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The Practice of Social Dialogue in the Readymade Garment factories in Bangladesh – H&M case study

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Abbreviations

BGMEA – Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

One of the largest trade associations in Bangladesh, representing the readymade garment industry (www, bgmea, 1, 2015).

COC – Codes of conduct

Codes of conduct are generally described as a list of principles aimed at workplace rights and responsibilities for suppliers in a company's supply chain and is viewed as a management instrument used to monitoring responsible behavior (Mamic, 2005).

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

It *“is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large”* (Holme & Watts, 1999, 1).

FLA – Fair Labor Association

A collaborative effort of universities, companies and civil society organizations, working toward protecting the rights of the workers (www, fairlabor, 1, 2015).

H&M – Hennes and Mauritz

A Swedish multinational retail clothing company (www, H&M, 1, 2015), and the second largest retailer in the world (The Economist, 2015).

ILO – International Labour Organization

The only tripartite agency of the United Nations, bringing together workers, employers and governments of 186 states to set labour standards and promote decent work for all (www, ilo, 1, 2015).

ITUC – International trade union federation

A trade union with the aim to promote and defend workers' rights and interests through cooperation's between trade unions (www, ituc, 1, 2015).

JSN - Just Solution Network

A company providing education in all aspects of corporate social responsibility (www, just solution network, 1, 2014).

NGO – Non-governmental organization

“Is any non-profit, voluntary citizen's group which is organized on a local, national or international level” (www, ngo, 1, 2015).

PC- Participation Committee

A partnership between employer and employee that solve problems in a cooperative fashion. The workers voice are being heard through an established channel at the workplace.

RMG – Readymade garment

Mass-produced finished textile items in the fashion industry.

SPT – Social practice theory

A theory which argue that human beings and the environment are in reciprocal relationship with one another (Shove & Pantzar, 2012). It also suggest that human behavior are embedded routinized human activities – social practices (Reckwitz, 2002).

SSI – Semi structured interviews An interview method used in the social sciences allowing for new thoughts to be brought up during the interview.

The practice of social dialogue in the readymade garment factories in Bangladesh

- H&M case study

SANDRA GRANATH

Sandra, G., 2016: The Practice of Social Dialogue in the Readymade Garment factories in Bangladesh. *Master thesis in Sustainable Development at Uppsala University*, pp, 1-55
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Abstract

Corporations have increasingly turned to CSR-initiatives in order to monitor workers' rights and responsibilities in global supply chains. This article argues that in order for these CSR- initiatives to succeed in enabling workers' voice at the workplace, the shared benefits of the practice must be realized by all stakeholders. In this article, H&M's social dialogue project in Bangladesh has been analyzed through the lens of social practice theory identifying three crucial elements which must exist or be created, linked and sustained in order to produce behaviour change, which in this case is social dialogue between factory workers and factory management. This article argues that H&M's social dialogue project has all the essential elements and objectives to increase workers' voice and improve industrial relations. It also points out the importance of not viewing bipartite social dialogue as the end goal. Instead, H&M's implementation of bipartite social dialogue at their suppliers' factories should serve as the stepping stone toward tripartite social dialogue where trade unions can empower workers in the readymade garment-sector. The trade unions have the unique right to bargain collectively and if corporations truly want to ensure workers' rights, they must promote increased union activity in the industry. This research describes the key activities, training methodology, objectives and expected outcomes of H&M's social dialogue project followed by an analysis of workers employed in Bangladeshi readymade garment-sector experiences, attitudes and associations to social dialogue. By analysing workers' associations to social dialogue and H&M's objectives of the social dialogue project, certain conditions have been identified as crucial in order to enable efficient social dialogue at the workplace.

Keywords: Case Study, CSR, H&M, Social Dialogue, Social Practice Theory, Sustainable Development, Workers' rights,

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Summary

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In past decades, the idea that corporations must recognize and be accountable for all stakeholders' rights have become more accepted. Corporate social responsibility is a voluntary undertaking, describing corporations' treatment of human beings, societies and the environment in which they operate. Corporate social responsibility builds on the notion that companies exist and operate within a society and therefore must be held accountable for their actions and address their responsibilities. The focus of this article is the readymade-garment sector in Bangladesh which is a crucial industry for the country's development and employment generation. Today, large fashion companies choose to source from Bangladesh because of the sector's low paid workforce which is generating over 80 percent of the country's total exports. The low wages are helping Bangladesh to stay competitive on the global market as corporations are becoming less dependent on the location and can move production to cheaper regions across the globe. The low wages have contributed to the country's economic success but have at the same time affected factory workers' personal safety, which currently is recognized as one major challenge facing the growth of the industry.

After serious factory incidents, such as the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza collapse where over a thousand garment workers were killed, the public started demanding more responsible conduct from the large fashion companies making huge annual profits while workers' was dying due to unsafe working conditions. The fashion companies sourcing readymade-garment from Bangladesh do not own their own factories and are therefore not direct employers of the garment workers, making the question regarding responsibility rather complex. As a response to the two fatal accidents accompanied with other workplace-related issues, corporate social responsibility-initiatives concerning workers' rights and standards increased rapidly in the region.

H&M is the single largest buyer of garments in Bangladesh and have used their socio-economic influence urging the government of Bangladesh to increase the minimum wage and are currently implementing a social dialogue project with the aim to have efficient committees representing both management and workers as a forum for discussion at all their suppliers' factories by 2018. Social dialogue has been identified to increase workers' voice and engagement as well generating economic benefits for the supplier. This article is describing H&M's ongoing social dialogue project in Bangladesh, analyzing the key activities, objectives and expected outcomes.

Additionally, the article highlights the importance of understanding workers attitudes and experiences of social dialogue in order to effectively enable the practice at the workplace. The objective of this project was to explain conditions for development of social dialogue practices as a part of sustainable development. The result of this project emphasized the importance of promoting the shared benefits of social dialogue to all engaged stakeholders to ensure commitment. The development from bipartite dialogue to tripartite social dialogue were also recognized as essential if companies truly aim to give workers actual power to change and ensure workers' rights at the workplace.

1. Introduction

This chapter contains a description of the background to the studied project. It also contains a presentation of the problem and its connections to the aim, definitions and outline of the project.

1.1. Problem background

Globalization has led to a dramatic change in geographical distribution of production in the textile and clothing industries, providing employment opportunities for millions of people in the developing world (www, ilo, 2, 2016). Conversely, while globalization has the potential to contribute to economic and social development in these regions it has also been criticized for pushing standards down, resulting in exploitation of cheap labor (Perman *et al.* 2004, 4). Low salaries and poor working conditions are the reality for millions of workers employed in our globalized economy where profits are tied to low wages and therefore drives a “race to the bottom”. In other words, the pursuit of profits is hindering the development of labor standards and social justice at the workplace (Aguirre & Reese, 2004).

While globalization has led to rapidly increased income for workers at the top of the income ladder, it has not benefitted the workers at the bottom the same way. In many nations the absolute poorest have instead been faced with declining or stagnated wages and decreased welfare (Storper, 2000, 5). The competitive nature of globalization simply place workers from low income countries against each other, competing for production jobs using the acceptance of lower salary as their main source of leverage. In today’s global market, international corporations are less dependent on location of production and can therefor use the threat of moving production and capital elsewhere, resulting in managers driving down factory workers wages. This downward spiral leads to increased income inequality as well as reduced power of organized labor (*ibid*).

While public policy is one key aspect of improving working conditions, the influence of the “winners” in the global economy, the multinational corporations, cannot be undermined (Compa, 2008). Scholars argue that by outsourcing manufacturing to contractors located in countries with a cheap labor force, brands have succeeded in avoiding legal responsibility for the contracted workers (LeBaron, 2014). This is especially recognized in the textile industry in the global south where labor laws are weak and garment workers often are denied the right to organize (Esbenshade, 2004).

As a result of reported fatal factory accidents in the 1990s and forward, the readymade-garment (RMG)-industry became scrutinized by media and human rights groups worldwide. Workers’ poor conditions became first page news in the western world and consumers started questioning the true cost of fashion and whether the large profits made by the fashion companies could be justified as ethical. Due to all the negative exposure, the international retailers were faced with criticism and potential loss of revenue which triggered a change of mindset in the RMG-sector. The establishment of codes of conduct (COC) and the introduction of different mechanisms for promoting workers’ voice became important strategies for clothing retailers to protect themselves from the public disapproval concerning the working conditions in factories overseas (Esbenshade, 2004).

1.2. Problem

The RMG-industry is considered the backbone of Bangladesh economy and has been described as a success story since it took off in the 1980s. Currently, the sector employs four million workers in over 5, 600 factories (www, swedwatch,1, 2014) and it accounts for over

80 percent of the exports from Bangladesh. It is therefore viewed as critical for the country's employment generation (Asian Center for Development, 2015). One major reason for Bangladesh rapid economic development in the RMG-industry is the country's low paid workforce which today is recognized as a major challenge facing the growth and expansion of the industry (Ramesh, 2014). In order for suppliers to keep prices low enough to stay competitive on the global market, factory-workers personal safety and wellbeing are being undermined. The poor working conditions for the factory workers in the Bangladeshi RMG-sector became painfully evident to the public after the 2012 Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013 (Human Rights Watch, 2015) which triggered an outrage towards global companies sourcing from Bangladesh. The media and human rights groups raised the question of to what degree fashion companies are accountable for the safety of their contracted factory-workers (Hoskins, 2015).

Since the establishment of individual company codes (see chapter 3.2.) there has been an ongoing debate about the merits of privately regulating workers' rights (Egelz-Zanden & Merk, 2013, 3). Workers have often limited knowledge of the code (Yu, 2009) and are ironically absent when "drawing up, implementing, monitoring and enforcing the company codes of which they are the purported beneficiaries of" (Ngai, 2003, 7). Therefore, human rights advocates point out the importance of engaging workers in the process of drawing up the code so they can ensure that their rights are being protected (Egelz-Zanden & Merk, 2013, 14). The narrow interest in workers' voice and workers' engagement when establishing grievance mechanisms for the workers is problematic. To enhance workers' voice, workers must be involved in monitoring, evaluating and reporting on working conditions in the factories (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Criticism has been voiced about how the Government of Bangladesh is lacking in efficiently enforcing the labor law, failing in ensuring workers the right to voice their concerns without fear of penalty, dismissals or reprisals (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Bangladesh is still recognized for the many violations of the right to bargain collectively and workers have according to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) no guarantee of rights (ITUC, 2013) and existing unions have expressed problems with harassment and intimidation. Collective bargaining is globally viewed as a failure in the RMG-industry in Bangladesh and even though there are provisions in the Labor Act of 2006 to protect workers who participate in trade unions, many workers do not take part in collective bargaining due to the fear of losing their job and income (Ramesh, 2014). The Human Rights Watch Organization recently published a report based on testimonies from 160 workers from 44 factories making garment for developed nations, exposing physical and verbal abuse, forced overtime and failure to pay wages among other violations calling upon the government, factory owners and western retailers to unite in order to end the violations of workers' rights (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Stakeholders in the RMG-industry have identified the right to bargain collectively as one of the most pressing rights which must be realized in order to enable workers to negotiate standards concerning safety, wages and labor standards (Ramesh, 2014). This is also recognized by The International Labor Organization (ILO) which coined the term **Social Dialogue** meaning "*all types of negotiation, consultation or simply exchange of information between or among, representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy*" (International Labour Office, 2016, 2) as the best mechanism to improve working conditions and social justice (*ibid*). With the risk of social dialogue becoming the new buzzword used by western retailers it is of great

importance to look at how social dialogue is being enabled at the factories, analyzing what measures that are being taken to make social dialogue a well-functioning practice. Due to the current low percentage of active unions in the RMG-industry in Bangladesh, this project will look at social dialogue solely at the workplace, between managers and workers employed by the factory, viewing it as a stepping stone toward the tripartite process of collective bargaining.

1.3. Empirical and theoretical gap

While there is a large scope of already existing academic literature on CSR-practices and their actual effect on working conditions in the factories, less attention is given to enabling factors of implementation of social dialogue. In regard to COC and their effect on process rights such as freedom of association, scholars have provided general explanations on why codes only have limited impact on workers' rights (Egelz-Zanden & Merk, 2013, 3; Anner, 2012). With that said, dialogue has been identified as essential when aiming to introduce effective supply chain management e.g. COC (Mamic, 2005, 85). Moreover, the majority of research has focused on top management and mid managers' role in the implementation of COC where many scholars used CSR, management theory and organizational theory to identify the shortcomings of COC - especially in regard to process rights such as the right to bargain collectively and social dialogue. While one ought to recognize the importance of leadership and organizational structure as key components for a practice to exist at a workplace, workers understanding and associations of the practice cannot be underestimated.

