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Human Rights Reporting of BRIC and Non-BRIC MNEs: An Exploratory Comparative Analysis

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Introduction

The United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, create a form of multilevel and polycentric governance system by establishing a set of global standards for business and human rights that cover companies in all UN member states. The first pillar of the UNGPs confirms the role of the state as primary duty bearer to protect human rights and its responsibility to prevent, investigate, punish and redress human rights abuses by companies. The second pillar includes the expectation that companies explicitly express their commitment to human rights by declaring their policy commitment to respect human rights, by conducting human rights due diligence and by establishing policies to remedy adverse human rights impacts of their business activities. The third pillar requires the state and companies to provide victims of human rights abuses with access to effective remedy (OHCHR 2011; Ruggie 2013).

This development in the field of business and human rights has triggered a substantive shift in the outlook on corporate social responsibility (CSR) within multinational enterprises (MNEs). Furthermore, it has encouraged corporate human rights reporting (Mehra and Blackwell 2016; Methven O'Brien and Dhanarajan 2016). However, while academic research is increasingly addressing the issues of whether and how MNEs report on compliance

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issues within their supply chains (Giuliani and Macchi 2014), the focus has largely been on MNEs from the Global North (Preuss and Brown 2012). Recent work on MNEs from the Global South, particularly the phenomenon of ‘rising power’ firms based in BRIC countries, has not only highlighted the growing importance and economic dynamism that is attributed to firms from Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) countries but also raised questions in relations to labour standards and human rights compliance (Sinkovics et al. 2014a, b, 2015).

This chapter looks at the issue of international business and human rights through the lens of non-financial, corporate reporting practices in order to better understand the similarities and divergences of human rights reporting across countries and between MNEs from BRIC and non-BRIC economies. Drawing on 240 randomly-selected MNEs from each of the four BRIC and four advanced (non-BRIC) economies, it analyses 691 company documents, including annual reports, CSR reports, sustainability reports, codes of conduct and human rights reports.

The next section introduces the research methods, including the research objectives, the sampling process, the data collection process and the development of the human rights reporting intensity score. The subsequent section reports on the empirical analysis. It first describes the corporate reporting channels of the 240 MNEs, then moves on to analyse the reporting channels with respect to communicating human rights-related information, and finally presents the findings with respect to the human rights reporting intensity scores. The last section of the chapter discusses the findings and proposes directions for future research.

Research Methods

Research Background and Research Objectives

The research interest behind this project is to explore and analyse the extent to which MNEs engage in publishing human rights-related information, focusing, among other things, on the differences between companies based in BRIC and non-BRIC countries.

Our research interest was inspired by previous work on corporate human rights reporting by Preuss and Brown (2012), who analysed publicly available information on companies included in the Financial Times Stock Exchange 100 Index (FTSE 100) in order to establish the degree of adoption of human

rights policies and to identify emerging patterns of company-level engagement with human rights. Although a significant proportion of the FTSE 100 companies are based outside the United Kingdom, Preuss and Brown (2012) call for further comparative cross-country analysis as one of several potentially fruitful avenues for future research.

Sampling Process

In order to identify suitable companies for comparative analysis, we decided to draw on the Forbes Global 2000 list for 2013. The Forbes Global 2000 is published by the US-based business magazine *Forbes* on an annual basis and includes the 2000 largest public companies of the world, considering market value, sales, profits and assets (Murphy 2015). A random sample of ten companies was selected from the Forbes Global 2000 list for 2013 and included in the search for company-level documents, including annual reports, CSR reports sustainability reports, environmental reports and human rights reports. For seven of these 10 companies, we were able to retrieve human rights reports. This stage of the project involved exploratory qualitative analysis of the content of the reports, using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (Sinkovics and Alfoldi 2012). As a result, it was decided to quantify the human rights-related information to be able to later engage in the quantitative comparative analysis of the relationship between human rights reporting and corporate behaviour and performance.

The data collection process involved several stages. In order to link the analysis to the debates on emerging market MNEs (Ramamurti and Singh 2009; Sinkovics et al. 2014b) and to analyse the differences between emerging market MNEs and MNEs from developed economies, the number of countries covered by the project was limited to four BRIC countries and four non-BRIC countries (France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States).

