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Glossary

Modern western society: When mentioning *the western world* and *the modern western society* we are referring to Europe and The United States of America. The modern western society is in our project thought of as the change in society and the modernity evolved through the last 50 years.

Modernization: We refer to modernization as the change from a traditional society to a modern society, which happened within a timeframe of the last 50 years.

Stakeholders: When referring to stakeholders through the project we mean all people who have an interest in BP including shareholders.

Shareholders: When mentioning the word *shareholders* we refer to people who have an economic interest in companies. In our case we only refer to the shareholders of BP. Shareholders can own shares in a company, or

have assets within a company.

Peer-group: We think of peer-groups as groups, that BP is trying to influence for the benefit of the company

BP: When referring to *BP* we mean the company

Beyond Petroleum (former known as *British Petroleum*).

Introduction

Motivation

The Deepwater Horizon oil Spill on April 20th 2010, which took place in the Gulf of Mexico is our study case in this project. Our project is based on an interest in the company Beyond Petroleum, formerly known as British Petroleum. We believe the oil spill in 2010 to be interesting due to the severe nature of the consequences causing 11 people their lives, the devastation of the wildlife in the Gulf and the huge environmental damages. The accident was also given major media attention surrounding the disaster and resulted in a huge outrage from both consumers and the public in general. Our field of interest is the stakeholders' reaction after the oil spill and how BP altered its CSR policy in order to meet the social demands. Additionally we are interested in the company's use of CSR and the way BP

communicates with its stakeholder by using social medias e.g. YouTube.

We find this case to be very interesting in relation to a modern society. It is informative and enlightening in the understanding of both the importance of sustainable resources and environmental engagement and the interest of business market.

Dimensions

In this project we will use three dimensions to cover our problem formulation. We have decided to use *History and Culture*, *Subjectivity and Learning* and *Science and Philosophy*, explained below.

History and Culture

History and Culture is the dimension we will use to obtain cultural and historical knowledge of the chosen topic. We will cover the dimension of *History and*

Culture by creating a historical view of the development of the company BP and additionally view this historical development in a wider social context, more specifically in relation to the changing attitudes amongst consumers. This will provide a qualitative understanding as opposed to the quantitative understanding, which we will obtain from a formed timeline, which is enclosed in appendix 1.

The dimension of *History and Culture* is inevitable in this project, since the need for thorough background knowledge is necessary. The development of the concept political consumer will be taken into account to assure a deeper understanding of the Risk Society as articulated by Beck and as mentioned in the *History of BP* into a wider social context. *History and Culture* will form a basis for the data found and for our further analysis.

Subjectivity and Learning

We will cover the dimension of *Subjectivity and Learning* by looking at the relation between the company BP and its consumers. This dimension will lead us in the direction of putting subjectivism and identity into relation with the behaviour of political consumers. The consumer is an important player in this project, and we have chosen to use *Subjectivity and Learning* in order to obtain an understanding of the reaction from the consumers towards the scandal in 2010.

We will, by analysing the commercials and the responses to commercial *a* on YouTube to put focus on the communication between the two parties.

Philosophy and Science

Michel Foucault's term *The Gaze* will be accounted for and thus help in the covering of the dimension

Philosophy and Science. The Gaze presents a discourse of how one perceives the world and we intend to investigate in what way BP wants the consumers to see the world and vice versa and how it has evolved through time and the development of our risk society.

The Gaze will be used as an analytical approach throughout our project.

We will investigate in what way BP has been handling the crises of the major oil spill while keeping the company's responsibility in mind.

Problem field and problem formulation

The main focus in this project is how the company BP communicates its interest in balancing making a profit for the company, while at the same time protecting the environment or at least producing oil in a way that is not detrimental to the environment. In addition to this we will analyse two commercials by BP, which communicates the accident from its point of view. We will use a term by Michel Foucault, thoughts by Ulrich Beck and historical material to create a background for our analysis. By using our historical material we aim at understanding exactly what happened on the Deepwater Horizon the 20th of April 2010 and the development of the company BP in order to understand the way the company communicates to the public.