Scholars argue for problematizing this wicked problem at a supplier level where a number of stakeholders have important roles in finding solutions. Furthermore, in order to grasp the development of behaviour change more holistically one should investigate the context, physical infrastructure and social relations as they are intrinsic to performance of social practices (Hargreaves, 2011, 11). This is why the use of Social Practice Theory (**SPT**) is well fitted when aiming to identify enabling factors of the practice of social dialogue. SPT put forward elements which need to be in place in order for a practice, in this case social dialogue, to exist. The three elements; materials, competence and meanings, are according to SPT crucial in order to bring about behaviour change. The theory have been used when looking at domestic practices and bringing about pro-environmental behavior, marketing, patterns of consumption and is now for the first time used to provide a more holistic view on enabling factors for social dialogue at the workplace

1.4. A Commission

This study was conducted as a case study of Hennes & Mauritz AB (**H&M**), a Swedish multinational retail-clothing company comprised of six independent brands: H&M, COS, Weekday, Cheap Monday and Other Stories with a total of 3,900 stores around the world (www, H&M, 1, 2015). H&M is the second largest apparel retailer in the world (The Economist, 2015) working with approximately 800 independent suppliers located mainly in Asia and Europe, creating more than a million jobs in the production countries (www, H&M, 2, 2016). H&M have 299 contracted suppliers in Bangladesh making the company the single largest buyer of garment in the country (Clean Clothes Campaign; Internatinal Labor Rights Forum; Maquila Solidarity Network; Worker Right Consortium, 2015, 6). As the market leading company in the RMG-industry, H&M have used their socio-economic influence urging the Government of Bangladesh to increase minimum wage and conducted in 2011 a Social Dialogue Pilot Project, inviting five suppliers to implement democratic election of

worker representatives in committees to conduct dialogue with management (www, H&M, 3 2013). In 2015, H&M joined a second project promoting social dialogue and harmonious industrial relations in Bangladesh RMG-industry implemented by the ILO in close collaborations with the Government of Bangladesh. H&M's role is to bring knowledge and know-how to the project which currently is the largest project in Swedish development portfolio connected to Private Sector Development with a total of 45 million SEK. The project will run to December 2020 and falls under ILO's programme Decent Work in Bangladesh (www, better work, 1, 2015; Embassy of Sweden Dhaka, 2015).

H&M have a dialogue and training center in Dhaka which currently is running a Leadership in Social Dialogue Project with the aim to improve worker management relations. Up to date, over a thousand elected participation committee (PC) worker representatives and approximately 500 PC management representatives received training with the aim to have rolled out the project at all their suppliers in Bangladesh by 2018 making H&M a suitable study objective for this research.

This project will describe the key activities, training methodology, objectives and expected outcomes of H&M's social dialogue project followed by an analysis of workers' employed in Bangladeshi readymade garment-sector experiences, attitudes and associations to social dialogue.

1.5. Aim and research questions

The aim of this project is to explain conditions for development of social dialogue practices as a part of sustainable development. By using a company that has recognized the need for establishing social dialogue as a way to improve workers' rights as a study object, the ambition of this research is to outline processes enabling social dialogue at the workplace.

To achieve the aim, the following research questions have been formulated:

- How does H&M work with their suppliers to enable social dialogue in their factories located in Bangladesh?
- What are the workers' experiences of social dialogue at the workplace?

These research questions were chosen based on the nature of dialogue. For a successful dialogue to take place both sides, in this case a fashion company and the factory employees, must experience value in participating in the practice.

1.6. Delimitations

Firstly, the focus of this research is rather complex as it is containing multiple stakeholders and aspects. Therefore, in order to conduct this research within the given time frame many limitations exist. Moreover, this project is a case study which builds on the assumption that the workers interviewed felt comfortable sharing their real experiences and thoughts with the researcher. This is why it is important to note that the factory's HR-manager and welfare officer were present during the interviews conducted at the factory facility. In regard to some questions focusing on the workers' personal views concerning their workplace, the presence of the HR-manager could have had a negative effect on whether the respondents felt comfortable in raising critique against their employer. In addition, the workers interviewed for this project came from multiple factories located in Dhaka and the majority of them were not employed by any of H&M's suppliers. Therefore, this project cannot in any way analyze

H&M's success in implementing social dialogue, but rather look at the phenomena of social dialogue at the RMG- factories in Bangladesh.

The study is solely looking at social dialogue practices in Bangladesh in the region of Dhaka and the respondents interviewed were workers and supervisors currently employed in the RMG-sector. Therefore, factory management's perspectives of social dialogue are not a part of this research.

In regard to theoretical delimitations, social practice theory was used to guide the analysis and even though multidisciplinary literature was reviewed prior establishing the framework, the final decision on using social practice theory as the conceptual framework was a delimiting choice.

1.7. Outline

Chapter 1 contains a descriptions of the background of the research topic and present the problem connected to the aim, definitions and outline of the project.

Chapter 2 presents and motivate the chosen research approach followed by a description of the methods used for data collection, quality assurance, data analysis and limitations.

In Chapter 3 key terms and theoretical perspectives are presented in order to develop the foundation needed for the empirics, analysis and discussion. The chapter explains theories concerning corporate social responsibility, workers' voice and social dialogue. Finally, the conceptual framework of this study is presented and clarified.

Chapter 4 consists of a background description of the RMG-industry in Bangladesh followed by a description of H&M's economic and political influence in the country. This chapter also describes the legal framework in Bangladesh and how it affects the practice of social dialogue.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical result derived from interviews and documents in accordance to this projects two research questions. It describes how H&M work to enable social dialogue at their factories in Bangladesh and present the result of the interviews aiming to gain further insight in garment workers' knowledge, experiences and attitudes in regard to social dialogue.

Chapter 6 analyses the empirical findings with the help of selected terms and the conceptual framework presented in chapter 3.

Chapter 7 offers a discussion on whether the fragmented market in concern to CSR-initiatives in the RMG-garment sector in Bangladesh is making it difficult for industrial collaboration in ethical sourcing. Additional points which appeared in the analysis are also considered.

Chapter 8 offers some answers to the aim of the study and summarize key findings along with suggestions for future research.

2. Method

In this chapter the chosen research approach is presented and motivated followed by a description of methods used for data collection discussing quality assurance, data analysis and limitations.

2.1. Research design

Qualitative research aims to answer “how”, “who” and “why” questions and provide descriptive knowledge of a real life phenomenon and in that way contribute to theory building (Yin, 2009, 8-10). As the aim of this study is to describe a phenomenon within its context, qualitative research was used to gain deeper understanding of social dialogue in the RMG-industry in Bangladesh. Robson (2011) stresses the importance of context when conducting qualitative research, pointing out that a phenomenon is best understood in its environment. Furthermore, by the observation of a phenomenon in its natural environment, influencing factors can be identified and analyzed with the chosen theoretical framework (*ibid*). Additionally, Yin argues that case studies are appropriate to response to research questions beginning with “how” and “why” (Yin, 1994). Moreover, case studies are argued suitable in the initial phases of the research or when the researcher want to contribute with new perspectives to a topic which is already well researched (Eisenhardt, 1989, 548).

As this study focus on the practice of social dialogue performed by H&M in Bangladesh, a single case study was selected as research strategy for collecting qualitative and empirical data. A single case study was chosen based on its capability to account for different kinds of information e.g. interviews, documents and archives. In addition, a case study is also deemed suitable when accounting for a multitude of stakeholders, recognizing the existence of both group and individual level constructs to describe the phenomena in question. Yin (2014) and Eisenhardt (1989) describe case study as a strategy which emphasis on the current dynamics within a distinct setting.

An abductive approach was deemed most suitable for this study since it is dealing with real world phenomenon constantly changed by internal and external factors. As Robson (2011) points out, a flexible design allows for re-evaluation of the appropriateness of both tools and framework and allow the researcher to ensure quality research. The constant refining of the framework, however, makes the study heavily dependent on the researcher’s interpretation - making the chance of unintentionally missing out on alternative explanations of data (*ibid*). To avoid this risk the researcher can, by adopting an abductive approach, move in-between theory, empirics and analysis allowing the researcher to find new interactions and variables (Yin, 2014). Additionally, Yin points out the importance of a theoretical framework guiding the researcher through the data collection with the aim to exclude bias. Therefore, a conceptual framework based on SPT has been used for this research (see section 3.7). Furthermore, this study also contains a literature review and case study.

2.2. Literature review

For this study, a literature review was conducted in order to understand the phenomenon in its specific context. A literature review can help the researcher to gain confidence in an already studied field of research and result in higher quality and possible academic contributions (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, the literature review functioned as a guide throughout the data collection and data analysis (Ridley, 2012; Yin, 1994) and should be viewed as a process aiming to create more insightful questions rather than an end in itself (Yin, 1994, 9).

To ensure scientific quality of the literature, peer-reviewed articles with recent publication dates were mainly used. Moreover, key terms and related concepts to social dialogue such as workers' voice, employee engagement, workplace dialogue and freedom of associations were used in the literature search together with concepts covering behaviour change and practices. The Searches for key terms was carried out through Uppsala University library's search engine and Google Scholar.

2.3. A case study

A case study is valuable to use when studying a present-day problem (Yin, 2013). Additionally, a case study is deemed fitting when the study is conducted in an environment which the investigator has little control over and when the boundaries and interrelations between the phenomenon and its context are hard to define (*ibid*, 9). Case studies also allow for both individual and group level constructs as units of analysis (Bhattacharjee, 2012) which was useful in this study analysing social dialogue practices at the workplace. Furthermore, a single case study is appropriate when the researcher wants to gain deeper insight about an empirical problem and an acclaimed theoretical framework already exist (*ibid*). Based on the above information, a case study was deemed appropriate for this study and was used for empirical data collection.

The challenges of using a case study is the risk of bias and making rushed conclusions (Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin points out that when conducting case studies, the data collection and analysis takes place at the same time (*ibid*) thus there is of great importance to choose a suitable theoretical framework. When using a case study the research will benefit greatly from having developed the theory prior data collection (Yin, 2013), which was the chosen approach for this research.

2.3.1 Choice of case and unit of analysis

H&M's social dialogue practices at their RMG-suppliers in Bangladesh was chosen for multiple reasons. Firstly, all stakeholders in the RMG- industry in Bangladesh have since the Rana-plaza collapse and Dhaka fire (see section 4.2) collectively expressed the need for change in order to promote a sustainable industry and economic growth. Secondly, social dialogue was chosen as practice as ILO has deemed it as the most efficient mechanism to improve working conditions and social justice (International Labour Office, 2016). H&M was chosen based on their socio-economic influence in the RMG-industry in Bangladesh as well as on their public announcements on improving working conditions at their suppliers. Furthermore, H&M is leading a social dialogue project for improving worker-management relations in Bangladesh. Thus, the choice of case is greatly suitable for achieving the aim of the study. The factory was chosen on availability as well as being a long-time partner of H&M. The studied factory is recognized as a role model factory and have a great reputation in the region.

2.3.2 Data collection

While there is are a large number of different qualitative data collection methods and techniques when conducting social science, one of the most commonly used methods is interviews (Mikkelsen, 2005). Interviews is an efficient way to collect information about individuals' perceptions, experiences and attitudes (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Additionally, interviews are an essential source of information when performing a case study (Yin, 2013).

For this study, semi-structured interviews (SSI) was chosen as method because of its capability of revealing important information which can be missed when using a more rigid structure. SSI allow the interviewer to adjust to the social setting and encourage the interviewees to express views and feelings using their own words. By preparing thematic questions based on the chosen theoretical framework the interviews will have structure while staying flexible as SSI allow modification during the interview process (Robson, 2011). The themes derived from the theoretical framework guided the development of the interview guide (see Appendix 1).

As the respondents' native language were Bengali the questions were first asked in English and translated by a translator (see section 2.4). Furthermore, all interviews were recorded (with the permission of the respondents) and transcribed to written language. Due to sensitive information the respondents that were interviewed at factory sites chose not have their transcribed interviews sent to them. Furthermore, the respondents' interviewed at the NGO did not have mail or email addresses (See section 2.4). Therefore, in order to receive verification, the interviewer repeated the respondents' answers offering the opportunity to clarify or edit the information. Kvale (1997) suggest follow up questions asked by the researcher as a good tool of quality assurance and was therefore applied during the interviews. The interviews lasted between 20 to 50 minutes depending on the availability of the respondents as well their knowledge of the topic. All interviews were conducted face to face where 12 were individual interviews and three sessions were group interviews containing 4-7 workers each session (Table 1). Furthermore, the interviews have been translated from Bengali to English by the translator.

The individual interviews were conducted at a factory site and the respondents were handpicked workers by the HR-manager at the factory after the researcher requested to interview workers with different positions and responsibilities. There was a time limit of 30 minutes for each interview due to the production cost for the factory to remove workers from the assembly line. The group interviews were conducted outside the factory facilities, at AWAJ Foundation office located in Dhaka. Workers interviewed at AWAJ were chosen based on availability with the only condition that they were currently employed in the garment industry.

In order to gain a holistic view from the workers' perspectives on social dialogue, garment workers from different factories were interviewed inside as well as outside the factory facilities. It is important to note that the majority of them were not H&M employees. The interviews conducted outside the factories were organized with the help of AWAJ-foundation, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which aim to give a voice to Bangladesh female garment workers. The organisation is funded by Nazma Akter who is an influential union member in Bangladesh. Currently the organization have over 37 000 members and provide workers with free of charge education in health and safety, budgeting, rights and responsibilities among other issues (www, awaj, 1, 2015). The organization was chosen as a collaborator in this project based on their commitment to improve working conditions for garment workers and their vast network of workers employed in the garment sector.

