

**Exploring Stakeholder Activism in an Age of Social Media**

**A Case Study of Fashion Revolution Day and Corporate Responses**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

Social media is increasingly influencing the way corporations and societies interact on a range of issues. This has given rise to stakeholder activism online and corporations becoming more active online. This study explores how activism online is formed and the impact it has upon the corporations it seeks to pressure. This is looked at through a case study of Fashion Revolution Day, which is a campaign calling for improvements to fashion supply chains as a result of disasters such as the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh in April 2013. The corporate response is also examined with the focus on high-street fashion retailer Primark. Thematic coding forms the analysis, which is carried out on Twitter data from the campaign and the response to it is explored across Twitter, Facebook and the old media. The data suggested that Fashion Revolution Day achieved the necessary scale of response making it a successful first year for the campaign. However, any industry changes will take time and this will be the test for the campaign going forward. Actor self-interest was identified as a key motivation for those leading the campaign and the corporations being pressured. Primark's use of social media has allowed it to be very flexible in response to crisis events. This indicates that while social media does shift the power relations between corporations and society, if it is fully embraced corporations can use it to their advantage.

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# **1 Introduction**

This chapter will bring in the aim of the study alongside the research questions. It will then explain the literature involved and the contribution the study is seeking to offer, touching on the importance of the context in question. It will finish with the structure of the study going forward.

## **1.1 Research overview and aim**

The research aim is to investigate how activism online can put pressures upon institutions and related corporations. It will seek to explore how activists engage with issues online and the corporate response with an additional interest in the influence social media has on both actors behaviour. This will be investigated through the case study of Fashion Revolution Day, which took place on 24th April 2014, and was a campaign spread across social media in protest against social and environmental catastrophes in fashion supply chains. It uses the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2013, where 1133 people died and over 2500 injured, as the date of the campaign. The case encapsulates the problems in fashion supply chains that need to change.

The overarching research question is: 'How does external pressure created by institutional entrepreneurs influences institutions and corporate responses to crisis events on social media'.

The following research questions will be explored

1. How the actors engage with the activism campaign.
2. How corporations responded to the campaign and the related issues.
3. How social media has altered the way corporations respond to crisis events and institutional pressures.

## **1.2 Important literature and contribution**

This study brings together literature from a few different, yet interlinked disciplines. Literature on the Internet and corporate –society relations helps to understand how the rise of online platforms such as social media has influenced the way business interacts with the public and vice versa. Social media is a relatively new phenomenon and corporations have only begun to fully embrace its capabilities so a contribution here will be laying out the different ways corporations understand and use tools online such as Twitter. It will also develop the understanding of who benefits from the new online environment and if any benefits are significant. There is also an interest in crisis communication and management literature because the case being studied relates to previous crisis events and may itself be viewed as a crisis for certain corporations. A look at different crisis events makes it possible to identify the impact social media is having on the process, if any. Helping identify why corporations respond in certain ways and whether they can be held more accountable for their actions. Finally intuitional theory explains the process by which pressure is placed upon institutions in the fashion field to change their practices. This is done through the theory of institutional entrepreneurship and institutional politics. The case can be assessed against the theory to see whether it fits and if it has any unique aspects that influence the results of institutional pressure. This particular case is important because it is about peoples livelihoods involved in producing garments, often in the developing world, for fashion brands. By developing knowledge of how online campaigns can be successful and how corporations interact with them builds best practice for future practitioners and researchers.

## **1.3 Structure**

Following this introduction, chapter 2 will involve a review of the relevant literature, of which there are three main sections. These include: The Internet and corporate-society relations, corporate crisis management and communication and institutional theory. Each of these large sections will begin with the basis of the literature to give a grounding of understand and then move onto the aspects that are relevant to the studies aim. This will set the foundations of what is already known in relation to this

study. It will also set out theory and understanding that can be applied in the analysis and discussion sections.

Chapter 3 will involve the methods used to further the understanding of the subject area in order to answer the aims and research questions. It will begin with the foundations of the research in terms of philosophical assumptions, approach and research paradigm. It will then become more specific in terms of the research design, which will look at the use of case study and netnography. Data collection will then be explained and described before going onto how the data was analysed. A large part of this will involve the development of the coding framework using institutional entrepreneurship theory. To finish the methods sections a critical eye will be cast over areas such as the ethics of the study and the limitations of the methods employed.

Chapter 4 will apply what was set out in the methods regarding the analysis of the data collected. The coding framework will form the structure here. The initial analysis will be about the problems of fast fashion, the campaign of Fashion Revolution Day, the actors involved in the campaign and a background on the studies focal company, Primark. This will set the foundations for the coding framework to be applied to the Twitter data from Fashion Revolution Day and the Facebook posts and press releases from Primark in response to Fashion Revolution Day and Rana Plaza. The section will be rounded off with a review of the outcome of the Fashion Revolution Day campaign.

Chapter 5 will move the facts of the analysis towards a discussion of what those findings amount to in the context of the literature and theory outlined in chapter 2. This will begin with a focus on the Fashion Revolution campaign and how it adds to understanding of collective action and activism online. Answering research question one regarding how actors engaged with the campaign on social media. The next section will be related to research question 2 about corporate responses to the campaign and related crisis events. This will use Primark as the example of how corporate responses can play out in online campaigns and other crisis events.



Moving onto the third section that is interested in the influence social media is having, if any, on the way corporations respond to crisis events and external pressures. Again Primark will be looked at by using different examples of their response to crisis, assessing any impact social media may be having.

Chapter 6 will conclude the study by summarising the key findings, outlining the limitations of the study and suggesting areas for future study.

## **2 Literature review**

This chapter will seek to establish the theoretical foundations of the study and the associated research that can begin to explain certain phenomena that relate to this research. Exploring the core themes of the research topic; the Internet and social media, corporate presence online, crisis communication and online activism will do this. The literature review will be utilising work from a range of disciplines such as public relations, corporate social responsibility (CSR), organisational studies and politics. The aim will be to establish where the gaps in the literature are and thus position this study into areas that have not yet been fully explored or understood. Many of the study's core themes, such as online activism and corporate social media communication, are relatively new concepts in terms of research. As a result they are very popular areas with researchers who are looking to contribute to the understanding of these evolving phenomena and utilise the great potential 'big data' has. Firstly I will look at the literature around the Internet and corporate-society relations. Secondly, the literature on crisis communication and management will be explained. Finally, institutional theory will be clarified with focus on institutional entrepreneurship.

### **2.1 The Internet and corporate-society relations**

This area is important in order to set the scene of corporate behaviour online, especially in terms of the new pressures by stakeholders for more responsible business practices. This study is interested in the developing the communicative view of CSR.

#### **2.1.1 Social Media and new corporate responsibilities**

Social media is speeding up critical messages, making it harder for corporations to control the terms of public discourse. The importance and scale of social media is extraordinary with statistics from 2013 calculating 1.11 billion Facebook users, 500

million Twitter accounts and 225 million LinkedIn users (UNCP, 2013). In addition to other social network sites, another key driver is the growth in smartphone users, which allows greater ease of communication and will hit 1.75 billion users in 2014 (eMarketer, 2013). This is happening alongside shifts in what society expects from companies in a globalizing world. Friedman (1970) saw corporations' responsibilities to solely lie in profiteering and not in the public sphere. However, in a modern, globalizing world with certain government powers decreasing and the increasing awareness of pressing and interlinked global/local issues; many see corporations as key players in social and environmental protection. Citizenship has been used as a legitimate framework for discussions of status, entitlements and processes; where citizenship is based around an active participation in wider society. In terms of business-society relations, citizenship can act as an organising principle for aligning power and responsibilities, among and between members of society (Crane et al., 2008).

With the new ethical expectations placed on corporations by society the attainment of organizational legitimacy is being achieved through new channels. Corporate communication strategies can be self-centred, mediated and dialogical, played out in network structures; this is how corporations create relational social ties. Alongside this there is the communication flow, which is how corporations produce and share content with networks. Colleoni (2013) focuses on Twitter, pointing to its uniqueness in that it can facilitate dialogue with people who do not know each other but care about the same issues and interactions are very much visible to the broader audience. There is no clear alignment for engagement or information strategies, it is not simply the more dialogue the more communality, it is much more complex in these communicative dynamics. Even when dialogue is the main engagement social media is still strongly linked to marketing, in that it is only used to increase corporate legitimacy rather than solve CSR issues. Castello et al. (2013) argues an organisation is legitimate when it is beneficial specific to its own interests (pragmatic legitimacy), when it does the right thing morally (moral legitimacy) or, when typical beliefs render the organisation legitimate (cognitive legitimacy). Its mutual theme is being justifiable and is inherently difficult on social media when such a variety of

issues are in question with a variety of mediums answering them (videos, pictures, text, data). Therefore understanding is needed on the ways corporations create legitimacy in their communication strategies across multiple mediums.

New voices are interacting with companies due to the introduction of Web 2.0 such as social media. Twitter in particular empowers individuals to interact with companies in a direct and open way, as long as the company has a Twitter account. In order to create 'buzz' companies often invite users to tweet about them and of course this is a risk. In 2012 McDonald's famously invited customers and suppliers to hashtag McDStories for positive things about the farmers who produce their products. This backfired with a flood of negative stories regarding food poisoning, poor labour standards and animal welfare. In light of examples such as this Lyon and Montgomery (2013) theorize that social media will reduce incidences of corporate green wash as citizens may feel a company is engaging in excessive self-promotion. More specifically relatively 'green' companies should use social media to express differentiation from others in their industry, however, if they have bad news they should reduce their promotion of green accomplishment and focus on the issue in hand. Firms with a 'brown' reputation, if they use social media, should disclose full environmental impacts and look to show improvements. It is a case of being proactive because in this case corporations are being treated as citizens and any activity that looks to deceive will be challenged.

Jones et al. (2009) indicates the importance of social media to corporate communication and reputation. Web 2.0 is a tool for consumer and citizenship empowerment where brand image and reputation are co-created. Born out of this are professional consumers who move from passive to active as they seek to influence and shape the future of business. There is little room for monologue online now and many corporations are now engaged more in social media channels as they seek to enable wider stakeholder engagement. The current relational model is based upon participation, co-ownership and reciprocity meaning corporations are shifting to practices that monitor and measure their presence on the web. Developments online have further emphasized how businesses do not operate in a vacuum but are part of

a societal context. Whilst broadcasting media (old media) remains important in corporate communication this study will explore the influence new media has on communication strategy. This study will seek to extend the corporate strategic understanding for online environments, especially when a message (from stakeholders) is expressed on scale (across social media).

### **2.1.2 Structure of corporate online presence**

Whelan et al. (2013) creates three dynamics in regards to 'citizenship arenas'. As information and communication technologies have advanced there have been signs of an increase on the importance of individual citizens relative to corporations and their stakeholders. The concept of 'corporate arenas of citizenship' relates to examples of social media being used in a way that empowers specific corporations as they set up channels to address CSR issues with stakeholders and individuals. Unlike physical space of the same type, due to the openness of digital content online individuals are more included. However corporations still set up these channels, so they can dictate discussions and even block certain content. Despite this they do not represent a complete transformation in corporate –society relations.

'Public arenas of citizenship' (still constructed by corporations i.e. social media technology firms) involve a range of companies and individuals working with relatively even privileges unlike old media where corporations and NGOs hold greater control. Of course this is positive as it empowers individual citizens to express their rights but has the downside of confusion and lack of focus with relatively less organization around issues. Scale is still required to bring issues to the attention of corporations. An important aspect is the control and construction of these public arenas. This responsibility is placed on the ICT firms to enable individuals to create their own content without government intervention, in this sense these are very political technologies. In terms of business-society relations as social media becomes more useful in empowering individual citizens we all become more reliant on these few technology firms to manage the platforms correctly.

The idealistic view of social media for corporations would be a faster communication channel, reducing cost whilst increasing interactivity, promoting transparency by transcending boundaries of the physical world and creating relevant engagement. In reality many issues arise in terms of controlling open networks creating risk for company reputation, high resource investment and uneven power dynamics. However, balancing these views and involving the perspectives of other actors can use social media to democratize CSR interactions, creating mutual benefits. Schultz et al. (2013) argues that the current mainstream views of CSR, instrumental and also political-normative views, do not sufficiently recognize the role of communicative dynamics for the constitution of CSR. These views often simplify communications to corporate goal driven self-presentation (instrumental view) or societal goal driven conscious making (political-normative view).

The communicative view understands the complex communicative dynamics underlying the configuration and organization of CSR. This lack of attention given to the communicative view can be explained through three biases; control, consistency and consensus bias. Control bias (instrumental and managerial view of CSR) sees CSR as a tool to be managed with the decentralization of communication. The empowerment in this case is with the corporation as they set up the Twitter account and participate but as discussed the platform allows more even power distribution. In contrast to a company's Facebook page where more control is with the corporation in terms of posting content, deleting unwanted content and relying less on user-driven content. Consistency bias places emphasis on the link between CSR talk and action, inconsistencies can be counterproductive and the empowerment of individuals on social media means they can oust the company publically for wrongdoing. Finally consensus bias stresses the construction of CSR in networked societies is made up of harmonious corporate-stakeholder relationships. Involving unplanned and non-intentional responses to form an arena of sense making for CSR and creating unity. Although this has its problems as it may suppress polyphony.

In effect the biases mentioned relate to the two established views on CSR; instrumental which sees it as an organizational tool to reach financial and

reputational goal and political-normative which highlights the societal conditions and role of corporations in creating norms. These views do not acknowledge communication dynamics in networked societies; the communicative view is a socially constitutive process of co-creation by which the understanding of company's social responsibilities is different. It points to a much more open, reflexive, self-organized and fluid public sphere. Therefore this study will seek to analyze the dynamics and networked interplay between media, organizations and public. This study will add to the growing body of work that values the communicative view and further help establish it alongside the traditional views of CSR.

Whelan (2013) distinguishes between dissensual and consensual CSR, where the later is the popular position of CSR in practice and academia where a general privilege of consent is given over dissent. Popular theory such as stakeholder theory is informed by consensual orientations and in practice international accountability standards (e.g. SA 8000) and new forms of voluntary global governance platforms (e.g. United Nations Global Compact) are inherently reliant on consensus. This perspective can be seen both positively and negatively. Multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Forest Stewardship Council and the belief that moral legitimacy comes from stakeholder consensus is positive as it seeks to create more responsible business practices. However, the negative perspective looks to the underlying motive behind consensual CSR and that engagement in initiatives is only done for profit related reasons. It is thus suggested that dissent or disagreement is a fact of life and unavoidable. To be open to the voices of disagreement can lead to fruitful opportunities and points of resistance. This idea of dissensual CSR can be helpful in this study as I seek to assess corporate communication strategies towards clear and widespread concern over working conditions in their supply chains. Dissent enabling public spheres can help those who are often silenced in consent-oriented-public spheres. It is here where online platforms such as social media can seek to open up debate but corporations will have to give in to traditional power structures for change to take place.

## **2.2 Corporate Crisis: Management and Communication**

This area is important in order to understand corporate communications strategy as new challenges are presented in the online environment when it comes to crisis. The social mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model will be explained alongside corporate best practice in crisis communication. Then the rise of online activism will be explored.