We have chosen to limit this case to how BP, as a reaction to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, has communicated how it is restoring the environment

around the Gulf in an attempt to re-establish BP's presumed image as a "green" company.

Another interesting aspect is the one of the stakeholders' reaction to the commercial and what affect it has had on the rest of BP's stakeholders. We want to investigate whether the construction of this commercial has made the stakeholders' view the company in a positive way again.

This project raises and tries to answer the following question:

How does BP through its communication to its stakeholders try to strike a balance between making a profit and at the same time respecting the environment?

Additionally three sub questions are raised:

- What does *Corporate Social Responsibility* consist of and how does BP apply it in its company structure/practice?

- How does BP use the media to regain the stakeholders' trust and rebuild the company's image after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010 and what was the stakeholders' reaction?
- How has society changed since the concept of *political consumers* was formed, and what impact does the change have on a company like BP?

Theory

In the theory chapter we will introduce the theories applied in our analysis. We have chosen to include theories on The Risk Society, Power Relations, Crisis Communication and Political Consumerism.

Additionally we have included the history of CSR to form a foundation for our knowledge on the concept, which we will use in order to investigate what message BP wants to communicate to the viewer of the commercial. Through analysing the commercial, we believe that the reason for BP's actions following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill will become clear.

The theory of *The Risk Society* articulated by Ulrich Beck investigates how society in late modernity has evolved into a risk society and how companies are an integral part of this development. The concept of *Power*

Relations contains theory on who has power in modern society, and the reason for this placement of power. It also includes theory on how the different kinds of power influence each other. We will use this concept to investigate how this relationship between company and consumer might have influenced BP's actions after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

An introduction to a part of the book *Crisis communication*, which includes means to analyse the different phases a company goes through when dealing with a crisis and how to define a crisis, will be included. The type of consumers called political consumers, will be explained and accounted for simultaneously to the development of this particular segment.

In the next section a depth-full explanation of Beck and his thoughts of *the risk society* will be accounted for.

Ulrich Beck and *The Risk Society*

In the modern society a new paradigm has been 'created'. Ulrich Beck describes this paradigm as the *Risk Society* and explains how the production of wealth is linked to the production of risks.

As mankind improves its technological resources, bigger risks are created along with that technology (Beck 1992). During the industrialization technological facilities were created and it is in the modernization, that the political and economic risks of that technology are being managed.

The stakeholders are aware and concerned with these risks and companies find themselves in a position, where they have to promise and improve security in order to keep a business functioning. Beck argues how the modern western world has developed from hunger and poverty to wealth and overweight, which he calls the development from the 'scarcity society'. He combines this notion with these historical facts. The

word 'risk' is not a new word. Beck argues that it is as old as the development of the scarcity society itself. The consequences of risk takings have also been known to the western world since the start of the industrialization, but they have been ignored due to poverty and now 'we', the modern society, have become greedy (Beck 1992). The western world is no longer in poverty but keeps on exploiting nature and its resources in the third world, where they still suffer from poverty and hunger. Beck describes this as a double process that takes place in the modern western world (Beck 1992). Beck's thesis is

"Sooner or later in the continuity of modernization the social positions and conflicts of a 'wealth-distributing' society begin to be joined by those of a 'risk-distributing' society" (Beck 1992:20).

Beck says that there is a change from the logic of the distribution of wealth in the 'scarcity society' to the

logic of the distribution of risks in the developed modern world. The modernization process becomes reflexive, which means that it becomes a theme and problem for itself. The question of how to manage the risks becomes important.

“Risks, as opposed to other dangers, are consequences which relate to the threatening force of modernization and to its globalization of doubt. They are politically reflexive” (Beck 1992:21).

In this quotation Beck states that risks become politically reflexive, which means that it becomes a question of how to manage risks politically and this could amongst other things include how to manage the reaction to risks.

The Internet in modern society has increased the possibility of using the right to free speech. Combined with the question of how to manage risks politically this leads to an open discussion since consumers have

become more politically active.

