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**Rhetoric and Argument in Social and Environmental Reporting:
The Dirty Laundry Case**

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper explores the dynamic nature of social and environmental reporting by analysing the use of rhetoric and argument during a conflict over environmental performance.

Design/methodology/approach – We adopt Aristotle’s triangular framework of the rhetorical situation to examine the influence of writer, audience, and purpose of communication on the rhetorical strategies used to persuade and convince; and argumentation techniques used to defend positions and rebut arguments. Our analysis focuses on *logos* (appealing to logic), *ethos* (appealing to authority), and *pathos* (appealing to emotion), with a particular emphasis on metaphor. We base our analysis on a case study involving a conflict between Greenpeace and six organisations in the sportswear/fashion industry over wastewater discharge of hazardous chemicals. The conflict played out in a series of 20 press releases issued by the parties over a two-month period.

Findings – All six firms interacting with Greenpeace in the form of press releases eventually conceded to Greenpeace’s demand to eliminate hazardous chemicals from their supply chains. We attribute this to Greenpeace’s ability to harness support from other key stakeholders and to use rhetoric effectively. Results show the extensive use of rhetoric by all parties.

Originality/value – The study analyses the differences in the rhetorical strategies adopted by both sides in a conflict, thus capturing the nature of verbal interactions between the parties, and the different rhetorical ploys adopted by the two sides.

Keywords Rhetoric, Argument, Social and environmental reporting, Stakeholder, Greenpeace.

Paper type Research paper

As humans, we don't absorb ... experiences as abstractions; we take them personally. And that's [what metaphors do]: taking the universal into the particular. (Anne Michaels) (Crown, 2009)

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the interactive element in social and environmental reporting during a legitimacy threat in the form of a controversy over environmental performance. Prior research analysing corporate narrative documents, including press releases, annual reports and CSR reports, as a means of restoring legitimacy focuses on organisations (e.g., Ogden and Clarke 2005; Linsley and Kajüter 2008; De Tienne and Lewis, 2005; Castelló and Lozano 2011). Responses by organisational audiences to breaches of stakeholder expectations or violations of social norms and rules are treated as part of the organisational context which is described in order to shed light on corporate communication (e.g., Hooghiemstra, 2000). This presumes that organisations are in control of legitimacy construction. By contrast, we view legitimacy construction as a 'process of reciprocal influence' (Ginzel *et al.*, 2004: 225) between organisations and their audiences. Legitimacy is achieved "through social dialogue... and [is] reliant on organisational communication" (Tregidga *et al.* 2007: 5).

The focus of our analysis is on the use of rhetoric and argument as a means of resolving a conflict between Greenpeace and firms in the sportswear/fashion industry over water pollution in China. Building on Aristotle's triangular framework of *logos* (appealing to logic), *ethos* (appealing to authority), and *pathos* (appealing to emotion), and insights from the 'New Rhetoric' movement, we examine the dialectic relationship between text and social context. We show the outcome of a conflict to be dependent on the power and legitimacy of the stakeholder and the urgency of their claim. Power constitutes access to material and symbolic resources, including the ability to mobilise support from other key stakeholders and rhetorical skill.

Research questions were developed abductively during an iterative process of going backwards and forwards between theories and concepts and data. The overarching research question is: How do parties in a conflict over corporate social and environmental performance interact? We subdivide this overarching research question into three sub-questions: (1) How does the rhetorical situation/social context influence the interactions? (2)

What moves do the parties make in the conflict? (3) How are those moves realised rhetorically?

Greenpeace published two ‘Dirty Laundry’ reports in July/August 2011 alleging that 18 brands (16 firms) were using hazardous chemicals in their textile manufacturing processes. Greenpeace’s purpose was twofold, namely (1) to voice its concern regarding the industry’s failure to safeguard environmental standards throughout its supply chain and (2) to draw public attention to this failure with the intention of prompting/pressurising the firms to take corrective action. This controversy played out in a series of 20 press releases issued by both sides (Greenpeace and six sportswear/fashion firms) over a two-month period. Of the six firms responding to Greenpeace’s accusation of misconduct, three (NIKE, adidas, H&M) disputed Greenpeace’s claims, while three (PUMA, LACOSTE and G-Star RAW) conceded to Greenpeace’s demands. Greenpeace used negative publicity to pressurise the initially unyielding firms to comply with its demands. Results show the extensive use of rhetoric by both sides involved in the conflict. Greenpeace used metaphors that resonate with its other key stakeholders – consumers, supporters, and the media (metaphors of housekeeping, size, racing, sport and fashion) – to urge the firms to agree to eliminate hazardous chemicals from their supply chain by 2020. This is countered by sportswear/fashion firms with metaphors which redefine the constructs of competition and speed inherent in Greenpeace’s argument (metaphors of collaboration, journey, and complexity).

Our paper builds on two streams of literature: (1) research that views social and environmental reporting as involving two or more parties – as such we respond to Bebbington *et al.*’s (2007) call to apply dialogic thinking to social and environmental reporting; and (2) research analysing communications using techniques based on concepts from rhetoric and argument. We extend the work of Brennan and Gray (2000) and Brennan *et al.* (2010) from a takeover to a social and environmental context and build on the work of Coupland (2005) and Higgins and Walker (2012) on rhetoric and argument in social and environmental reporting.

The paper makes four contributions to the literature. First, we introduce a dynamic and interactive concept to stakeholder theory, regarding the resolution of conflicts between organisations and a stakeholder as dependent on the stakeholder’s power, legitimacy, and the urgency of its claim. Power constitutes the ability to draw on material and symbolic resources, including support by other key stakeholders and rhetorical skill. Second, our

analysis focuses on interactions in the form of moves between parties in the conflict. Third, we develop an analytical framework linking social and environmental reporting, rhetoric, and metaphor. Fourth, we highlight the use of metaphor as a powerful means of persuasion for both sides involved in the conflict.

The remainder of the paper comprises five sections. First, we review the literature on social and environmental reporting, including theoretical perspectives and rhetorical approaches. Then, we outline the relationship between social and environmental reporting, rhetoric and metaphor. Third, we provide an overview of the data, consisting of 20 press releases by Greenpeace and six sportswear/fashion firms, and set out the analytical framework and the categories of analysis. Fourth, we apply our analytical framework to the analysis of rhetoric and argument in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case and discuss findings. The paper concludes in Section 6 with a summary and recommendations for future research.

2. Prior literature

We first review the relevant literature on social and environmental reporting, discuss predominant theoretical perspectives, and on the use of argument and rhetoric in corporate reporting.

2.1 Social and environmental reporting

Social and environmental reporting has variously been described as “the process of communicating the social and environmental effects of organisations’ economic actions to particular interest groups within society and to society at large” (Gray *et al*, 1987: ix) and “extension of disclosure into non-traditional areas such as providing information about employees, products, community service and the prevention or reduction of pollution” (Mathews and Perera, 1985: 364). Social and environmental reporting plays a crucial role during controversies caused by organisational ‘wrongdoing’ (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990) or misconduct (Ketola, 2006, 2008) as a means of resolving the conflict.

Target audiences for social and environmental reporting by organisations are complex. Social and environmental reports are sent to shareholders who tend to be the primary audience for such information. However, managers are aware of other parties who also access these public documents, including, *inter alia*, various stakeholders, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), social pressure groups, the media and government. Social and environmental

reporting constitutes a means of responding to social pressures exerted either by the public at large or by specific stakeholders in particular. It may be used to demonstrate that the organisation is abiding by social norms and rules (legitimacy) or fulfilling the demands of a specific stakeholder (public responsibility). A study of the use of rhetoric and argument by organisations and a key stakeholder during a controversy over environmental performance can add insights to our understanding of the ways in which social and environmental reporting can be used to negotiate organisational legitimacy.

Corporate press releases constitute one means for firms to communicate with their relevant publics, e.g., shareholders, customers, or employees. During a conflict or controversy corporate press releases are used to state the firm's position on the contested issue. By contrast, one purpose of press releases issued by stakeholders, such as NGOs, trade unions, or public bodies, is to initiate a public dialogue about a particular issue. Alternatively, press releases by stakeholders may be prompted by a disagreement with the action, non-action, or controversial action of a specific industry or company.

2.2 Theoretical perspectives

Conflict resolution between business organisations and their stakeholders over social and environmental issues has traditionally been studied through the lens of legitimacy. Organisational legitimacy constitutes audience perceptions of the desirability and appropriateness of organisational actions within a socially constructed system of norms, values, and beliefs (Suchman, 1995: 574). This means that organisational legitimacy is granted, withheld, or questioned by audiences. During a legitimacy threat, organisations are assumed to use corporate narrative reporting and communication to restore legitimacy by means of demonstrating their re-alignment of norms and rules with those of society. This may involve real changes in processes and procedures (substantive management) or merely 'cosmetic' changes in the form of executive replacement or the creation of monitors and watchdogs (symbolic management). The latter makes the organisation *appear* to respond to stakeholder demands and concerns. This literature focuses on the strategies used in corporate narrative documents to restore legitimacy after a corporate scandal, environmental disaster, or product failure. For example, Elsbach (1994) and Linsley and Kajüter (2008) focus on the use of verbal remedial strategies, such as excuses, apologies, and justifications, to separate the negative event (e.g., fraud, scandal, or product safety issue) from the organisation as a whole. However, there is no literature on how the restoration of legitimacy is rhetorically achieved.