### **2.2.1 Crisis in the world of social media**

A crisis is a perception of an unpredictable event that threatens stakeholder expectations, impacts a firm's performance and generates negative outcomes. In fact the perception of stakeholders is what makes a crisis real as they react and impact upon a firm. A stakeholder is a person or group that is affected or can affect an organisation. As corporations respond to crisis they cover a set of factors that seek to lessen any damage inflicted, known as crisis management. The process of crisis management will seek to identify types of behaviour, starting with prevention and preparation moving to response, recovery and revision. Stakeholder activism has become more widespread as stakeholders are now more likely to generate crisis than in the past, as they are both more aware of corporate behaviour and more able to voice these concerns to wider audiences. Both these factors have been greatly facilitated by the Internet as explained in the previous section. Activist groups are using the Internet to organise and pressure organisations to change behaviour. Social media, online communication channels where users control content, is part of the pressure tactics alongside more traditional boycotts and public protests. The vast majority of social media messages never find an audience, however, when stakeholders connect and speak together they have the scale to impact corporations (Coombs, 2012b). Communication technologies make transmission of information easier and faster with great ease of access in developed nations. They also make the world more visible meaning a local crisis can become globally visible, often involving multinational corporations.

The Internet is made up of many communication channels, including websites, discussion boards, blogs, micro blogs (Twitter), image sharing (Instagram) and social



networks (Facebook and Twitter). Internet communication channels emphasize the interactive and interconnected nature of the Internet, giving reductions to time, effort and resources used to communicate. The same basic crisis management needs are important, although, the way information is collected and processed has changed which demands quicker and more accurate responses by corporations. Although websites are relevant in discussions involving crisis communication online, for the sake of this study the interest lies in the influence of web 2.0 not web 1.0. Web 2.0, in contrast to web 1.0's one way information exchange, refers to applications that utilise user-generated content involving sharing and collaboration to create content. Social media is a collection of online web 2.0 technologies creating a sphere of multiple media and interactive content. As a result new media was created where users control the content, not organisations (Coombs, 2012a).

Voit (2011) says the five common characteristics of social media are: participation is open to anyone with the technology, openness on most platforms is for all, conversation represents a two-way communication, communities are formed through similar interests and connectedness is clear with links to content all over the web. This can create crisis based on false claims but can also highlight real problems that can then be solved with the help of all stakeholders. An example of a potential false claim gaining traction in relation to this study is the recent messages calling for help due to poor working conditions found in Primark clothing labels. Despite Primark reporting this was a hoax it gained national traction and thus was a crisis for the company (Hoskins, 2014). There are many types of social media already online and new applications are constantly being developed, further building the online environment. For this study the main focus is on Twitter, which is a social network and micro blogging site that enables users to send and read messages (maximum 140 characters long), controlling their content by 'following' other users and being 'followed'. The features that proved helpful in the activist campaign were: direct messaging corporations in Tweets using @Primark, for example, and creating trends by including #insideout, for example.

The effect of social media on crisis communication can be broken down into; pre crisis, crisis response and post crisis. Pre crisis for corporations is all about listening and sensing any trends. Crisis response involves choosing the relevant channels to communicate with particular stakeholders. This may not be online; more traditional means of communicating may be used alone or in tandem with online channels. It is of course important not to hide from the online world and stakeholders will look at corporate web pages and social media accounts so the corporation must be present. They must also be where the action is in terms of using the online origins of a crisis as the channel to respond, primarily because it will reach those who were affected by the crisis. Being there before the crisis is also important because suddenly implementing a social media push post crisis is less effective than utilizing it before and after as this builds reach, credibility and authenticity. Post crisis is where stakeholders often need follow up information and updates that may come through social media and gradually be faded out as interest drops. Twitter is useful here as lingering questions are answered and updates will reach interested stakeholders, as they are likely to be following the organisations account (Coombs, 2012a).

### **2.2.2 SMCC Model**

Figure 1 shows the Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model that considers strategic response based on crisis origin, type, infrastructure, message strategy and message form. If a crisis origin is internal the public response is more negative, less sympathetic and less trustful of the organizations involved especially if corporations deny allegations. The crisis type is important especially when victims are involved as sensitivity must be present. Organizational infrastructure is whether more centralized messages or localized messages are best in terms of reaching the right people in the correct manner. Content refers to the attributes of the message based on the target group and form is how the message is conveyed (e.g. Tweet or Press Release) (Jin et al., 2014). This model is a more holistic version of Jin et al. (2010) Blog-mediated crisis communication model as it includes all social media. Advances in social media application and supporting technologies require models to constantly evolve to ensure the medium is effectively understood and managed.

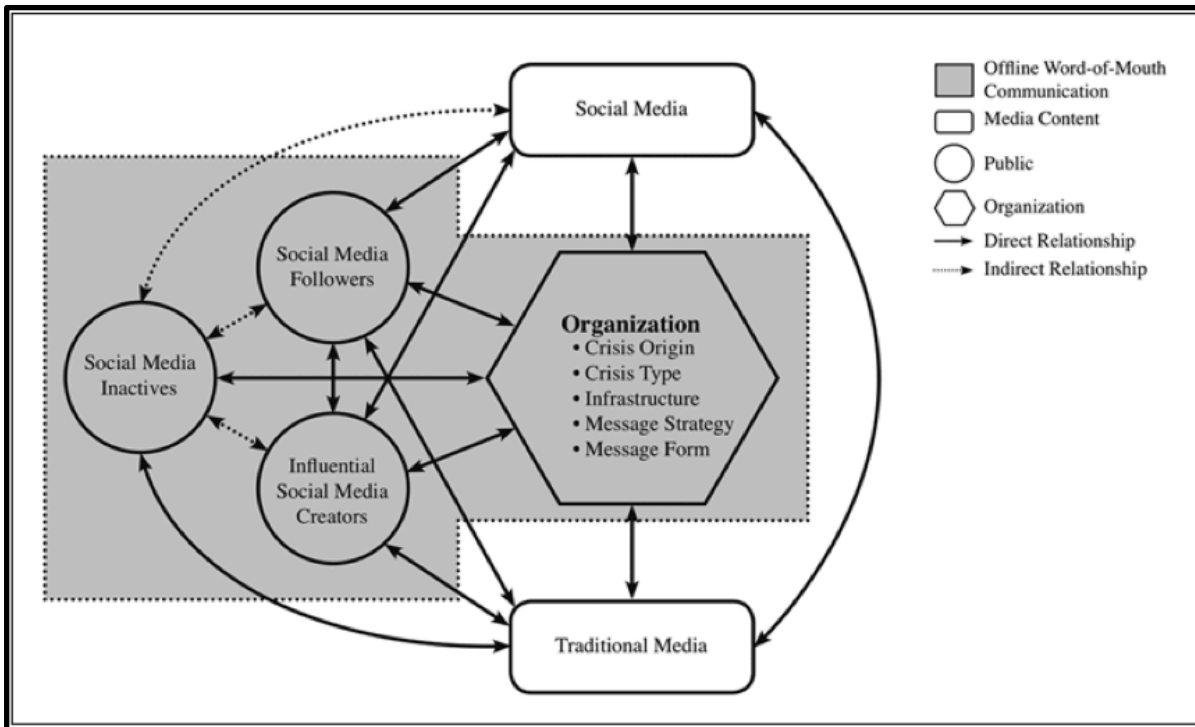


Figure 1: Social-Mediated Crisis Communication (SMCC) Model (Jin et al., 2014)

### 2.2.3 Issues arising from social media

There are still major questions around the credibility of social media information, which may impact this study in terms of how both corporations and consumers assess credibility. Social media has emerged as a new and potentially powerful source for people to seek information, especially about crisis. Source credibility can be assessed by expertise, trustworthiness and good will. The traditional media actors of 'gatekeepers' are more like 'gatewatchers' in new media. Where a tradition media has professional journalists and editors, many social media platforms require everyone to be aware of variable source credibility without controlling the content. Comments, likes or shares may do this (Westerman et al., 2014). The public is increasingly using social media during crisis so corporations need to strategically optimize these tools. People active on social media or becoming active during crisis assign a higher credibility to social media coverage than traditional media for crisis, placing importance on the medium. It also enables people to band together for support, share information and demand resolution. Therefore corporations must seek the best way to use this new medium, however, in 2010 only 29% of US companies

had formal social media policies and most public relations practitioners do not believe social media is as credible or accurate as mainstream media. Though this trend has been changing in recent years, research is behind practitioners so more needs to be explored in the area of corporate use of social media in crisis situations.

#### **2.2.4 Corporate best practice**

Social media should be embraced by organisations in all their forms of communication and its unique direct access to stakeholders comes with benefits that cannot be gained through other mediums. Especially when negativity is casted over a company's reputation, an online presence and involvement shows willingness to improve and bravery, attributes that attract consumers. Handing some control over to the public has meant companies have been slow to get involved in social media or shied away from fully utilising the platforms available (Johnson, 2009). Of course there are some risks and problems, notably technological failure, hackers and the spread of misinformation (Whelan et al., 2013).

However many of these issue are more likely to occur if social media is not completely embraced leading to poor monitoring, lack of training on systems and low standard security installation. In reality many stakeholders are already using social media to comment on companies and crisis events. This will continue to increase so organisations voices will just be left out if they do not join the arena. Fully embracing social media should go hand in hand with an established mainstream media strategy with 85% of practitioners using both medias finding they complement each other (Wright and Hinson, 2009). News media can often have a soothing effect on public panic and speculation so crisis escalation can be prevented. This is especially the case when social media channels are not well managed by the corporation in questions, leading to overwhelming scale of speculation on sites such as Twitter. However, Twitter offers a quick response time meaning a well-controlled social media strategy can simply complement news media (van der Meer and Verhoeven, 2013).

Veil et al. (2011) identify a comprehensive collection of best practice in relation to crisis communication and social media. Social media should form some part of any crisis communication plan because it offers a two-way information exchange and has broad reach to many stakeholders. Most importantly it offer a great tool for listening to concerns, which can prevent crisis and better deal with situations as they develop. Engagement needs to become part of daily communication for corporations if it is going to be fully utilised in times of crisis as this builds up trust and partnerships. By joining the conversation misinformation can be brushed away and respect will arise if responses are created rather than silences. However, in consumer generated channels corporations can be over involved and too proactive, making them seem controlling of debates, therefore it can be better just to respond when questions are asked. This reactive approach can evoke sympathy and it stresses that listening and understanding is priority. Proactive behaviour also has its place, notably in brand generated channels where corporations are expected to provide consistent updates to bring stakeholders up to speed on areas of concern (van Noort and Willemsen, 2012).

Success will come from social media when the focus is on knowledge communication and creating a situation where by all parties understand what the crisis is about and how to solve it. This process of optimisation is about information exchange between actors. Corporations can assist this process by always posting accurate information, using credible sources if information is not directly from them, linking digitally with other relevant organisations so information is consistent and being clear with messages so everyone can understand (Johansson and Harenstam, 2013). Schultz et al. (2011) study claims that the medium matters more than the message when it comes to crisis communications. Although it is concluded that more people talk about newspaper articles, Tweets had the most proactive effect on reactions to crisis in this study. This is partly due to Twitter users sharing information via other channels creating high reach. Organisations should therefore pay more attention to Twitter and strategically reflect on their media choice in relation to their target groups.

### 2.2.5 Online activism

Activist groups have harnessed the power of social media in recent years, pushing for change by creating scale online and inevitably pressuring corporations like never before. Corporations are now expected to take positions on a whole range of issues, some of which are not necessarily related to their direct business practices. This was shown recently as a number of brewers, including Guinness, pulled sponsorship from some U.S. St. Patrick Day parades due to pressure from campaigners who attacked the parade organisers for banning gay and lesbian expression (Jopson, 2014). Websites remain an important channel for CSR discussions and activists have been known to use them for more formal forms of communicating to get past the often-trivial attitude towards a tweet or Facebook status. SOMO (The Centre for Research in Multinational Corporations) had a campaign called makeITfair, tackling labour rights in the IT industry. They used a website as the base online, in terms of a more fixed set of information which then linked to the more dynamic channels of social media where current debates can actively develop. This shows how web 1.0 and 2.0 can be linked in such a way that certain drawbacks of both can be compensated for. However for this to be successful the two should be consistent in content and combine to influence change, makeITfair done this by creating societal concern by naming and shaming company irresponsibility (de Bakker and Hellsten, 2013).

New global activism has been influenced by the Internet far beyond lowering costs of communication and transcending geographical and temporal barriers present in other communication media. More crucially, it uniquely facilitates loosely structured networks, reflecting the dynamic qualities of new-networked politics (Bennett, 2003). Grass roots activists have developed highly advanced forms of computer-mediated alternative media such as hacktivism. They have begun to use the Internet in their everyday routines, through email lists and websites. These activists are building a new digital media culture that may begin to engulf a whole range of citizens wanting to voice their concerns (Juris, 2005). Social media allows for acceleration in activist communication and enhances the visual character through videos and photos

connecting the digital and physical worlds, creating a complex cultural and political configuration. Despite this, they can begin to lose access and control over the data they collectively produce as social media corporations are ever increasingly interested in limiting the access to data shared on their sites. Activists online must find ways of maintaining control in such a busy environment and make sense of the content being shared (Poell, 2014). Bennett and Segerberg (2011) discuss how digital media has facilitated the personalization of collective action. This personalization has arisen in lifestyle values around economic justice, environmental protection and workers rights. Bringing individuals own narratives to the surface social media creates challenges and opportunities for companies looking to satisfy consumer protests.

## **2.3 Institutional theory**

This section relates to relevant aspects of institutional theory that will enable later discussions around the three research questions. The basic concept will be explained with further concentration on corporate strategic response to institutional pressure and institutional power relations. The major interest is in institutional entrepreneurship that will help construct the coding framework and form the basis for the data analysis.

### **2.3.1 The basis of Institutional theory**

Institutional theory focuses on the process by which structures such as rules and norms become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour. It explores how such aspects are created, diffused, adopted and adapted over space and time. It also touches on how they fall into decline and disuse (Scott, 2004). Scott (1987) defines an institution as a social order based fundamentally on a shared social reality, meaning it is a human construction created in social interaction. So institutions are social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience, with associated activities and resources, they provide stability and meaning to social life.