Table 1 Respondents in the case study

| Location | Gender | Position | Years/factory | Participation in Social Dialogue | In-text citation |
|----------|--------|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Awaj | M | Cutting assistant | 16 | | Respondent 1 |
| Awaj | M | Senior operator | 13 | Union Member | Respondent 2 |
| Awaj | F | Helper | 4 | | Respondent 3 |
| Awaj | F | Iron man | 10 | | Respondent 4 |
| Awaj | M | Package man | 11 | | Respondent 5 |
| Awaj | F | Operator | 14 | Union Member | Respondent 6 |
| Awaj | F | Operator | 5 | | Respondent 7 |
| Awaj | F | Helper | 5 | | Respondent 8 |
| Awaj | F | Quality assistant | 1 | | Respondent 9 |
| Awaj | F | Senior operator | 9 | | Respondent 10 |
| Awaj | F | Senior operator | 10 | | Respondent 11 |
| Awaj | F | Helper | 1 | | Respondent 12 |
| Awaj | F | Assistant operator | 15 | Worker Rep | Respondent 13 |
| Awaj | F | Assistant operator | 9 | | Respondent 14 |
| Awaj | F | Quality Operator | 14 | | Respondent 15 |
| Awaj | M | Quality Operator | 7 | | Respondent 16 |
| | | | | | |
| Factory | F | Folding | 3 | Worker Rep | Respondent 17 |
| Factory | M | Cutting assistant | 11 | Worker Rep | Respondent 18 |
| Factory | F | Supervisor | 14 | | Respondent 19 |
| Factory | F | Operator | 4 | | Respondent 20 |
| Factory | M | Quality department | 9 | Prev. Worker Rep | Respondent 21 |
| Factory | F | Supervisor | 4 | | Respondent 22 |
| Factory | F | Quality department | 3 | | Respondent 23 |
| Factory | F | Quality department | 5 | | Respondent 24 |
| Factory | M | Operator | 4 | | Respondent 25 |
| Factory | F | Quality department | 9 | | Respondent 26 |
| Factory | F | Folding man | 4 | | Respondent 27 |

All respondents taking part in this research were employed in the RMG-industry in Dhaka and held different positions at their factories and therefore had different responsibilities.

Supervisors, members of the PC, workers and union leaders are examples of respondents of the diverse group being subjects to the interviews. Table 1 display where the interviews took place, gender, position at the factory, years employed in the RMG- sector and whether they are elected worker representatives or trade union members.

Secondary data is a relevant source of information when conducting a case study as it is important to have a good knowledge-base when conducting research about a recent phenomenon (Yin, 2013). Therefore, a literature review was conducted covering news articles, sustainability reports, dissertations, and websites of case organizations, research reports and internal documentation connected to the phenomenon and the units of analysis. Search words such as social dialogue, workers voice and workplace dialogue were used when searching for articles relevant for this study. Furthermore, in this particular study the secondary data also supported the primary data conducted during the SSI.

2.3.3 Quality assurance

Ensuring validity and reliability throughout the research process is of great importance hence quality assurance was conducted in each phase of the study (Robson, 2011). Trustworthiness can be achieved with numerous methods when conducting flexible design research (*ibid*). Creswell and Miller (2000) defines validity of qualitative research as “how accurately the account represent participants’ realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them” (Cresswell & Miller, 2000, 126). Furthermore, quality can be ensured when using good researcher methods which describe the phenomena in an unbiased way (Robson, 2011). Completely unbiased research is however not possible as no researcher can stay fully objective, which is recognized and considered in this study (Bryman, 2004). Biased research will most likely occur when researchers work closely with employees and participants whom serve as objects of the study as one can lose the role of being the researcher in such setting. On the other side, participants of the study might feel more comfortable with the researcher and therefore give more honest and less unbiased information (Robson, 2011).

As Robson points out, interpretations made by the researcher must be easy to trace and be clearly explained in the study. On the same note, alternative considerations must also be accounted for (Robson, 2011). For this study, the empirical material was explained and the interpretations were motivated in a clear manner. Moreover, the researcher stayed as objective as possible during the research process and used triangulation to avoid bias. According to Bryman, triangulation is a technique used in social science research when two or more sources of data is used (Bryman, 2004). When more than one source is used it allows for comparison through cross verification and bias can easier be avoided (Robson, 2011). The researcher also recognize the criticism voiced over the use of sustainability reports as they in a subjective manner aim to create valid presentation for stakeholders (Manetti & Becatti, 2009, s. 290). Conversely, in some instances sustainability reports were the only sources available and therefore used. Furthermore, the researcher must assure coherence between the study design and problem presented, resort to peer review and record all traces as it will assure congruence between the study design and the problem presented (Riege, 2003).

In order to construct validity throughout this project full recordings and transcripts were made of the interviews which according to Kvale (1997) allows the researcher to focus on the research topic and dynamic of the interview. As it was not possible to send out transcribed copies to the respondents’ for verification (see chapter 2, 4) the researcher asked verification questions during the interviews allowing the respondents’ to edit or clarify their statements

during the process. Furthermore, triangulation, using multiple sources of evidence (Riege, 2003), was applied via different data sources, methods and interview methods.

Graphic models from literature and theoretical framework were used for this project in order to assist explanations and ensure internal validity. Furthermore, the same framework was applied to all sources of data (Riege, 2003, 78-79). To ensure internal validity, this project defined scope and boundaries for the research (see chapter 2.3.1 and 2.3.2) and used an abductive approach, building the analysis on the chosen theoretical framework.

Finally, to ensure reliability this study gives full account of theories and ideas as well as assuring congruence between the studied issue and the chosen study design (see chapter 2). The interviews' were taped and notes were made to record the observations and actions occurring. Moreover, a proposal and a half-time seminar with peers and supervisor were conducted allowing for peer reviewing and opposition.

2.4. Ethical considerations

When producing knowledge the elements of scrutiny, reflection and interrogation must be used at all times, meaning not only when analysing the data collected but also in regard to the researcher herself. It is crucial that researchers analyse their own role in the research process, and evaluate these actions with the same critical scrutiny as the rest of the collected data (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004, 274).

Ethics must be applied all through the research process and the researcher must be reflexive, alert and prepared for ethical tensions (Guillemin & Gilliam, 2004, 271). Important to note, interviews are an unnatural social situation created by the researcher where the respondents are sought out by the researcher for its own aim. With other words, the purpose of the interviews will not solely benefit the respondents (*ibid*). Firstly, in order to ensure ethical consideration related to the research process, all respondents were informed about the aim of the study and why they were the subjects for interviews. In addition, they also agreed on being recorded under certain conditions such as staying anonymous due to the chance of negative consequences occurring for commenting on the current workplace situation. Therefore, with the promise to keep all names anonymous, the respondents felt more comfortable responding to personal questions concerning their workplace. Furthermore, the factory also requested to not be named in the study, which was allowed in order gain greater access to their everyday practices and policies. Letting the respondents and the factory staying anonymous was deemed allowed as not revealing the names of the workers and the supplier did not influence the aim of study. During the interviews (see section 2.3.3) at the factory, the presence of higher officials in the room could have affected the workers sense of feeling secure in answering truthfully about their workplace.

Moreover, the issue of transcripts became an ethical matter when conducting this research. Early on in the study it became clear that the majority of the workers did not feel comfortable having their transcript being sent to their employer (the supplier) for editing and approval. However, many of the workers did not have a proper mail address nor access to internet. When suggesting coming back to the supplier with a hard copy for the respondents to read, the issue of removing workers from the assembly line for a second time was brought up. It was merely not possible from a cost perspective, according to supplier. On the same note, the respondents that were interviewed outside the factory stated that it would take too much time of their daily work to come back to the location where the interviews took place to edit and approve the transcription. This was also the response when the researcher offered to pay for the respondents'

bus tickets back and forth to read through the transcripts. Faced with this reality, the researcher had to receive verification while interviewing by repeating the answers loud and in that way offering the opportunity to edit and clarify statements which also served as quality assurance (see chapter 2.3.3). The recordings and the contact details to the supplier and the NGO which helped organize the interviews were collected and saved in case there is a request for ensuring transparency and quality.

Worth mentioning is that the researcher paid for the transportation home for the workers whose interviews were conducted outside the factory facility. The researcher chose to reimburse the workers based on the fact that a large majority of the respondents were low paid employees working long hours but still agreed on being interviewed on their time off. Some of the respondents travelled over an hour to attend the interviews and therefore the researcher strongly felt that reimbursing for transportation home was the ethical thing to do.

Based on the reported violations and harassments against union leaders and worker representatives in the garment industry the researcher felt a great ethical responsibility protecting the respondents subject to interviews. In order to make the respondents more comfortable during the interviews a female translator were chosen for this study. This is due to that majority of garment workers in Bangladeshi are women.

2.5. Data analysis

The analysis in qualitative research is an iterative practice which already begins during the collection of data (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In this study, the interview questions are based on a chosen theoretical framework which also help categorize the results. To organize the data collected for this case study, a general analytical strategy was determined as a tool to treat evidence objectively when drawing analytical conclusions and ruling out other interpretations (Yin, 2013). Jacobsen et al. (2002) states that if the research departs from the interview guide, which often occur as qualitative data is contextual and therefore not fully predictable, the original themes created from the theoretical framework can be used as the first part of the analytical process and new themes and categories will arise from the empirical data during the iterative research process (Jacobsen *et al*, 2002). Multiple information sources were used for this project and the data was organized in tables and graphs for facilitating categorization for the analysis.

2.6. Limitations

The methods chosen for a study will always influence the research by bearing consequences and setting limitations. While the researcher cannot have control over certain consequences, it is important to be aware of these occurrences (Robson, 2011). As described and motivated in earlier chapters, a single case study and SSI were chosen as the main tools for collecting data. Furthermore, the results of the interviews are not objective facts but perceptions of individuals and must therefore be treated that way. Nonetheless, understanding the respondent's reality is what the researcher aimed to do in this particular study as it is dealing with social constructs as pointed out by Lindgren and Packendorff (2009). Furthermore, a case study was deemed most appropriate in order to understand the phenomenon, and as Dubois and Gadde points out there might not be a more suitable way when doing researcher in a dynamic environment than a comprehensive case-study (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

3. Literature review and theoretical framework

In this chapter the key terms and theoretical perspectives are introduced and explained to create the foundation for understanding the empirics, the analysis and discussion. The chapter explains theories concerning corporate social responsibility, workers' voice and social dialogue. Finally, the conceptual framework of this study is presented and clarified.

3.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept which describes corporations' treatment of human beings and the environment as well as the relationship between corporations and the societies they operate in. It also refers to corporations voluntary undertakings of social and environmental issues (Andersen & Skjoett-Larsen, 2009). As most corporations today have policies concerning CSR there are a vast number of different principles and blueprints of CSR which have been promoted during the years. To simplify, this study uses Crowther and Rayman-Baccus (2004) seven groups of activities to categorize existing CSR policies: environmental sustainability; enhancing local community well-being, competitors or customers, transparent and honest accountability, legal and honest operations, global citizens to promote social and environmental justice, and promoting rights of employees as well as suppliers where the last group, promoting rights of employees, is of particular interest for understanding the researched phenomenon.

The idea that a business need to recognize and be accountable for all stakeholders' rights have been the subject of widespread debate (Branco & Rodrigues, 2007). This is especially true in the case of economic accountability where groups argue that corporations need to address all stakeholders and not only the shareholders. The argument is that companies exist within a society and therefore they must address responsibilities to the society they operate in (Crowther & Ortiz Martinez, 2004). In 2014, when looking at the 100 governments and corporations with the highest annual revenue, the result showed 63 corporations and 37 governments (Freudenberg, 2015) which clearly showcase corporations' huge economic influence in today's globalized world making CSR an essential element of the world economy. CSR has the power to improve labor rights, human rights and labor standards by combining consumer power with accountable business leadership. Additionally, when corporations aim to improve workers' rights it is not only limited to the employees working at the headquarters located in the developed world but can also be applied to factory level in export countries (Compa, 2008, 1). Reports show that big brands, using their economic power as leverage, is one main reason for improved working conditions in factories (*ibid*).

While there are a large number of promoted benefits of CSR there are equal amount of criticism and the phenomena of the corporations owning responsibilities is what one can describe as a wicked problem. One of many CSR strategies adopted by brands in the 1990s is the establishment of codes of conduct (COC) (see section 3.2). During this time the world witnessed a "global development of corporate social responsibility movement against labor abuses" (Yu, 2009, 233) and the adoption of the code was a mean to control labor practices of their foreign factories and to establish monitoring tools to oversee codes implementation (*ibid*). For example, brands such as Reebok, Levi's and Nike, all early movers in regard to CSR, announced in the late 1980s that their suppliers must sign their internal company code or production would be moved elsewhere. Loss of production equals a great loss of revenue for local producers, demonstrating a great example of big brands using their economic influence as leverage. Now, these brands, the early movers, owned the burden of

responsibility on enforcing and monitoring the code, which opened up for public scrutiny and criticism of the brand if failing. While some of these large corporations did a decent job enforcing the COC, human rights groups pointed out many weaknesses (Mamic, 2005; Compa, 2008). One of the main issues communicated was the large number of factories the sourcing was being made from, making it difficult for corporations to ensure that their entire supply chain respect workers' rights. This is one reason why human right groups are continuously exposing brands that are using suppliers which are illegally firing workers engaged in unions or employing child labor, all occurring without their knowledge – according to the brand. Furthermore, the internal corporate code is sometime described as a fox monitoring a henhouse, stating that factory management would rather hide abuses than being exposed publicly which in their case would result in loss of revenue (Compa, 2008, s 3).