Beck also argues, that people involved with political issues, could be linked to the inequalities of class. Ergo Beck reasons that people of wealth seek profit, which involves risks and due to their presumable political role in society, there could be created a link between wealth and risks.

He supports this notion as

“with the economic exploitation of the risks it sets free, industrial society produces the hazards and the political potential of the risk society” (Beck 1992:23).

The political potential of the risk society develops knowledge about risks, and creates political discussions, environmental debates and organisations and so on.

***Magt og Modmagt*¹ by Ulrich Beck**

The power relations between Beyond Petroleum and its stakeholders are analysed through tools found in Ulrich Beck's book on power relations *Magt og Modmagt*. The theories by Beck are used in order to see how the two parties are able to influence each other and how the Deepwater Horizon oil spill has affected this relationship.

Beck works with several different types of power relations, most of these, within the field of business. As an example, Beck investigates the power relation between the employer and the employee. In this relationship the employee's power exists in his ability to refuse to offer his labour, which is called *counter power*. *Counter power* can also apply to a consumer, refusing to

buy a product. Opposite to this the company's power is *lock-out*, which is the company's possibility of getting rid of its employees.

Beck goes on to illustrate *economic power*, where one aspect is the exit option for investors. The power of the *exit option* is the possibility for investors to pull their investment from the company and possibly take it elsewhere. Beck explains that this power has grown, which is caused by the globalization of the world market (Beck 2006) and the increased demand for investors. Beck argues that the most extensive amount of power belongs to those in possession of wealth, namely the investors.

These two theories form the basis of an understanding of the players in *the risk society*. However, these two, *the counter power* and the *economic power*, are the two factors a company within *the risk society* has to balance. The company needs to keep both the investors and the

1

Power and Antipower

consumers satisfied. The investors expect to see a profit from the company, and the consumers want a good and/or cheap product. However, with the introduction of the political consumer, the needs and desires from different stakeholders can be more difficult to both recognize and meet.

If the company does not manage to uphold its responsibility and meet the demands of the investors and stakeholders they might end in a state of crisis in one way or the other.

Crisis Communication

The definition of a crisis has changed. Traditionally, we think of a crisis as something out of our control and very damaging to those involved. In addition to this, a crisis is also an incident, which grants us a limited amount of time to react (Johansen et. al. 2007)

After defining a crisis, the point of exploring the theory

of crisis communication is to define the ways companies can manage their communication of a crisis.

The book *Crisis communication* by Winni Johansen and Finn Frandsen, deals with the concept of *crisis communication* and the three phases a company must go through when dealing with a crisis (Johansen, et al 2007:137). The three phases are labelled before, during and after a crisis.

The three faces are divided as shown below:

	Phase and step	Content
Before	Signal detection	Identify and intercept signals or signs of potential problems or crisis
	Prevention	Act in relation to the intercepted signals, i.e. Handle issues, risks and stakeholder relations
	Preparation	Ready the company to deal with the crisis
During	Recognition	Articulate, frame and perceive the nature and character of the crisis
	Containment	React with the aim of giving response and avoid a dissemination of the crisis to the healthy parts of the company

	Restoration	Limit the duration of the crisis and work on re-establishing the administrative procedure
AFTER	Evaluation	Analyze the course of the crisis and evaluate the handling of the crisis
	Learning	Work with culture and establish memory
	Initiatives after the crisis	Make necessary changes, among these build relations to stakeholders and monitor issues derived from the crisis

The model can be used as a tool for guiding a company through a time of crisis, but it can also be used for analysing whether a company have used the model during the crisis. The latter is how we intend to use the model, in order to understand how BP has communicated during the three phases of handling the crisis of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

History

History of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

This section of the history part is meant to highlight the important aspects of CSR. Firstly the development of CSR and how it has changed through time and secondly the importance of CSR to companies will be accounted for. We will use information from several articles by Archie B. Carroll namely “A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance” and “The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders”. CSR is an important way for a company to communicate with its stakeholders and to inform them about the corporation’s engagements in responsible behaviour on behalf of society. Companies are basically expected to be responsible to the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic dimensions by political

consumers.