In order to achieve appropriate cell sizes for bivariate and multivariate analysis, thirty companies were selected for each of the eight countries. In order to (1) be able to conduct a comparative cross-country analysis and (2) to improve the generalisability of the findings, the sampling strategy included a random component. The process was as follows: random numbers were assigned to the 1098 companies from the eight target countries, and then the first thirty of each country (random numbers in decreasing order)

Table 8.1 The sample companies from the Forbes Global 2000 list (2013)

	Forbes dataset (<i>n</i>)	Forbes dataset (%)	Sample (<i>n</i>)
Brazil	31	1.6	30
China	136	6.8	30
India	56	2.8	30
Russia	30	1.5	30
SUM	299		120
France	64	3.2	30
Germany	50	2.5	30
United Kingdom	95	4.8	30
United States	542	27.1	30
SUM	799		120

Key: *n* number of companies

were selected to be included in the sample. This ultimately led to a sample of 30 MNEs for each of the eight countries, and a total of 240 companies in the dataset (Table 8.1).

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process then involved searching for different types of publicly available documentation for the year 2013. The search was conducted in 2014 by a research team and targeted the following stand-alone documents, published in English:

1. annual reports (excluding 10-K statements);
2. CSR reports;
3. sustainability reports;
4. codes of conduct/ethics; and
5. human rights reports.

It soon emerged that only 7 out of the 240 companies in the sample had published an explicit human rights report as a stand-alone document. As a consequence, we broadened our search strategy to also include human rights statements publicly available on the companies' webpages. The respective webpages were printed as PDF files and added to the data archive, documenting the accession date and the HTTP address. This broadening of the search strategy increased the number of companies for which human rights reports or statements were available from 7 to 59.

All 691 retrieved documents were then checked by the author of this chapter for relevance and quality. This process was linked to a second round of data collection.

Measuring the Intensity of Corporate Human Rights Reporting

The qualitative analysis reported above yielded a considerable diversity of corporate disclosure in terms of coverage of human rights issues, reporting channels and content of the available material. In order to measure the extent to which a company is reporting on its human rights-related philosophy and/or policies and practices, and to be able to compare the findings across companies, countries or groups of companies and countries, a scoring system was developed and applied to all 691 documents. This scoring system involves the following elements.

The first stage included a systematic content search of all available documents for the term ‘human right’ in order to identify the document sections with information related to human rights. At this stage, we encountered two problems. First, it emerged that US-based companies frequently use the term ‘civil right’ instead of ‘human right’. As a consequence, all documents were searched for the keyword ‘civil right’. However, all companies from the other seven countries referred to human rights. Second, a number of documents from Chinese MNEs included the standard forms of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)—which include the keywords ‘human right’—in the appendix without providing information in the respective report sections.

The second stage involved the analysis of the documents by a researcher. Each available document was given a score based on the following scheme:

- (–): No report available;
- (0): report available, but ‘human rights’ not mentioned in the report;
- (1): ‘human rights’ mentioned, but used without providing further information or context (e.g. in lists of policies/concepts OR in the appendix of the document, for example, in relation to the GRI or the United Nations Global Compact);
- (2): one or two short paragraphs on ‘human rights’ in the report, indicating that the concept of ‘human rights’ is linked to content and substance with respect to management policies and practices;
- (3): ‘human rights’ are mentioned in one or two sections of the report, and over several paragraphs; and

- (4): ‘human rights’ play a prominent role in the respective report (e.g. human rights play an important role in corporate strategy).

In order to ensure the quality of the scoring process, all members of the research team analysed the same subsample of documents for ten companies. Reliability coefficients were calculated (Campbell et al. 2013; Krippendorff 2011) and discussed in order to converge on a similar scoring behaviour and to increase the degree of inter-rater reliability.

After allocating a score to each document, aggregate scores were calculated for each company by adding the individual scores of all documents published by the respective company. The possible range of values for the aggregate score ranges from a minimum value of 0 to a maximum value of 20, which would imply a maximum score of four on all five documents.