Research suggests that the use of rhetoric and argument is particularly pronounced during public controversies, conflicts over values, or shortfalls in corporate social and environmental performance (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005; Coupland 2005), as organisations depend on public approval and thus need to ‘engineer’ public support (Bernays 1947). The majority of prior research focuses solely on organisational responses to legitimacy threats, treating audience reactions as part of the organisational context which is described in order to shed light on corporate communication. By contrast, we regard organisational legitimacy as established, maintained and restored in a dialogue between an organisation and its audiences focusing on organisational activities and performance and their relation to social norms and values.

Stakeholders may create organisational legitimacy threats by questioning the appropriateness of organisational activities or the standard of social or environmental performance. Stakeholders are persons, groups, or organisation that have a direct or indirect stake in an organisation because they can affect or be affected by the organisation’s actions, objectives, and policies (Freeman, 1984). As firms depend on stakeholders for resources, such as finance, labour, and patronage, a good relationship between the two parties is crucial for organisational survival (Ullmann, 1985). Mitchell *et al.* (1997) differentiate between stakeholders who have a legal or moral claim on the organisations and stakeholders who have the ability to influence the organisational behaviour, processes, or outcomes. The former consist of employees, suppliers, and debt and capital providers. The latter are also referred to as ‘stakeseekers’ (Fassin, 2009) in the sense that they seek to have an input into organisational decision-making processes and include NGOs, pressure groups, and social movements. Environmental NGOs, such as Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund, seek to influence organisational environmental activities, performance, and reporting. Prior research shows that NGOs are able to challenge corporations in the form of direct action campaigns, such as the McLibel trial (Vidal 1997), campaigns against Shell concerning the Brent Spar oil platform (Tsoukas 1999, Hooghiemstra 2000), and the ‘No Sweat’ campaign against major clothing manufacturers (Ross, 1997).

2.3 Rhetoric in corporate narrative reporting research

Organisations use rhetoric retrospectively to respond to existing rhetorical situations or proactively to shape or frame or to anticipate future rhetorical situations (Cheney *et al.* 2004: 87). Rhetoric serves to resolve both overt and covert conflicts between two parties and to

avoid conflict in the first place. It constitutes a powerful means of manufacturing consent by means of dominant discourses. Rhetorical approaches emphasise either the strategic or political nature of corporate narrative reporting and communication. The underlying assumption is that the purpose of corporate narrative reporting and communication is to achieve specific communicative or political goals, such as convincing financial stakeholders of the financial soundness or creditworthiness of the company, persuading organisational audiences of the company's environmental credentials (Higgins and Walker, 2012), persuading stakeholders to accept planned structural re-organisation, such as privatisation (Craig and Amernic, 2004a, 2008), reinforcing capitalist ideology or securing hegemony.

However, there is little research on the use of rhetoric by powerful stakeholders, such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International and the World Wildlife Fund, as a means of persuading organisations to review their values or improve their social and environmental performance. In the case of an overt conflict between an organisation and a stakeholder, the goal is to convince both the other party and relevant publics, including the media, of the validity of a particular point of view or of the necessity and legitimacy of a particular course of action.

3. Argument and rhetoric

We regard the use of rhetoric and argument as a communicative resource applied to achieve intended outcomes. Our view of rhetoric is informed by insights of theorists of the 'New Rhetoric' movement which regards rhetoric as an essential constituent part of social interaction and communication, rather than mere ornamentation of speech. This is linked to the ideas of the so-called 'ordinary language philosophers' of the 1950s and 1960s, such as Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) who view language as action, i.e., 'doing things with words' (Austin, 1962).

Arguments constitute the verbal means by which speakers/writers aim to exert influence on their audience in a verbal exchange (Amossy, 2001). Rhetoric "is the science and art of persuasive language use" (Reisigl, 2008: 96) and thus constitutes an essential element of arguments. Arguments consist of three elements: (1) the claims or statements made, (2) the assumptions or beliefs underlying these statements, and (3) the evidence provided for the claims. Rhetoric constitutes a means of persuading others to change their attitudes, beliefs, values or actions (Cheney *et al.* 2004: 80) and is thus part of the evidence provided for a specific claim. Our rhetorical framework is based on classical Aristotelian rhetoric which

differentiates between three types of rhetorical strategies: (1) *logos* (appeal to logic), *pathos* (appeal to emotion), and *ethos* (appeal to values or to the authority of the speaker / a respected person or organisation). *Logos* aims to convince audiences by means of using facts and figures to back up a claim. It involves using discourse from the domains of science, technology, bureaucracy, law and business to persuade audiences of the validity and legitimacy of the claim. It makes the speaker/writer seem knowledgeable, thus enhancing their authority (*ethos*). *Ethos* is used to persuade audiences by means of either appealing to the authority of the speaker/writer or to the authority of another social actor (e.g., an expert, an independent authority or a person of high social or moral standing in the community). *Pathos* is aimed at invoking an emotional response and empathy. The use of metaphors constitutes an effective way of evoking an emotional response and of having a psychological impact on the audience (Charteris-Black, 2004, 2005).

3.1 Rhetorical situation

Rhetoric is embedded in the ‘rhetorical situation’, i.e., the social context in which the verbal exchange takes place. The rhetorical situation consists of three interrelated elements: (1) the speaker/writer, (2) the audience(s), and (3) the purpose of communication. Due to the public nature of press releases, they are directed at multiple audiences. DeRosa and Ferruci (2011) differentiate between the primary/target/stated audience (the other party involved in the conflict) and secondary/wider/implicit audiences (the wider public, such as consumers, the media, and shareholders). Press releases therefore have multiple purposes directed at the primary/target/stated audience and at secondary/wider/implicit audiences. In a corporate narrative reporting context, it entails organisations addressing multiple audiences, including one another (Cheney *et al.* 2004: 86) through formal public messages, such as CEO speeches, mission statements, and public relations communication (Cheney *et al.* 2004: 81).

3.2 Metaphors

Due to their function as both heuristic and persuasive devices, metaphors play a central role in rhetoric and argument. Metaphors are powerful conceptual devices (Morgan, 1980, 1983, 1993) as they indicate particular ways of thinking about an issue in the sense that “*the[ir] use...involves cognitive processes which structure thought and behaviour*” (Amernic & Craig, 2009: 878). As highlighted by the linguistic ‘turn’ in the social sciences, social phenomena are perceived only in terms of the images used to represent them (Gabriel, 2004: 63). Thus, metaphors play a key role in knowledge construction and constitute “a way of knowing”

(Walters, 2004: 160). Making claims or statements invariably involves the use of metaphors. Metaphors reinforce specific perceptions and ways of thinking about an issue while ignoring others. For this reason, they not only function as a means of knowledge production, but also as a means of perception engineering (Walters, 2004). Metaphors thus play a key role in influencing others' thinking and behaviour. This means that they are intrinsically rhetorical. Metaphors are also indicative of social actors' underlying values and beliefs. They provide an insight into the assumptions underlying a claim or statement made on a particular issue. For this reason, metaphors play an instrumental role in constructing and reproducing ideologies and justifying social action and behaviour. In fact, the persuasive power of metaphors lies in their ability to "tap ... into an accepted communal system of values" (Charteris-Black, 2004: 12). They are thus a common feature in the speeches of political and corporate leaders (see, for example, Amernic *et al.* 2007; Charteris-Black, 2005; Cox, 2012) and constitute a prevalent feature in corporate reporting and communication (Beelitz and Merkl-Davies 2012; Craig and Amernic 2004b; Crowther *et al.* 2006).

Goatly (2007) argues that there are patterns of metaphors which are associated with the dominant capitalist ideology which underpins Western societies. Ideology refers to the social beliefs of a group of people. The basic beliefs of an ideology organise specific attitudes (socially shared opinions) about an issue, such as immigration or global warming. Some groups of people are more powerful than others which results in a dominance of specific ideologies. Language, meaning and power are interlinked. For this reason, the use of metaphors associated with dominant ideologies affect the way we think and act, thus reinforcing social inequality, injustice, and environmental exploitation. The ideology of capitalism is characterised by "the impulse to acquisition, pursuit of gain, of money, of the greatest possible amount of money" (Weber, 1958: p. 17). Metaphors associated with the capitalist system include metaphors of power (e.g., activity is conceptualised as fighting as in 'takeover') and metaphors for humans and the living world (e.g., human beings are conceptualised as machines as in 'human resources'). Metaphors tend to occur in the form of differentiation, i.e., significant pairings, contrasts, or dualisms, such as up-down, mind-body, public-private, etc. which are often seen "in contradiction to each other, frequently with one term assuming dominance" (Llewellyn, 2003, p. 670).