Based on the above criticism, the demand for independent monitoring and verification has increased. CSR-models that collaborate with developing nations' business leaders, NGOs and trade unions were viewed as a more efficient way of strengthening CSR-programs (Compa, 2008). Corporations play a key role in most CSR-programs today which in some cases have been criticized in resulting in a focus on monitoring minimum labor standards, falling short in implementing the right to bargain collectively and the right to form independent unions. When looking at the trend of internal implementation of codes also referred to as “market-based-solution” scholars point out that firms can improve labor standards in the global economy as there is a market for standards. This rest on the idea that consumers will reward responsible corporations, with other words there is a consumer market for items that are produced by corporations that respect labor standards (Anner, 2012, 613). On the other hand, labor unions have repeatedly voiced their concerns of most CSR-initiatives saying that corporations are trying to replace the unions as well as the state's role in defending workers' rights (*Ibid*).

3.2. Codes of Conduct

COC are generally described as list of principles aimed at workplace rights and responsibilities for suppliers in a company's supply chain and is viewed as a management instrument monitoring responsible behavior. COC is a part of a company's CSR policy and is widely used across the world as a way of acting as responsible corporate citizens (Mamic, 2005). COC have been offered as a solution to improve workers' rights using the private sector's consuming buyer power and responsible business as the driving force (Compa, 2008). Corporations usually adhere to external codes, established in multilateral government settings or by governments or NGO's or create internal codes which are self-initiated and self-supervised (Compa & Hinchliffe-Darricarrère, 1995, 669-675).

Literature highlight that codes without enforcement and monitoring will not improve the level of responsible behavior within the organization (*ibid*) and argue that COC without enforcement is merely a public relations smokescreen (Klein, 2000). There is also a financial aspect in adopting COC as it could be viewed as a tool to attract customers and generate more business (Hammann, Habisch, & Pechlaner, 2009). COC is voluntary and do not require transparency when applied (Yu, 2009). Empirical research also demonstrate that COC have limited impact on improving process rights such as the right to form associations and collective bargaining while having more impact on outcome standards such as health and safety (Egelz-Zanden & Merk, 2013). Some scholars argue that a reason for this is that

corporations will be less enthusiastic about monitoring the right to join associations and collective bargaining as it can be viewed as mean to lessen corporate control (Anner M. , 2012). In conclusion, COC in regard to labor rights is viewed as a part of a more extensive movement of CSR based on the notion that corporations are the dominant entities of the planet – and must therefore address socio and economic problems facing civilization (Compa & Hinchliffe-Darricarrère, 1995, 668).

3.3. Collective bargaining

The birth of collective bargaining goes back to the industrial revolution, a time of transition to new manufacturing processes from rural agrarian societies to urban and industrial in Western Europe and North America and other parts of the world (Kaufman, 2004). The demographic change, people moving from the countryside to cities, resulted in a steadily growing workforce in the factories. These factory workers, as a response to the new intensified production methods, set up organizations capable of representing their interests to the employer during a time with increased competitive pressure (Windmuller, 1987). These organizations had the power to pull out the majority of workers in support of their demands which left employers with the choice of bargaining with the organizations or loose production and revenue due to strikes. The known origins of collective bargaining was the shift from the earlier unequal bargaining power in employment relations to a more balanced relationship. Furthermore, low wages and other negative consequences of increased competition were addressed in collective agreements by adopting a common rule – standard rates of wages and conditions of work for employees depending on factory, trade and industry (Hayter, 2011, 2).

Today, collective bargaining is known as the negotiations between the employer and workers with the aim to settle on a collective agreement which will oversee the employment relationship (Hayter, 2011, 1). Collective bargaining is a process of mutual decision-making and therefore differ from individual contracts and independent decision made by employers. Collective bargaining covers working conditions such as working time and wages, referring to the rights and responsibilities of both respective groups (*ibid*). ILO defines collective bargaining as “all negotiations which take place between an employer, a group of employers or one or more employers’ organization, on the one hand, and one or more workers’ organizations, on the other for:

- a) determining working conditions and terms of employment; and/or
- b) regulating relations between employers and workers; and/or
- c) regulating relations between employers or their organizations and a workers organizations (ILO convention No.154, article 2)”.

Collective bargaining is a fundamental right recognized in various ILO conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and function to empower and enable workers to create and sustain a change in their working conditions (Egelz-Zanden & Merk, 2013). As being recognized as a universal right, collective bargaining is separated from labor standards which can be modified by government policies. For example, minimum wage is a standard and can be changed by government decisions while the right of collective bargaining is a non-negotiable right and therefore guarantee specific procedures (Anner M. , 2012). Trade unions identify the right of collective bargaining as the most pressing rights stressing that when the unions’ collective

muscle is recognized, other changes concerning labor rights will flow from there (Braun & Gearhart, 2004).

3.4. Workers' voice

Voice is a term which is frequently used in the literature in human resource management and industrial relations and have been suggested to historically mean collective bargaining (Dundon *et al*, 2004). Prosser, a former general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union argue that "collective voice achieved what the lone voice could never do: it humanises and civilises the workplace, arguing that collective representation is the foundation of a partnership relationship that brings positive benefits for business" (Prosser, 2001). Advocates of trade unions often combined the voice term with industrial democracy stating that workers at the time, in the late 19th century, were forced to sell their labour as a commodity and due to competitive capitalism they had no other option than accept poverty wages and long workdays with no security (Kaufman, 2013, 5). History has repeatedly shown that when humans are treated as commodities and social justice is disrupted uprising and rebellion will take place hence the need for unions to use collective bargaining to restore the balance of bargaining power in the labour market and to protect the workers (*ibid*). Hirschman (1970) argues that a human has two possible responses to disappointment - to voice or exit. The concept was developed firstly for consumers where he argued that if companies failed to listen to the voice of the consumers they would lose them to competitors. The concept has since then been applied in multiple studies in relation to the workplace, demonstrating that when workers' have an effective voice and can change things they are more loyal to their employer. A loyal employee is financially beneficial for the business (Freeman, Bozall, & Haynes, 2007). Increased workers' voice is a key tool to reduce absenteeism and turnover or what also is referred to as high performance workplace (*ibid*). Furthermore, The MacLeod Report to the British Government argue that one key drivers of workers' engagement is workers' voice stating,

"An effective and empowered employee voice – employees' views are being sought out; they are listened to and see that their opinion count and make a difference. They speak out and challenge where appropriate. A strong listening and responsiveness permeates the organisation, enabled by effective communication" (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009, 75).

McCabe and Lewin puts forward four types of workers' voice all involving due process for grievance resolution. Firstly, ombudsman which serves as a channel for workers' voice. The ombudsman role is to listen to grievances and offer guidance and help in how to resolve the problem. The second type is mediation where the mediator assist the two parties in a dispute. The mediator does not make any final decisions but instead guide and encourage solutions for employees which later make the resolving decision. The third type is arbitration which is viewed as the last step in a grievance procedure and must adhere employee standards, policies and procedures. The arbitrator can make the final binding decision and is therefore different from the two first types of workers' voice (McCabe & Lewin, 1992).

Armstrong (2012) describes two other types of voice beyond grievance procedure: representative participation and upward problem solving. Representative participation involves a formal mechanism of collective representation. It involves matters of joint interests and can be described as a partnership between employer and employee, solving problems in a cooperative fashion. Examples of representative participation are trade unions or worker representative committees where workers' voice are being heard through an established

channel. Upward problem solving is based on a teambuilding perspective where two way communication between managers and employee groups that together come up and suggest ideas rather than the groups independently suggest changes to the employer which usually reward them. Another example of upward problem solving is the use of attitude surveys seeking employee opinion. This kind of employee is expressed through questionnaire and suggestions forms on a direct level - employee to employer (Armstrong, 2012)

3.5. Social dialogue

The ILO defines social dialogue as *“all types of negotiation, consultation or information sharing among representatives of governments, employers and workers, or between those employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy”* (International Labour Office: Governance and Tripartism Dept, 2013, 12). Social dialogue can be a tripartite process involving the government as a formal party to the discussion or a bipartite process concerning the dialogue between labour and management. These groups can involve trade unions and employer organizations and can have both direct and indirect government participation. Furthermore, social dialogue can be institutionalized or informal or both and can occur on local, regional and national level (International Labour Office, 2016).

The three main activates of social dialogue are: negotiation, consultation and information sharing (International Labour Office, 2016, 3). Negotiation, or collective bargaining, is a vital component of social dialogue and one of the most common forms. It can occur on all levels, from sectoral level to multinational level. Consultation involves two or three parties engaging by exchanging views aiming to land in a more in-depth dialogue. While some of these parties are solely consultative and informative others have the right to decide on agreements which are binding on the parties. Lastly, information sharing is the most basic activity for effective social dialogue. No dialogue or discussion need to take place in this activity - but it is still a vital element in supporting dialogue and decision making (International Labour Office, 2016).

For this this study the focus will be on social dialogue merely at the workplace, taking place between workers and management inside a factory. This mean that there are no outsiders' involved in the process. Workers representatives, the voice of the workers, are defined in ILO Convention No. 135 (b) which state:

“For the purpose of this Convention the term workers representatives means persons who are recognized as such under national law or practice, whether they are –

- (a) Trade unions representatives, namely representatives designated or elected by trade unions or by member of such unions; or
- (b) elected representatives, namely, representatives who are freely elected by the workers of the undertaking on accordance with provisions of national laws or regulations or of collective agreements and whose functions do not include activities which are recognized as the exclusive prerogative of trade unions in the countries concerned”**

According to the law in Bangladesh negotiations can only be done by trade unions and in some cases Workers Welfare Associations – both recognized collective bargaining agents. Therefore the role of elected members of PC is to promote consultation and information

sharing. In the Bangladeshi RMG-sector, the PC is the forum where worker representatives and the management meet, consult and share information.

3.6. Social Practice Theory

SPT explains human behaviour through social practices. Traditionally, human behaviour was addressed either as *homo economicus* or *homo sociologicus* (Reckwitz, 2002). *Homo economicus* explains humans as an ideal clear minded agent who acts to maximise utility and can therefore explain existing social order as the outcome of an individual's intentions. *Homo sociologicus*, on the other hand, is more concerned with the society's accepted norms and rules, stating that humans act to pursue social roles and not only selfish interests (Schatzki, 2001). A number of critics have responded to these two opposing understandings of human behaviour deeming them as too general and simplistic. This initiated new ideas of human actions and social order resulted in the establishment of SPT – a theory which combined individuals with social constructs (Shove, 2012; Reckwitz, 2002). In SPT, practices are much more than the action itself. Reckwitz explains practices such as “*forms of bodily activates, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge*” (Reckwitz, 2002, 249). In this view, humans can be seen as “*carriers of practices*” (Spotswood, 2015). Spotswood (2015) provides the example of SPT in the context of an individual playing football stating that when analysing the football player's behaviour using SPT, the game and the rules are of more importance more than the individual player.

Behaviour and behaviour change are complex which is why for this study's analysis purposes, Shove's three element model (figure 1) deemed the most accommodating. According to Shove (2012), three elements must exist in order for a practice to exist: Materials, competence and meanings. For a practice to become successful, these elements must be interconnected to one other and thereafter sustained by a circuit of reproduction.

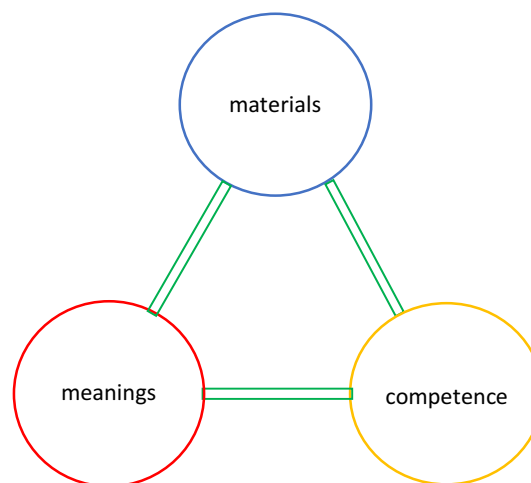


Fig. 1. Elements of practice (Shove, 2012, 14).

Materials are tangible entities which are a necessity for a practice to exist (Spotswood, 2015). Physical things in SPT do not merely have symbolic meaning but are closely connected to our identities and reproduction of everyday life (Shove & Pantzer, 2005). The role of materials in

every human's life is vast and continuously increases with time. Examples of materials are tools, infrastructure and technologies (Shove & Pantzar, 2012). Practitioners use different materials in order to perform a practice but are very much dependent on skills and shared values. If the activity requires other individuals to be carried out, such as playing football, a group can develop characteristic features (Röpke, 2009). As materials are necessary for a practice to exist, they must be changed or created when not resulting in the desired behaviour. Nudging is a technique used to push people to act a certain way, conceiving a hard behaviour more attractive to pursue (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). By nudging one makes alterations in the physical environment to "help" the individual to do "right" rather than "wrong" (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz, 2014).

Competence describes "multiple forms of understanding and knowledgeability" meaning the skill needed to perform or carry out the practice (Spotswood, Chatterton, Tapp, & Williams, 2015). Competence includes know-how, techniques and skills (Shove & Pantzar, 2012). The "carrier of practice related beliefs" are generic competence such as the ability to write while other kinds of competence are more specialized (Röpke, 2009). Competences are embodied in individuals performing the task and are therefore seen as a part of the practice (*ibid*). Furthermore, competence will determine how rapidly an individual will engage in the practice (Shove, 2012) which demonstrates why education should be stressed when aiming for people to adopt a certain behaviour. Successful behaviour change is not solely about performing the practice but about performing it in the right way (Rousta & Ekström, 2013).