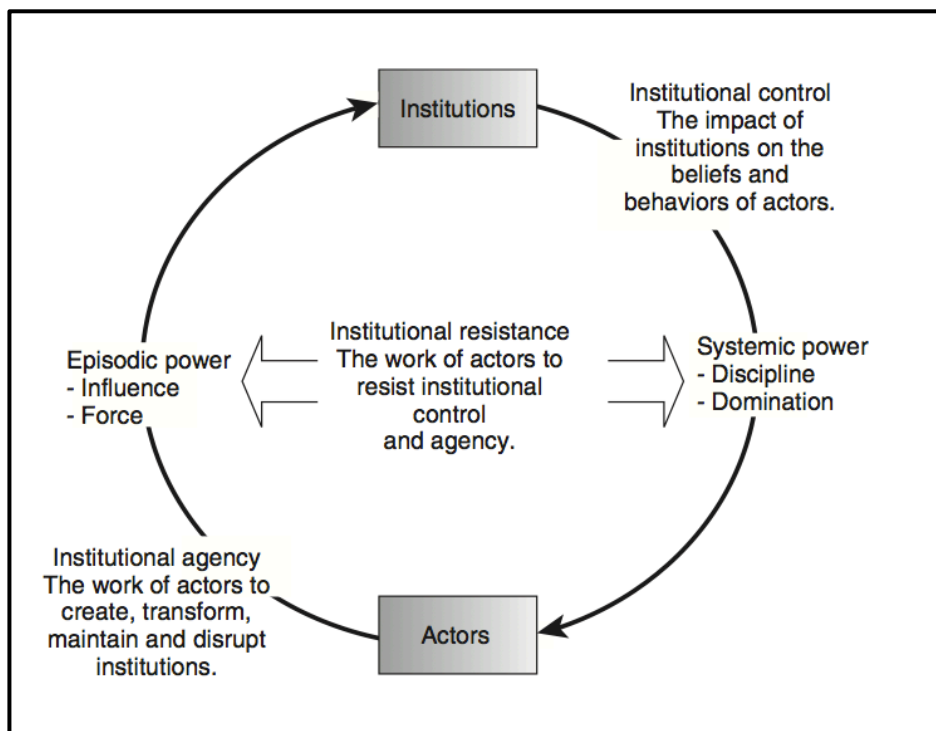
Institutional theory is expressing that institutions are powerful patterns of social actors that influence how we think and act in social contexts (Scott, 2004). As a result there are three mechanisms by which attitudes and practices become more homogenous within social contexts, as set out by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). They are coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphic pressures. Coercive pressures are a result of both informal and formal effects on organisations to represent the cultural expectations of society. These may be regulatory pressures from a range of sources (Non-Government Organisation protests, government policies and media coverage). Mimetic pressures come from organisations working to base themselves or their practices on others. This may be done if uncertainties are present within their operating area and may include shifts in consumer preferences, lack of government regulation or negative publicity. Lastly, normative pressures often occur due to professionalization of certain disciplines. As members of a discipline begin to standardise the skills and thinking required to gain membership to that profession, they create legitimacy for their occupational autonomy. Through these three pressures homogeneity of meaning and practices is increased in institutions leading to institutionalisation.

### **2.3.2 Power, institutions and organisations**

The relationship between power and institutions will be a focal point in this study. Institutions exist to the extent that they are powerful, in that they can affect the behaviours, beliefs and opportunities of individuals, groups and organisations. Power is therefore what differentiates institutions from other social constructions. Power and institutions have an interesting relationship with actors, individuals and groups affecting the institutional context within which they work. Agency and interest are thus brought directly into the relationship. The consideration of power is key in understanding how institutions operate in society and their relationship to organisations. Lawrence (2008) has developed an organising framework for understanding the multiple-dimensional relationship. As figure 3 shows, the relationship has three dimensions; intuitional control, institutional agency and



institutional resistance. Each explains the intersection between institutions and actors in relation to power as shown in figure 2.



*Figure 2: Institutional politics – the interplay of institutional control, agency and resistance (Lawrence, 2008).*

Institutional control explores the effects of institutions on actors’ beliefs and behaviours. Power is present here but usually appears only indirectly, observable through compliance of organisational actors to institutional rules. Institutional agency looks at the work of actors to create, transform and disrupt institutions. Power is explicit in this case; power and agency hold a significant connection, and the influence of actors on institutional arrangements. Finally, institutional resistance describes the attempts of actors to impose limits on institutional control and institutional agency. Oliver (1991) identifies this also, which is discussed in the next section; this forms an interlinked system of institutional politics.

Power is conceived as a property of relationships in this case; another actor or system affects beliefs or behaviours of an actor. This is because power is a relational phenomenon, it is an effect of social relations not something that an actor can ‘have’. As a result two basic modes of power are in operation. The first mode is ‘episodic’,

which are relatively discrete, strategic acts of mobilizations carried out by self-interested actors. The second mode is 'systemic' and is power that works through routine, on going practices to benefit certain groups within those groups necessarily establishing or maintaining those practices. Institutional agency is linked to episodic forms of power because it requires actors to mobilize resources, engage in institutional contests over practices and support or attack forms of practice. These all involve discrete, strategic acts of mobilization. Two forms of episodic power are influence and force. Furthermore institutional control is tied to systemic forms of power and operates independent of any agent or at least any agents' interests. Discipline and domination are important in this relationship (Lawrence, 2008).

### **2.3.3 Corporate strategic response to institutional pressures**

In order to understand the way corporations strategically respond to pressure online it is helpful to look at a theory explaining strategic response to any type of external pressure to conform. The model of institution politics does help, however a look at Christine Oliver (1991) is useful. It utilises Resource Dependence and Institutional theory to form five responses, each with three tactics. One is to accede to institutional pressures by either; forming habits, imitating others or complying consciously with the rules. This is likely to take place if conformity is in the interest of the organisation or the organisation is unaware of the institutional pressure and is just acting in their own interests, otherwise another response will be used. Compromise may take place in the form of a balancing tactic aiming to please all involved, a pacifying tactic to minimise resistance or attempt to bargain between actors to lower demands. This is likely to occur when institutional demands are conflicting or there are inconsistencies between institutional expectations and internal objectives.

Avoidance is another response that attempts to preclude the necessity of conformity and is often done promptly. Firms could conceal their nonconformity and escape the pressures, operate buffering to reduce the extent of the external inspection (loosening institutional attachments) or escape by removing the external pressure through ceasing activities. This is a relatively extreme avenue when defending a

position that is seen as not feasible. Defiance requires an active rejection of pressures and one tactic is ignoring rules and values. Alternatively the rules can be challenged in a bid to change the way things are or an attack on the sources of institutional pressures can take place. This could be risky due to the clear dissent, which could look too aggressive to the public, and it is only realistically achievable if the pressure is coming from a relatively low powered source.

The most active response is that of manipulation that seeks to purposefully attempt to resist pressures. A co-op tactic involves importing influential constituents to neutralise the situation. Influencing values and norms through the act of lobbying can also be used or controlling established institutions (highly dependant on power of actors). Of course the ability of organisations to carry out these tactics depends highly on power relations, the market they operate in, the issue being pressured and the resulting interest of the issue from stakeholders.

#### **2.3.4 Institutional entrepreneurship**

Institutional change is a complex process involving different forces and actors. Institutions influence actors' behavior, however, these actors can also influence and change institutions; this is the idea of institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009). This is closely associated with DiMaggio's (1988) work in which he states new institutions arise when organized actors with sufficient resources (institutional entrepreneurs) see an opportunity to realize interests that they highly value. Underpinning much interest in institutional entrepreneurship is the 'paradox of embedded agency', which states if actors are embedded in an institutional field, how do they envision new practices and get others to adopt them? More specifically a truly embedded actor is not supposed to imagine, desire or realize alternative because institutional regulative, normative and cognitive pressure should produce actors' identities. Dominant actors have the power to change but lack the motivation while periphery actors may have incentive to create and champion new practices but lack the power (Garud, 2007). Therefore institutional entrepreneurs are change agents that initiate divergent changes against institutional logic and actively mobilize resources in the implementation of these changes (Hardy and Maguire, 2008).

The enabling conditions for intuitional entrepreneurship can be seen in figure 3 as field characteristics and actors' social position (Battilana et al., 2009). Maguire and Hardy (2008) divide field characteristics into stimuli and states. The stimuli for some is based on the assumption that actors are rational and thus uncertainty in a field leads to intuitional change. This sees the institutional entrepreneur as solving a problem by introducing new practices, that may show signs of effectiveness, gaining legitimacy and leading to further adoption by other actors. Others focus on tensions and contradictions in a field with the belief that fields are not stable and involve actor conflicts. This is often due to multiple intuitions being present in a field exposing actors to a range of practices. Conflicts inspire ideas, mobilizing actors to restructure the field.

The state of a field is also recognized as important with mature, emerging, stable and in crisis fields as major categories. Some are more likely to involve institutional entrepreneurship, for example, emerging and fields in crisis are often seen as the most susceptible to institutional entrepreneurship. For emerging fields conflicting values and no clear norms offer high reward for actors who can influence the structure of the field. With fewer constraints than mature fields, as there are no established patterns to mimic and power is more diffuse. Crisis brings tensions that can cause triggering events such as social upheaval, regulatory change or media reports. Forcing unorthodox practices from individual organizations to change the industry and often involves new players entering the field to facilitate change. However, mature fields can also foster institutional entrepreneurship as central organizations are more likely to come into contact with contradictory logics because they bridge organizational fields, known as boundary bridging. Additionally, they become immune to coercive and normative processes because their market activities expand beyond the jurisdiction of field level regulations, known as boundary misalignment (Battilana et al., 2009).

Actors of institutional entrepreneurship can be individuals, organizations, networks and social movements. Actors' social position can be split into properties and

position. Properties refer to characteristics, qualities or abilities that create a social type who has the capability to take a reflexive position towards institutional practices and as result come up with new practices. This all takes place in an institutional context because the actor is a product of their institutional field, however, they are also influenced by cultural and historical factors. Position is relevant because fields create a limited number of subject positions; these refer to legitimated identities meaning power relations are embedded in a field. Fields are structured systems of social positions within which struggles take place over resources, stakes and access. So actors do not have power but occupy subject positions that allow power to be exercised (Hardy and Maguire, 2008).

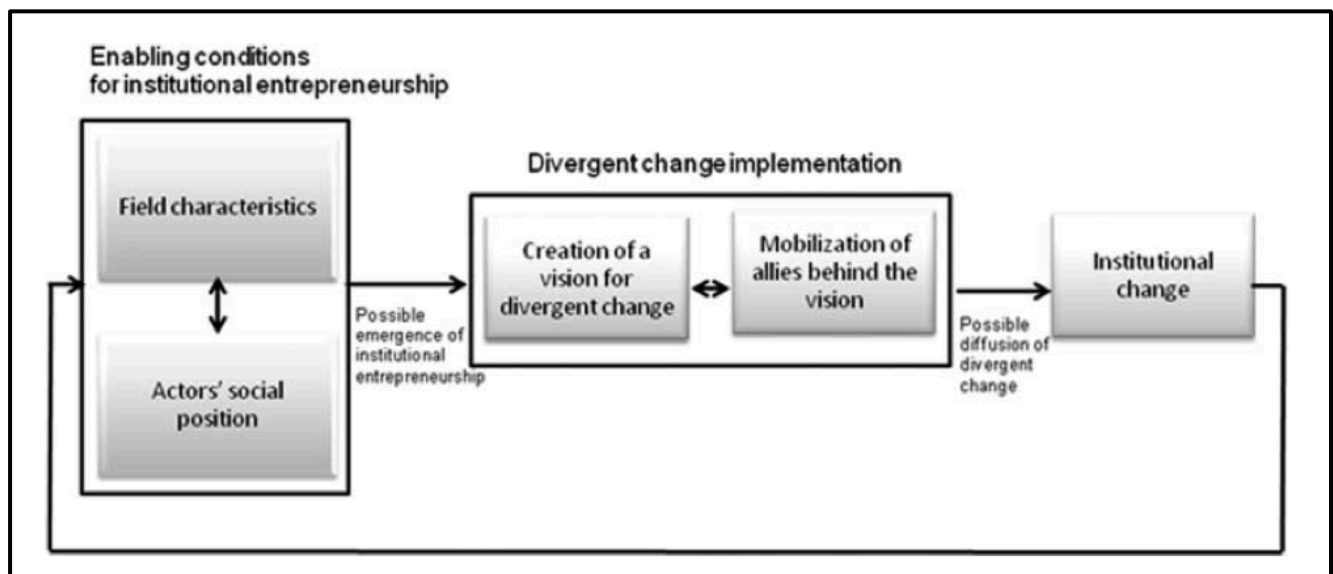


Figure 3: Model of the process of Institutional Entrepreneurship (Battilana et al., 2009).

The divergent change implementation process in the middle of figure 3 comprises of two key areas, creation of a vision for divergent change and mobilization of allies behind the vision. Developing a vision is about making a case for change and sharing that vision with followers (Battilana et al., 2009). The content of the institutional entrepreneur creates shared cognitions that support the institutional change. Social movement theory shows how institutional entrepreneurs create legitimacy for their institutional projects by framing change to generate collective action. These ‘collective action frames’ include; punctuation (identifying the problem

and defining its importance), elaboration (diagnosis of the problem and describe who or what is responsible), prognosis (describe what is required to correct it) and motivation (what should encourage actors to participate in the change). By using particular frames institutional entrepreneurs increase their chances of successful institutional change. This is linked to theorization in institutional theory where a problem is specified using existing practices and new ones are justified as solutions. These legitimization accounts often combine normative and interest based appeals with existing practices often described as unjust and accused of being ineffective and inefficient (Hardy and Maguire, 2008).

In order to achieve mobilization of allies behind the vision both resource mobilization and inter-actor relations must be successful. A great range of resources are involved in institutional change from financial, knowledge, political and cultural. However focus here will be on material resources which institutional entrepreneurs use to lever against other actors to negotiate support for a change project. Some extremely powerful actors may have sufficient resources to impose change themselves but institutional entrepreneurship usually involves some level of dependency on other actors and their resources. Positive inducements can be used to allies in exchange for support and negative inducements can be used as threats to establish bargaining relationships. This is a system of rewarding supporters and punishing opponents. However, institutional entrepreneurs do not control rewards and punishments in themselves, they recruit allies that do (Battilana et al., 2009).

New inter-actor relations bring changes through collective action and require cooperation of other actors. Institutional entrepreneurs are thought to have unique political and social skills to help create cooperation. They are connected to the exercise of power as actors adopt new practices that may not have otherwise engaged in. Luke's (1974) three dimensions of power usefully explain the situation. The 1<sup>st</sup> dimension of power is achieved through the overt leverage of material resources to ensure change even with resistance present, for example through financial incentives. Less focus is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> dimension of power, to manipulate decision, agendas and participants to bring change. This is because of the use of the

3<sup>rd</sup> dimension of power that aims to create legitimacy from new practices by managing meaning; in order to avoid resistance cooptation between opponents is favored over confrontation. This is informed by social movement theory as framing is used to purposefully enroll allies and build coalitions (Hardy and Maguire, 2008).

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Having reviewed all the literature relevant to the study, the methods used to explore the gaps in the literature can now be explained. The methods will develop the analytical coding framework based on institutional theory and also form the basis of discussion that will consider the literature in this chapter

## **3 Methods**

This chapter will explain how the research questions will be answered. It will begin with research strategy moving onto data collection and data analysis techniques. The chapter will finish with some critical thoughts on the study.

### **3.1 Research strategy**

This section will introduce the study's philosophical foundations of ontology and epistemology. It will also discuss the qualitative research paradigm and abductive approach.