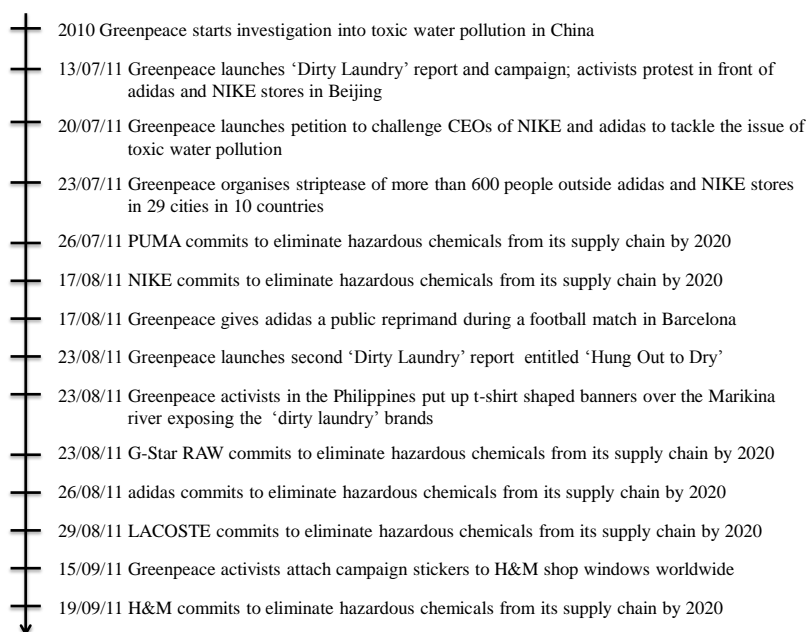
4. Data and methodology

We analyse the use of rhetoric and argument in a conflict between Greenpeace and sportswear/fashion firms over water pollution in China as a result of the textile manufacturing process. The conflict played out in the form of 20 press releases issued by Greenpeace and six sportswear/fashion firms (adidas, G-Star RAW, H&M, LACOSTE, NIKE and PUMA) over a two-month period. Greenpeace's 'Dirty Laundry' campaign can be conceptualised as a challenge over the sportswear/fashion firms' failure to meet expected environmental standards (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990). Greenpeace is a stakeholder in the sense that it seeks to have an input into the decision-making processes of sportswear/fashion firms in terms of their impact on the environment.

4.1 The 'Dirty Laundry' case

In July 2011 Greenpeace issued a press release concerning its first 'Dirty Laundry' report on wastewater discharges of hazardous chemicals in textile processing. It was followed by a second report entitled 'Hung out to Dry' in August 2011. This led to 19 subsequent press releases, six from Greenpeace and 13 from the six business organisations referred to above. The summary timeline of key events shown in Figure 1 indicates that Greenpeace used both strategies outlined in its mission statement (Greenpeace, 2011) in the 'Dirty Laundry' campaign, namely 'peaceful protest' and 'creative communication' to achieve its dual aims of exposing global environmental problems and promoting solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future. In the 'Dirty Laundry' case, this entailed drawing public attention to the harmful environmental practices of the sportswear/fashion industry and pressurising firms to eliminate the use of hazardous chemicals in their supply chain. Greenpeace drew on its social capital (i.e., its social connections allowing it to advance its interests) to mobilise activists to participate in key events, including (i) a protest outside the world's largest adidas store and a NIKE store in Beijing, (ii) an online petition signed by thousands of people, (iii) a record-breaking striptease in front of adidas and NIKE stores worldwide, (iv) a public reprimand to adidas at a European cup football match watched on TV worldwide, (v) activists stringing out t-shirt shaped banners over the Marinka river in Manila and (vi) a week-long campaign of attaching protest stickers to H&M shop windows. Greenpeace extensively used social media networks to exert pressure on sportswear/fashion firms. In his work on public relations, Bernays (1947) stresses the importance of vividly dramatising events for those who do not witness them and of constantly creating news to capture public attention.

Figure 1: Timeline of key events



4.2 The data

Table 1 presents the 20 press releases in terms of chronology, issuing organisation, title and length. Length is measured as total sentences/phrases and as total number of words including notes to editors (a particular feature of the Greenpeace press releases), footnotes, but excluding contact details. While website addresses were included in the calculation of length, they did not form part of the rhetorical analysis.

Table 1: Press releases relating to Greenpeace 'Dirty Laundry' campaign

PR No.	Date	PR issuer (no. press release)	Title (per the press release – Greenpeace inaccurately names some organisations)	No. sentences/ phrases		No. words	
				Greenpeace	Firms	Greenpeace	Firms
1	11_07_13	Greenpeace (1)	Greenpeace challenges Adidas and Nike to champion a toxic-free future	37		746	
2	11_07_13	adidas (1)	adidas Group Response to Greenpeace Report 'Dirty Laundry - Unravelling the corporate connections to toxic water pollution in China'		52		1,056
3	11_07_22	adidas (2)	adidas Group Response to Greenpeace Report - Update July 22nd, 2011 adidas Group Response to Greenpeace's Request "to eliminate all releases of hazardous chemicals" from across the supply chain and products		42		785
4	11_07_23	Greenpeace (2)	World's largest striptease challenges Adidas and Nike to Detox	21		663	
5	11_07_26	PUMA (1)	PUMA is Committed to Eliminate Discharges of Hazardous Chemicals		13		336
6	11_07_26	Greenpeace (3)	Puma overtakes competitors Adidas and Nike in race to drop toxic pollution	22		613	
7	11_08_17	NIKE (1)	NIKE, Inc. Commitment on Zero Discharge of Hazardous Chemicals		26		700
8	11_08_18	NIKE (2)	NIKE, Inc.'s Response to Greenpeace Report		120		2,335
9	11_08_18	Greenpeace (4)	Nike Scores 1-0 Over Adidas with toxic pollution clean-up commitment	22		692	
10	11_08_23	Greenpeace (5)	New clothing tests implicate global brands in release of hormone-disrupting chemicals	29		821	
11	11_08_23	H&M (1)	Personal views of Helena Helmersson (Head of CSR)		23		410
12	11_08_23	G-Star RAW	G-Star RAW committed to eliminate hazardous chemicals		20		444
13	11_08_23	NIKE (3)	NIKE, Inc.'s Response of the Use of NPEs		9		214
14	11_08_26	adidas (3)	adidas Group's Commitment to Zero Discharge of hazardous chemicals		58		1,248
15	11_08_29	LACOSTE (1)	Lacoste apparel – health environment comments		17		423
16	11_08_31	Greenpeace (6)	'Impossible is nothing' as Adidas join [sic]Nike and Puma in cleaning up their supply chain	31		819	
17	11_09_13	H&M (2)	Personal views of Helena Helmersson (Head of CSR)		9		172
18	11_09_19	H&M (3)	H&M engages with Greenpeace		67		1,588
19	11_09_20	Greenpeace (7)	H&M's "Detox" commitment set to be this season's hottest fashion trend	33		978	
20	11_09_23	PUMA (2)	PUMA Progress Update Detox Campaign		14		362
Total sentences_phrases/words				<u>195</u>	<u>470</u>	<u>5,332</u>	<u>10,073</u>
Average sentences_phrases/words per press release				<u>27.9</u>	<u>36.2</u>	<u>761</u>	<u>775</u>

Key: PR = Press release

Website addresses for the 20 press releases are available from the authors on request.

4.3 Analytical framework

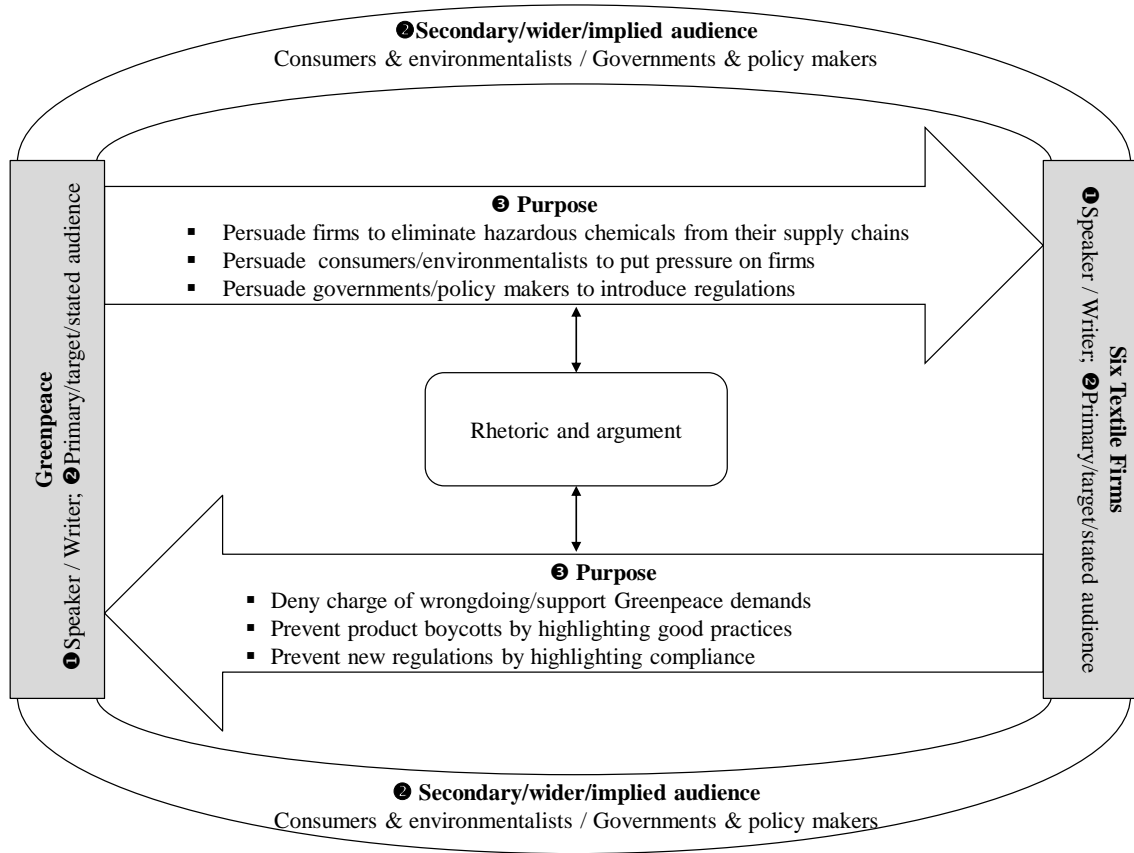
Our assumption of language and society as interrelated results in an analytical framework consisting of two levels of analysis, namely (1) a rhetorical analysis of the 20 press releases exchanged by Greenpeace and the fashion/sportswear firms (text) and (2) an analysis of the rhetorical situation (social context) in which the press releases are embedded. The rhetorical analysis is based on the view of rhetoric and argument as social action and focuses on the strategies used to achieve social and political goals (moves and *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*). The analysis of the rhetorical situation utilises Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) framework and focuses on the relationship between Greenpeace and the fashion/sportswear firms and their relationship with other organisational stakeholders and the media.