There is no unequivocal definition of CSR, because each scholar describes the concept differently and the understanding is ever changing but according to (Fauset 2006) “*The phrase Corporate Social Responsibility was coined in 1953 with the publication of Bowen's Social Responsibility of Businessmen*” (Fauset 2006:497).

Before responsibilities towards social and environmental dimensions were recognized as focal points in the world of CSR, the companies’ main focus was on raising their profit.

Scholars within the field of economy and business slowly started discussing companies’ responsibilities towards social matters, such as ethical concerns, human resources, and environmental problems. In 1960, one of these scholars, Keith Davis, discussed social responsibility and referred to “[...] *business’ decision and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond*

the firm's direct economic or technical interest"

(Carroll 1979: 497).

In the article Carroll argues, that there is a connection between the corporation and society, so in this case the companies' decisions are made in relation to the given society. Some scholars share this view and describe in this way "[...] *the behaviour of the firm must be voluntary*" (Carroll 1979: 498).

In 1971, the *Committee for Economic Development* formulated the *Three Concentric Circles* as a way to describe CSR.

The inner circle is the economic function, which is the economic growth in form of products, which are sold. *The intermediate circle* follows *the inner circle* and this part of the circle is the ethical and moral part of CSR, which contains notions of the companies' consciousness towards social and ecological responsibilities within an economic framework. *The outer circle* -

"Outlines newly emerging and still amorphous responsibilities that business should assume to become more broadly involved in actively improving the social environment" (Carroll 1979: 498)

This part of the circle consists of the companies' ambition to improve social environment in order to develop their image.

CSR is therefore to be seen as the tool to inform stakeholders and peer-groups about the company's responsible commitments not necessarily to improve the profit.

In addition to *the three concentric circles*, we look into what *The four-part framework* and *The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility* are. The pyramid is the outline of the needs or the social behaviour a company tries to fulfil and *the four-part framework* provides a deeper understanding of the necessity of these four responsibilities. *The pyramid of social responsibility*

and *the four-part framework* are closely intertwined because they both explain how to use the four parts of social responsibility within a company. This is taken into account when analysing BP's way of using CSR strategically.

When looking at a company's use of CSR strategically the stakeholders' concerns are vital. Shareholders' main interest is in the corporation's profits, because they have invested their money in the company, and they need economic results. Due to this the company has an economic responsibility towards the shareholders.

The stakeholders or peer-groups are concerned with legal-, ethical-, and philanthropic responsibilities.

In the following quote the role of the stakeholders is cemented "*[...] in order to profit and survive companies need to engage frequently with a variety of stakeholders upon whom dependence is vital.*"

(Schultzn et. al. 2006: 324-325)

It explains the company's need for satisfying its stakeholders in order to maintain their positive view on the company.

In order for a company to create and maintain a positive image and reputation in the eyes of the stakeholders, CSR can be applied strategically as a way of branding themselves through e.g. commercials.

A company's profit and its image and reputation are co-dependent. A decreased value of a company's image influences the profit, and a fall in profit decreases the value of its image.

History of BP

We have chosen to look at BP's history, in order to fully understand the choices BP has made through time, and the consequences, which followed these choices. To get a thorough understanding of BP and its corporate culture, we have read historical material on BP's

history.

Before BP was known as British Petroleum it was known as Anglo-Persian Oil Company, founded in 1900/01 by the English entrepreneur William K. D'arcy, placed in the Middle East.

It was not until 1908, when a search team discovered oil at its field in Persia, the company was up and running. Even though they had discovered oil, the company still lacked the interest from Britain and it was close to bankruptcy in 1914.

Due to World War One many of the British coal companies were suspended, which resulted in Winston Churchill deciding to let the Royal Navy use oil instead of coal this provided Anglo-Persian with a chance in the British business market and hereby rescued the existence of company.

The Middle East suffered due to restrictions implemented because of political conflicts and decided

to make the oil business more open, allowing local companies to compete with William K. D'arcy. Anglo-Persian Oil Company therefore made a decision to buy the German company British Petroleum and changed the name of the company to BP in order to appeal more to the British nation, Europe and later America.