#### **3.1.1 Ontology**

Ontology is concerned with the essence of phenomena and nature of their existence. It can be categorized by either realism or subjectivism. Realism believes there is a reality out there independent of human consciousness and action and subjectivism believes reality is not independent from human consciousness but an outcome of subjective human perception and action (multiple realities). This study is seeking to understand the actions of activist (people) online and the response of corporations to these people. Thus the social construction of reality is of interest and by taking a subjectivism approach through changing the practitioners understanding of the research object, one is actually shaping the research object (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

#### **3.1.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology is concerned with understanding the nature of knowledge. It questions what the nature of knowledge is and how it can be obtained, and the extent to which the knowledge relevant to any given subject can be obtained. Two main approaches exist in objectivism and relativism. The former believes it is possible to uncover truthful, objective knowledge of an external reality, focusing on cause and effect. Whereas the later believes knowledge is an outcome of social interaction, it is



contextual, and thus objective knowledge external of human subjectivity is not possible. This study looks to form a deeper understanding of corporate responses to online activism and crisis events, building on current theory. It is therefore concerned with the 'how' instead of the cause and effect or testing hypothesis meaning a relativist epistemological approach is taken (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

### **3.1.3 Qualitative paradigm**

This research is positioned in the qualitative paradigm due to my interest in language and words not numerical findings. As a result my focus is placed upon meaning where context is important and situations are described from the perspectives of those involved. The research will be based around a natural setting (social media trend) and is of a small scale in terms of the situations researched (Fashion Revolution Day and corporate responses). The social world is viewed as a creation of the people involved and as a result research reflexivity is highly valued. This study's purpose is to build on models for online activism and corporate crisis response on social media, in an exploratory and descriptive manner, which would be very difficult with a quantitative approach. A qualitative approach fits this study as it is interested in in-depth understanding of the meaning and contexts. Most vitally it allows the study of actors in their natural setting (Robson, 2011).

The philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research are vast, however, as Hood (2006) points out that most researchers will not fit neatly into given categories. The philosophical underpinning of this research is based on social constructivism that sees social properties as constructed through interactions between people. Meaning does not exist in its own right; it is constructed by human interaction and engagement in interpretation. Whatever the underlying nature of reality, there is no direct access to it. This means, in principle, there are as many realities as there are participants. Giving the researcher the task of understanding the multiple social constructs of meaning and knowledge (Robson, 2011).

### **3.1.4 Abductive approach**

Knowledge can be generated in three ways. A researcher taking an inductive approach starts from the observation of facts in reality. A deductive approach creates knowledge through testing theories. In contrast to both, an abductive approach generates knowledge from a combination of existing theories and the empirical reality. This belief that theories and the empirics are connected and are interlinked in reality has led to the combination of inductive and deductive approaches. Whilst inductive and deductive approaches have long been used in qualitative and quantitative studies respectively, they have been criticized for not properly representing the practice of researchers and as inadequate when seeking to generate useful theories (Guttman, 2004).

In light of this discussion this research will adopt an abductive approach to generate theory and knowledge. The research starts with an incomplete set of observations and explanations, as the study develops existing theories and observations from the real world assist each other in explaining phenomena. This study clearly has an established set of knowledge, as discussed in the literature review, around crisis communications, corporate presence online and online activism. However, many of these areas are not fully understood, especially in the areas of social media where real world practice is only relatively recent meaning research has not completely explored the area. Additionally the case of Fashion Revolution Day is a planned online activist event that could relate to crisis response, stakeholder relations and institutional theories. An abductive approach should thus offer the best way to further explore these new phenomena with the assistance of the related established understanding.

## **3.2 Research Design**

This section encapsulates my research methodology, which is the way knowledge about 'reality' is investigated.

### 3.2.1 Case Study

I am interested in the new form of online activism and corporate communications and crisis response online so a case study was an attractive option. As Thorpe and Holt (2008) explain case studies are especially effective in approaching phenomena that are little understood, ambiguous and dynamic. Social media interactions are exactly that as they are never static, have lots of variables and complex relationships making it difficult to overview them. This adds to the case for using qualitative analysis as it aids the need for depth in understanding. To produce a successful case study it is important to have a well-planned investigation, a flexible approach in order to exploit opportunities as they arise and evaluate the final product with a qualitative and reflexive manner. This study builds a case study around Fashion Revolution Day which was identified as an appropriate case months before the rest of the research would commence giving enough time to plan data collection in a broad way that would enable a shift in focus towards certain actors later.

This was done by later deciding to focus on Primark as a key corporate actor in light of the activist's behaviour. Although this study takes an abductive approach, Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), discussion on (inductive) theory building from cases is still useful. The use of rich evidence from a range of sources strengthens a study, so the primary source as social media data (Twitter and Facebook) complemented with newspaper article and press releases. Using broadly scoped research questions further aids flexibility creating a study that fully utilises the evidence collected. With this study the abductive element will additionally use some established theory to initially make sense of the phenomena and also look to develop current understanding further.

The rationale for choosing a single case study as a posed to multiple comparative cases was a difficult one. In effect the study is a single case study within another linked single case study, with Fashion Revolution Day forming the outer and within is the corporate response to it in the form of Primark case study. Although other actors will not be ignored in the analysis and discussion Primark will be the focal actor and

others will just form to further make sense of their role and strategy. This makes the case in question an embedded case study. My main rationale is based on the unique aspect of the case; in the case of Fashion Revolution Day it was an online activism campaign that would directly target corporations, linking my research interests around online activism and corporate crisis communication.

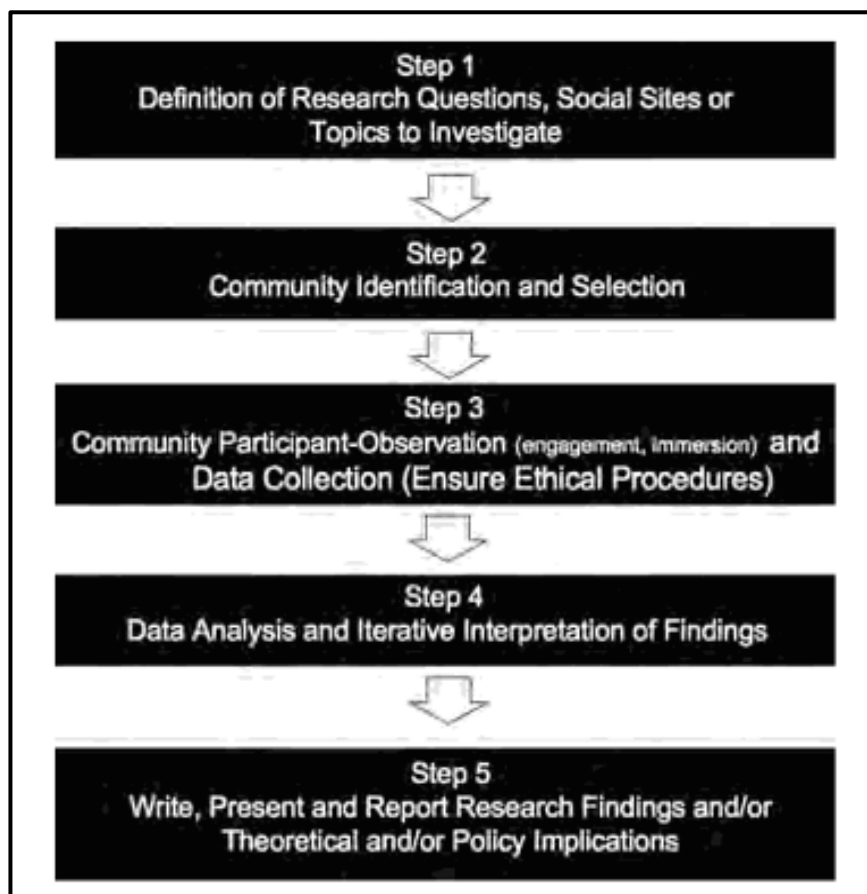
More complex was choosing a single case for the corporate response section. I would again draw on the unique case rationale for Primark owing to their unique and in some ways relatively extreme negative unethical reputation in the UK media over decent years (Yin, 2009). Going back to 2005 Primark was voted the most unethical retailer in the UK according to Ethical Consumer magazine, who calculated the results based on data on thousands of different companies supplied by a range of environmental and labour activist groups (Whitehead, 2005). Furthermore, Primark has continually been criticised on many review sites and blogs. Of particular significance, however, was the BBC Panorama programme shown in June 2008 that looked into the retailers labour practices, reporting instances of child labour and ultimately creating more negative publicity for the company (Jones et al., 2009). The response from Primark, the validity of these media claims and the resulting strategic position adopted by Primark will be discussed later in relation to research question 2 and 3.

### **3.2.2 Netnography**

Netnography is ethnography adapted to the study of online communities. It is a faster and simpler version that can produce similar rich data with a less intrusive nature. It refers to any written account resulting from fieldwork studying cultures and communities emerging online (Cova and Pace, 2006). This is research into 'communities online' in that it examines to some extent the general social phenomena with the social existence extending well beyond the Internet and online interactions, even though those interactions may play an important role in the groups membership. These studies take a particular social phenomenon as their focal

interest and extent this arguing through the study of the online community something can be learnt about the wider community or culture and generalized to the whole.

This type of research often requires an immersive combination of participation and observation. For this study, the focused was only on observation in order to concentrate on the content produced by the activists and corporations respectively (Kozinets, 2010). There appeared to be little benefit from participation that may have distorted the online community or made a negligible impact and certainly would have taken extra time and resources. In the run up to Fashion Revolution Day it was ensured the case was well researched in terms of the origins, aims, key actors and any other details that would help to understand the event, thus collecting the data in the most rewarding way.



*Figure 4: A simplified flow of a netnographic research project (Kozinets, 2010).*

The above was followed (figure 4), which is a guide to netnographic research; of course the simple flow of the five steps is in reality full of obstacles and adaption, which will be discussed throughout. Netnography provided a method that could utilise a wealth of information with good accessibility on social network sites (mainly using Twitter), more economically and time efficient than a traditional ethnography and a greater scope for flexibility for observation and analysis. It was not without its difficulties as users authenticity can often be an issue causing certain data to be ignored; it just requires good awareness and identification from the researcher.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Data collection involved collecting tweets on Fashion Revolution Day using the '#insideout' as people were asked to wear their clothes inside out thus showing the labels, questioning their supply chain and asking the producing corporation who make my clothes? The campaign was not exclusive to Twitter, although it appeared the most active platform; Instagram and Facebook were also involved. Twitter was being regularly referred to in articles about the event and the organisers Twitter page was very regularly updated in the lead up meaning it was chosen it as the collection point. The platform also provides interaction between parties that do not know each other in a more effective manner than other social media platforms, which was vital to online activism.

#### **3.3.1 Text Mining**

Two Twitter text-mining tools were used to ensure data was collected even if problems occurred. They were Discovertext and ScraperWiki. ScraperWiki collected more data and resulted in approximately 28,000 tweets from Fashion Revolution Day and three days either side. Discovertext may have collected less due to rate limiting by Twitter, which limits the amount accounts can be used to extract feeds, this will have also impacted the other data set but to a lesser extent. Discovertext was also used to collect Twitter and Facebook posts from five leading UK high street fashion brands, of which the data from Primark was used. Lexisnexis was later used to collect news articles on Fashion Revolution Day and similar events in relation to

Primark's business to assess the impact social media has on bringing issues to corporations attention. Primark's press releases were also used to complement the news articles.

With the new possibilities offered by social media data for research text mining can be seen as the answer to accessing these avenues. The text mining tools used made the study possible, as they allowed the collection of a large amount of data on the interested case with good efficiency (the software does all the work once set up) and a high quality resource to exploit. There were risks as these tools were new, meaning the options had to be researched and learnt. This was particularly important in this case, as the data had to be collected on one particular day. As a result a trial was done two days before to ensure the tools worked correctly and for extra safety two different tools were used (JISC, 2012). The large amount of data gathered could prove overwhelming so the data analysis section will explain how these challenges were dealt with.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The analysis will then form the basis for discussion alongside the literature discussed in the literature review. Discussion will be based around the three research questions as follows:

1. How the actors engage with the campaign – descriptive analysis of fast fashion, the campaign itself, founding and other key actors using secondary sources and analysis of twitter data from event (thematic coding).
2. How corporations responded to the campaign and related issues– focus on Primark, company background, and strategic position. Discuss analysis of corporate social media response on event (using examples from different actors) alongside press releases and Facebook posts (thematically coded) and news media information.

3. How social media has altered the way corporations respond to crisis and institutional pressures - Compare this response to previous crisis situations that were effected by social media in different ways, discussing news media analysis of historic crisis events.

### **3.4.1 Qualitative coding**

A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that seeks to capture the essence of language based data, in this studies case. Coding will be carried out on Twitter posts, Facebook posts, press releases and news articles in order to understand the messages being expressed by creating themes within the data sets. Moving towards more general ideas and away from real world observations to abstract ideas. Themes or concepts will then develop as all the categories are make sense of together leading to theoretical assertions or theory modification (Saldana, 2009).

Due to the size of the full data set of the Twitter feeds from Fashion Revolution Day interval coding was conducted in order to analysis a sample spread across the event. This was done every 50<sup>th</sup> entry, which produced approximately 200 entries to code. Excel was used to clean up the data set so it only contained unique tweets in English. This meant that the original set of approximately 28,000 tweets was cut down to just over 10,000. Other samples were also produced, these contained posts by Fashion Revolution Day by using the filter option on Excel. Another sample was created using the sort function on Excel involving the highest retweeted tweets identifying the main actors (measured by the reach their messages were attaining). Thematic coding analysis was adopted to examine the way in which events, realities, meaning and experiences are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society. Coding was done in line with the abductive approach meaning a coding framework, informed by current theory, will guide the analysis. In doing so the coding should produce some unique results that also link to prior knowledge bases (Robson, 2011).



Thematic coding was appropriate here due to its flexibility, it can be used on all types of qualitative data and this research involved Facebook posts, Twitter data, press releases and news articles. The Twitter data needed a technique that was versatile as there was no clearly established analytical technique for it. Flexibility leaves a lot of decisions in the researchers hands in terms of how to approach the analysis, however, there was a clear idea of what was wanted and what questions needed to be addresses. Its simplicity fitted with time constraints and the relative inexperience as a qualitative researcher. It could be said that results can often be limited to exploration and not interpretation. This may be more of an issue for topics that have been highly researched but this area is very new and uncharted so exploration is realistically what the study can achieve. It may also be the case that some interpretation can occur in relation to Primark's behaviour in light of their strategic position online over multiple crisis events (Braun and Clark, 2006).

### **3.4.2 Coding framework**

The coding framework looks to build on the literature review chapter by indicating the specific way the coding will be carried out. This is where the study differs from an inductive approach as this abductive approach aims to code using knowledge from current literature meaning understanding can be clearer in analysis and discussions. The phenomenon being studied is centred on the concept of institutional entrepreneurship. The institutional entrepreneur in this study is Fashion Revolution and they are seeking to influence changes in supply chain practices in the fashion field with particular focus on fast fashion organisations. The area that the data can best describe is the 'creation of a vision for divergent change'. This focuses on the reasoning and communication by the institutional entrepreneur (Fashion Revolution) with other actors as to why they should or at least not resist the institutional project in question. The coding will involve categorising communications across Twitter and other data courses into 'collective action frames' (Hardy and Maguire, 2008). The initial descriptive analysis will focus on the field characteristics in terms of the fast fashion and its problems, Fashion Revolution Day and its main actors and a Primark company background. Additionally in order to further understand Primark's corporate response Oliver's (1991) five corporate strategic responses to institutional pressures

will be used. Figure 5 shows the analytical process supported by the coding framework.