The analytical framework and categories of analysis, resulting in Figures 2, 3, and 4, were developed abductively in an iterative process of going backwards and forwards between the theories and concepts introduced in the prior section of the paper and the data. The data analysis and interpretation was preceded by the authors familiarising themselves with the theories and concepts relating to argument and rhetoric and Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) framework of stakeholder identification introduced earlier in the paper. This was followed by a number of close readings of the press releases issued by Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms in order to provide a high level familiarity and understanding of the data. Following the close readings, initial analytical categories were selected for analysis based on their ability to capture rhetoric and argument in the press releases. These were refined a number of times by means of going backwards and forwards between the concepts and empirical data until we were satisfied that the analytical framework and categories of analysis were able to capture the dynamics of interaction between the two parties. We have made our analysis as transparent as possible, for example, by providing illustrative examples throughout the presentation of findings in Section 5, particularly in Tables 3, 4, 6 and 8.

Rhetorical situation

Figure 2 applies the three elements of the rhetorical situation to the 'Dirty Laundry' case, i.e., (i) speakers/writers, (ii) (direct and indirect) audiences, and (iii) the purposes of communication. It shows that the press releases are not only directed at the other party, but also at wider audiences, including environmental activists/Greenpeace supporters, consumers of fashion and sports goods, governments and policy makers, the general public and the media.

Figure 2: The rhetorical situation in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case



In order to identify the audiences for the press releases, we analysed the press releases for direct references to other stakeholders. Table 2 indicates that Greenpeace is primarily concerned with its own supporters/activists, consumers, and policy makers. By contrast, the sportswear/fashion firms address their press releases mainly to Greenpeace and, to some extent, to their suppliers.

Table 2: Audiences for the press releases – references to other parties

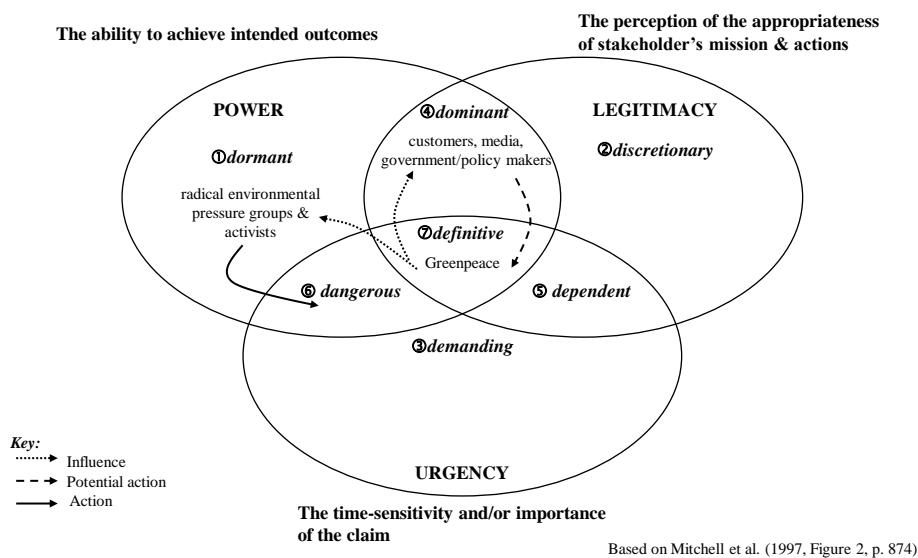
	Greenpeace No. references	Textile firms No. references
<u>Primary/target/stated audience</u>		
Six textile firms	<u>172</u>	
Greenpeace		<u>64</u>
<u>Secondary/wider/implied audiences</u>		
Supporters /Activists	10	0
Consumers/Customers	6	8
Suppliers	16	76
Government/Policy makers/Regulators	7	6
Non-governmental organisations	-	8
Workers/employees	0	1
Stakeholders/Communities/Civil society	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>
	<u>40</u>	<u>108</u>

The presence of multiple audiences and purposes for social and environmental reporting in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ conflict necessitates an analysis encompassing all relevant stakeholders. Mitchell *et al.* (1997) argue that stakeholders are characterised by three relationship attributes, namely (1) power, (2) legitimacy, and (3) urgency. Power constitutes the ability to achieve intended outcomes and derives from the ability to access resources. Resources include both financial resources (e.g., donations) and symbolic resources, such as the relationship of the organisation with its relevant publics or stakeholders (e.g., donors and supporters, the general public, and the media), and staff knowledge and experience (e.g., PR and communication skills). Legitimacy involves the perception of the desirability and appropriateness of the stakeholder’s mission and actions by the general public and the media. Legitimacy can thus be considered a resource which is used to attract and maintain public support. In a conflict between firms and a stakeholder this includes the stakeholder’s ability to form alliances with customers, thus influencing the consumption of the organisation’s goods and services. Urgency relates to the time-sensitiveness or the importance of the stakeholder’s claim. By combining their three relationship attributes, Mitchell *et al.* (1997) identify seven types of stakeholders, with examples for each type: (i) dormant (only power) (e.g, employees laid off, fired), (ii) discretionary (only legitimacy) (e.g, beneficiaries of corporate philanthropy), (iii) demanding (only urgency) (e.g, lone picketer outside company premises), (iv) dominant (power and legitimacy) (e.g, shareholders, creditors, employees, customers, media, government/policy makers), (v) dependent (legitimacy and urgency)(e.g, local residents affected by activities of the firm), (vi) dangerous (power and urgency) (e.g,

wildcat strikers, employee saboteurs, terrorists) and (vii) definitive (power, legitimacy and urgency) (e.g. shareholder activists, whistleblowers).

We apply Mitchell *et al.*'s (1997) typology of stakeholder attributes to the 'Dirty Laundry' case in Figure 3. Stakeholders combining power, legitimacy, and urgency constitute definitive stakeholders in the sense that organisations tend to prioritise their demands. Organisations also have strong incentives to resolve conflicts with this type of stakeholder quickly and satisfactorily for both sides. This is particularly the case for stakeholders who have the support of the wider public and the media, as the potential negative publicity associated with the conflict may damage the firm's image, reputation, or legitimacy. Large NGOs, such as Greenpeace or the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), are thus able to put considerable pressure on business organisations, particularly if these operate in industries characterised by strong public visibility, both in terms of media attention and the presence of a consumer audience (Carter, 2006).