“The Irony was that, in essence, BP was not really an old company at all. BP in 2009 was a company whose culture, structure and leadership had been forged only 20 years earlier, and whose identity was largely owed to one man: John Browne.” (Bergin 2011:4)

John Browne was the front figure of BP and worked in company for 40 years (Bergin 2011). Browne started in BP engineering in 1969 in the search for oil in Alaska, which resulted in the biggest discovery ever found in North America. Due to political issues in the Middle East regarding a British company in their country, BP was expelled from the country and it was thanks to the

discovery of oil in Alaska, that BP did not go bankrupt after the expulsion.

Drastic changes in the oil industry happened in the late 1990's. The debate on global warming forced BP to take action because petroleum was the largest source of CO2 emissions in the world.

“The problem was that, in acknowledging a problem, one acknowledges the need to take action to solve it, and the obvious means of addressing climate change involved harming the oil industry” (Bergin 2011:52).

In 2000 Browne decided to run a \$250 million campaign called Beyond Petroleum, which focussed on renewable energy (Bergin 2011). Additionally BP redesigned its logo with inspiration from the sun and thereby tried to brand its image in an eco-friendly way. These changes portrayed BP as an environmentally responsible company ahead of its rivals.

BP and its rivals decided to see through their differences

and focus on their joint interests - CO2 emissions. The oil companies wanted the government to create restrictions forcing businesses to lower their CO2 emission. BP preferred the trading scheme ETS, Emission-Trading-System, which allows parties to buy and sell permits giving them the right to pollute. The idea was that CO2 emitters should ‘pay to pollute’ and the logic behind was that, if one has to pay to pollute, one would pollute less (Bergin 2011).

Led by Browne BP decided to invest in renewable energy, but this turned out to be unprofitable (Bergin 2011).

“The eventual plan was something of a halfway house: BP would invest a little bit of money in renewable energy and then spend a lot of money on publicising it” (Bergin 2011:59)

BP spent \$20 million on a solar power manufacturing plant outside of San Francisco. This was yet another

sign of Browne's marketing strategy and it helped BP tremendously due to the media's positive attention that followed. This action showed that "*BP was taking a leadership in a fast growing market*" (Bergin 2011:61) and in 2004 BP's shares rose faster than ever. In 2005 BP formed BP Alternative Energy and invested approximately \$8 billion over ten years in greener energy sources such as wind, solar and hydrogen.

Alaska – Prudhoe Bay Oil Field

As mentioned earlier an oil field in Alaska was discovered in 1968 and a pipeline was built from Alaska's North Slope to the southern harbour (Bergin 2011). The pipeline system (TAPS) cost \$8 billion and took a workforce of 70,000 to build. It was the most expensive privately finance construction project in history (Bergin 2011).

The problem with the pipeline system was that the engineers designing it, made a few basic mistakes. BP

had not taken into account, how much water would be produced with the crude oil. In March 1989 the pipelines were leaking, causing Alaska's worst oil spill (Bergin 2011). The solution was to spend more money on improving the facilities at the field, but BP did not. They ignored the problem, and employees started to leak information to the media.

BP tried its best to cover up the accident from the media.

The problem escalated and in the beginning of 2000 the field suffered from several shutdowns, which cost BP thousands of oil barrels per day (Bergin 2011). "*When the repairs finally began to be executed, they were more expensive than if it had been undertaken earlier*" (Bergin 2011:75) BP started to repair parts of the field but during 2001 the field still caused minor spills. One of BP's peer-group did not care for safety regulations they cared for business. The only ideas the

peer-group shared, were ideas on how to boost profits (Bergin 2011).

In 2002 BP was sued for \$139 million because BP had ignored minor problems at its Carson Plant in California. It had been discovered that BP was breaking 80 % of the safety regulations set for Plant's like theirs. This discovery backed up the rumours, which had been flourishing for some time, about BP ignoring safety and health regulations.