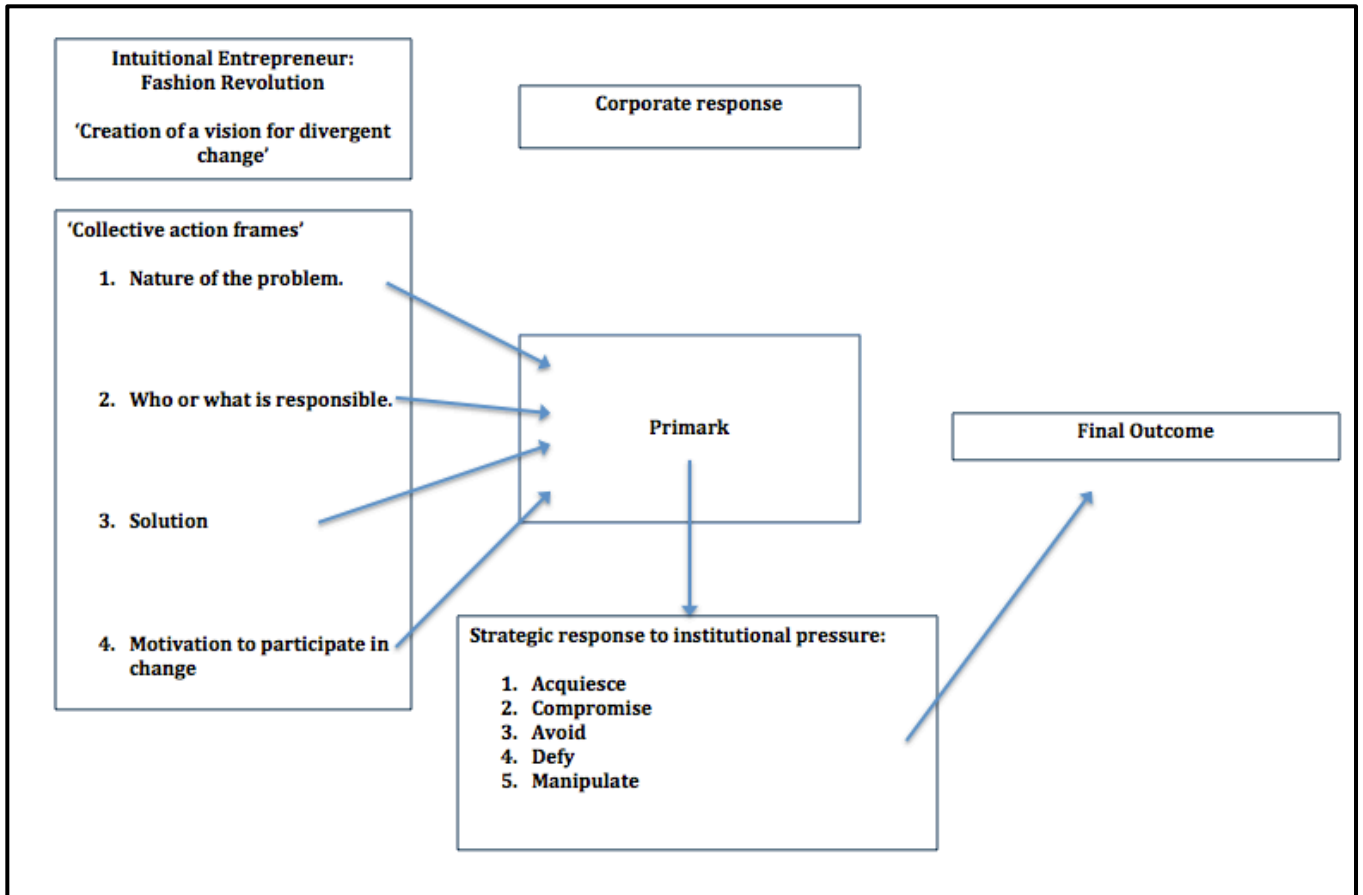


Figure 5: Coding framework

Like most studies of institution work this study is language-centred, discourse analysis involves structured collections of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing that bring related objects into being as these texts are produced, disseminated and consumed. Within this narrative analysis structures temporal chains of related events or actions undertaken by actors in the process of creating, maintaining or disturbing institutional work. Narrative analysis will be used to illuminate the processes through which actors are able to fashion, communicate and embed stories that support the creating, maintaining or disturbing of institutions (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006). The tweets used to create the narrative are shown in Appendix 1 and were selected from the selection of samples taken from the main database of tweets.

## **3.5 Critical dimensions**

### **3.5.1 Ethics**

Joint ethical clearance in conjunction with another academic staff member, doing similar research using social media data, was achieved. The University code of ethics treats the participants in social media as human subjects meaning anonymity of individuals and protection of their information was important. Therefore no names of the accounts linked to individuals were revealed in respect of their privacy/confidentiality and data was safely stored in password protected files in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 (Nottingham, 2013). However Twitter accounts linked to organisations were used, as they were relevant to the study and did not seek to harm the organisations in question. It could be argued that informed consent should still take place on Twitter because individuals posting publicly do not do so in the expectation of being research subjects. Although this may not necessarily be the case as tweets are public and the user makes a conscious choice to open up their activity to the world. As a result it was not felt there is any significant potential for harm to individuals involved in the data and much of the analysis will be based on textual content detached from human subjects.

### **3.5.2 Reliability**

Reliability is concerned with whether the results can be repeated by other researchers at other times. Being a qualitative study there is an element of researcher influence on the way data is analysed, interpreted and presented in contrast to a more set process in many quantitative studies. Despite this transparency in the methods used was prioritised making the process understandable and repeatable. The coding framework developed could assist in future work on institutional entrepreneurship.

### **3.5.3 Validity**

The measures used to assess the research questions are thematic qualitative measures that suit an event of activism because it deals with feeling of dissent towards norms, which would be difficult to encapsulate numerically. The presence of data triangulation (using multiple methods of data collection; social media text and new articles) and theory triangulation (using multiple theories) improved the validity as they compensate for the shortcomings of using just one data set or theory. Of course more observers/analysts could have been used to reduce researcher bias and quantitative methods could have added a statistical dimension, however, their absence is a reflexion of my time and resource limitations.

### **3.5.4 Generalizability**

This is not usually of major concern due to the focus on the richness of the individual case and less to do with helping explain other contexts. However, as an abductive approach is used it means the current theory is developed further to explain emerging trends in online stakeholder engagement in terms of crisis events and activism.

### **3.5.5 Limitations**

The main limitation of working with social media data is it is relatively uncharted territory in terms of well-established and tested methods. Therefore resourcefulness was vital, the examples available were adapted to the study, innovation helped cover the gaps others studies could not help with. This meant this limitation helped to form

a strong methodology in order to contribute to methodological advances in qualitative social media research. The exclusive use of Twitter, despite the activism taking place across Instagram (visual data) and Facebook, limited the data to textual sources and only enabled the exploration of one avenue through which the online event transpired. This was again a case of being realistic in the scale of the study and using the analytical skills available, which were primarily in textual analysis.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

It should now be clear the how this study aims to answer the research questions leading onto the next chapter of analysis.

## **4 Analysis**

This chapter will use the data collected from Twitter, Primark's press releases and Facebook posts alongside a range of other secondary sources to answer the research questions. I will begin by exploring the problem of fast fashion, the Fashion Revolution Day campaign, the key actors in the creation of Fashion Revolution Day and a background on the focal company, Primark. This will lead into a more in depth analysis of how the intuitional entrepreneur (Fashion Revolution Day) structured its pressure for institutional change in the online environment. Much of the pressure from Fashion Revolution is towards the fast fashion institution but also extends to overlapping institutions in the fashion fields that operate in an unethical manner. Primark's response will then be analysed, also using the coding framework. The section will finish with a review of the general outcomes from the campaign.

### **4.1 Enabling conditions**

#### **4.1.1 Fast fashion and its discontents**

The global apparel industry has experienced annual growth of 4.3% since 2000 with a market size of US\$ 1.7 trillion in 2012. The number of pieces of clothing purchased per capita has also increased from 9.0 in 2000 to 13.9 worldwide and in the UK the increases has been 18.7 and 29.5 across the same time period. Parts of these trends are due to the emergence of new industry players know as the fast-fashion retailers (Caro and Martinez-de-Albeniz, 2014). Throughout Europe fast fashion was winning over consumers of all ages with sales increasing by more than 45% between 2001 and 2005, compared to the market average of 3% (Tokatli, 2008). Creating new brands, new product ranges and new products has driven sales and growth. Seasonal cycles have been shortened, from the traditional two seasons to as often as every week from some fast fashion brands. As a result these products are produced, consumed and discarded at an alarmingly high speed. The fast fashion business model relies on efficiency in sourcing and production to reduce costs and time to market, driving and meeting consumer demand for new styles at the right

price (Deloitte, 2013). There is a race between a significant number of fast fashion retailers to increase the number of their stores (often on a global scale) while maximising the speed, synchronicity and responsiveness of their supply chains (Tokatli, 2008).

Fast fashion has been so successful because it has taken the designs of the once fashion elite from the catwalk to the high street at such low prices (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2010). It has become clear that affordable and trend-sensitive fashion, while typically highly profitable, also raises ethical issues. Many fast fashion retailers rely on outsourcing from overseas factors in order to achieve the lowest costs. Even companies such as Zara, who once prided themselves as solely European producers, now outsource at least 13% of their manufacturing to China and Turkey (Joy et al., 2012). The combination of global supply chains and outsourced production brings a lack of transparency, making corporate responsibilities hard to track and regulate. With production based in countries, such as Bangladesh, where regulation, workers conditions, pay and rights are unlikely to be adequate.

Bangladesh has long been used as a cheap outsourcing country, especially as part of the global supply chains of many Western clothing brands. In 2011, the country gained almost 80% of its export earnings from the clothing factories there (Jacob, 2012). The responsibility to ensure their workers are safe and treated fairly should partially lie with the brands they produce for. We are continuously reminded that fast fashion brands are not taking this responsibility seriously with tragic events such as the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Dhaka, Bangladesh. On 24<sup>th</sup> April 2013 1133 people were killed and over 2500 injured. This case highlighted how poor working conditions can prove fatal alongside low pay and long hours, workers rights looked non-existent. Twenty-eight Western fashion brands were sourcing from Rana Plaza, indicating the complexity of the fast fashion supply chains. This is the human cost of fast fashion (LBL, 2006). Additional environmental costs are also significant with the increases use of pesticides in cotton production, the dumping of chemical dyes and growing landfills due to the short lifecycle of clothes (Joy et al., 2012).

#### 4.1.2 Fashion Revolution Day

Fashion Revolution is an organisation that believes the fashion industry can value people, the environment, creativity and profit in equal measures. It is registered as a Community Interest Company, which is a division designed for social enterprises that want to use their profits and assets for the public good (CIC-Association, 2014). Its mission is to bring everyone together to make it happen. On 24<sup>th</sup> April each year, Fashion Revolution Day will connect up the fashion chain and help raise awareness of the true cost of fashion, showing that change is possible and celebrating those that are leading the change. It is a global movement that uses an annual campaign to build momentum and achieve an impact in the fashion industry, bringing together organisations and people that would otherwise not be connected (FashionRevolution, 2014a). The focus of the 2014 campaign is transparency, which stresses the importance of brands knowing who and where their clothes are made as that makes it possible to solve the issues around production. The greatest cost faced is the loss of life and that happened to 1133 people in the Rana Plaza tragedy. Knowing who made your clothes requires transparency and with this comes openness, honesty, communication and accountability. It is about linking the consumers to the people who make their clothes (FashionRevolution, 2014b). Transparency is clearly an issue in the industry with a recent report from Australia showing, of the companies surveyed, 61% did not know where their garments were made, 76% could not trace where the fabric was woven, knitted or dyed and 93% did not know the origins of the raw fibre (Nimbalker et al., 2013).

In the aftermath of Rana Plaza global activists were dissuaded from a boycott of the brands associated with those kinds of factories. This was under the understanding that boycotts have become ineffective in these cases as they hurt the very people that they are supposed to help which stands at about 4 million fast fashion garment workers in Bangladesh alone (Siegle, 2014). Fashion Revolution Day offered an alternative for activists and anyone else to get involved across social media and selected events across 60 countries. With one simple question, 'Who Made your Clothes?', they asked participants to post a photograph of themselves wearing clothing



inside out. It all linked using the #insideout across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Participants were also encouraged to tag the retailers who made their clothes in posts in order to push for a response (FashionRevolution, 2014c).

#### **4.1.3 Fashion Revolution Day main actors**

The organisations origins lie in the United Kingdom with its founder Carry Somers and co-founder Orsola de Castro, both pioneers of sustainable and ethical fashion. Carry Somers established Pachacuti in 1992, which is now a globally recognised ethical fashion brand specialising in hats, fascinators and beach bags. In 2009 it became the first company in the world to be Fair Trade certified by the World Fair Trade Organisation, it has piloted the EU Geo Fair Trade project that increases traceability and transparency in supply chain and was recently granted the new Fair Trade Guarantee label (FashionRevolution, 2014d). Orsola de Castro began up cycling in 1997 with her own label, From Somewhere, and recently started Reclaim To Wear that uses surplus from the fashion industry to create new garments. In 2006 she launched Esthetica at London Fashion Week under the British Fashion Council to showcase labels designing sustainably (FashionRevolution, 2014e). The board of Fashion Revolution Day includes key figures from the fashion industry and elsewhere such as industry leaders, press, campaigners, consultants, representatives from charities and academics. Country co-ordinators in over 50 countries help the campaign fulfil its global reach. It also has a Global Advisory Board made up of six members, two being the aforementioned founders. Amongst the group is Managing Director of Pants to Poverty, established as part of Make Poverty History in 2005 and CEO of Futerra, a sustainability communications agency (FashionRevolution, 2014f).

In terms of the campaign on Twitter a sample of 79 tweets involving the highest retweeted tweets identified the main actors (measured by the reach their messages were attaining) across the medium. The most prominent actor on Twitter was news related accounts with 32 tweets in the sample. This included general and specialist news organisations, linked individuals and separate specialists in fashion news. Next was the organisers (Fashion Revolution) and individuals professionally linked with

them with 21 tweets (included Futerra, the communications company who helped create the campaign). The last significant group of actors was NGOs and associated individuals with 18 tweets. These had the most powerful individual tweets with Greenpeace and FairTrade (very well know and well supported NGOs) achieving the top three highest retweeted tweets (253, 218 and 193) compared to the next down which was BirtishVogue (news) at 105. The remaining 8 few gaining reach were celebrity or political figures that were clearly interested and wanted to help but not showing significant power as a collective. Organisation and individual had a ratio of 55:24. Almost all individuals were female often-prominent figures from the fashion world whether that was a blogger, journalist or practitioner.

#### **4.1.4 Primark background**

Back in 1969 Primark opened its first store in Dublin (called Penneys), the first UK store opened five years later and by 1984 Primark had 22 stores in the UK and Ireland apiece. Primark in 2014 has 268 stores across nine European countries, with the majority (162) in the UK (Penneys, 2014). Primark is a subsidiary company of the ABF (Associated British Foods) Group and having launched Primark as an insignificant side project, in 2009 it accounted for one third of the parent company's profits (Hall, 2009). Primark epitomises the fast fashion industry and has dominated the UKs high street for many years. It remains ambitious and has recently announced it will launch its first US store in Boston at the end of 2014. They plan to invest £200 million in a bid to build a substantial chain in the £200 billion US clothing market with further stores planned for New York and New Jersey states. Primark still sit as the second largest UK high street brand (in terms of profit and sales) behind Marks & Spencer but they will look for growth overseas where their competitor has previously failed (Wood, 2014).