As the human rights reporting scores measure the intensity of human rights reporting of each of the five potential reporting channels separately—that is, annual report, CSR report, sustainability report, code of conduct/ethics and human rights report or statement—and on aggregate as a sum score of all available documents, a maximum of five individual reporting scores and one aggregate reporting score are available for analysing the human rights reporting intensity for each of the 240 companies. In the following sections, the individual and aggregate scores will be used to compute country-level scores as well as average scores for companies based in particular countries or groups of countries (i.e. BRIC vs non-BRIC). While the next section will introduce findings of this analysis, the table with the summary statistics (mean value, minimum value, maximum value and standard deviation) is included in the appendix.

Empirical Analysis

The following sections will describe and discuss the empirical observations and findings on the extent to which companies were using different reporting channels for disseminating information on their human rights philosophy, policies and practices. The subsequent section will introduce and discuss the human rights reporting scores for companies based in the different countries and country groupings (BRIC and non-BRIC).

At this stage, it should be noted that the structure of the presentation of the descriptive findings as well as the analysis and discussion will be organised according to the following sequence of steps. The first step will involve the

presentation of information for different reporting channels. The second will distinguish between country groupings, for example, BRIC and non-BRIC countries. The third will look at aggregate information for each country. Finally, in the fourth step we will take a comparative cross-country perspective on particular types of reports.

Corporate Reporting Channels

The following section reports on the extent to which MNEs based in the eight countries covered by the project use specific channels for corporate reporting. It will provide aggregate information for all MNEs combined, as well as separately for MNEs from BRIC and non-BRIC countries.

Table 8.2 displays information on the total number of reports collected for each of the eight countries and each of the five reporting channels. In

Table 8.2 Corporate reporting channels

		AR	CSR	SUS	CoC	HR	<i>n</i>
Brazil	<i>Number</i>	30	15	18	19	8	90
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	50	60	63	27	
China	<i>Number</i>	26	15	4	3	0	48
	<i>Percentage</i>	87	50	13	10	0	
India	<i>Number</i>	30	19	16	21	0	86
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	63	53	70	0	
Russia	<i>Number</i>	30	21	12	18	6	87
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	70	40	60	20	
France	<i>Number</i>	30	24	12	16	13	95
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	80	40	53	43	
Germany	<i>Number</i>	30	18	16	24	12	100
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	60	53	80	40	
United Kingdom	<i>Number</i>	30	22	11	20	13	96
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	73	37	67	43	
United States	<i>Number</i>	30	13	10	29	7	89
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	43	33	97	23	
All MNEs	<i>Number</i>	236	147	99	150	59	691
	<i>Percentage</i>	98	61	41	63	25	
<i>Average no. per country</i>		29.5	18.4	12.4	18.8	7.4	86.4
BRIC MNEs	<i>Number</i>	116	70	50	61	14	311
	<i>Percentage</i>	97	58	42	51	12	
<i>Average no. per country</i>		29.0	17.5	12.5	15.3	3.5	77.8
Non-BRIC MNEs	<i>Number</i>	120	77	49	89	45	380
	<i>Percentage</i>	100	64	41	74	38	
<i>Average no. per country</i>		30.0	19.3	12.3	22.3	11.3	95.0

Key: *AR* annual report, *CSR* CSR report/statement, *SUS* sustainability report/statement, *CoC* code of conduct/ethics, *HR* human rights report/statement, *n* number of documents, *BRIC* Brazil, Russia, India and China

addition, the table shows the respective percentages of companies using by a particular reporting channel for each category. In total, the analysis covers 691 documents published by 240 companies. Almost all companies publish annual reports in English and make these annual reports available online, with the one notable exception of MNEs from China, whose annual reports may not be published online and are not always available in English.

When looking at overall reporting structures for MNEs from all countries, annual reports are the most frequently used reporting channel (98%), followed by codes of conduct (63%), CSR reports (61%), sustainability reports (41%) and human rights reports and statements (25%). This observation holds true for the group of non-BRIC MNEs, while CSR reports and codes of conduct swap position for the BRIC MNEs. Table 8.2 also indicates that the sample of MNEs from BRIC countries has—on average—a smaller total number of reports. The incidence of human rights reports/statements is far lower for BRIC MNEs (12%) compared to MNEs from non-BRIC countries (38%).