Meanings are context dependent. Aspirations, ideas and attitudes linked to practices, behaviours and materials all differ due to cultural differences, gender and experiences. Meanings are shared values of what is socially expected (Shove & Pantzer, 2005). The element of meaning aims to make sense of the practice and look at what different emotions and beliefs are related to the activity. Why do certain individuals like or dislike the activity etc. In this sense the practitioner becomes the practice (Röpke, 2009). In other words, the practitioners are belonging to the practice.

3.7. A conceptual framework

When improving Social dialogue in factories, important learnings can be made in identifying how practices are created, challenged and discontinued. SPT looks at human behaviour through every day activities (practices) made up by interrelated elements here categorized as materials, competence and meanings (Shove *et al.*, 2012). The model (figure 2) below has been empirically helpful in research on behaviour change and social marketing (Spotswood *et al.*, 2015; Piscicelli *et al.*, 2014; Hargreaves, 2011). However, the model has not yet been applied to the process of introducing collective bargaining or social dialogue practices in factories.

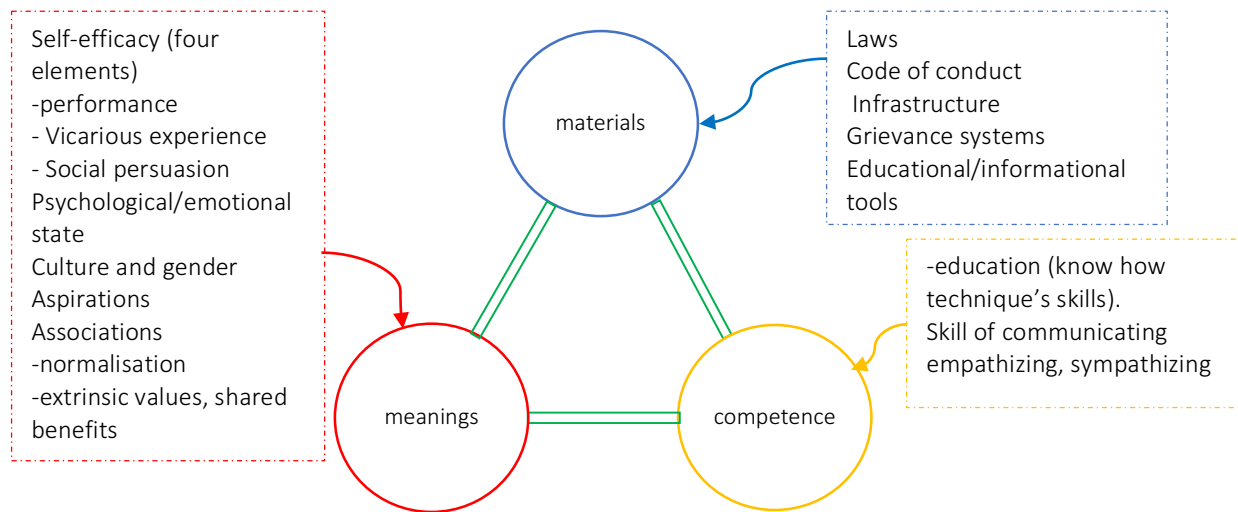


Fig. 2. Conceptual framework (based on Shove, 2012, 14, modified by the author).

Figure 2, aim to illustrate what elements needed to be in place and interact with each other for establishing effective social dialogue practises at the workplace. The analysis of the interconnection of the three elements are crucial and equally important as the elements themselves. In SPT, identifying the elements and their relationships will provide information about practices, how they change and develop over time. (Hargreaves, 2011). Practices are never constant but continuously developing as elements and the interaction between them change together with the people carrying out the practice (Watson, 2012) SPT provide a multidisciplinary view on social dialogue focusing on: legislation and education; Skills and know-how and lastly attitudes and meaning.

4. Background for the empirical study

This chapter describe the RMG-industry in Bangladesh followed by description of H&M's economic and political influences in the country. This chapter also describe how the legal framework in Bangladesh affect the practice of social dialogue.

4.1. Bangladesh Readymade-Garment industry

The RMG-industry in Bangladesh employ approximately 4 million workers in 5600 factories (www, Swedwatch, 1, 2014) and account for 80 percent of the export earnings of the country (Asian Center for Development, 2015). The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Associations (BGMEA), being the most influential trade body in Bangladesh recently stated that the industry has played a key role in decreasing poverty “through skills development and employment generation” (Human Rights Watch, 2015, 17). The BGMEA have over 5600 members where of 4225 are active as of December year 2014 (Asian Center for Development, 2015). The Bangladeshi garment industry contribute with more than 13.5 percent of the total gross domestic product and bringing over 19 billion dollars to the country and its people. The sector is with other words crucial for the population of 150 million people living in Bangladesh (Mariani & Valenti, 2013, 9).

Today, 60 percent of the export goes to Europe while the US stand for 24 percent (Mariani & Valenti, 2013, 9). Russia China and Brazil's shares rapidly increased 20 percent from the 2011-12 period to the 2012-2013 period landing at a total of 10 percent (*ibid*). The international corporations sourcing their garment in Bangladesh do this first and foremost because of the country's cheap labour force. Bangladesh have specialized in RMG which does not require a highly trained workforce allowing the industry to keep the salaries competitively low (*ibid*). The sector is often described as a success story and Bangladesh is currently recognized as a lower-middle income country (The World Bank, 2015) aiming to become a middle-income country by 2021, the same year they celebrate 50 years of independence (Rahman, 2015). Furthermore, the garment sector in Bangladesh have been recognized to promote female empowerment, and even though the minimum wage is only 38 dollar/month many women argue that a job in the textile sector have provided them with a voice (World Policy Organization, 2013). Unfortunately, the improved economic situation and the female empowerment have been accompanied with a less positive reality. The many reports on violations of human rights, poor working conditions and fatal factory accidents have given the country a poor reputation and is considered a real threat against a desired expansion of the sector, which by many is viewed as lifeline out of poverty (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

The current conditions in the Bangladeshi garment sector are still very grim but serious measures are being taken in order to improve the situations for the workers as well restoring its international reputation in the garment sector (Brown, 2015). Up to date, Bangladesh have ratified 33 ILO conventions which include 7 out of 8 fundamental conventions (www, ilo, 3, 2016). The country also has The 2006 Labour Act which aim to protect workers' rights but have been criticised for poor implementation and enforcement. To strengthen the legal provisions, the government has started labour law reform through tripartite consultative process (The International Labour Organization, 2012, 2). An ILO-project named “Improving Working Conditions in the Reade-Made Garment Sector” was designed to support the National Tripartite plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity and also asked the government to address other risk factors in the sector, resulting in labour amendments being made to the previous tedious union registration criteria (www, better work, 1, 2015). The

union situation is still far from developed and union activists are still reported being threatened or beaten. The total number of active unions reported in 2015 were 437 which is considering the large industry a low number representing only 5 percent of the RMG-workers (Westervelt, 2015). Corruption is common, and many of the existing unions have close ties with factory owners and politicians (Transparency International Bangladesh, 2016). Bangladesh ranks 145 out of 174 countries in the Corruption Perception Index of Transparency International which has played a major role in the re-occurring accidents in the RMG-sector (*ibid*, 7).

4.2. The Tazreen Fashion Fire and Rana Plaza Collapse

The Tazreen Fashion Factory was a nine story building that produced garment for large brands such as Walmart, Li & Fung, Sears, Dickies and Disney (Clean Clothes Organization, 2015). The factory, located in the outskirts of Dhaka, opened in 2010 and employed over 1500 workers. The factory fire, which was the deadliest in Bangladesh history, broke out the 24th of November 2012 killing 117 people and injuring over 200 (Ahmed, 2012). One main reason to the high number of deaths was the fact that the fire occurred on the first floor, trapping workers inside the building. The fire spread rapidly due to the large amount of yarn stored in the warehouse on the first floor (Bajaj, 2012) and was caused by short circuit. The fire department operations director stated however that it was not the fire itself that caused so many deaths fire the absence of safety measures taken by the supplier. (NBC News, 2012).

The Rana Plaza collapse occurred only five months after the Tazreen fire, 24th of April 2013, in which more than a thousand people lost their lives. The accident ranks as the world's worst garment factory accident and represent a change in legal accountability in the Bangladeshi RMG-industry. The eight story building, located in Savar area, contained five RMG-factories on the top floors all supplying to large international fashion brands (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The day before the collapse a government inspector had ordered the building to be evacuated due to large cracks appearing in the walls, an order which was dismissed by the factory managers who threatened workers with being fired if they did not enter the building and continued working. After a power cut around 9am the building started shaking followed by the collapse taking more than 1100 lives and injuring over 2000 people (*ibid*).

What these two accidents had in common were poor working conditions and the failure in addressing workers' safety and wellbeing. The organization Human Rights Watch states that if workers in Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashion Factory had more of a voice, deaths and injuries could have been prevented (Human Rights Watch, 2015, s. 4). Firstly, none of the factories had trade unions which according to the same report made workers more vulnerable to managers' threats ordering them to remain in the two buildings. With active unions, workers would most likely be more comfortable in pointing out safety violations such as lack of fire escapes and blocked exits (*ibid*). The stakeholders in the RMG-sector post Rana Plaza mindset seem to be that without workers' voice and power to influence their working situation, employees are facing issues such as poor workplace safety, long working hours, and wage and job insecurity leading to accidents such as Rana Plaza and the Dhaka fire.

4.3. H&M in Bangladesh

H&M is the largest single buyer of RMG in Bangladesh as well as the largest H&M fashion retailer in the world. The brand has 299 manufacturing suppliers in the country whereof 56 are graded by H&M as Platinum or Gold, meaning that they are preferred suppliers and

strategic partners. H&M has stated that Platinum and gold suppliers make approximately 60 percent of the H&M's garments, and have a long term partnership with the company (Clean Clothes Campaign; International Labor Rights Forum; Maquila Solidarity Network; Workers rights Consortium, 2015). Due to their economic influence on the RMG-industry, the largest private manufacturing and labor intense sector in Bangladesh, H&M's and other large fashion brands demands and expectations are treated with high priority. H&M have described Bangladesh as one of their most important production markets and are aware of their substantial role in the country's economy (IndustriALL, 2015).

The right to form and join associations and the right to bargain collectively are both declared in H&M's code of conduct which refer to the ILO conventions 87, 98 and 135 (www, ilo, 4, 1996-2016).

“All employees have the right to form or join associations of their own choosing, and to bargain collectively. H&M does not accept disciplinary or discriminatory actions from the employer against employees who choose to peacefully and lawfully organize or join an association (H&M, 2009)”

H&M did not source any garment from Tazreen Fashion Factory or Rana Plaza but have donated over US\$ 100,000 to the victims of the disaster (Smith, 2014). In addition, H&M have, together with 150 other brands, signed the Bangladesh Accord in Fire and Building Safety which is legal document aiming to improve the safety conditions in the textile industry. The agreement was a response to the Rana Plaza building collapse and involve global brands, retailers and trade unions and actively works to improve the working conditions in approximately 1,600 factories in Bangladesh (www, H&M, 4, 2013; Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, 2015)

Since the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza amongst other workplace related issues highlighted by human rights organizations and the media, H&M have publicly made several statements about the importance of the right of collective bargaining in their factories in Bangladesh. Anna Gedda, Social Sustainable Manager at H&M, stated in 2014 that “workers ability to organize and negotiate about their rights is key to improve working conditions which is why we take violations in this area so seriously (www, Danwatch, 1, 2014)” When workers can negotiate their rights and responsibilities it will improve working conditions in the factories, according to H&M (*Ibid*). Furthermore, H&M's CEO Karl-Johan Persson stated recently that “well-functioning industrial relations including collective bargaining are key to achieving fair living wages and improved working conditions in our supply chain (IndustriALL, 2015)”. This clearly demonstrates how H&M is also publicly communicating their efforts in strengthening collective bargaining in their factories. As the labor movement is still in its cradle, influential global brands such as H&M stress the importance of social dialogue in in the factories, viewing it as the first step in facilitating better communication and improving conflict resolution through dialogue in the factories.

4.4. Social dialogue in Bangladesh

Only a few months after the Rana Plaza collapse (see chapter 4.2) a new labour law bill was passed with amendments to a total of 87 sections of the Labor Act of 2006 (Rise, 2013). A democratic election of a PC became a legal requirement and is today viewed as the foundation for social dialogue at the workplace. Important to note is that a PC is not a forum for workers, but a structure where management and workers discuss how to improve the factory. PCs do

not engage in collective bargaining and negotiation as those are exclusive activities for the trade unions. Social Dialogue in Bangladesh can take place at three different levels of the factory; PC, Safety committee and the Canteen management committee, all three having different roles in regards to social dialogue.

The Bangladesh Labor Act, 2006, Section 206 (1)

The functions of the participation committee shall be to inculcate and develop sense of belonging and workers commitment and, in particular –

- a) To Endeavour to promote mutual trust, understanding and co-operation between the employer and the workers;*
- b) To ensure application of labour laws;*
- c) To foster a sense of discipline and to improve and maintain safety, occupational health and working condition;*
- d) To encourage vocational training, workers' education and family welfare training;*
- e) To adopt measures for improvement of welfare services for the workers and their families;*
- f) To fulfil production target, improve productivity, reduce production cost and wastes and raise quality of products.*

The amendment to Bangladesh Labour Act in 2013 (section 202)

Section 205 (6KA) if there is no trade union in any establishment, worker representatives in the participation committee shall conduct the activities related to workers interest till a trade union is formed in that establishment.