Figure 3: Stakeholder relationships in the 'Dirty Laundry' case



Categories of analysis

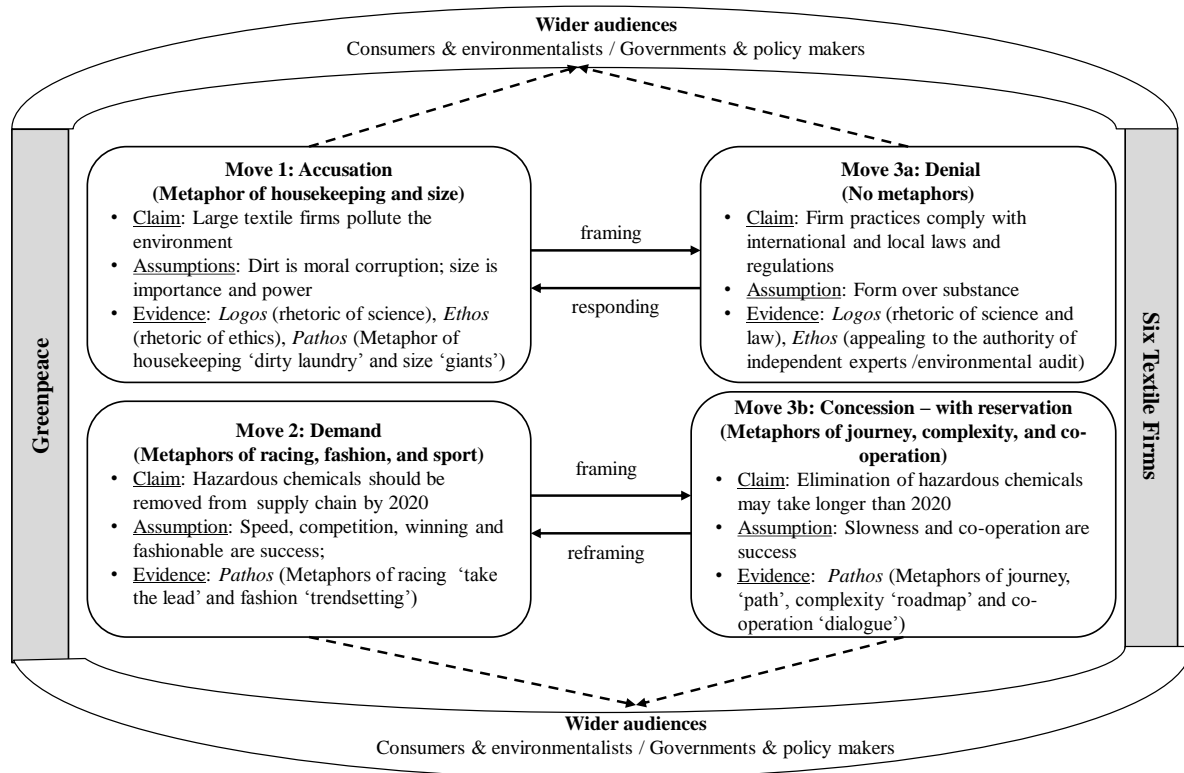
We focus on the dynamics of verbal interaction between Greenpeace and the six sportswear/fashion firms involved in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case. We conceptualise verbal interaction as a series of conversational units or moves which have a specific communicative purpose, such as requesting, threatening, or accusing. The focus of our analysis is on how the moves used during a verbal interaction between parties are realised in the form of rhetoric and argument. Ketola (2006, 2008) classifies organisational response to charges of misconduct based on whether the organisation (1) admits the misconduct and/or (2) admits responsibility for the misconduct. Combining the two aspects results in four strategies: denials, excuses, justifications; and concessions (see Figure 4). Denial involves the failure to admit to the misconduct and the refusal to take any responsibility for it. Excuses entail admitting to the misconduct, but refusing to take any responsibility for it. Justifications involve admitting responsibility for actions, but denying their harmful nature. Finally, concessions involve admitting both responsibility for actions and the harmful effects of environmental practices.

Metaphors involve an implied comparison between two entities, achieved through a figurative use of words (e.g., top management, fringe benefits, and front-line staff). They entail “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5). For example, we conventionally conceptualise money as liquid (e.g., cash flow, liquidation of a firm, to run out of money) or organisations as machines (e.g., human resources, communication has broken down). Metaphors work by conveying abstract concepts (such as money or time) in concrete terms (e.g., as physical objects, spatial orientations or fixed structures relating to everyday human experience). As human beings find it difficult to relate to abstractions, metaphors capture the audience’s imagination and are therefore effective means of influencing audiences’ thinking and behaviour.

Figure 4 summarises our analytical framework, showing that Greenpeace used rhetoric prospectively to frame the issue of environmental pollution by sportswear/fashion firms and the need to eliminate hazardous chemicals from their supply chain by means of using *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* (metaphors of housekeeping, size, racing, sport and fashion). By contrast, the sportswear/fashion firms used rhetoric reactively to either dispute Greenpeace’s charge of misconduct by means of *logos* and *ethos* or to reframe the demand to eliminate hazardous

chemicals from their supply chain by means of *pathos* (metaphors of journey, complexity, and co-operation) as a means of conceding to Greenpeace’s demands on their terms.

Figure 4: Rhetorical analysis - Verbal interactions in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case



To summarise, our analytical framework comprises two levels, namely (1) a rhetorical analysis of press releases (text) and (2) an analysis of the rhetorical situation (social context). The rhetorical analysis focuses on the dynamics of interaction between the parties involved in the conflict in the form of moves (i.e., accusations, demands, denials, excuses, justifications and concessions) and their rhetorical realisation (*logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*), with a particular emphasis on metaphor as a means of appealing to emotion. The analysis of the rhetorical situation focuses on the relationships between the parties involved in the conflict, including their relationships with other stakeholders.

5. Discussion of findings

Figures 2, 3, and 4 visualise the application of the analytical framework developed in the prior section to analyse the interaction between Greenpeace and sportswear/fashion firms in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case. We first discuss the findings relating to the rhetorical situation characterising the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case, including the relationship between stakeholders. We

then discuss the dynamics of interaction between the parties in the form of moves (i.e., accusations, demands, denials, excuses, justifications and concessions). Finally, we consider how the moves are rhetorically achieved in the form of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, with a particular emphasis on the use of metaphor as an emotional appeal. Illustrative examples to support our findings are provided in Table 3.

5.1 Rhetorical situation

As shown in Figure 2, Greenpeace's press releases simultaneously served three purposes: (1) to persuade firms to eliminate hazardous chemicals from their supply chain, (2) to persuade consumers and environmentalists to put pressure on firms by means of product boycotts and participating in protest activities, and (3) to persuade governments and policy makers to introduce tighter environmental regulations. Conversely, the press releases of the sportswear/fashion firms also served three purposes: (1) to deny Greenpeace's charge of wrongdoing on their part or to concede to Greenpeace's demands, (2) to prevent product boycotts and (3) to prevent increased regulation by highlighting good environmental practices and aligning themselves with Greenpeace's cause.

Figure 3 indicates that Greenpeace is a stakeholder, as it aims to exert influence over the firms' environmental practices and performance. Prior to the first 'Dirty Laundry' report, Greenpeace is a dominant stakeholder for firms with a high-street presence (i.e., operating predominantly in the retail and food sector) in that it combines power and legitimacy gained through a variety of successful campaigns targeting these industries (Cooper, 2009). The identification of pollution in the supply chain of the sportswear/fashion industry provides Greenpeace with an urgent claim, thus transforming it from a dominant to a definitive stakeholder. The urgency of the claim manifested itself rhetorically by means of the metaphor of racing in Greenpeace's press releases (see discussion in the next section). During the 'Dirty Laundry' campaign it skilfully uses its power and legitimacy to access symbolic resources in the form of support by activists, consumers, the government/policy makers, the general public, and the media to create a legitimacy threat for the targeted firms. Consumers, government/policy makers, and the media are dominant stakeholders in the sense that they have both power (i.e., access to financial and symbolic resources) and legitimacy. By persuading them of the urgency of the claim, they have the potential to become definite stakeholders who can exercise their power in the form of product boycotts, more stringent environmental regulations, and negative portrayal in the media. By contrast, activists are

dormant stakeholders in the sense that they have power to impose their will organisations by means of campaigns which attract the attention of the media. By persuading them of the urgency of the issue, Greenpeace mobilised activists to participate in high-profile events, such as a mass-striptease, activism during a football match, and a sticker campaign. This transformed them into dangerous stakeholders who used their power to coerce the firms to commit to Greenpeace's demands. These events were reported in the media, thus not only creating negative publicity and threatening the firms' legitimacy, but they were also aimed at influencing the perceptions and behaviour of the consumers of sportswear/fashion goods. Greenpeace subsequently rendered the support by activists explicit in its press releases (see Example 3.17 and Example 3.18 in Table 3).

5.2 Argument and rhetorical strategies

Both Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms used rhetoric and argument in their press releases to address multiple audiences in order to achieve specific purposes (see Figure 2). This section considers the dynamics of verbal interaction between the parties involved in the dispute in the form of moves and the rhetorical strategies used to realise the moves, including the use of metaphor as a means of appealing to emotion, thus underlining the urgency of their claim both in terms its importance and speediness of response required. Table 3 provides illustrative examples in the form of quotes.

Dynamics of interaction: Moves

The interaction between Greenpeace and the six sportswear/fashion firms took the form of four moves (see Figure 4 and Table 3). Greenpeace initiated the interaction by accusing the sportswear/fashion firms of using hazardous chemicals in the supply chain (Move 1) and demanding their elimination by 2020 (Move 2). This involved the prospective use of rhetoric as a means of framing the projected rhetorical situation, thus putting Greenpeace firmly in the driving seat. In Move 3, the six sportswear/fashion firms engaged in verbal interaction with Greenpeace. They used rhetoric retrospectively to respond to an existing rhetorical situation, namely Greenpeace's charge of misconduct and demand for action. The responses by sportswear/fashion firms fall into two categories, namely those which chose to respond to the charge of misconduct and those which chose to respond to the demand for remedial action. adidas, NIKE, H&M responded by disputing Greenpeace's claim and defending their environmental practices (Move 3a – denials, excuses, justifications). adidas excused its harmful environmental practices by shifting the responsibility onto its Chinese supplier by