Looking at country-level information, in Brazil sustainability reports (60% of all companies) are more popular than CSR reports (50%), while coverage by human rights reports or statements is highest compared to other BRIC countries (27%). MNEs from China mainly use annual reports (87%) and CSR reports (50%), while the proportion of companies with sustainability reports (13%) and codes of conduct (10%) is relatively low. Similar to companies from India, none of the companies from China had published a separate human rights report or statement. For companies from Russia and France, CSR reports are the most important form of non-financial reporting. Germany and the United States stand out with respect to a relatively high proportion of companies publishing codes of conduct. Non-financial reporting in the United Kingdom stands out in terms of a relatively low proportion of companies covered by sustainability reports (37%), and a high proportion of companies having a human rights report or statement (43%). Ninety-seven per cent of the companies based in the United States have a code of conduct, but only one out of three companies published a sustainability report.

Comparing non-financial reporting channels across countries, France is leading with respect to CSR reports (80% of companies) and together with the United Kingdom (43%) is leading the league table for human rights reports or statements. Sustainability reports are most popular in Brazil (60%), while almost all US-based (97%) companies have a code of conduct. In terms of the total number of reports, German companies published a hundred reports, while companies based in China published 48 reports.

With respect to CSR reports, coverage ranges from 50% of Chinese companies to 83% of French companies. The respective figures for sustainability reports are 13% for Chinese companies and 60% for Brazilian companies. While 97% of US companies publish a code of ethics/code of conduct online, the respective figure for Chinese companies is 10%. In terms of human rights reports or statements, France has the largest number and proportion of companies using this reporting channel (43%), while MNEs based in China or India did not publish human rights reports or statements.

The Corporate Reporting on Human Rights Philosophy, Policies and Practices

While the previous section provided an overview of corporate disclosure and reporting channels, this section will establish the link between corporate disclosure and reporting on human rights philosophies, policies and/or practices. The first part will focus on the incidence of human rights reporting, that is, whether or not companies use the different potential reporting channels for reporting on human rights philosophy, policies and practices. The second part will focus on the intensity of human rights reporting, using the human rights reporting intensity score introduced above.

Table 8.3 provides information on the extent to which companies in the different countries make use of different reporting channels (i.e. annual report, CSR report, sustainability report, code of conduct, and/or human rights report or statement) to communicate human rights-related information. In order to identify relevant cases, each of the 691 documents was checked to ascertain whether or not it includes a reference to human rights philosophy, policies and/or practices.

For each country sample of 30 companies, columns 2–6 in Table 8.3 provide information on (i) the total number reports that include a reference to human rights policies, and (ii) the percentage of companies in that country (out of 30) or country group (BRIC and non-BRIC countries, out of 120) using the respective reporting channel for communicating human rights-related information. In addition, Table 8.3 includes aggregate information on MNEs from BRIC and non-BRIC countries, and for the entire sample of all 240 MNEs.

When looking at the overall picture of reporting channels used by the 240 companies from eight countries, annual reports are the most frequently used reporting channel (97 companies, or 40%), followed by sustainability reports (78, or 33%), CSR reports (70, or 29%), codes of conduct (69, or 29%) and

Table 8.3 Reporting channels used to communicate human rights policies

		AR	CSR	SUS	CoC	HR	<i>n</i>
Brazil	<i>Number</i>	18	5	15	9	8	55
	<i>Percentage</i>	60	17	50	30	27	
China	<i>Number</i>	1	4	4	1	0	10
	<i>Percentage</i>	3	13	13	3	0	
India	<i>Number</i>	15	3	14	4	0	36
	<i>Percentage</i>	50	10	47	13	0	
Russia	<i>Number</i>	4	8	9	7	6	34
	<i>Percentage</i>	13	27	30	23	20	
France	<i>Number</i>	20	19	8	12	13	72
	<i>Percentage</i>	67	63	27	40	43	
Germany	<i>Number</i>	15	12	14	14	12	67
	<i>Percentage</i>	50	40	47	47	40	
United Kingdom	<i>Number</i>	21	11	10	11	13	66
	<i>Percentage</i>	70	37	33	37	43	
United States	<i>Number</i>	3	8	4	11	7	33
	<i>Percentage</i>	10	27	13	37	23	
All MNEs	<i>Number</i>	97	70	78	69	59	373
	<i>Percentage</i>	40	29	33	29	25	
<i>Average no. per country</i>		12.1	8.8	9.8	8.6	7.4	46.6
BRIC MNEs	<i>Number</i>	38	20	42	21	14	135
	<i>Percentage</i>	32	17	35	18	12	
<i>Average no. per country</i>		9.5	5.0	10.5	5.3	3.5	33.8
Non-BRIC MNEs	<i>Number</i>	59	50	36	48	45	238
	<i>Percentage</i>	49	42	30	40	38	
<i>Average no. per country</i>		14.8	12.5	9.0	12.0	11.3	59.5