Texas City oil plant

In 1998 BP bought its largest refinery, Texas City oil Plant. In 2005 "*visitors noticed broken windows, uncut grass, peeling paintwork, roofs in need of repair and a corroded pipework*" (Bergin 2011:80). Greg Coleman health and safety chief at the plant, wrote several reports warning BP about the dangers at the plant but BP would not recognize the problem due to the amount of means required "to turn the place around" (Bergin 2011).

In 2004 two employees were scalded to death while working and earlier that year a contractor had died from falling inside a gasoline-making unit. "*Deaths were rare in the refinery industry, so three in a year stood out*" (Bergin 2011:82). A consultant to the refinery said "*(...) managers felt they had to compromise on safety to meet production goals. Employees reported 'feeling blamed when they had gotten hurt' and 'an exceptional degree of fear of catastrophic incidents at Texas City'*" (Bergin 2011:82-83)

In 2005 a gasoline unit was overfilled and because several alarms did not function the plant exploded and hundreds of people were injured. 15 employees were killed and their bodies were so damaged they could not be identified without DNA samples. 170 men and women were taken to the hospital.

"*(...) People asked how senior management could have failed to act on the warnings they received, some*

blamed BP's 'aggressive' corporate culture, a rather abstract concept" (Bergin 2011:85).

After the tragedy at the Texas City Plant, managers were briefed on how to address the media. They were at no time allowed to refer to the tragedy as a tragedy but instead an incident, which would pertain for years after the scandal (Bergin 2011:85).

BP executives tried to portray it as having no fault but the media saw it differently. BP came to know that it was to the constant ignoring of health and safety regulations through many years that led to the scandal. This resulted in the operation called 'Operation People' which was one of Browne's attempts to manipulate the media and BP's stakeholders into seeing BP as a caring company. The operation was a matter of dealing with ethical and moral problems, including a programme to address them. But surveys showed that the employees were not comfortable with working at the company's

refineries.

In his book Bergin argues that at this time, BP's reputation could not sink any lower, but BP's shares were still rated high; "*The problem was that shareholders and analyst had previously believed what BP had told them*" (Bergin 2011:92). This quote shows that Browne's manipulative marketing strategy had been working successfully for BP, but the shareholders could no longer be fooled due to the major interest the media had in BP which finally resulted in a major decrease in its shares.

BP executives forced Browne to retire and Tony Hayward was hired in his place. "*We weren't looking for the media image type, we were looking for the practical implementation type*" said one director" (Bergin 2011:113).

Hayward chose to close down the solar power project and increased the speed on drilling power. Faster

drilling equalled more money he reasoned and in 2008 things started to turn around with an increasing production and higher profit.

The wish to increase profit was met at BP's oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico where drilling, deeper than ever before, took place and where making a profit equalled risk taking.

The Deepwater Horizon Oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico

BP had only been drilling for oil in the Gulf of Mexico since 1998, but it quickly became one of the biggest companies drilling in the Gulf. BP took risks when it came to installing a safety drilling system and chose the cheapest solution, which surprised rivals such as Chevron and Shell. Even though other companies would have done otherwise, BP's way of building its platforms was still acceptable, so the company was not breaking

any laws.

Initially when BP started drilling for oil the employees discovered that the amount of drilling mud they pumped down the well was not the same as the amount they got back up. It is very important that the amount is equal so that the pressure is the same in order to avoid an oil spill (Bergin 2011). BP was more focused on efficiency and once again ignored the problem (Bergin 2011).

By 2010 BP was the top producer in the gulf. BP tried hard to save money, and they surprised many investors (Bergin 2011).

BP started drilling a well at Deepwater Horizon. BP hit several bumps in the road but knowing that there were at least 50 million barrels of oil to be found BP kept going. Bergin explains BP's decision

“Drilling is a game of constantly overcoming the challenges that geology throws at you. This often means taking on new risks. The key to drilling safely, however,

is to balance every new risk with an additional safeguard.” (Bergin 2011:151).

BP did not care about risk assessments and it saved the company money not to include a safeguard (Bergin 2011).

On April 20th 2010 a negative pressure in the well was conducted but the workers controlling the pressure misread the numbers several times during that day (Bergin 2011). This was a sign of BP’s cost cutting BP wanted to save money on training programmes for its employees and BP wanted to move fast. Having misread the pressure workers kept on drilling.