As democratic elections of PCs are a requirement according to Bangladeshi law, H&M have promoted their social dialogue project to their suppliers, as they believe it is expected of H&Ms business partners to be in the forefront (Internal document, leadership in social dialogue project, 2016).

5. Empirics

In this chapter the empirical results are presented. The results are derived from interviews and documents and aim to explain how H&M work with social dialogue. It also presents the result of the interviews focusing on the garments workers' knowledge experiences and attitudes regarding social dialogue.

5.1. H&M Social Dialogue Project

The following sections describe the character of H&Ms Social Dialogue Project in Bangladesh and give an overview of key activities in the Project. The information is gathered from H&Ms internal documents.

5.1.1 The Project

H&M conducted a social dialogue pilot project in Bangladesh between 2012 and 2013, inviting five suppliers to participate. H&Ms internal evaluation of the project highlighted positive impact in regard to increased understanding (both workers and management) of the importance of congenial industrial relations. Workers, supervisors and managers in the participating factories considered the techniques of social dialogue as effective and the elected worker representative solved many of the workers' problems which earlier was dealt with by the management. The impacts recorded of the pilot phase was increased confidence on elected representatives, more grievances solved through elected representatives and improved communication between worker and management.

H&M then initiated the Leadership in Social Dialogue Project (from now H&Ms social dialogue project) expecting to run from 2014-2018. The aim of the project is to enable communication at the workplace through social dialogue. Furthermore, H&M have communicated that they strive to strengthen the PC to become a legitimize tool of communication and guarantee efficient worker representatives through democratic elections. H&M view social dialogue as a proven method for matured industrial representation and the suppliers participating in the project will receive full support from H&M in regard to implementation and cost.

H&M rollout plan for the social dialogue project is to engage 60 factories each year, three groups comprising 20 factories at the time. The project duration is 3-4 months in each factory and H&M aim to have all their factories on-board by 2018. Currently, (2016-02-19) a total of 128 factories are participating and over 78 factories have elected worker representatives to the PC. Furthermore, over 1000 elected worker representatives and 450 PC management representatives have received training from in social dialogue by H&M. The H&M training is taking place outside the factories at a venue not far located from the industries (Internal document, leadership in social dialogue project, 2016).

Expected outcomes voiced by H&M are increased knowledge about social dialogue mechanisms and rights and responsibilities at the workplace, leading to a more positive relation between worker and management. Moreover, it is expected that the project will help reduce worker turnover and absenteeism which in the long run will reduce costs.

5.1.2 Activities

H&M's social dialogue training can be divided in two sections. Firstly, the activities taking place prior the election followed by the activities for the elected members of the PC.

Before the PC election, H&M firstly conduct training with managers including Compliance, Admin, Directors, HR (among other), briefing them about the project's objectives. During that day H&M also introduce the business case of working with social dialogue and employee engagement. There is also a full day of supervisor training where the project is introduced and their own role during the project implementation is being highlighted. After the briefing of management and supervisors, film viewing for workers, focusing on increasing awareness of functions of PC takes place. This film shall be viewed by all workers and the duration of the process depends on the number of workers in the factory. Lastly, when all workers' have viewed the film the factory will elect worker representatives for the PC. H&M's objective of a transparent election is to influence its capability to establish trust between the general worker, worker representatives and the management.

After the election a new phase of the project starts. The duration of the training of the newly elected PC worker representatives are four days and H&M combine representatives from different factories in their trainings. The learning objectives stated by H&M are: understanding the role as a member of the PC which includes their rights and responsibilities. H&M also highlight the importance to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes fitted for a representative as well as improving communication skills with management and general workers. The elected PC management representative goes through one day of training, sharing the same objectives as above. Furthermore, there is one day of training for the member secretary and four days of training of PC worker vice-chairman in order to understand their responsibilities, rights and as well as to develop leadership qualities. Lastly, there will be half day combined training at the participating factory, where all the elected members of the PC must be present in order to understand standard procedure of a PC meeting.

5.1.3 Training methodology

H&M's project consultant in the Leadership in Social Dialogue Project is Just Solutions Network (JSN). JSN specialize in social dialogue and have worked with other large brands such as Nike and Li and Fung. JSN trainers conduct H&M's management training and briefing and have developed the training modules, the material and method used in the project. The rest of the trainings are conducted by H&M's local staff who gone through a training of trainer programme. According to JSN they have developed a training methodology which is practical and interactive - built upon action learning. The training involve "kinetic pedagogy", involving all participants with dramas and role play. Props are used both by trainers and the participant. The training model is built on the idea that new information, skills and mindset change will result in change in behaviour.

5.2. Workers experience

The following sections represent issues raised by workers concerning social dialogue during the interviews.

5.2.1 Grievance systems

When faced with a work related issue such as too high production pressure, dirty washrooms or requests on receiving leave there are different systems workers can use in order to express their voice. When the respondents were asked which grievance system they preferred using at their factory, the majority described worker representatives and welfare officers as the most efficient mechanisms of solving a work related issue. The workers viewed the welfare officer and the worker representative as a more direct way of communication than other systems such as suggestion boxes and helplines.

Many of the respondents stressed that supervisors and the management were too occupied with production and therefore did not have time or interest to listen to the workers problems (Respondents 1,2,3,5,7,9,12 &13).

One of the respondents said that management does not think workers' have the right to complain saying that there can be negative reactions from the management if one voice a problem (Respondent 9).

“The management say that you have no complain. If you do not reach the production target you will have to resign” (Respondent 11).

“My factory has a welfare department but they are not helping. My supervisor say that they are working for the factory so they cannot decide (on the issue) without the management approval” (Respondent 7).

“The worker representatives are picked by the managers. So they are not chosen by us” (Respondent 10).

“The (worker) representative is more useful for help. Supervisors, line chiefs or other kind of management are not very helpful. There is always pressure from production” (Respondent 1).

On the same note, some of the respondents said that they preferred to talk to the worker representative over the manager but due to lack of availability it was sometime more efficient to talk to the immediate supervisor (Respondent 9,12 &16)

“We have one (worker representative) on our floor. We are 400 people, and we all are going to that one representative. So, sometime they can support us and sometimes they do not. Sometimes there is no time, then we go the management” (Respondent 9).

The same issue was voiced when discussing the welfare officers, which all respondents identified as a good grievance channel, but not easily accessible. On the contrary, workers employed in factories with more than one elected worker representative on their floor expressed the opposite. Instead, they stressed that it was more efficient to talk to the worker representative as they are easily accessible and someone they personally knew.

“I talk to the worker representative because there are 7-10 members on each floor. They talk to the management and usually the issue is solved” (Respondent 20).

All the respondents except one had used suggestion boxes to bring up issues to the management but did not prefer to use that mechanism based on the lack transparency. Two workers voiced how one never received any information about the issues placed in the suggestion box and believed that the management simply did not bother dealing with them (Respondents 6 & 8).

“If we have a problem we use the suggestion box, but we think the management is cutting up (hand gesture like a scissors) the suggestions” (Respondent 6)

“Every month they open the box and the Worker Participation Committee and management both go through the box together. But we never get any feedback or information about if they solved it. We do not know” (Respondent 8).

Furthermore, all of the workers were aware of existence of help lines but only a few had used them for raising smaller issues.

5.2.2 Education and information

When asking the respondents on what kind of information or education they had received prior nominating and electing a worker representative the answer varied widely. The majority had been informed that a nomination and election was coming up by the welfare officer or casually from co-workers. None of the workers had received any class room training prior to the election but one worker had viewed a film describing workers’ rights and responsibilities, which covered the process of nominating, electing a worker representative as well as the duties of a worker representatives (Respondent 7).

Respondents interviewed at the factory facility said they received useful information prior the election, helping them making an educated choice. Welfare officer and the admin officer had called for a meeting saying that they should elect a person who can solve workers’ problems’ and be the medium between workers’ and the management (Respondent 19,20, 22,25)

A few workers interviewed at AWAJ expressed discontent in only finding out the day before than an election was going to take place (Respondents 2 & 5).

“The management came and told us, tomorrow is an election on your floor and there will be two candidates. Tomorrow you are all invited in the election so decide who you want to vote for. This is not right” (Respondent 5).

One worker interviewed at AWAJ described that one day there was a meeting where they were informed that they now had a new worker representative and if they had any issues or questions they should approach that person. There were no information or education prior that regarding worker representatives or the election process (Respondent 6).

Two respondents at AWAJ said they received training and information about health and safety and worker representatives’ processes when global buyers (person employed to purchase materials for a large retail business) were scheduled to visit (Respondent 14 & 15).

“When a buyer is coming they (the management) are looking if everything is okay. They are checking extra that everything is okay a day before audit” (Respondent 14)

“Our factory have a speaker that will tell us that a buyer is coming tomorrow so please use the right gear (referring to personal protective equipment)” (Respondent 15).

When asked about the education the worker representatives had received after being elected all interviewed worker representatives stated that they had received education in problem solving and how to talk to the management (Respondent 2, 13 17 & 18). One respondent from the factory stated that the education was very inspiring mentioning that one trainer had given the example of famous female leaders in Bangladesh, saying that if she can do it, you can do it as well (Respondent 17). When asked about who conducted the training all except two answered that the management together with the welfare officer had been in charge. The other two had not received training at their factories but at AWAJ-foundation (Respondent 2 & 13).

One supervisors from the factory said that she received training in how to be more understanding of the workers and that they should ask them in a friendly manner about their problem and how to solve it (Respondent 19).

5.2.3 Qualities of a worker representative

When asked to describe the perfect worker representative the majority of workers said the he or she must have a strong voice. It was also clearly important that the representative came from the workers, with other words representing them and understanding the issues they were going through stating that a worker representative *“want what is best for the workers”* and should be *“supportive of the workers”*. A large number of the respondents stressed the importance of communication skills and having the ability to make managers understand their issues. One stated that the worker representative should have the guts to talk to the high officials (Respondent 24) and one said that the worker representative should be passing on knowledge to the workers, feeling obliged to enlighten others (Respondent 23).

Many respondents also described a qualified worker representative as educated and knowledgeable. Two respondent wanted their representatives to be knowledgeable about the law (Respondent 2 & 27). Being a hard worker or “workaholic” were also characteristic’s mentioned during the interviews (Respondent 19, 22 & 25).

Charismatic, empathic and friendly were also important characteristics according to the respondent as workers feel more comfortable discussing issues with an understanding person. One person interviewed at the factory facility stated that a workers representative *“should respect equality between genders so that he can freely talk to every one of every age, gender and race”* (Respondent 18).

When asking the supervisors for the perspective on what characteristics they valued in a worker representative the two respondents answered that they should be aware of what is happening around them (Respondent 19 & 22) One respondent stated that a worker representative must understand the duties of the supervisor so when he or she is absence, the worker representative can make sure workers do not lag off. (Respondent 22). One supervisor stated that a worker representative should be very empathic, friendly and charismatic so workers feel comfortable talking to them (Respondent 19)

5.2.4 The purpose of the participation committee

The majority of the respondents stated that the role of the worker representative is to be a bridge between workers and managers. *“Workers cannot always talk to the management about their problems individually so it easier for them (worker representatives) to solve and discuss problems with the management”* (Respondent 24). One worker said that managers and workers look at the worker representatives the same way, saying that both sides want someone who are good at communicating and experienced, as they will often talk to the buyers (Respondent 8). Another pointed out that a worker representatives have connections and contacts and can therefor solve problems better than the average worker (Respondent 20).

When asking a supervisor about the main objective of worker representatives she stated that they are very important at the factory. Worker representatives’ advantage is that workers listen to them more because they think that they are one of them (referring to workers). She continued explaining that when supervisors say something, workers think it is because they want them to work more. The worker representative can convince them about a problem and make workers do things they would not do if the supervisor asked. Worker representatives can back up and strengthen the voice of the supervisor. This is why the PC and worker representation are so important (Respondent 22)

5.2.5 Positive experiences

When asked to give examples of times issues were solved after approaching a worker representative, all workers interviewed at the factory had examples of a positive outcome except one worker who stated that he never approached a worker representative as he never faced any difficulties (Respondent 25). At AWAJ, respondents 14, 11 and 1 stated that issues been solved with the help of worker representatives. Successful problem solving by trade unions were expressed by four respondents interviewed at AWAJ Foundation (Respondents 2, 14, 13 & 16). The majority of the respondents at AWAJ did however voice that they did not have any good experiences from approaching the worker representative, adding comments such as *“they are there for the management”* (Respondent 1).

One interviewed supervisor was really proud over being the only female supervisor on her floor of 700 workers. She said that workers expressed admiration about that she use to be a worker and that she now has stepped up becoming a supervisor, saying that the workers *“want to be like me”* She also said that general workers are very curious about the training the supervisor and worker representatives receive and ask for advice (Respondent 19).

One supervisor shared a personal story about her marriage which was not accepted by her in-laws. The situation tortured her very much and she felt emotionally unstable and therefore she could not perform well at work. She was helped by her supervisor and that inspired her to become a supervisor. She said that if she notices that workers are not feeling well she will talk to them or tell them to go for a walk for 30 minutes or so. *“Usually they feel better when they come back”* (Respondent 22). Another worker shared how grateful she was to a supervisor who gave her 15 days off to go and write an exam in her hometown, saying that it meant a lot to her to get time off for school (Respondent 23).