Primark offers innovative, fashionable clothes at value-for-money prices. Like many high street fashion brands, they outsource their production overseas. This means they rely on low costs, economies of scale and efficient distribution to maintain its competitive position. As a result their weakness has long been in supply chain ethics with many rightly questioning how they can offer such low prices without cutting

corners. Although the company has long claimed it holds rigorous supply chain standards it has not been without crisis and a poor reputation around such issues (Hall, 2009). Back in 2005 research by Ethical Consumer magazine saw Primark voted the most unethical retailer in the UK (Whitehead, 2005). This negative reputation has spread with many online forums and blogs criticising the company's supply chain ethics.

The BBC programme Panorama, in 2008, exposed the treatment received by labourers working for Primark's supplies, which included child labour (Jones et al., 2009). The BBC later apologised for using false footage in relations to child labour in Primark supplied factories, however, the damage was done as the programme had triggered an influx of negative publicity. More recently, in 2014, a number of labels in Primark garments sourced from Bangladesh had messages such as 'forced to worked exhausting hours'. Although these are likely to be a hoax, it further highlights Primark's association with these issues. Despite this Primark has continued to grow. The reality is, in the opinion of The National Garment Workers Federations, poor pay and conditions are not unique to one brand but applicable to almost all the brands sourcing from Bangladesh (Hoskins, 2014). This was all too apparent in the aftermath of the tragic collapse of Rana Plaza in 2013 where 28 Western brands clothing had been sourcing. Primark's involvement was undeniable and their response was proactive, which is more than can be said of some others involved (Siegle, 2014).

## **4.2 Fashion Revolution Day – 'creation of a vision'**

Based on institutional entrepreneurship theory, Fashion Revolution Days can be said to have pressured for intuitional change around supply chain issues in the fashion field. This has been structured into four themes: nature of the problem, who or what is responsible, solutions and motivation to support change. This analysis of Fashion Revolution Day on Twitter should reveal the ways in which a vision of change was developed. This is about making a case for change and sharing that vision with followers. Mobilization of allies behind the vision relies on resource mobilization and successful inter-actor relations. As is the case for most institutional entrepreneurs,

there is a level of dependency on other actors and their resources. The system of rewarding supporters and punishing opponents relies on allies because they usually possess the control over reward and punishments.(Battilana et al., 2009). As a result Tweets from Fashion Revolution Day and their allies will be looked at in order to understand the true influence of the institutional entrepreneurship process.

#### **4.2.1 Nature of the problem**

The nature of the problem involves identifying the problem and defining its importance. Fashion Revolution Day 2014 had a particular focus on transparency, what it means and why it is important in the fashion industry (25304, Appendix 1). This backs up the campaign asking people to ask fashion brands ‘who made your clothes?’. This is based on the idea that supply chains have become so complex with outsourcing and global operations that many brands are unaware of their full supply chain activities. By asking the question it is also telling brands that consumers want to know because it can help them make ethical purchasing decisions. The idea of ‘unsustainable fashion’ comes through as a major problem within the industry with Fashion Revolution posting about it. They use the term ‘we are fashion’ (5811, Appendix 1) to create a collective ethical high ground with reference to sustainable fashion and those who are seen as supporting the cause. It is done to distance those who are ethical and those who are not in the field.

Those partaking in the campaign also understand the problems being discussed and offer more specific insights into the issues. One particular Labour MP highlights ‘global workers’ rights’ and ‘clothing factory conditions’ as key aspects that have driven his involvement (12385 & 19434, Appendix 1). As Fashion Revolution sets the scene for the campaign, allies such as this political figure help to build a more detailed picture of the concerns about the fashion industry, passing the message onto their followers. The involvement of political figures shows the skills of Fashion Revolution to gain powerful allies who can help gain credibility for their changes.

The importance of the issues at hand is made clear with reference to the human element involved in fashion production and the potential harm that can be caused. Carry Somers tweets a blog post with the title 'Clothes made my humans' sending the message that we need to appreciate and reward those making our clothes, not use them as machines (25144, Appendix 1). Rana Plaza is used as a theme throughout by the campaign and its supporters, which forms the basis of the campaign that human lives being lost, is unacceptable. It acts as a reminder that the importance here will always be on the livelihoods of those producing our clothes and that we must 'honour' those that lost their lives to make a change (8092, Appendix 1).

#### **4.2.2 Responsibility**

Who or what is responsible can be a difficult question with lots of factors being suggested and some people simply not fully understanding the complexity behind fashion supply chains. Fashion Revolution looks to make it clear that the 'link between your shops & Dhaka factory... where workers died [is] shorter than you think' (19636, Appendix 1). This suggests two clear responsibilities, that of the consumer and of the producers. The use of 'your shops' gives ownership and hints that the consumer should question where they buy their clothes. It also states that the workers were producing for brands that the general public use, linking to fast fashion and high street retailers.

Supporters of the campaign place the responsibility in similar places and most actors will have added reason to blame a certain group for the industry problems. A sustainable e-commerce fashion boutique makes reference to 'fast fashion' and that 'someone is paying' (9043, Appendix 1). This suggests that fast fashion producers are taking advantage of workers and not treating them correctly. This supports the campaign message and also supporter their form of sustainable fashion. A fashion news provider has a different outlook, although still supporting the campaigns message; it blames 'mindless fashion consumption' for the problems in the fashion industry (17901, Appendix 1). This fits more with their role in influencing consumer behaviour and ensuring that consumers play their part in forging solutions.

This study focuses on Primark and there are a range of ways the campaign can play out, in terms of responsibility. One campaigner simply asked Primark ‘who made these £3 bikinis’ (10579, Appendix 1). This is a common tweet that is simple and follows the curiosity theme with no clear judgement in regards to responsibility. However, others may be clearer with their message that they feel responsibility is with the brand. One campaigner refers to Primark clothes as having ‘blood stains’ on them linking the company directly to workers dying (9941, Appendix 1). A fashion blogger refers to Primark as ‘the main [Fashion Revolution Day] target’ which is particularly significant as a well informed campaigner is placing responsibility on them probably given Primark’s links to Rana Plaza (17980, Appendix 1).

### **4.2.3 Solutions**

With responsibility placed on fast fashion and those supporting it, many of the solutions involved alternatives and a move away from fast fashion. This section is the most conflicting between the alternatives and fixing the problems with fast fashion. Fashion Revolution clearly pushes the alternative of ethical fashion brands with reference to an ‘ethical fashion show’ and ‘where to buy ethical fashion’ with links to ethical fashion brands to make sure people know that there are many alternatives available (18673 & 6297, Appendix 1). Futerra, the communications agency for the campaign, makes reference towards fast fashion and the over consumption of clothes, stressing that our consumption is too fast and slow fashion may be the answer (25371, Appendix 1).

Fashion Revolution makes clear that the campaign is not ‘anti-fashion’ but ‘pro fashion’, perhaps not completely against fast fashion with the jobs it provides, for example (11232, Appendix 1). It seems a ‘change in behaviour’ is what is needed in terms of current fashion production and consumption with people ‘who love fashion’ coming together (599, Appendix 1). The use of ethical fashion brands as an alternative may have more significance in light of the fact that both the founders are involved with ethical fashion brands. This suggests a degree of self-interest in this solution, however, also adds an expertise on how fashion can benefit everyone

involved. The campaign was also used as a platform by many small, sustainable and ethical fashion brands to promote their products. This further reinforces that a major aim of the campaign was to raise the profile of ethical fashion and ensure consumers know the alternatives to fast fashion.

Despite the alternatives available those supporting the campaign still appreciate that the current brands will not be completely replaced meaning they need to improve their practices. The World Fair Trade Organisation looks more towards a fix to the current situation as the solution saying 'we are all part of the problem [and] the solution' (8473, Appendix 1). Instead of going for alternatives they suggest a collective responsibility and a move towards all fashion brands 'pay[ing] fair wages' (26280, Appendix 1). In fact the campaign appears to express two main solutions. It understands the influence of large fashion brands but feels they should improve their supply chain practices. It also has clear intentions to reduce the power of fast fashion and increase the consumer base for ethical fashion brands. This can be clarified by Fashion Revolution's founder Carry Somers who stated in an interview "it is a global platform which we can all use to ask questions, raise standards and set an industry-wide example of what better looks like. By celebrating best practice, we can change lives." This highlights how the campaign aims to change the entire fashion industry and the use of best practice, as shown in the analysis of the solutions, is key to understanding how that change can be achieved. The campaign is clearly ambitious and plans to run further Fashion Revolution Days in the years to come that will carry a different focus (this years was transparency) but ultimately the same long term vision for change (FashionRevolution, 2014g).

#### **4.2.4 Motivation**

The motivation laid down for people to embrace the campaign has two clear themes: based on emotional memory and another on a supportive memory. Throughout the campaign the Rana Plaza tragedy is used to remind everyone of the problems that the fast fashion industry can cause. This resulted in the '#RPNeverAgain', signifying change needs to be immediate to prevent such events occurring again (5624, Appendix 1). The second motivation is to support the change as a possible goals by

using past achievements. FairTrade UK helped launch a food revolution previously leading to improvements to supply chains conditions in many food products, which can be related to the clothing industry so they use their success to support this campaign (571, Appendix 1). Fashion Revolution makes reference to fairtrade bananas that are one of the success stories of the fairtrade movement as an example that the goals of the campaign are realistic (24622, Appendix 1). These themes together produce motivation that is emotional and logical.

### **4.3 Primark's response to Fashion Revolution Day**

Primark chose not to use their Twitter account to talk about or engage with Fashion Revolution Day meaning they did not reply to any requests sent to them on this medium. This correlates with Oliver's (1991) response of avoid in relation to the institutional pressures for change by Fashion Revolution Day. It was also the case that across Facebook and Instagram there was no mention of Fashion Revolution Day. A further analysis of Primark's response to Rana Plaza can further explain why this may have been the response.

### **4.4 Primark's response to Rana Plaza factory collapse**

Due to Primark's response to Fashion Revolution Day (avoid) analysis of all Primark's 28 press releases (21 April 2011 - 27 June 2014) is required to understand this response (Appendix 2). This is supplemented by their Facebook responses that comprised of a scaled down version of their press releases made up of 10 posts (25<sup>th</sup> April 2013 – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2014). The analysis of the press releases in terms of content can equally be said for the Facebook posts, they were consistent in their communication. Rana Plaza dominated their press releases since the disaster occurred with 16 of the 24 press releases since that date relating to Rana Plaza.

#### **4.4.1 Nature of the problem**

Therefore the nature of the problem in the fashion industry, from Primark's point of view, would be to improve conditions for workers across supply chain but especially in more vulnerable countries such as Bangladesh. This only partially corresponds



with Fashion Revolution, unsurprisingly given Fashion Revolution's negative opinion of many fast fashion brands. Primark is unlikely to change its whole business model because of crisis events, however, it may act on its responsibilities more and this is shown later on with their solutions.

#### **4.4.2 Responsibility**

Primark took the responsibility in the Rana Plaza case two days after the event took place, with them admitting their involvement with the factory and their desire to investigate further. A year later on Fashion Revolution Day there was recognition of the anniversary with updates on progress made. In terms of content themes in relation to Rana Plaza accepting blame is the first theme to emerge and makes infrequent yet significant appearances throughout with terms such as "promised...[to] meet its responsibilities in full" (7, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014). As a result press releases in relation to Rana Plaza had no theme of defensive language seen as they had accepted blame and it was not up for debate. Much of the content is based on the ways in which they are resolving the situation they have taken partial responsibility for.

Despite taking responsibility for their involvement in Rana Plaza they did frequently compare their reaction and actions to competitors or mentioning competitors in relation to the crisis. They make it clear they are not alone in this situation 'the building contained several factories which manufactured garments for some 28 brands' (4, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014). In relation to short-term financial payments to 'most of whom were making clothes for our competitors' (7, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014) and making their framework for compensation available to other brands involved, 'calling on other brands... to contribute' (13, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014). This is a way of sharing responsibility and also seeking to prove they are acting on their responsibilities in a way that is superior to many other brands involved.

### **4.4.3 Solutions**

Primark's solution to improving workers conditions had to begin by sorting out the mess they had contributed to in Bangladesh. The major theme of their press releases (9 out of 16 relating to Rana Plaza) was based on minimising the impact of the disaster on victims, with short-term financial assistance, emergency relief and longer-term compensation. They stressed the point that they acted promptly in this area 'within a week of the collapse of Rana Plaza, Primark committed to paying long term compensation to victims of the disaster as quickly as possible' (13, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014) and 'Primark is doing the right thing by offering immediate support for the victims and their families of the Rana Plaza disaster.' (21, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014). Their response was quick and appears to be one of the largest support packages for victims compared to all the brands involved in the factory. However this is just the case of trying to fix a situation that they are held responsible and accountable to.

Beyond this responsibility is the responsibility that Fashion Revolution is interested in and that is about preventing disasters like this happening again. In the press releases and Facebook posts preventing future issues involved structural building inspections, signing of the Accord on Fire and Safety in Bangladesh, removal over incompliant suppliers (across 5 press releases). Reference is frequently made to Code of Conduct as shaping how their business practices should be done which is based on the ETI Base Code, giving external reliability. Preventative measures such as signing the Accord on Fire and Safety in Bangladesh, structural building inspections and removal of a non-compliant supplier do correspond to solutions covered by Fashion Revolution. Promising building surveys follow the 'highest international standards' and being the 'first UK brand to sign up to the Accord on building and fire safety.' (21, Appendix 2) (Primark, 2014).

### **4.4.4 Motivation**

Their motivation was clearly based on fulfilling their responsibility to reduce the impact of the event and prevent such an event happening again. In the case of the

later this corresponds to Fashion Revolution motivation, to use Rana Plaza as a wake up call and not allow for anything like this occurring again in the fashion industry. The major difference here is the solutions to the issue, which for Primark are unlikely to involve any significant shift to retailers offering a wholly different business idea to their own.

Primark's response to Fashion Revolution Day, in that they avoided any correspondence with it, could be down to their response to Rana Plaza. They have made a proactive response to Rana Plaza, looking to reduce the damage done and put in place measures to protect workers in Bangladesh. This may have meant they thought they were dealing with the entirety of issues Fashion Revolution Day was concerned with. In fact Rana Plaza is just one example of what the campaign was interested in. Their lack of engagement with the campaign may suggest that they are still conscious of their negative reputation and did not want to open up into an arena that could further damage the ethical reputation of their brand.

#### **4.5 Outcome of Fashion Revolution Day 2014**

All the work for this campaign came to fruition on the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and it depended on a large-scale response from its supports to be considered a success. The day after the event actors tweeted to express the scale of the participation on Twitter. The founder of Fashion Revolution Day, Carry Somers displayed the success by showing the top three "trends on twitter 1. #insideout 2. Rana Plaza 3. Fashion Revolution Day" (212, Appendix 1) were linked to the campaign. A Fashion blogger also displayed the quantity of tweets as "20,664 #insideout tweets!!" (1011, Appendix 2). Therefore a relative and absolute achievement of scale on Twitter, with the day trending in all the top three spots and gaining over 20,000 tweets in a day. This meant that more people were being curious about who made their clothes, giving the campaign a great start to its long-term goal to create change in the fashion industry.