“Gas continued to fill the well; the pressure inside continued to rise. Sitting in the drill shack, head driller Dewey Revette was experienced enough to know what rising pressure in the pipe meant. But he did nothing about it” (Bergin 2011:155).

At the same time the mudlogger, whose job was to

monitor the flow of mud, was on a break after a 12-hour shift. It was 9.42 pm so outsourced offices and control offices on shore were all closed (Bergin 2011).

When the drilling mud floated from the drilling well up on the rig the workers realised the seriousness of the situation. Alarms started but because employees on the rig were used to alarms going on and off, without there being any life-threatening dangers, they were ignored by the workers (Bergin 2011). The gas from the well had spread into the engine room and into the machines and only seconds later, the first blast occurred on the rig and several workers on the deck were killed immediately.

The rig was hit by another blast and the lights went out.

The chief engineer at the platform had the option to activate an emergency disconnect system, which would allow Deepwater Horizon to float away, saving many lives, but he was not in a position to make this decision.

It would cost BP tens of millions of dollars and required

an approval from the executives. When he finally got the approval it was too late and people had already giving up on The Deepwater Horizon rig (Bergin 2011). 115 employees at the rig survived and 11 died. The rig produced 5000 barrels of oil per day (Bergin 2011) and those 5000 barrels of oil was at that moment spilling out into the Gulf of Mexico.

According to a timeline made by The Guardian BP announced that its attempt to reduce the amount of oil leaking was successful on May 17th. This attempt was the first out of many to succeed after various failed tries and experiments. The tube installed was only intended to reduce the amount of oil and not stopping it completely. On July 15 BP reported that it had stopped the leaking temporarily. On August the 4th BP announced, that the leak was successfully closed. On September 19th BP closed Deepwater Horizon and scientists estimated that 4.4 million barrels of oil had

been leaked in the Gulf of Mexico

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2010/jul/08/bp-oil-spill-timeline-interactive?fb=ative>)

After the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, BP constructed a website, called BPgulfupdate.com. This page allows viewers to follow BP's activities in the Gulf Coast including how far it is in the process of cleaning up the Gulf of Mexico. BP claims to have spent over \$14 billion on its activity on the Gulf Coast and the amount of money paid to private businesses adds up to **\$8,282,730,601**(<http://www.bp.com/sectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9036580&contentId=7067577>).

History of Political consumers

This chapter provides the basic information about political consumerism and how the theory of the political consumer has changed through time.

Before the term political consumerism was formed,

there had been actions and ideas with regard to the business market as an arena for politics for other consumers.

The development of the concept political consumerism started in connection with the unequal right to participate politically in past societies.

“Late modern consumers do more than just think about their own well-being when doing their daily shopping. Increasingly consumers express non-economic values through the market arena, especially with regard to such issues as human rights, animal rights, global solidarity and environmental responsibility.”(Boström, et al 2004:9).

Political consumers are concerned with e.g. the environment and human rights. They look at companies from a critical point of view and they use *boy-cutting* as a way of making a political statement.

It is said that

“(...) political consumers are significantly more worried about environmental problems and climate change but much less worried than non-political consumers about typical issues for materialists, e.g., too many immigrants, unemployment, economic crisis, and terrorism (...)” (Micheletti 2005:6).

We chose to highlight four different types of consumer actions to help gain a deeper understanding of how BP's stakeholders have reacted to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, which will lead us to the answer of why they reacted as they did.

1. Collective, organized, positive political

consumerism like, e.g., requests from the Max Havelaar Foundation to buy coffee in order to support poor farm workers in the developing countries.

2. Collective, organized, negative political

consumerism like, e.g., the 1995 boycott against Shell, organized by Greenpeace.

3. Individual, unorganized, positive political

consumerism like, e.g., the choice of organic products in order to promote sustainable farm production.

4. Individual, unorganized, negative political

consumerism like, e.g., avoidance of eggs from battery hens in order to promote animal welfare.