All respondents expressed that being a worker representative comes with great responsibilities and when the respondents were asked if they wanted to be a worker representative all except one said yes. The majority of the respondents explained that they were inspired to one day

become a worker representative when realizing that they can help their co-workers solving issues.

One worker representative said that after being elected by his co-worker he strongly felt that he would never be irresponsible to them, stressing that solving workers' issues is his responsibility. The same worker said that he actually did not want to become a worker representative at first but his co-workers wanted him because they felt very comfortable with him. They believed that he could communicate with the top management and co-workers (Respondent 18).

6. Analysis

In this chapter the empirical findings are analyzed with the help of selected terms and the conceptual framework presented in chapter 3. The analysis will focus on the concept of workers' voice and the three elements of social practice theory; materials, competence and meanings.

6.1. Workers' Voice

In order for social dialogue to take place at the workplace, workers should feel that they have a voice or it will result in a one party monolog. As identified in chapter 3.4 there are different kinds of mechanisms for enabling workers voice. The two broad categories are upward problem solving and representative participation. H&M's social dialogue project would fall in the second category, as it is referring to practices where worker representatives meet managers on scheduled basis. Upward problem solving strategies include suggestion boxes, helpline, welfare officer and two-way communication between worker and immediate supervisor. The main difference between these two methods is that while representative participation is not direct between individual worker and managements but through representatives, upward problem solving operate direct between workers and management. The objective for corporations to enable workers' voice is to improve performance and productivity. When analysing the key activities of H&M's social dialogue training (see chapter 5.1.2.) there many exercises with the objective to improve communication between worker and management. For example, when looking at the training for newly elected worker representatives the focus is on developing communication skills with both management and workers, as well as develop skills, knowledge and attitudes needed of a representative. Also, the film viewing taking place prior the election is an important element of social dialogue as it is the only source of information the general workers will receive from H&M about the functions of the PC and the election process. The purpose of the film, according to H&M, is to provide awareness. This is important, as in order for workers to be able to make an educated decision in who to elect as their voice, one must be informed properly. Furthermore, H&M have recognized that the actual election is an important part of promoting workers' voice, as transparency and trust are vital elements in order for workers to feel comfortable in raising issues with representatives. According to H&M, a transparent election builds trust between workers, worker representatives and the management.

The importance of trust and feeling similar to the representative was highlighted during the interviews as workers who felt that a representative was "one of them" preferred worker representatives as a channel for grievances. The favoured mechanism for employee voice when facing a work related problem was to approach someone similar to themselves, elected by them. When asked why this was important, the answer was that "only a worker understands workers' issues". Having a strong voice was also one of the characteristics the respondents identified as important when describing the perfect worker representative. Moreover, already elected representatives pointed out that being the workers' representative is a great responsibly as co-workers thought that they could communicate with the top managers and co-workers. In addition, communication skills were one of the most mentioned features when describing the perfect worker representative.

The workers who did not express trust in their worker representative believed that the representative was selected by the management for the management purposes. "He is not one of the workers", one worker pointed out i.e. not representing the workers voice. Another

worker said that he had asked for help but received the response that the representative had the same problem and could not help. Both examples demonstrate the importance of trust and transparency as workers tend to not use grievance mechanisms if they do not have trust in them. They also, based on the question on what grievance system they prefer using, favour face to face communication (worker representative, welfare officer) over suggestions boxes and helplines. One worker raised the issue of fear of facing negative consequences when bringing up an issue with the supervisors. A functional grievance system must be transparent, and guarantee the integrity of the worker in order to be beneficial for the supplier. The national commission on Labour in 1967 describes the importance of solving worker issues as follows:

“Prompt redressal of individual grievances is essential for sustaining good labour-management relations, and promoting efficiency at the plant level. Absence of machinery leads to small grievances developing into collective disputes. The type of grievances we have in mind are those arising out of complaints affecting one or more individual workers in respect of their conditions of work and not disputes over matters of general applicability to all” (Ethical Trading Initiative, 2015, 3).

With other words, if a corporation does not address workers' problems they may become less productive, leave the company or hurt the reputation of the company. A workplace where workers have an effective voice and the capacity to change things is more likely to have a loyal workforce (Freeman, Bozall, & Haynes, 2007).

H&M's management training and briefing taking place prior to the election have the objective to highlight and help understand the business case for employee engagement and social dialogue. One recognized key driver of worker engagement is worker's voice (MacLeod & Clarke, 2009). H&M have also stated that one expected outcome of the project is to contribute to reduce worker turnover and absenteeism which will result in cost reduction.

Finally, the respondents stressed the importance of electing a strong voice with communication skills with the focus in how to talk to the management. It was essential that the voice representing the workers, understand workers' issues etc. Moreover, H&M's social dialogue project has clear objectives to promote workers' voice at their factories in Bangladesh. H&M's key activity for managers is to enhance the business case of social dialogue while the goal of the activities for the general worker seems to be increased awareness of the functions of social dialogue and how it will benefit them personally. The result of the interviews also shows that the workers who felt that the worker representative was selected not elected had more distrust and negative associations towards worker representation, the PC and the management at that particular factory.

6.2. Social Practice Theory

In this chapter, the conceptual framework of SPT developed in chapter 3 is introduced to analyze H&M's Leadership in Social Dialogue Programme as well as workers' experience of social dialogue at the workplace.

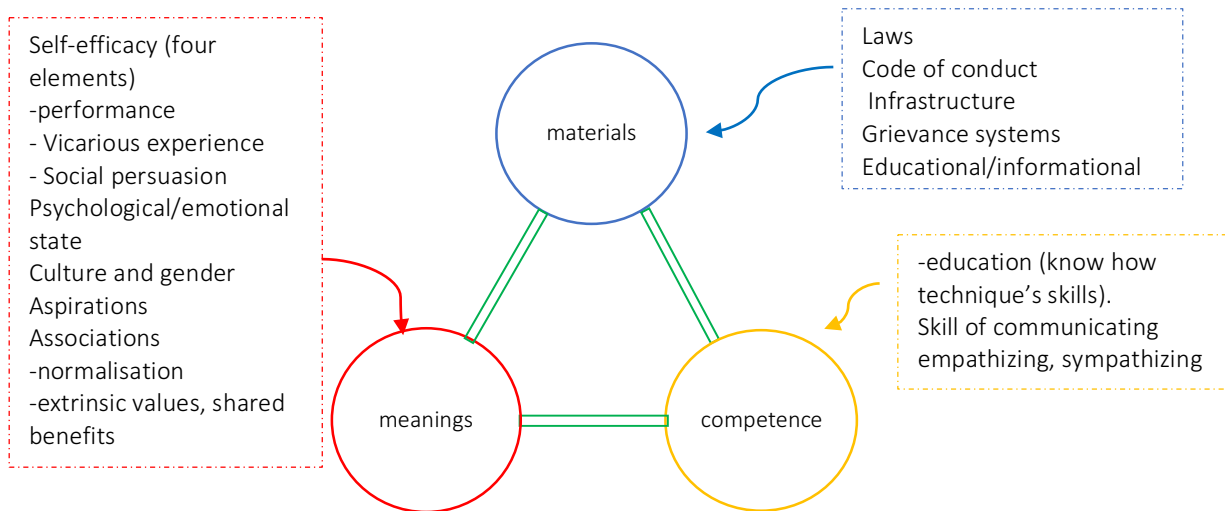


Fig. 3. Conceptual framework (based on Shove, 2012, 14, modified by the author).

This conceptual framework will help analyze H&M's social dialogue project and workers' experiences of the practice from a behavior change perspective. The analysis will use the three elements (materials, competences and meanings) which are identified by Shove, et al (2012)

6.2.1 Materials

The role of materials is vital for behaviour change and must be changed or created when one aim to create a new practice or if an already existing practice is not resulting in the desired behaviour (Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). Firstly, the amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Law Act in 2013 (see chapter 4.4) requiring democratic elections of worker representatives have changed the landscape of where social dialogue is taking place. In addition, H&M's COC (see chapter 4.3) declares the right to form and join associations, strengthening the infrastructure in enabling social dialogue at the H&M's factories.

For the practice of social dialogue to be successful there must exist functional and efficient grievance systems at the workplace. One positive result from the interviews were that all workers were aware of the existence of suggestion boxes, helplines, welfare officers and PC committees in their factories. The existence of different grievance mechanisms are beneficial for workers and do not stand in conflict with each other, in fact, when functioning properly they can provide the worker with different options of raising grievances. This wide range of options can ensure higher accessibility and convenience which are key elements when creating or changing materials to bring about a new practice (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz, 2014).

H&M's social dialogue project conduct trainings and provide suppliers with educational material such as films and pamphlets. H&M is also physically present during the election,

aiming to support the factory with expertise if needed. In order for social dialogue to take place there must be a forum for discussions and scheduled meetings on regular basis. As this projects aim is not to measure and the effectiveness of H&M's nor other brands implementation of social dialogue it is important to recognize that the existence of worker representatives must be accompanied with meetings, and minutes of the meetings easily accessible showcased for the general workers in order to know what have been discussed in the PC. It might sound obvious that certain materials must exist for a practice to be created but in SPT psychical material are primarily objects of knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002, 253). The knowledge cannot exist without the actual objects. Therefore, when enabling social dialogue education tools, grievance systems, worker representative election and physical processes such as meetings, note taking as such, must exist in order for the practice to be effective.

To sum up, the labour law amendments in 2013 making democratic elections of worker representatives a legal requirement have nudged corporations and suppliers in enabling social dialogue at the workplace in Bangladesh. During the interviews, all the respondents' factories had existing grievance systems and PCs. Furthermore, H&M are (according to their internal papers) providing participating suppliers with learning materials and physical training activities and have local trainers specialized in social dialogue at the H&M office in Dhaka. Providing material and creating accessible and convenient infrastructure are key components when creating the practice of social dialogue.

6.2.2 Competence

Competences are embodied in the individuals performing a task and enables the practice. As Rousta and Ekström (2013) points out that successful behaviour change demand that the practice is performed in the right manner and not solely performed. Therefore, it is essential that a practice such as social dialogue is performed correctly when aiming to generate a certain wished behaviour. Having the right competence and skills are a must when carrying out a practice. Competences can take different forms and when analyzing the competences needed in the practice of social dialogue, both H&M and the interviewed workers stressed communication skills as an important quality of an ideal worker representative. Many respondents highlighted the importance of having a worker representative that understood them as workers but still had the competence in how to talk to the management on their behalf. The creation of knowledge, skills and attitude as well developing communication skills with management and the general workers are also written objectives of H&M's input activities for the participating factories in the social dialogue project. These objectives match the competence which were mentioned by the respondents during the interviews when asked to describe the perfect or ideal worker representative.

The majority of the respondents had not received any information about the functions of the PC and what one should think about prior electing a worker representative. Without this information there is a risk that workers cannot make an educated choice as they might not have the knowledge of what qualities worker representatives should have. Furthermore, the worker might not have the knowledge that the factory is required by law to conduct a democratic election. H&M's social dialogue project has solved this issue with film viewings at the participating factories, with the requirement that all workers should watch the film prior the election.

Furthermore, Shove et al (2012) points out that people often gain the needed knowledge and skills when they engage in a practice. JSN, H&M's project consultants in charge of the social

dialogue, training modules are based upon Action Learning, a methodology stressing interactive learning, role play and dramas. JSN training modules are built upon the belief that information and skills will result in mind-set change and change in behaviour. During the combined training all elected participation committee representatives (workers and managers) participate in a role play where they conduct a PC meeting with the aim to understand the standard procedures. The already elected worker representatives interviewed at the factory facility all said that they received in-house training from management and welfare officer providing them with the useful know-how needed of a worker representative.

Furthermore, when the interviewed supervisors were asked regarding what competences and characteristics they wished to see in the elected worker representative one said that she wished to see more understanding of the supervisors' roles and duties. She stressed the importance of cleverness and that the worker representative should be able to step in if the supervisor was absent. In that particular case the different ideas of what competences that are needed for efficient social dialogue might hinder behaviour change. As Shove and Pantzar (2012) puts it, competence will determine how rapidly an individual will engage in the practice.

Social dialogue concerns everyone at the workplace, therefore, it is important that everyone are informed about the objectives and strive for the same result. As Warde (2005) points out, a practice is a never ending process and its success might depend on the commitment of the participating practitioners. Furthermore, the correct know-how, techniques and skills to enable social dialogue must exist within the top-management as well as the general worker. Mutual understanding of the practice is important. For example, the fear of raising an issue with the supervisor because of the risk of negative consequences expressed by a worker during the interviews might be solved if he knew that raising issues were welcomed and viewed as something positive from for managers. This, however, is based on that all workers, supervisors and managers have knowledge on how to act in order to enable social dialogue.

Finally, H&M's training modules are built differently depending on the employee's position in the factory. When implementing social dialogue, H&M starts with educating and informing the factory management about the social dialogue project with the objective to increase the knowledge of the business case. By highlighting the economic benefits of the practice it will add more value and nudge suppliers to engage properly. By informing about the business case suppliers might not just view the implementation of social dialogue as "checking the box" because of new law requires democratic elections. This way, management with negative attitudes toward the practice of social dialogue could change their mind-set after being informed and educated about the benefits of increased workers' voice and worker engagement.