Key: *AR* annual report, *CSR* CSR report/statement, *SUS* sustainability report / statement, *CoC* code of conduct/ethics, *HR* human rights report/statement, *n* number of documents, *BRIC* Brazil, Russia, India and China

human rights reports or statements (59, or 25%). For the group of non-BRIC MNEs, annual reports are most frequently used (59 companies, or 49%), sustainability reports are least frequently used (36, or 30%), and coverage is around 40% for the remaining three reporting channels. In contrast to this, BRIC MNEs most frequently use the sustainability reports (42, or 35%). In general, with the exception of the sustainability reports, all other reporting channels are more frequently used by non-BRIC MNEs compared to BRIC MNEs.

Looking at country-level information, in Brazil, India, France, Germany and the United Kingdom, annual reports are the most frequently used reporting channel for disseminating human rights-related information. MNEs based in China prefer CSR and sustainability reports. For US-based MNEs, the codes of conduct/ethics represent the reporting channel most frequently used to refer to human rights issues.

While Table 8.2 provides information on whether companies use a particular reporting channel, Table 8.3 provides information on whether companies use a particular reporting channel for communicating human rights-related information. However, neither table provides information on the quality or quantity of the human rights-related information. In order to measure the intensity of human rights reporting, we analysed the content of the available documents and applied the scoring scheme described above.

Table 8.4 presents the results of the qualitative content analysis and the scoring process. Columns 2–6 show the average scores for the different reporting channels, considering the documents available in each category only. For example, the number of 1.8 for Brazil in column 4 (sustainability reports) means that all available sustainability reports published by Brazilian MNEs score on average 1.8, on a scale ranging from 0 (lowest level of intensity) to 4 (highest level of intensity). It is important to note that this average score is calculated on the basis of (and in relation to) the published reports for a particular category. Thus, the indicator measures the human rights reporting intensity in relation to existing documents.

Column 7 (Av doc) displays the average score for all available documents for a particular country or groups of countries. This score reflects the average intensity of human rights reporting for all available documents published by MNEs based in that country or group of countries. While column 7 uses available documents as a base for calculating the average score, column 8 (Av MNE)

Table 8.4 Human rights reporting intensity scores

Average scores	AR	CSR	SUS	CoC	HR	Av doc	Av MNE
Brazil	1.1	0.5	1.8	0.7	1.8	1.1	3.4
China	0.0	0.3	1.8	0.3	–	0.3	0.5
India	0.8	0.3	2.1	0.3	–	0.8	2.4
Russia	0.2	0.8	1.3	0.5	1.7	0.7	1.9
France	1.4	2.0	1.1	1.6	2.0	1.6	5.1
Germany	0.8	1.7	2.1	1.0	2.2	1.4	4.5
United Kingdom	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.0	2.5	1.4	4.4
United States	0.2	1.5	1.0	0.7	2.6	0.8	2.4
All MNEs	0.7	1.0	1.6	0.8	2.1	1.0	3.1
BRIC MNEs	0.6	0.5	1.8	0.5	1.7	0.7	1.7
Non-BRIC MNEs	0.9	1.6	1.5	1.0	2.3	1.3	4.1

Key: *AR* annual report, *CSR* CSR report/statement, *SUS* sustainability report / statement, *CoC* code of conduct/ethics, *HR* human rights report/statement, *Av doc* average of the scores of existing documents for all five reporting channels, *Av MNE* average of the individual company scores

uses all thirty companies as a base for calculating the average human rights reporting intensity score.