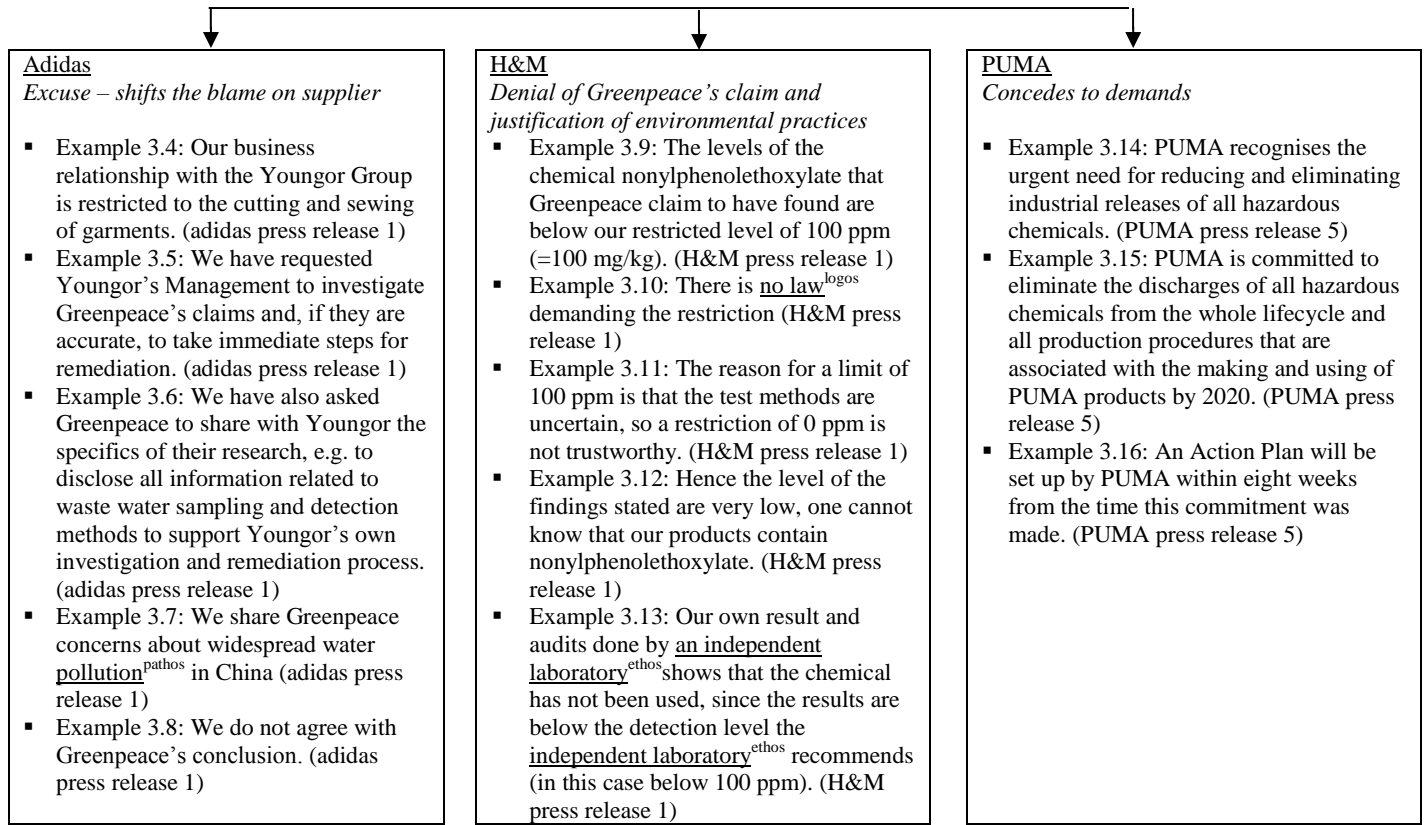
stating “Our business relationship with Youngor Group is restricted to the cutting and sewing of garments” Example 3.4 in Table 3). H&M questioned the validity of Greenpeace’s claims (“Our own result and audits done by an independent laboratory shows that the chemical has not been used” Example 3.13) and justified its harmful environmental practices by reference to compliance with local and international regulations (“there is no law demanding the restriction” Example 3.10).

By contrast, PUMA, LACOSTE, G-Star Raw responded by aligning themselves with Greenpeace’s aims, acquiescing to Greenpeace’s demands (Move 3b). This allowed them to sidestep the validity of the charge of misconduct, thus giving them scope to reframe the rhetorical situation. PUMA responded, underlining its environmental credentials, by stating that it “recognises the urgent need for reducing and eliminating industrial releases of all hazardous chemicals” (Example 3.14). However, it neither acknowledged the “urgent need” as originating in Greenpeace’s ‘Dirty Laundry’ report nor that PUMA was targeted by Greenpeace in the report. This means that there was no real dialogue between the two parties about the validity of the charge of misconduct. In turn, Greenpeace responded by portraying acquiescing firms in a positive light (see Example 3.16) and non-acquiescing firms in a negative light (see Example 3.17 and Example 3.18). This resulted in all six sportswear/fashion firms eventually conceding to Greenpeace’s demand.

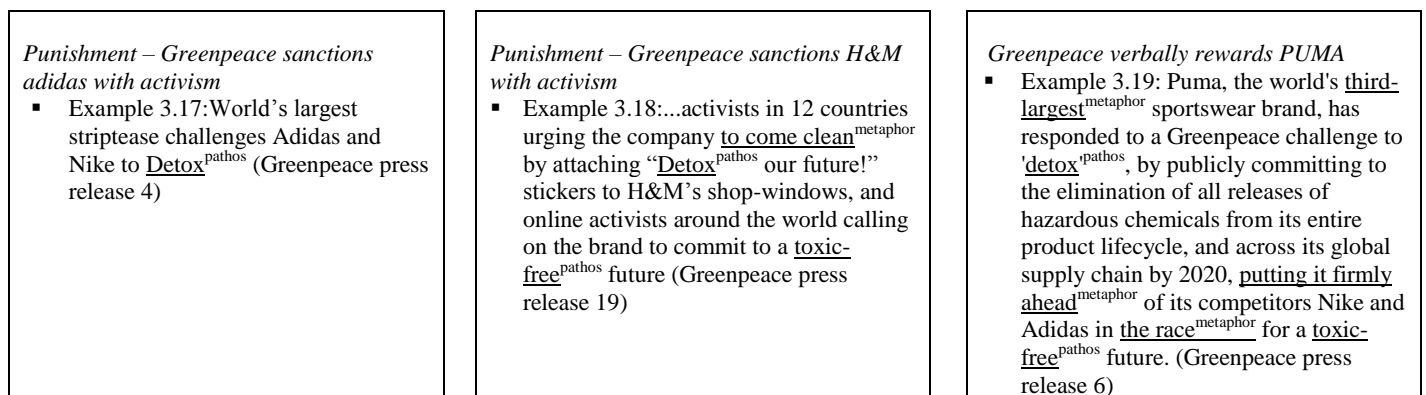
Table 3: Dynamics of interaction between Greenpeace and textile firms in the form of moves

<p style="text-align: center;">Greenpeace accuses textile firms of water pollution: Move 1 (Accusation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example 3.1: The Greenpeace International ‘<u>Dirty Laundry</u>’^{pathos} report ... found hazardous chemicals in <u>samples</u>^{logos} of wastewater discharges taken at two textile processing facilities... (Greenpeace press release 1) Example 3.2: ...snapshot of the kind of <u>toxic</u>^{pathos} chemicals that are being released by the textile industry into waterways all over the world. (Greenpeace press release 1) 	<p style="text-align: center;">Greenpeace demands to elimination of hazardous chemicals from the supply chain: Move 2 (Demand)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example 3.3: ...calling on the sportswear <u>giants</u>^{metaphor} to remove <u>toxic</u>^{pathos} chemicals from their supply chains and from their products... (Greenpeace press release 1)
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Firms responses to Greenpeace’s accusation: Move 3a (Denials, Excuses, Justifications) Firm responses to Greenpeace’s demands: Move 3b (Concessions)



Greenpeace’s response to firms: Move 4a (negative presentation) or Move 4b (positive presentation)



Key: See Table 1 for identification of the specific press releases; underlined words indicate rhetorical strategies (*logos, ethos, pathos, metaphor*)

Rhetorical strategies: *Logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*

In order to persuade the other party of the validity and legitimacy of their claim, speakers/writers appeal to logic (*logos*), to authority, (*ethos*), or to emotion (*pathos*). Both Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms drew on all three rhetorical strategies in making their claims. Figure 4 conceptualises the interaction between the parties as a series of moves which have specific communicative purposes, i.e., accusing (Move 1), demanding (Move 2), denying (Move 3a) and conceding (Move 3b). Each move manifests itself in the form of a claim or statement with supporting rhetorical strategies (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*) and associated assumptions and beliefs. For example, Greenpeace's statement "The Greenpeace International 'Dirty Laundry' report ... found hazardous chemicals in samples of wastewater discharges taken at two textile processing facilities" (Example 3.1) is based on the claim that sportswear/fashion firms are polluting the environment. The underlying assumption is that sportswear/fashion firms put profits before the environment. The evidence is provided in the form of *logos* (rhetoric of science: 'samples of wastewater discharges' (Example 3.1) and *pathos* (metaphor of housekeeping: 'Dirty Laundry report') (Example 3.1).

Logos (rhetoric of science) and *ethos* (rhetoric of law and audit)

The interactions between Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms in the 'Dirty Laundry' case focused on charges of organisational misconduct in the form of harmful environmental practices. Table 4 summarises the use of *logos* (rhetoric of science) and *ethos* (rhetoric of law and audit) by Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms, illustrating differences in practices. The rhetoric of science (*logos*) is common in debates on the environmental impact of individuals and organisations (e.g., pollution, climate change, population growth) as a means of providing evidence in the form of measurement, to appeal to instrumental rationality, thus gaining legitimacy. Both sides involved in the 'Dirty Laundry' campaign use the rhetoric of science (see Examples 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 in Table 4) to convince both the other party and wider audiences of the legitimacy and validity of their arguments, albeit in different ways. Greenpeace tended towards the rhetoric of science as a means of evoking an emotional response ("bioaccumulative hormone disruptors" – Example 4.1), whereas the firms tended to use precise chemical formulae and measurements ("Nonylphenoethoxylates", "alkylphenols", "alkylphenoethoxylates" – Example 4.3). The reference in Table 4 to "78 articles tested" (Example 4.4) and "52 were found to contain nonylphenoethoxylates" (Example 4.4) implies objectivity and precision that may not be valid. As environmental matters are heavily regulated, appealing to the authority of the law (*ethos*) in the form of legal

compliance (see Examples 4.4, 4.5, 4.6) is also important means of persuading audiences of the legitimacy and validity of one's claim. *Ethos* also entails appealing to independent parties, such as experts or laboratories, to verify environmental performance (see Examples 4.7, 4.8, 4.9).