Long term the campaign has four objectives. Raise awareness of the true cost of fashion and its impact at every stage in the process of production and consumption. Show the world that change is possible through celebrating those involved in

creating a more sustainable future. Bring people together the length of the value chain to communicate. To ask questions and share best practice and work towards long-term industry-wide change and get consensus from the entire supply chain around what changes need to happen (FashionRevolution, 2014g). These objectives do come through in the 2014 campaign; however, the ambition for the change suggests success will only be a reality in the long term. The 2014 campaign, focusing on transparency, was able to set in motion a process where by more consumers began to question the supply chain conditions their clothes are made.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

This section has analysed the role of Fashion Revolution as an institutional entrepreneur. First by exploring the enabling conditions for institutional entrepreneurship (field characteristics and actors social position) shown by the problem of fast fashion, what Fashion Revolution Day was and who the main actors were and the corporate role (Primark) in fast fashion. The use of Twitter allowed Fashion Revolution's pressure for change to be categorised using the coding framework. Primark's unresponsiveness to Fashion Revolution Day needed further analysis of Rana Plaza response. This allowed deeper understanding into Fashion Revolution's workings as an institutional entrepreneur and Primark involvement in this alongside their crisis response. The following discussion chapter will bring theoretical and literature considerations back into the study.

## **5 Discussion**

This section will contextualise the analysis into the current theory and literature as explored in the literature review. Three main points will be discussed that linked to the three research questions and the three literatures. The literatures on the Internet and corporate-society relations and corporate crisis management and communication will be looked at alongside institutional theory in an overlapping contribution. The first will look at the case of Fashion Revolution and how the actors engaged with the campaign on social media. Secondly, Primark's response to avoid engagement with Fashion Revolution Day will be discussed and contextualised using other corporations engagement with the campaign. Finally, the influence of social media in corporate communication strategies to crisis in reference to cases involving Primark will be discussed.

### **5.1 Fashion Revolution Day and actor engagement on social media**

The case of Fashion Revolution Day emphasises the role social media has played in connecting actors towards a collective aim. This section goes towards answering research question 1 about how actors engaged with the campaign on social media. Social media is a facilitator for citizens to push for greater corporate responsibilities. The way in which Fashion Revolution used actors from across disciplines of journalism, activism, fashion and politics created strong links between new and old media. This created great public awareness of the event, which was essential for it to create the scale that it needed to achieve. Castello et al. (2013) argues social media is still being used too much in way of corporate legitimisation and not solving CSR issues. This study challenges that as we see Fashion Revolution questioning the moral legitimacy of fast fashion brands such as Primark and using the openness of the Twitter network to build support for their cause. This means there is more agreement with Lyon and Montgomery's (2013) notion that Web 2.0 and its empowerment of citizens aids a reduction in corporate green wash. By building a campaign like Fashion Revolution Day corporations become aware that consumers

are more curious and informed on ethical issues meaning they are less likely to report false claims in these areas.

Whelan et al. (2013) idea of 'public arenas of citizenship' is further explored in this study as the focus is on Twitter. Fashion Revolution Day allowed anyone with a Twitter account to join in and support the calls for greater transparency in fashion supply chains, in this it used social media to empower citizens. It confirmed that in order to successfully occupy social media, due to its size and scope, both good organisation and scale is necessary. Fashion Revolution also supported the use of the social media with a website, mentions in newspapers and the support of a range of powerful actors. This shows that just being dominant across one platform is rarely enough to really gain the scale necessary to make an impact online.

The way in which the campaign looked to question corporations could be seen as dissentual CSR, in that it gives corporations an opportunity to open up to citizens who disagree with their practices. Social media platforms such as Twitter are ideal for this as they are open to all voices, offering a better representation of what the public think of fashion supply chains. This can only be utilized when all the relevant actors engage in the discussions to help form solutions. With the lack of corporate involvement, notably from Primark, on Twitter to the campaign there was an imbalance of questions from consumer to answers from fashion brands. This is a key issue with dissentual CSR as it is a high-risk environment for those under scrutiny and it often requires a lead corporation to encourage the rest to get involved. Essentially this all supports the communicative view of CSR (Schultz et al., 2013) as it promotes the co-creation of the problems in the fashion industry with an open platform to find solutions. Fashion Revolution seeks to make corporations more reflexive of their operations and to use the knowledge and concerns of those involved in the campaign to produce an ethical industry that can still be viable.

Fashion Revolution Day does not fit the conventional definition of a crisis that is an unpredictable event, threatening stakeholder expectations, impacting firms performance and generating negative outcomes (Coombs, 2012b). However, it can

be treated in a similar way as it has the potential to harm the firm by bringing its problems to the surface, which could impact performance. Although the campaign was planned the unpredictable element was the scale and scope achieved. The unique aspect of it really was that it does not necessarily only bring negative outcomes, even to the targeted fast fashion firms. It is looking to improve industry standards and as a result may negatively impact firms who are not compliant with these stakeholder demands. All this was based on the back of crisis events in fashion supply chains such as Rana Plaza collapse in 2014. The Internet facilitates new crisis events that are born out of stakeholder activism as users are given more control and can, if scale is achieved, force corporations to react. Social media has great potential if used properly as an open access platform with two-way communication channels linking across the web (Voit, 2011). This is clear of Fashion Revolution Day on Twitter with many users across the world, with a passion for the issues at hand, created conversations with each other and with corporations linking to articles and reports to reinforce the campaign. Activists have been taking advantage of the collective action online to speak to corporations about their responsibilities. This study has shown how successful campaigns online can bring together loosely connected people who would not normally be an activist but have a passion for certain issues and are given a voice as a collective.

The 'paradox of embedded agency' questions how an institutional entrepreneurs, Fashion Revolution, can realize alternatives if they are truly embedded in their institutional beliefs and practices (Garud, 2007). This study shows how certain conditions can allow periphery actors (those making up Fashion Revolution) to gain power through collective action with the use of social media. The state of the fashion field is of great significance, which relates to the crisis of Rana Plaza and the criticism of the supply chains of fashion brands from within and outside of the field. The tensions created caused the triggering events of media reports, for example, which then led to Fashion Revolution Day that involved a host of actors from many intuitions that wanted to help enforce change. Fashion Revolution started with individuals, gained support from organisations and finally became a social movement in the online environment. Within fields there are a limited amount of positions, these

positions give actors power to influence the institution. However the actors supporting Fashion Revolution utilised the online environment to gain power through collective action. With a group of passionate actors in the fashion field it used social media to express the change that they believed in, gaining the scale of support from the public and organisations that may have otherwise been out of reach to pressure the institutions with practices they disagreed with.

With the right conditions it was down to the development of the vision, which has been used as the coding framework for earlier analysis. Collective action frames were used on the social media campaign to express the problems, the responsibilities, the solutions and the motivations for change. Of course this assigned the support of more actors and also showed the conflict that was in place from those that were being challenged. With their vision of change, Fashion Revolution needed to mobilize allies behind it so used their skills across social media and traditional media to get the message out. This process relies on Fashion Revolution getting support of actors that can reward supporters and punish opposition. Vitally to this case were inter-actor relations because collective action was needed to obtain the power to force change in the fashion field. Luke's 3<sup>rd</sup> dimension of power was strongest here as it aims to create legitimacy for new practices by management meaning to avoid resistance and looks to create co-optation even between opponents. This can be seen in Fashion Revolution Day 2014 as it was not attacking fast fashion firms but instead promoting curiosity. In doing this is welcomed all fashion brands to communicate and be part of the solution, of course not all joined the conservation for a variety of reasons.

Lawrence's (2008) model of institutional politics (figure 2) helps to understand the role power plays in the fast fashion institution. Fast fashion institutional control effects actors in that they are won over by its beliefs. For example organisations such as Primark begin to believe that they must lower cost of production to meet the demand of the mass consumerism culture. Institutional agency shows that actors can disrupt or transform an institution, which would involve a fashion retailer altering where they produce garments. Institutional resistance is an actor limiting the



previous two areas, as seen by Fashion Revolution. Episodic and systemic powers are both present in this case. The influence and force of episodic power is discrete and serves self-interest. This can be attributed to both Fashion Revolution and fast fashion firms, although their conflicting self-interest presents a great challenge for any change. The discipline and dominance of systemic power is only shown by the fast fashion intuition as it looks to hold onto its core beliefs despite agreeing that they produce problems in the supply chain because these practices have and may still benefit certain groups. However Fashion Revolution's emphasis on cooperation between all actors may allow this self-interest impasse to be reduced as all actors agree to improve supply chain conditions and share the solutions and any rewards.

## **5.2 Primark's response to Fashion Revolution Day and related issues.**

In this study the focus was on Primark, as part of the fast fashion institution. This section answers research question 2 about how corporations responded to the campaign and related issues. Looking at Primark's communications in the analysis Fashion Revolution had some agreement in that they felt tragedies like Rana Plaza and the supply chain issues that go with it were unacceptable. They both thought they needed to change and used past events as motivation for them to never happen again. Primark did take responsibility for Rana Plaza but still continually brought in competitors that they felt were not taking responsibility. In this there was a lack of joint responsibility that Fashion Revolution was based on, the collective responsibility to change practices and fix the problems. The difficulties faced by institutional entrepreneurs are typified by the solutions set out by Primark, in that they would never offer the solution of bringing more ethical/ sustainable brands into the fashion field because they want to protect their own business. They also feel they can improve without drastically altering the institutional practices that they have worked by for so long, breaking this routine is very challenging. Fashion Revolution of course are more willing to use smaller ethical fashion brands as a solution as they can control their supply chains better, however, again there is self interest as many of the

actors involved in this have a self interest in these sorts of brand succeeding. This displays how self-interest can be present, not only for the institution being pressured to change but also by the actors who are pressuring.

Primark's Twitter account around the time of the Fashion Revolution Day campaign mainly dealt with topics of competitions, new product lines and promotions. This was also the case on Facebook and Instagram. This represents the avoid response to the pressures from Fashion Revolution. To contextualise this, they were in the majority of corporations that were targeted. The general response to 'who made my clothes?' was shown in a tweet by Fashion Revolution 'Please keep asking brands WHO Made Your Clothes? If they reply Where, that's a good start, but ask again Who?' (1925, Appendix 1). Some large and well-known fashion brands did produce replies via Twitter and generally gave out similar messages. For example Debenhams, Reiss and Nudie Jeans replied that they would check and send an email reply to the person asking. Or they posted a link to more information or referred to their 'code of conduct'. Hobbs looked to detach themselves from the issue by stating they source none of their products from Bangladesh and that all other sourcing is in line with ETI guidelines and their code of conduct. Of course the overwhelming majority of fashion brands did not reply, directly at least. One tweet encapsulates this 'Still no reply from retailers. Disappointed in @clarksshoes @levis @johnlewisretail @hm' (10409, Appendix 1).

Many small fashion brands, many of which had a focus on ethical fashion, responded without being directly asked as a proactive response. For example American Swimwear brand Mi Ola Surf tweeted 'Proudly made in the USA by MC, Larry and their team – all paid a living wage...' (8705). There were also a significant amount of these smaller brands using the hashtag as a way of promoting their ethically sourced, sustainable, eco or simply fair products. This supports the notions that Fashion Revolution Day gave alternatives to fast fashion as a solution to the problems in fashion supply chains. The campaign acted as a platform for fashion brands with transparent and fair supply chains, offering the people following the campaign a way to stop using fast fashion. Again bringing in the element of self-

interest for Fashion Revolution Day to bring attention to fashion brands that can act as alternatives to fast fashion. The use of ethical fashion brands as an alternative may have more significance in light of the fact that both the founders are involved with ethical fashion brands. This suggests a degree of self-interest in this solution, however, also adds an expertise on how fashion can benefit everyone involved. The campaign was also used as a platform by many small, sustainable and ethical fashion brands to promote their products. This further reinforces that a major aim of the campaign was to raise the profile of ethical fashion and ensure consumers know the alternatives to fast fashion.

### **5.3 Primark's crisis communication strategy**

Primark's approach to crisis situations in the case of Rana Plaza and Fashion Revolution day are very different. However a look at some more cases will help understand the communications strategies and the role social media has played in them. This section will look to answer research question 3 about how social media has influenced the way corporations respond to crisis and institutional pressures. The BBC Panorama programme in 2008 focused on the poor the treatment received by labourers working for Primark's supplies (Jones et al., 2009). The BBC later apologised for using false footage in relations to child labour in Primark supplied factories, however, the way in which Primark responded to these claims are interesting. Primark response to Panorama was to have a separate channel of communication, this was done on a dedicated website (<http://www.primarkresponse.com/panorama/>). This was done instead of discussing through the same medium, which would have been an interview on the BBC programme. Something that they again have decided to do on the Fashion Revolution Day on twitter by simply addressing the issues raised by Rana Plaza and not interacting with the event as they feel they are making necessary steps. Although this case is very different in that Primark did not want to begin to give credibility to the programmes claims and instead carried out a thorough investigation, reporting progress on the website to clear their name. Despite the differences it does show how Primark prefers to be in control of crisis matters and will usually use a different

channel to respond to criticisms on their own terms. This case was at a time, in 2008, when social media was not in very wide use, especially for corporations. Primark first posted on Facebook in March 2012, on Instagram in October 2013 and first tweeted in November 2013. This communication tactic of switching domains was being used by them before social media by using a dedicated website.

Much like the BBC Panorama crisis, the labels crisis in 2014, was also thought to be a hoax. The crisis was born out of a number of labels in Primark garments sourced from Bangladesh had messages such as 'forced to worked exhausting hours'. In Primark's press releases three statements address the label scandal all using defensive language addressing the issues as 'very serious' and 'nobody should be in any doubt that Primark places the utmost importance on the wellbeing of workers in its supply chain'. It goes on to comprehensively explain the systems in place to ensure workers rights are upheld through the code of conduct with factory audits, ETI membership and its response to the Rana Plaza disaster. They also reported on the crisis on Facebook and Twitter once it had be shown to be a hoax and gave them an opportunity to show customers their ethical policies. Primark has had a lot of negative press in recent years and the two cases here that they proved to be false do not suggest the company has been hard done by. The Rana Plaza disaster shows that despite their proactive response they are still operating in countries that are inherently prone to poor working conditions and rights. This is due to lack of regulation and corporate action on these regulation gaps. However, the industry of fast fashion pushes the production capabilities of outsourcing factories to the point where safety standards begin to lose attention.

All these cases do show Primark's ability and willingness to change tactics to the crisis situation. They have the resources to operate across many platforms in the old and new media realms. Continually updating social media platforms in recent years and using press releases for many of their formal announcements. With Rana Plaza they mainly used press releases, only used Twitter to recognise the disaster and used scaled down versions of press releases on Facebook. In the label crisis they used social media (Twitter and Facebook) in a similar manner to traditional media

(press releases). In the 2008 Panorama crisis they used a separate website before social media was in full flow. This shows how even before social media Primark was able to use the Internet to communicate in a separate arena to the criticism. The advances of social media have given more options for corporations as powerful as Primark to access the best way to form a response across the growing options both online and offline. The online environment and social networking sites have allowed Primark to target their audiences more accurately and generally reach more people with their messages. Social media through Fashion Revolution Day does give citizens more of a voice against corporate irresponsibility. Despite this corporations still hold great resources to leverage these new platforms to suit them.

## **6 Conclusion**

This chapter will summaries the main points from the discussion of findings, giving an idea of the contribution to current research. It will then reflect on the limitations before suggesting ideas for related future research.

