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As emerging (and developing) country firms internationalize, they often need to build legitimacy to overcome home-country liabilities. We argue that international legitimacy is at risk if these firms do harm in the conduct of their business, and we investigate the extent to which host countries' speech and press freedoms influence corporate social irresponsibility (CSIR) for a sample of Multilatinas, observed during the period 2003–2012. We do find evidence of lower CSIR among Multilatinas which have adopted explicit CSR policies and have higher levels of investment in countries characterized by strong speech and press freedoms.

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