Table 4: Examples of the rhetoric of science, law, audit/inspection/review

Rhetoric of science (*logos*) used by Greenpeace to accuse textile firms

- Example 4.1: The chemicals found in the sampling carried out by Greenpeace include persistent and bioaccumulative hormone disruptors (Greenpeace press release 1)

Rhetoric of science (*logos*) used by the textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 4.2: Our own result and audits done by an independent laboratory shows that the chemical has not been used, since the results are below the detection level the independent laboratory recommends (in this case below 100 ppm). (H&M press release 1) (see also Example 3.13)

Rhetoric of science (*logos*) used by the textile firms conciliating to Greenpeace's claims

- Example 4.3: Nonylphenoethoxylates (NPEO or NPE) are a class of chemical substances that belong to the general family of chemicals known as alkylphenols (AP) and alkylphenoethoxylates (APEO). (NIKE press release 3)

Rhetoric of law (*ethos*) used by Greenpeace to accuse textile firms

- Example 4.4: [Policy makers] can set stringent regulations that systematically reduce and eliminate hazardous chemicals while supporting sustainable innovations (Greenpeace press release 1)

Rhetoric of law (*ethos*) used by the textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 4.5: The adidas Group also commissioned a German-based independent testing institute specialised in water analysis to compare testing results as reported in the Greenpeace report with German and European waste and drinking water regulations. (adidas press release 1)

Rhetoric of law (*ethos*) used by the textile firms conciliating to Greenpeace's claims

- Example 4.6: EU restriction: 1000 mg/kg G-Star limit: 100mg/kg Greenpeace detection limit: 1 mg/kg (G-Star Raw press release 1)

Rhetoric of audit/inspection (*ethos*) used by Greenpeace to accuse textile firms

- Example 4.7: Of the 78 articles tested, 52 were found to contain nonylphenoethoxylates, chemicals which breaks down into the hormone-disrupting nonylphenol (Greenpeace press release 5)

Rhetoric of audit/inspection (*ethos*) used by the textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 4.8: We conduct about 30 000 chemical tests every year to ensure compliance with our chemical restrictions. (H&M press release 2)

Rhetoric of audit/inspection (*ethos*) used by the textile firms conciliating to Greenpeace's claims

- Example 4.9: At the moment, G-Star has a compliance system fully focused on hazardous substances, which includes a Restricted Chemicals List, regular checks on the sites, risk assessments, training and support to suppliers, product testing and independent environmental auditing. (G-Star RAW press release 1)

Key: PR = press release; Key phrases guiding the coding judgement are underlined

Greenpeace used hardly any rhetoric of law or audit, whereas the firms extensively referred to regulations and audit. This is because the three firms who denied the charge of wrongdoing defended their environmental practices by reference to local and international laws and regulations. Organisational legitimacy extends beyond laws and rules and encompasses “*a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions*”(Suchman, 1995, p.547). This means that a debate on a charge of environmental misconduct is ultimately a debate on beliefs and values which cannot be won by reference to rule compliance. The remaining three firms avoided a debate on the charge of wrongdoing, as they realised that organisational legitimacy is based on beliefs and values, rather than on rule compliance. By conceding to Greenpeace’s demands, they avoided engaging in a debate on the validity of the charge of wrongdoing, thus protecting their legitimacy and reputation from further damage.

The frequencies of usage of terms associated with the rhetoric of science, law and audit by Greenpeace and the firms is summarised in Table 5. The terms used/basis for the frequency counts in Table 5 are shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Frequency of use of rhetoric of science, law and audit & metaphor				
Rhetoric of science, law & audit	Science	Law	Audit	Total
Greenpeace press releases	65	1	6	72
Textile industry press releases	94	39	49	182
Metaphor	Sport	Fashion	Housekeeping	Total
Greenpeace press releases	34	12	95	141
Average per press release				20.1
	Journey	Complexity	Cooperation	Total
Textile industry press releases	32	11	100	143
Average per press release				11.0

Table 6: Analysis of the frequency of the rhetoric of science, law and audit

Greenpeace (Total length of press releases in words: 5,332)		Firms (Total length of press releases in words: 10,073)	
<u>Logos: Rhetoric of science</u>			
'Bioaccumulative'	15	'Bioaccumulative'	8
'Hormone disruptors'	22	'Endocrine disruptors'	4
Nonylphenoethoxylate, alkylphenols, alkylphenoethoxylates, perflourinatedsulphorates, etc	21	Nonylphenoethoxylate, alkylphenols, alkylphenoethoxylates, perflourinatedsulphorates, etc	31
Other terms referring to science	<u>7</u>	Other terms referring to science	<u>51</u>
	<u>65</u>		<u>94</u>
<u>Ethos: Rhetoric of law</u>			
European legal regulations	0	European legal regulations	16
Local regulations	0	Local regulations	6
Regulations	1	Regulations	14
Best practice standards	<u>0</u>	Best practice standards	<u>3</u>
	<u>1</u>		<u>39</u>
<u>Ethos: Rhetoric of audit, inspection, review</u>			
External audit/Independent review	6	External audit/Independent review	15
Internal audit	<u>0</u>		<u>34</u>
	<u>6</u>		<u>49</u>

Pathos – Strategic use of metaphors

Both Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms used metaphors strategically to convince the other party and their implied audiences of the validity and legitimacy of their claims (see Figure 4). Table 5 analyses the frequency of metaphor usage, using the categories summarised in Figure 4 (three categories for Greenpeace, three categories for the textile firms). Greenpeace used metaphor to a much greater extent than the sportswear/fashion firms. This is in line the strategy of creative communication outlined in its mission statement. The use of metaphors allowed Greenpeace to psychologically connect with the general public by appealing to their emotions (*pathos*) through unconsciously formed sets of beliefs, attitudes, and values (Chateris-Black: 2005: 175). Organisational legitimacy is concerned with audience perceptions of the normative appropriateness of an organisation's “*action within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions*” (Suchman, 1995, p.547). By strategically using metaphors questioning the sportswear/fashion firms' legitimacy, Greenpeace was able to put pressure on the firms to concede to its demands.

Greenpeace used metaphors (See examples in Table 7a) which tap into the belief system of Western societies to execute the moves of accusation and demand highlighted in Figure 4.

Greenpeace's campaign against the sportswear/fashion firms was imaginatively named the 'Dirty Laundry' campaign. This entailed the use of the metaphor of housekeeping ('dirty laundry' – Example 7.2 in Table 7a, 'clean up their acts' – Example 7.1) embedded in the popular saying 'washing your dirty laundry/linen in public' to refer to the pollution by the sportswear/fashion industry. The power of this metaphor derives from its inherent dualism, i.e., clean versus dirty. Whereas cleanliness is associated with morality (i.e., godliness), dirt is associated with amorality (i.e., vice). This allowed Greenpeace to construct the practices of sportswear/fashion firms as physically and morally 'dirty'. As this metaphor resonates with the belief system of Western societies, Greenpeace was able to psychologically connect with its audiences, including consumers, environmentalists, and the media. They, in turn, were able to put pressure on the sportswear/fashion firms to abolish their harmful environmental practices by means of product boycotts, protests, and negative publicity. The metaphor of size ('giants' – Example 7.6 in Table 7a) constructed the sportswear/fashion firms as important powerful organisational actors. This renders Greenpeace's plea for action both compelling and viable. The dominant capitalist ideology values size which is associated with importance, growth, and power. Both metaphors resonate strongly with the beliefs system of Western capitalist societies. This made it difficult for sportswear/fashion firms to counter Greenpeace's charge of misconduct with *pathos*. Thus, sportswear/fashion firms contesting Greenpeace's accusation of environmental misconduct resorted to *logos* (rhetoric of science) and *ethos* (reference to the authority of the law and to the authority of independent testing) to defend their environmental practices.

Greenpeace framed its demand to eliminate all hazardous chemicals from the sportswear/fashion firms' supply chains as a race, thus pitting the firms against each other in a competition to reach this target. Greenpeace then used the metaphors of sport and fashion to construct the firms conciliating to its demands as 'winners' – Example 7.12 in Table 7a, 'champions' and 'trendsetters' and the firms resisting its demands as 'losers' – Example 7.14, 'laggards' and 'unfashionable'. As consumer goods firms are highly dependent on public opinion, this positive/negative labelling by Greenpeace influenced public perception and thus risked impacting on organisational reputation and legitimacy. As a result, all six sportswear/fashion firms engaging in verbal interaction with Greenpeace eventually agreed to Greenpeace's demands. The metaphors of racing, sport and fashion tapped into the dominant capitalist ideology of competition and success. Goatly (2007) argues that metaphors of speed involve the conceptualisation of a process or an activity as motion, regardless of whether it

involves movement or not. The intensity at which an activity takes place is then associated with speed. As speed metaphors tend to double up as metaphors for success, speed is associated with success. There are a large number of metaphors in which activity is metaphorically viewed as a race. Greenpeace cleverly linked the association between speed and success with the firms' products (sportswear and fashion) to construct the elimination of hazardous chemicals from their supply chain as a competition between firms. This resulted in winners and losers. Western fashion functions as an aesthetic medium for the expression of ideas, desires, and beliefs circulating in society (Counsell and Wolf, 2001: 150). Environmentalism constitutes a core value in Western societies. Using the metaphor of fashion, Greenpeace exploited fashion firms' dependency on being perceived at the forefront of ideas, desires, and beliefs. Thus, firms conceding to Greenpeace's demands are constructed as 'trendsetters' and firms refusing to do so as old-fashioned.