### **6.1 Summary of study**

This study has brought together three distinct literatures and crossed multiple disciplinary boundaries. Contributions have been significant equally to crisis communication, Internet and corporate-society relations and institutional theory. Fashion Revolution Day as the case focus has shown how social media campaigns can bring together a range of actors towards a shared goal and challenge corporations activities. Much of the study shows how social media speeds up messaging and allows for communications that defies geographical boundaries. Despite this the campaign has shown us how in the real world the sort of change being targeted in the fashion industry is a long process. This study represents the origins and initial stages of Fashion Revolution Day as an institutional entrepreneur to pressure changes in the institution of unsustainable fashion.

The corporate response to the first Fashion Revolution Day was fairly low and the focal company, Primark, ignored the campaign. As this is the beginning of the pressure from the campaign, a low response was expected. The success of this years campaign was represented by the high response from organisations and individuals recognising the problems in the fashion industry. This represents the campaign increasing awareness for the problems it aims to fix and on Twitter the campaign trended worldwide. With this low corporate response and no response from Primark, an examination of Primark's response to Rana Plaza gave an impression of their view on supply chain issues. This showed that they accepted there was a problem, which involved them, however they did not see fast fashion as the underlying problem. Fast fashion and the mass consumption that it encourages, Fashion Revolution Day argue, is the causes of disasters like Rana Plaza. This means that whilst Fashion Revolution Day sees solutions in finding alternatives and

fixing problems in current fast fashion supply chains, Primark unsurprisingly sees only improving their supply chain conditions as the solution. This created a clear challenge moving forward and highlighted how actors self interest is significant in any push for change in the industry. Fashion Revolution Day was formed by those who are involved in ethical fashion brands and is a platform for ethical producers so they will always see this as part of any positive change in the fashion field. Primark and other fashion brands, especially fast fashion brands, will see themselves as the solution in the form of taking more responsible control of their supply chains. These conflicts in vision are a challenge for change that will play out over the coming years.

Primark's crisis communication response was also interesting in terms of how they balance the use of social media and traditional media. After assessing their response to Rana Plaza, Fashion Revolution Day, garment label messages and BBC Panorama crisis events the company clearly had great power and resources for their communication strategies. Fashion Revolution Day and the ignore response showed how they did not want to face this pressure at all as they felt they were dealing with the issues discussed. This can be backed up with Primark's switch of domain to an online website when criticised on BBC Panorama programme in 2008, they clearly like be in control of their response. Rana Plaza and label garment messages crisis response was spread across the mediums showing their adaptability to communicate in the areas they feel can best control their reputation. This is only possible because of the great resources they possess in sending out press releases and maintaining multiple social media feeds.

### **6.3 Limitations**

One challenge of the study was the scope of the issues discussed and the amount of data collected in relation to the campaign and corporate responses. With Twitter data in the tens of thousands it had to be decided which actors were of interest and how the data would be managed. This limited the focus mainly on Fashion Revolution's posts backed up by samples of other participants and actors. The corporate response was limited to Primark in detail with some other examples. A decision was made not to do comparative study between two corporations and this

was done to form the detailed understanding of Primark's activities and there was little to justify the inclusion of another corporation. Due to Primark's avoid response to Fashion Revolution Day the study had to be adapted in order to understand their view of the changes Fashion Revolution Day was pressuring for. The use of press releases and Facebook posts, although not on the same medium (Twitter), still offered an insight into how Primark viewed responsibility and solutions in relation to Rana Plaza, which was the crisis linked to the campaign.

## **6.2 Future research**

Many aspects of this study involve underdeveloped areas of research meaning there are many more avenues to explore. This is particularly true of social media and its influence on the activities of corporations, activists and the public at large. Fashion Revolution Day represented an excellent case for understanding the idea of the institutional entrepreneur in an online environment so further examples of this type of pressure from a group of actors upon corporations would be useful. In doing this it can extend the knowledge about how social media can bring different actors together, the results their pressure can achieve and how interested corporations are in their activities. Fashion Revolution Day as a case has many more dimensions that this study could not explore. A focus upon a different corporation or a comparative study of corporations could help develop the differing responses. This study looks at the first year of a campaign that plans to continue for many years to come as it looks to create a change in the fashion industry. Therefore the long term success and progress of this campaign would be interesting in terms of the longevity of online activism and whether industry change can be achievable. Additionally other actors apart from corporations could be looked at to see their impact, this could include NGOs and news organisations. Although these and other actors are mentioned in this study their role is not fully understood.

Rana Plaza and Fashion Revolution Day were different but linked crisis events and the corporate focus was on Primark. There were 27 other brands involved in Rana Plaza and many more targeted by Fashion Revolution Day, these other corporations' crisis responses could be assessed with the same coding framework developed in



this study. The coding framework adapted from institutional entrepreneurship theory is a helpful way to understand the way actors frame a crisis in terms of the problem, responsibility, solutions and motivation. Other crisis events, even from other industries could be looked at in terms of the use of social media in the communication to different stakeholders. It is still not understood how different corporations value the use of social media compared to traditional media, including the interplay and potential manipulations of combining the both mediums.

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## Appendix 1 – Sample Tweets

| ID                | Created at                   | Text   | Screen name        |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| NATURE OF PROBLEM |                              |  |                    |
| 25304             | 2014-04-22<br>19:13:30+00:00 | Transparency. What does it mean & why is it so important in the #fashion industry? Find out.<br>@Fash_Rev<br><a href="http://t.co/dJiJFtmSML">http://t.co/dJiJFtmSML</a><br>#insideout | Fash_Rev           |
| 5811              | 2014-04-24<br>17:23:05+00:00 | We are fashion. We are as it should be. Let those who don't adhere to standards be called Unsustainable fashion<br>@orsoladecastro<br>#insideout                                       | Fash_Rev           |
| 12385             | 2014-04-24<br>12:37:26+00:00 | Here's why I'm #insideout, campaigning for global workers' rights and responsible business<br>@fash_rev<br><a href="http://t.co/XciSFhggaF">http://t.co/XciSFhggaF</a>                 | bilalmahmood13     |
| 19434             | 2014-04-24<br>07:58:55+00:00 | RT @bilalmahmood13: I'm #insideout to campaign on clothing factory conditions w/@Fash_Rev @stellacreasy. Ask brands who made their stuff ht...   | Carrysomers        |
| 8092              | 2014-04-24<br>15:46:05+00:00 | Honor the 1,133 people who died in Bangladesh 1 year ago: say no to fast fashion.<br>@fashion_rev<br>#InsideOut<br><a href="http://t.co/763gH1UQwb">http://t.co/763gH1UQwb</a>         | MayraGarciaNY<br>C |

|             |                              |   |               |
|-------------|------------------------------|---|---------------|
| 25144       | 2014-04-22<br>20:49:44+00:00 | RT @diycouture:<br>"Clothes made by humans" - a blog post in support of @Fash_Rev<br><a href="http://t.co/8ZrF6js2Cy">http://t.co/8ZrF6js2Cy</a><br>#fashionrevolution<br>#insideout          | Carrysomers   |
| RESPONSIBLE |                              |   |               |
| 9043        | 2014-04-24<br>15:05:33+00:00 | "fast fashion isn't free someone somewhere is paying!"<br>@lucysiegle<br>@Fash_Rev<br>#bethechange<br>#insideout #awareness<br><a href="http://t.co/GaXhfyN4SN">http://t.co/GaXhfyN4SN</a>    | aboynamedsue_ |
| 5158        | 2014-04-24<br>18:06:21+00:00 | Just because you've outsourced production doesn't meant you've outsourced responsibility<br>#insideout<br>#fashionrevolution<br>#RanaPlaza<br>@WarOnWant                                      | AmandaLouGray |
| 19636       | 2014-04-24<br>07:47:33+00:00 | Link between your shops & Dhaka factory where 1,333 garment workers died shorter than you think<br><br><a href="http://t.co/Z8RJUQ2qTX">http://t.co/Z8RJUQ2qTX</a><br>#insideout<br>@guardian | Fash_Rev      |
| 19550       | 2014-04-24<br>07:53:03+00:00 | Everyone around the world is engaged in the fashion industry one way or another. We ALL have a responsibility to make a change #insideout   | peilow        |



|       |                              |  |                |
|-------|------------------------------|--|----------------|
| 17901 | 2014-04-24<br>09:04:54+00:00 | Op-Ed I Join the Revolution Against Mindless Fashion Consumption<br>#insideout<br><a href="http://t.co/X47tUXk0Eu">http://t.co/X47tUXk0Eu</a><br><a href="http://t.co/mdtQdiB99W">http://t.co/mdtQdiB99W</a> | BoF            |
| 10579 | 2014-04-24<br>13:57:24+00:00 | . @Primark who made these £3 bikinis?<br>#insideout<br><a href="http://t.co/Rvkeuyqn5S">http://t.co/Rvkeuyqn5S</a>   | LaurenCaraP    |
| 9941  | 2014-04-24<br>14:27:47+00:00 | Whats the best way to get blood stains out of @primark clothes?<br>#RanaPlaza<br>#Bangladesh<br>#InsideOut<br>@BBCNews   | RaggyTroosers  |
| 12666 | 2014-04-24<br>12:25:45+00:00 | Just seen a @primark worker from the factory collapse on @BBCNews who lost both legs in the collapse...#insideout<br>#CheapClothes   | RaggyTroosers  |
| 17980 | 2014-04-24<br>09:02:08+00:00 | My next question is for the main #FashRev target... @Primark Who made my dress?<br>#insideout<br>@Fash_Rev<br><a href="http://t.co/KMoxhjqaAz">http://t.co/KMoxhjqaAz</a>                                    | TollyDollyPosh |
| 25279 | 2014-04-22<br>19:32:20+00:00 | Isn't it time fashion writers & editors took responsibility for how we report on clothes? #insideout<br>@Fash_Rev<br><a href="http://t.co/ij0vbbkMqy">http://t.co/ij0vbbkMqy</a>                             | fashedatlarge  |
| 9722  | 2014-04-24<br>14:39:04+00:00 | Everyone should question #Capitalism<br>#Primark #Amazon<br>#Starbucks<br>#McDonalds<br>#Bangladesh<br>#RanaPlaza<br>#Insideout@BBCNews  | RaggyTroosers  |

| SOLUTIONS |                              |   |                 |
|-----------|------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 25371     | 2014-04-22<br>18:15:17+00:00 | "Buy less, choose well, make it last" - Vivienne Westwood. 2 days until Fashion Revolution Day!<br>@Fash_Rev<br>#insideout<br><a href="http://t.co/ODt4VwcpNj">http://t.co/ODt4VwcpNj</a> | heatherknight08 |
| 26280     | 2014-04-22<br>06:55:11+00:00 | @BananaRepublic who made your clothes? Please pay fair wages - be part of the solution!<br>@Fash_Rev<br>#insideout<br><a href="http://t.co/bTAO6Qt6uU">http://t.co/bTAO6Qt6uU</a>         | Threadfairs     |
| 8473      | 2014-04-24<br>15:29:41+00:00 | #Fash_Rev #InsideOut<br>We are all part of the problem, but we can also be part of the solution! ... Join the Fashion...<br><a href="http://t.co/YfuXHa6lwH">http://t.co/YfuXHa6lwH</a>   | WFTO            |
| 18673     | 2014-04-24<br>08:37:14+00:00 | In half hour<br>@EthicalFashionF<br>Showcasing the Alternatives BE CURIOUS, FIND OUT. starts at 10. #insideout  | Fash_Rev        |
| 6297      | 2014-04-24<br>16:58:48+00:00 | Where can you buy #ethicalfashion? Check out @Zady @Modavanti @ShopEthica @HELPSYheart @bhoomki Proudly wear your clothes #insideout  | Fash_RevUSA     |
| 599       | 2014-04-25<br>08:28:48+00:00 | Fashion Revolution is a movement made up of people & organisations who love #fashion, but want to see change in its behaviour #insideout  | Fash_Rev        |

|                        |                              |   |                |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------|
| 11232                  | 2014-04-24<br>13:24:32+00:00 | RT @swishingleucy: we are not anti fashion. clothing sector employs 60 million people. we are pro fashion protesting. #insideout <a href="http://t.co...">http://t.co...</a>        | Carrysomers    |
| 16720                  | 2014-04-24<br>09:47:10+00:00 | We're hosting a twitterchat at 4pm for @Fash_Rev on the role of designers/brands: how can design inform sustainable solutions? #insideout   | sustfash       |
| <b>MOTIVATION</b>      |                              |   |                |
| 5624                   | 2014-04-24<br>17:34:18+00:00 | Turning clothes #InsideOut to mark #RanaPlaza deaths <a href="http://t.co/xmvK11evZM">http://t.co/xmvK11evZM</a> #RPNeverAgain  | AJStream       |
| 24622                  | 2014-04-23<br>07:21:52+00:00 | Change is possible, look at #fairtrade bananas says @hwallup on @daybreak with @Caryn_Franklin. Can same happen for fashion? #insideout   | Fash_Rev       |
| 571                    | 2014-04-25<br>08:36:47+00:00 | RT @FairtradeUK: We started a revolution in food: let's bring that to fashion. 1 year on from #RanaPlaza <a href="http://t.co/05gZjmNWS">http://t.co/05gZjmNWS</a> o #InsideOut ... | Carrysomers    |
| <b>GENERAL OUTCOME</b> |                              |   |                |
| 212                    | 2014-04-25<br>10:45:14+00:00 | Yesterday's trends on twitter 1. #insideout 2. Rana Plaza 3. Fashion Revolution Day <a href="http://t.co/Zx50x3gEyY">http://t.co/Zx50x3gEyY</a>                                     | Carrysomers    |
| 1011                   | 2014-04-25<br>03:57:22+00:00 | 20,664 #insideout tweets!! Talk about a fashion trend!!! <a href="http://t.co/rHzYazWqZB">http://t.co/rHzYazWqZB</a>  | upcyclefashion |

## **Appendix 2 – Primark’s Press Releases**

1. Swansea garment labels are a hoax, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2014.
2. Statement from Primark on investigation into labels, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014.
3. Statement from Primark, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014.
4. Statement from Primark on the anniversary of Rana Plaza, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014.
5. Update on Primark’s commitment to zero discharge, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2014.
6. Primark completes structural surveys, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2014.
7. Primark meets its commitments to long-term compensation for Rana Plaza victims, 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
8. Update on structural survey programme, 7<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
9. Primark announces working towards zero discharge, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2014.
10. Primark Stores welcomes award from BITC, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
11. Statement on angora, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
12. Primark expands its partnership with Newlife Foundation for Disabled Children across Europe, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013.
13. Primark announces further steps to deliver long-term compensation, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013.
14. Second short-term financial payment received by workers and families of Rana Plaza, 11<sup>th</sup> October 2013.
15. Primark registers further workers of Rana Plaza, provides further short-term financial aid, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013.
16. Support for injured workers and families, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2013.
17. Primark registers more than 3,000 workers for Rana Plaza short-term aid support, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013.
18. Statement on Liberty Fashions, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013.
19. Further update on Rana Plaza short-term aid, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013.
20. Structural building inspections in Bangladesh, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2013.
21. Short-term financial assistance announced, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013.
22. Signing the Accord, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2013.
23. Comprehensive support package announced, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2013.
24. Rana Plaza collapse, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013.
25. Sandblasting ban, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2011.

26. BBC apologies for faked footage in Panorama, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011.
27. Helping workers to open bank accounts, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
28. Newlife Foundation, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2011.