As far as the averages across all available documents are concerned, the intensity of human rights reporting is highest in human rights reports and statements (2.1), followed by sustainability reports (1.6), CSR reports (1.0), codes of conduct (0.8) and annual reports (0.7). This overall pattern holds true for non-BRIC MNEs. For BRIC MNEs, the score is highest for sustainability reports (1.8), followed by human rights reports (1.7), annual reports (0.6), CSR reports (0.5) and codes of conduct (0.5).

Comparing the results for reporting channels between countries, annual reports published by French MNEs score highest (1.4), closely followed by annual reports published by UK-based MNEs (1.3). French MNEs also lead the league table for CSR reports (2.0) and for codes of conduct (1.6). For human rights reports and statements, the reporting intensity score is highest for reports published by US-based MNEs (2.6), closely followed by UK-based MNEs (2.5). Reports published by Chinese MNEs score lowest with respect to annual reports (0.0), CSR reports (0.3) and codes of conduct (0.3), while human rights are more frequently referred to in sustainability reports (1.8). In Indian and German MNEs, the human rights reporting intensity score is highest for sustainability reports (2.1).

Column 7 in Table 8.4 (Av doc) displays the average score of the manual coding process considering all available publications per country. Reports published by French multinationals lead the list (1.6), followed by reports from German and British MNEs (1.4), Brazilian MNEs (1.1), Indian and American MNEs (0.8), Russian MNEs (0.7) and Chinese MNEs (0.3). Last but not least, column 8 (Av MNE) provides information on the human rights reporting intensity of companies between countries. On average, French MNEs score highest (5.1), followed by German MNEs (4.5), British MNEs (4.4), Brazilian MNEs (3.4), Indian and American MNEs (2.4), Russian MNEs (1.9) and Chinese MNEs (0.5). For both types of aggregate average scores in columns 7 and 8, MNEs from non-BRIC countries have higher scores than MNEs from BRIC countries.

Discussion and Future Research Directions

The overall research objective of this chapter was to explore the extent to which MNEs engage in reporting on human rights philosophy, policies and practices, with a specific focus on cross-country variation. Although rather

descriptive in terms of empirical analysis, there are a couple of interesting issues and findings emerging from our research.

To start with, even though not directly and explicitly related to human rights reporting, the chapter identifies a considerable amount of variation with respect to financial and non-financial/social reporting channels being used across companies as well as across and within countries and country groupings. While the financial and non-financial reporting literature is currently discussing the phenomenon of integrated reporting (de Villiers et al. 2014; Vaz et al. 2016), the issue of multi-channel reporting deserves further investigation and analysis. Especially with respect to non-financial/social reporting, it would be interesting to see future research on the preferences for and drivers of different configurations of reporting channels. Why do some companies prefer CSR reports to sustainability reports, or vice versa? Why do companies have both, and in addition include non-financial information in their annual reports? Are different types of reports or reporting channels substitutes, or do they complement each other? Furthermore, what are the drivers of the publication cycles of specific types of reports? Annual reports are usually published on an annual basis, supposedly as a consequence of regulatory requirements. CSR and sustainability reports also seem to follow specific publication patterns. However, codes of conduct/ethics and human rights reports or statements seem to be published on a less regular basis.

Moving towards the coverage of human rights philosophy, policies and practices in financial and non-financial/social reporting, three observations stand out. First, despite the current discussion on human rights due diligence and human rights reporting requirements linked to the UNGPs, at least for the period around 2013, explicit and stand-alone human rights reports or statements seem to be relatively rare. Using our sampling strategy in order to get a 'more representative' impression on the incidence of human rights reporting among MNEs shows that in 2013 only one out of four companies in our sample had published a human rights report or statement, the proportion among BRIC MNEs being one out of ten. This raises interesting questions about the management relevance of the business and human rights debate, as well as about the impact of the UNGPs.

Second, our research yielded interesting results with respect to the incidence of human rights issues being mentioned in the different types of reports. This is especially true for annual reports—with 40% of the annual reports (49% for non-BRIC MNEs and 32% for BRIC MNEs) mentioning human

rights. In addition, variation across and within countries with respect to human rights being mentioned in CSR and sustainability reports raises interesting questions about the definition and conceptualisation of CSR as well as sustainability. Third, and last, the observable cross-country variation in terms of using different alternative or multiple reporting channels for communicating human rights-related issues might lead us to question the determinants and drivers of this phenomenon.