The sportswear/fashion firms cleverly countered Greenpeace's demand for the elimination of hazardous chemicals from their supply chain by using the metaphors of journey, co-operation, and complexity (*pathos*) (see Table 7b) which redefined Greenpeace's target as a complex process involving a collaborative effort by the sportswear/fashion industry. They strategically used the concepts of slowness and co-operation to gain time. Slowness and co-operation, the non-dominant aspect of the metaphors of speed and competition, are particularly valued by environmentalists and other counter-culture groups in society (e.g., the slow food movement, the rat race). The journey metaphor constitutes a predominant metaphor in business discourse on sustainability used in annual reports, press releases, and CEO speeches (Milne *et al.*, 2006). However, it also functions as a means of obfuscation, as it simultaneously evokes images of engaging with and progressing towards sustainability, yet masks the actual destination of the journey by describing it as a "long, difficult, on-going, perhaps never ending, and ill-defined" process (Milne *et al.*, 2006: 820). However, in the 'Dirty Laundry' case, the end point of 'the journey' is defined by Greenpeace both in terms of outcome and time-frame as the elimination of hazardous chemicals from their supply chain by 2020. This suggests that Greenpeace is not only aware of corporate greenwash, but also prevents targeted companies from engaging in it.

In conclusion, both Greenpeace and the sportswear/fashion firms used metaphors incorporating values of the other party to persuade them of the validity and legitimacy of their argument.

Table 7a: Use of metaphors by Greenpeace

Housekeeping (Laundry) metaphors: Used by Greenpeace to accuse textile firms

- Example 7.1: As industry frontrunners, major sportswear brands have a responsibility to show leadership and clean up their acts (Greenpeace press release 2)
- Example 7.2: global brands like Adidas are expecting customers to their dirty laundry for them (Greenpeace press release 5)
- Example 7.3: Brands must ... come clean about what chemicals their factories are using and discharging (Greenpeace press release 5)

Housekeeping (Laundry) metaphors: Used to reward textile firms conceding to Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.4: By committing to clean up its dirty laundry, Nike is showing real winning form (Greenpeace press release 4)

Housekeeping (Laundry) metaphors: Used to punish textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.5: To highlight this problem and the need for urgent solutions, activists in the Philippines today hung out t-shirt shaped banners exposing the 14 brands 'Dirty Laundry' over the Marikina River, challenging them to "Cut the chemicals and Detox our water". (Greenpeace press release 5)

Size metaphors: Used to apply pressure on textile firms to concede to Greenpeace's demands

- Example 7.6: calling on the sportswear giants to remove toxic chemicals from their supply chain (Greenpeace press release 1)
- Example 7.7: Puma, the world's third-largest sportswear brand (Greenpeace press release 6)
- Example 7.8: major fashion brands (Greenpeace press release 7)

Racing metaphors: Used to reward textile firms conceding to Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.9: Nike Scores 1-0 Over Adidas with toxic pollution clean-up commitment (Greenpeace press release 4)
- Example 7.10: Round one of the Detox challenge goes to Puma (Greenpeace press release 3)
- Example 7.11: putting it [Puma] firmly ahead of its competitors Nike and Adidas in the race for a toxic-free future (Greenpeace press release 3)
- Example 7.12: Nike is showing real winning form (Greenpeace press release 4)

Racing metaphors: Used to punish textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.13: now Nike and Adidas better get in gear, or else risk falling behind in the race towards a toxic-free future (Greenpeace press release 3)

Sporting metaphors: Used to punish textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.14: losers shouldn't throw in the towel (Greenpeace press release 4)
- Example 7.15: water pollution is not fair play (Greenpeace press release 4)
- Example 7.16: Adidas and Nike are playing on the same team as toxic polluters (Greenpeace press release 2)
- Example 7.17: Adidas and Nike talk a good game (Greenpeace press release 2)

Fashion metaphors: Used to reward textile firms conciliating to Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.18: this season's hottest fashion trend (Greenpeace press release 7)
- Example 7.19: setting the trend for this season and the future (Greenpeace press release 7)
- Example 7.20: "detoxing" is back in fashion, with a number of clothing brands publicly engaging in the "Detox" challenge (Greenpeace press release 6)

Fashion metaphors: Used to punish textile firms contesting Greenpeace's claims

- Example 7.21: it also sends a clear message to other brands that using toxic chemicals to make our clothing is no longer in vogue (Greenpeace press release 7)

Table 7b: Use of metaphors by the sportswear/fashion firms

Journey metaphors

- Example 7.22: Driving industry collaboration for the development of a dye-house audit protocol (phrase repeated - adidas press releases 1 and 2)
- Example 7.23: To make this a reality, NIKE, Inc. will continue phasing out hazardous chemicals in our supply chain and we will accelerate the phase out of the highest priority hazardous chemicals. (NIKE press release 1)

Metaphors of complexity

- Example 7.24: This work is done within a complex and tiered network of buyers, agents, distributors and material suppliers. (NIKE PR 2)
- Example 7.25: The supply chain of a garment is a very complex system with as many steps and suppliers in the chain as parts and raw materials used. (G-Star RAW press release 1)

Metaphors of co-operation

- Example 7.26: We always strive to strengthen our methods and routines, and as part of our work we wellcome [sic] the dialogue with all our stakeholders- of course including Greenpeace. (H&M press release 1)

Key: See Table 1 for identification of the specific press releases; Key phrases guiding the coding judgement are underlined

6. Summary and implications

We examined rhetoric and argument in social and environmental reporting in the ‘Dirty Laundry’ case which involved a conflict between Greenpeace and firms in the sportswear/fashion industry over the use of hazardous chemicals in their supply chains. Both sides used the rhetorical strategies of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* to convince audiences of the validity and legitimacy of their arguments. Greenpeace skilfully used *pathos* (i.e., appealing to audiences’ emotions) in the form of metaphors associated with the dominant capitalist ideology which underpins Western societies (metaphors of housekeeping, size, racing, sport and fashion) to expose the harmful environmental practices of fashion/sportswear firms and to demand their improvement. This is in line with Greenpeace’s strategy to use creative communication to achieve its aims. Firms eventually conceded to Greenpeace’s demand by means of choosing metaphors based on values and beliefs of the environmental movement (journey, complexity, and co-operation). This allowed them to reframe the elimination of hazardous chemicals from their supply chain as a complex process, thus buying them some time. Both Greenpeace and the textile firms used metaphors associated with the other party’s belief system to persuade them of the validity and legitimacy of their argument. This suggests that the use of *pathos*, particularly in the form of metaphors which are associated with the value system of the respective audience, constitutes a powerful method of persuasion.

Our findings suggest that the outcome of conflicts on social and environmental issues is dependent on the particular attributes of the stakeholder involved and the stakeholder's ability to harness the power and legitimacy of other stakeholders. Firms find it difficult to ignore the demands of powerful and legitimate stakeholders who have urgent claims. Power derives from the ability to access material and symbolic resources. Our findings suggest that in social and environmental conflicts access to financial resources is less crucial than the ability to tap into a network of support from other key stakeholders, such as supporters, consumers, the general public and the media, and the rhetorical skills of public relations personnel. The use of metaphors allows parties involved in the conflict to frame and reframe the contested issue in particular ways, thus playing a key role in the way the conflict is resolved. Our findings suggest that Greenpeace combines all three attributes of a 'clever' stakeholder, namely skills in coalition-building, political action, and social reality construction (Mitchell *et al.*, 1997: 879). For this reason, the sportswear/fashion firms find it impossible to ignore Greenpeace's demands and eventually all commit to the elimination of hazardous chemicals from their supply chains. This is in line with the view that language is a mechanism of power through which constituents pursue their interests (Bourdieu, 1991).

In this paper we only focus on one aspect of communication (written communication in the form of press releases) between the two parties involved in the 'Dirty Laundry' case. However, Greenpeace also used visual rhetoric (a video, posters and placards) and the rhetoric of performance (strip-tease, attaching stickers to shop windows, etc.) to put pressure on the firms to concede to its demands. These non-verbal means of communication constitute a powerful means of persuasion and undoubtedly contributed to the outcome of the conflict. Prior research has focused on the use of visuals in corporate annual reports to convey a particular message. However, we know little about the use of non-verbal means of communication by stakeholders and even less about the use of non-verbal means of communication during interactions between business organisations and stakeholders. Pictures have a strong psychological impact and therefore constitute an even more powerful way of persuasion than metaphors. In order to understand the dynamics of communication between business organisations and their audiences, future research needs to explore non-verbal as well as verbal communication. This necessitates interdisciplinary research drawing on insights from visual arts and drama.

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