6.2.3 Meanings

Attitudes, ideas and aspirations linked to a certain practice differ based on gender, experiences and cultural differences (Shove & Pantzer, 2005). The element of meaning, in SPT aim to gain understanding in why certain emotions and beliefs are linked to a practice and the results from the interviews show that workers with positive experiences from approaching a worker representative with work related problems had a more positive attitude toward them, and preferred them as grievance system than workers with negative experiences. When asked about the purpose of a PC at the factory, all workers responded that the main purpose was to deal with problems. General workers viewed the worker representatives as their voice, and

stressed the importance of similarity and belonging when electing a candidate. The workers who had negative experiences when dealing with worker representatives expressed the opposite, saying that representatives were set in place for the purpose of the management and not for them (the workers).

When a supervisor was asked about the main objective of a PC she said that it (the committee) had the advantage of reliability. Workers listen to them more, she said, stressing how workers always believe that supervisors only care about production and making workers increase production. Moreover, the same supervisor viewed an efficient PC as a tool for supervisors, as worker representatives could help the management in convincing workers do certain tasks as they are associated with reliability and trust by the general workers.

Furthermore, when asking if the respondents believed that being a worker representative came with a big responsibility all workers answered yes. When listing the responsibilities two already elected representatives expressed that they felt that the general workers trusted them to solve issues, and that they would not let them down. The general workers' issues are now their issues - their responsibilities.

For social dialogue to be efficient worker representatives must have positive meanings and associations attached to the practice. These meanings and associations can be created and changed with education and new experiences. The development of attitudes needed for worker representatives and management representatives of the PC are objectives mentioned in H&M's social dialogue project. For the general workers, there is film viewing to provide awareness about the PC and for managers, H&M stress the economic benefits of social dialogue.

In H&M's social dialogue project the business case, reduced worker turnover and absenteeism are linked with harmonious industrial relations and improved workers voice. In these sense, social dialogue becomes a shared value. Shared benefits linked to a new behaviour can have positive affect on attitude towards it. In addition, shared benefits can also have a strong effect on the creation of meanings for a certain practice (Nicholls & Strengers, 2014).

Finally, meanings can be created and changed through education and experiences, and developed together with the practitioners' engagement in the new practice. The meanings can vary from person to person and in the case of social dialogue the strongest meanings voiced during the interviews were belonging, problem solving and responsibility.

6.2.4 Interconnection of elements

According to Shove (2012), the interconnection of materials, competence and meanings are crucial for a practice to exist. As illustrated in figure 3, firstly, all three elements must exist, and if they do not exist they must be created. Secondly, links between the elements must be made. Thirdly, when the links are made between the elements they must be sustained.

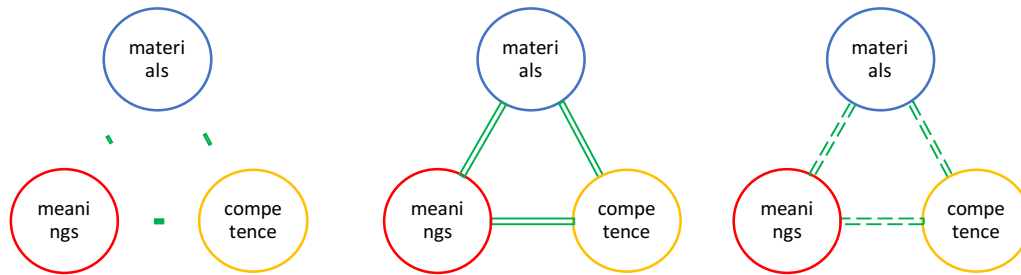


Fig. 4. Conceptual framework interconnection (based on Shove, 2012, 14, modified by the author).

For example, in the practice of social dialogue a grievance system might exist physically but not be used by workers depending on their skill and competences. A worker might not know that the grievance system exist or how to use it. Furthermore, they might have negative associations and meanings such as distrust toward that particular grievance system and therefore chose not engage in it. Moreover, when the links are made between the elements and the practitioners are engaging in the practice in an efficient manner it need to be sustained. Practices are never constant but continuously developing, and the interaction between them will change together with the people engaging in the practice (Watson, 2012). The information and training in social dialogue must continue in order for the practice to be a success.

7. Discussion

This chapter provides discussion about how the fragmented market is making it difficult for industrial collaboration in ethical sourcing. Additional points which appeared in the analysis are also considered

7.1. CSR-initiatives

CSR-programs today have been criticized for their focus on monitoring minimum labour standards instead of pushing for the implementation of collective bargaining and the right to form independent unions (Egelz-Zanden & Merk, 2013). Labour unions have voiced concerns about how corporations' CSR-initiatives are replacing unions and the government's role in defending the rights of workers (*ibid*) and some would argue that it is when businesses use CSR to avoid legislation or to privatize governments' functions CSR become a hindrance instead of an opportunity to promote labour standards (LeBaron, 2014). The Economist Milton Friedman has argued that corporations are ill-equipped to handle the role of the government, as corporations' first and foremost responsibility is to make profit for its shareholders. He argues that corporations and the free market cannot solve social issues and therefore it is the role of the government deal with social injustices. Therefore, Friedman argues that the society should not rely on corporations to address ill-defined responsibilities which can be illogically interpreted by managers. Instead the government and the law must force corporations manage externalities (Worthington & Britton, 2009, 213).

On the other hand, there is great potential in corporations using their socio- economic influence in introducing and implementing ILO conventions or in this case the practice of social dialogue. Compa argues that in recent years there have been positive results from certain CSR-initiatives giving the example of the Korean owned Kukdong sportswear factory in Mexico. In that particular case Reebok and Nike in collaboration with the Fair Labor Association (FLA) and Workers rights Consortium managed to use their influence to enforce their code of conduct resulting in replacing a trade union containing mostly management and government representatives - with a democratic union elected by the workers (Compa, 2008, 1). In a labor right report published by Oxfam International concerning sportswear production in Asia, Jaqalanka Ltd sportswear factory is given as another example of succesful intervention by corporations in collaboration with unions to improve workers rights. In the Jaqalanka factory, members of a newly formed union were assaulted and systematically harrassed by unknown people. The two companies, Columbia and Nike, sent two auditors to the factory and made a complaint to the FLA. The FLA facilitaded a dialogue with all stakeholders resulting in that the rights to form and join a union and bargain collectively were respected. Oxfam International's assesment recognized how the two companies played a positive role in the union being accepted at the factory (Connor & Dent, 2006, 22-25).

There is clearly a conflict in the public wanting corporations to take social responsibility while recognizing the danger in corporations owning the responsibility. In the case of the RMG-industry in Bangladesh this becomes particularly problematic as the right to bargain collectively is not yet considered realized. Union members still fear physical and verbal violations and the percentage of active unions is very low. After the Rana Plaza collapse, CSR initiatives from brands have increased in Bangladesh adding even more actors on an already fragmented arena with the aim to improve low labor standards and health and safety issues and in that way secure their supply chains.

The RMG-industry in Bangladesh have a complex supply chain as fashion companies do not own their factories and are therefore not the direct employer of the workers. However, for an end-consumer, due to the label in the garment, the production will be connected with the fashion company and not the supplier. Therefore, one can understand from a public relation perspective that visible CSR- initiatives are a must to ensure consumers that they are taking corporate responsibility. The question is, however, how the existing fragmented market of CSR initiatives affect the end goal of actually improving workers' rights? As Waddel (2003) stresses "firms that respond individually find themselves at a disadvantage of their competition, which have lower standards" (Waddel, 2003, s. 39). Furthermore, he argues that the traditional way of conducting CRS is not the most efficient as solutions to big issues cannot not be achieved by an individual stakeholder (*ibid*). Moreover, it seems as corporations are more enthusiastic in engaging NGOs as stakeholders in their CSR work, leaving trade unions out of the dialogue. The problem with that attitude is that the collaboration between corporations and NGOs cannot bring genuine power to the workers, as only trade unions are representative organizations of workers (Justice, 2002). Could the case be that these CSR initiatives are having a negative effect on role of the government is these matters and in the end becomes a substitute for genuine dialogue?

In order for social dialogue to empower workers with genuine power, there is a need for increased union penetration at the factories. H&M have received praise for their close collaboration with the ILO, the government of Bangladesh and the global worker federation IndustriAll with the aim to strengthen trade union rights for H&M employees employed in their supply chain. Hence, the organization Clean Clothes Campaign stated that they now expect H&M to focus on tripartite social dialogue at their factories and abandon the current efforts in establishing worker PCs (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2015). As in the examples above of Jaqalanka factory and Kukdong sportswear factory, the success in recognizing workers rights was enabled through the collaboration with unions. While, H&M have declared the right to form and join associations and the right to bargain collectively in their code of conduct (see chapter 4.3.) their current social dialogue project is solely focusing on implementing bipartite social dialouge.

7.2. Elements of a practice

After analysing H&M's social dialogue program through the lens of SPT, this study shows that the program has all the required elements to bring about behaviour change. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter 6.3.2 these elements must be connected and sustained in order to ensure a well-functioning practice. The communication of shared values and shared benefits is crucial in order to engage all stakeholders in the long run, and H&M is aiming to do so with presenting the benefits of social dialogue in economic terms for factory management participating. Shared benefits are important when analysing the effect social dialogue have on individual level when analysing the result of the interviews. If a supervisor does not associate social dialogue with a positive outcome, there's a greater chance of that employee going through the motions rather than truly engaging. Each stakeholder must be informed about the aim of social dialogue and how it will affect them individually. Furthermore, transparency is a key component needed for social dialogue to succeed as workers must trust that management and supervisors are on the same page in order to dare raising work related issues without fearing negative consequences.

This project contributes to the developing research which approach practices enabling social dialogue and improved workplace relations from the perspective of SPT (Spotswood et al,

2015; Hargreaves, 2011). The SPT insights from this research could provide guidance for behaviour change in the RMG-sector, stressing the importance of experiences and identities of practitioners (Hargreaves, 2011)

8. Conclusions

This chapter reconnects with the aim of this study; to explain conditions for development of social dialogue practices as part of sustainable development. Furthermore, suggestions for future research are presented.

8.1. Conditions for the development of social dialogue

There are many conditions which need to be considered for social dialogue to become a practice promoting sustainable development. In regard to the existing bipartite social dialogue practice at the RMG-factories the results of this project highlighted certain conditions improving the implementation PCs at the workplace. The conditions are divided into short term conditions and long term conditions with the aim to improve the practice of social dialogue.

Short term conditions:

- Identify and engage all stakeholders (from management to workers) in the practice by promoting the shared benefits of social dialogue.
- Enhance workers voice at the factory by implementing well-functioning grievance systems, making sure all workers feel that they have the power to change their situation at the workplace.
- Use educations as a tool to strengthen and sustain the competence and positive associations to social dialogue.

Long term conditions:

- Understanding that a practice is an ongoing process and therefore implement a long term plan in how to sustain the competence at the factories.
- Convince management to create a HPW through workers' voice by stressing the long term benefits such as reduced turnover and absenteeism.
- View bipartite social dialogue as a stepping stone toward tripartite social dialogue. This is essential as the PC is not a forum for collective bargaining nor negotiation but a forum in which workers can discuss measures to improve the factory. Social dialogue at the workplace, between management and workers are therefore not set in place for the workers but for the factory and must be developed to involve government and labor organizations. Tripartite social dialogue is the only way to give workers actual power to change and ensure their rights through collective bargaining.
- Corporations must use their socio-economic influence to promote increased union penetration in the RMG-sector.

8.2. Future Research

The researcher suggest that future studies of social dialogue could benefit from a more comparative approach comparing how corporations implement the practice of social dialogue at their factories as a comparative study would generate deeper understanding of the phenomena. Furthermore, behaviour change is an ongoing process which need to sustained and therefore future research could apply a longitudinal approach, bringing more knowledge about the different stages of the process.

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Internal Documents

Internal documents: H&M

1. Leadership in Social Dialogue Project (2016-02-19)
2. H&M Project: Leadership in Social Dialogue, training for worker's representatives of participation committee programme schedule (2016-02-19)

Appendix 1 – Interview guide

This appendix contain the interview guide used during the interviews. A large number of questions were added during the interviews, since all interviews were carried out in a semi-structured manner: The interview guide is based on SPT, the conceptual framework used in this project, and the questions below are divided into the three elements of materials, competence and meanings.

General questions (introductory)

How long have you worked in the RMG-sector?

How long have you worked in this factory?

What is your occupation?

What did you do before working in the RMG-sector?

How do you compare your life now from before working in a factory?

What does your family situation look like?

If a work-related problem occur at your workplace, what do you consider is the best way to solve it?

Are you a worker representative?

Materials:

What kind of grievance systems do you have at your factory (suggestions box, helpline, welfare officer)?

Have you ever used any of these grievance systems, describe the experience?

Is there a participation committee at your factory?

Have you received any education in how to elect worker representatives, what did that training look like?

Competence:

Do you know anyone who is a worker representative? How did you nominate /elect your factories representative?

Were there any training in how to elect worker representatives, if yes describe?

As an elected worker representative, what kind of training have you received?

What kind of qualities and skills should a worker representative have?

What does worker representative do at the factory?

Meanings:

What is the main objective of a participation committee/worker representative?

From your personal experience, can you describe a time where a work related issue has been solved through dialogue?

Do you think it is a responsibility to be a worker representative? If you, what are there responsibilities?

Can you give an example of a time when an issue was solved through a worker representative? Describe that situation?

Can you give an example if a time when an issue could not be resolved through a worker representative?