With respect to the intensity of human rights-related reporting, the human rights reporting intensity score introduced and applied in this chapter is novel and innovative, but requires additional analysis and testing with respect to measurement quality. The intensity scores have been used to describe the intensity of human rights-related reporting of published documents, and the descriptive analysis shows interesting variation in terms of intensity of human rights reporting between the different reporting channels and companies, but also between and within countries or groups of countries. Future research may also elaborate on the respective properties of the scoring approach, especially compared to word count analysis and/or qualitative coding-based approaches.

It would be interesting to see a further analysis of the drivers and determinants of the intensity score. In addition, the intensity score can be used as a variable in quantitative research on the link between human rights reporting intensity and corporate behaviour, outcomes and performance. Finally, a further interesting research topic is to explore and analyse changes in human rights reporting practices over time.

While most of the suggestions made so far ask for additional empirical research, there is a strong need for additional conceptual and theoretical research. Legitimacy theory, stakeholder theory, signalling theory and institutionalist approaches may be useful starting points for analysing the determinants and implications of corporate human rights reporting. While there is a plethora of research available on the internal and external drivers of CSR reporting (e.g. Giannarakis 2014; Giannarakis et al. 2014), sustainability reporting (e.g. Kolk 2010), environmental reporting (e.g. Kolk and Fortanier 2013) and financial reporting (e.g. Tschopp and Huefner 2015), there is a definite need to discuss whether and to what extent the existing approaches can be used to also explain and analyse human rights reporting, or, if need be, can be adapted to include additional human rights-related elements in the respective analytical frameworks.

Appendix

Table 8.5 Human rights reporting intensity scores—summary statistics

		AR	CSR	SUS	CoC	HR	Av doc
Brazil	Mean	1.1	0.5	1.8	0.7	1.8	1.1
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	3	2	4	3	3	10
	SD	1.0	0.7	1.2	0.9	0.7	2.7
China	Mean	0.0	0.3	1.8	0.3	–	0.3
	Min	0	0	1	0	–	0
	Max	1	2	3	1	–	4
	SD	0.2	0.6	1.0	0.6	–	0.9
India	Mean	0.8	0.3	2.1	0.3	–	0.8
	Min	0	0	0	0	–	0
	Max	3	2	3	2	–	7
	SD	0.9	0.7	1.1	0.7	–	2.0
Russia	Mean	0.2	0.8	1.3	0.5	1.7	0.7
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	3	3	3	3	3	7
	SD	0.6	1.2	1.1	0.8	0.8	1.9
France	Mean	1.4	2.0	1.1	1.6	2.0	1.6
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	4	3	4	3	4	13
	SD	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	2.9
Germany	Mean	0.8	1.7	2.1	1.0	2.2	1.4
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	3	4	3	2	4	11
	SD	0.9	1.4	1.1	0.9	1.0	2.8
United Kingdom	Mean	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.0	2.5	1.4
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	3	3	3	3	4	13
	SD	1.0	1.2	0.8	1.1	1.0	3.3
United States	Mean	0.2	1.5	1.0	0.7	2.6	0.8
	Min	0	0	0	0	2	0
	Max	3	4	3	3	4	10
	SD	0.6	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.8	3.0
Average ALL MNEs	Mean	0.7	1.0	1.7	0.8	2.1	3.1
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	4	4	4	3	4	13
	SD	0.6	1.5	1.3	1.0	0.8	3.0
Average BRIC MNEs	Mean	0.6	0.5	1.8	0.5	1.7	2.0
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	3	3	4	3	3	10
	SD	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.8	0.7	2.2
Average non-BRIC MNEs	Mean	0.9	1.6	1.5	1.0	2.3	4.1
	Min	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Max	4	4	4	3	4	13
	SD	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.0	1.0	3.1

Key: *AR* annual report, *CSR* CSR report/statement, *SUS* sustainability report /statement, *CoC* code of conduct/ethical code/statement, *HR* human rights report/statement, *Av doc* average of the scores of existing documents for all five reporting channels, *Mean* mean value for all companies in the respective category, *SD* standard deviation

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