(Micheletti, et al 2001:13)

Political consumers tend to care more about environmental problems and global affairs than domestic conflicts. BP conducted a very destructive action towards the environment, which is one of the most debated topics worldwide, which attracted the attention of the political consumers.

Method and Methodology

Michel Foucault – “The Gaze”

In this chapter we will focus on *The Gaze* by Michel Foucault and how we will use the term as a method of understanding the chosen material in our project.

Foucault is seen as one of the key thinkers of the post World War (Oliver 2010: 1).

In 1963 Foucault introduced the term *the Gaze* in his book *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*.

Foucault was very interested in discourses, explained as “*the way in which we approach and understand the world*” (Oliver 2010: 27). The discourse is a term used to explain the different way objects, fields etc. can be interpreted by different people, who view the world through different discourses. Foucault’s interest in the perception of the world was the stepping-stone to his development of the term *The Gaze*.

“*The Gaze is the object a of a vision, as vision can be defined as the discourse of the Other, as the unconscious*”. (Lacan, et al; 2006: 186).

The Gaze means to interpret objects the way subjects unconsciously want to see them. Furthermore *object a* is the object interpreted, but it is important to establish that *object a* is not objective. The interesting thing about the term *The Gaze* is that objects will “fit” the subject unconsciously and vice versa. Things will become what we want them to be.

Foucault worked with *The Gaze* in relation to the medical world, whereas we will work with the term in relation to our interest field, as a method of interpreting and analysing the commercials created by BP and the responses posted to this.

The term *The Gaze* will be used as a tool to investigate how BP is trying to influence the consumer to view the company in a specific way.

We intend to investigate how stakeholders reacted to the commercials created by BP and look at which communicative tools BP has been using to restore its image and whether it worked to BP's advantage or if consumers had already created a certain view on the company, as described in Foucault's term *the Gaze* above. To analyse the commercials created by BP, we will use *The Gaze* to gain a thorough understanding of why BP has created these. *The Gaze* will serve as a tool in the understanding of the message the commercials are trying to convey.

Furthermore, we will use the responses to the commercial on YouTube to obtain an understanding of how the stakeholders view BP as a company. Once again we will use *The Gaze* to understand how the stakeholders view the company.

The following chapter will consist of an analysis upon BP in the risk society. How they handled the risks

concerning the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the consequences, which followed. Lastly we will analyse BP's way of communicating to its stakeholders through the media.

Analysis

BP in a risk society

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill is not the first oil spill BP has responsible for. This particular spill stands out due to the amount of media attention the spill received. As described in the *history of BP*, the company has a long history with unfortunate decision-makings regarding safety and prioritising of profit. These decisions have taken its toll on nature and as it is defined by Beck, that the oil industry is a risky industry in a risk society namely because it exploits natural resources, which can be difficult to control.

Through this analysis we will try to define the significance of the consequences of BP's decisions in a risk society.

One of the decisions BP was criticised for was that the company was drilling too deep into the bottom of the ocean and thereby putting high pressure on nature. It is

hard to define whether or not this could have been avoided. In Beck's theory of the risk society it gets harder to control nature as long as we keep building new machines and keep taking bigger risks.

BP did not look into health and safety regulations at its plant, which only increased the chances of risks. The last thing BP was criticised for was that the administration in London was too slow when it came to making a decision on whether or not they would disconnect the plant. According to Bergin they did not do so because the cost of relocating the plant would be too expensive, again proving that BP's interest was in rather making profit than avoiding risks.

When it comes to drilling for oil we intend to look at how this is related to the risk society and how BP's decisions have had an influence on the outcome of the risks.

As argued by Beck, the technological development has

increased the amount of risks human beings take in relation to nature. The oil industry is based on technology, as it tries to go beyond the natural reach of man and thereby puts its faith in machines. The development of technology and the decreasing amounts of natural resources has only resulted in an increase of the risks in this industry, which is already under pressure from the massive competition also found in the industry. We are left with a struggle for not only profit but also a struggle for the stakeholders again increasing the risks. In short, we are left with a high-pressured risk society, too focused on profits and shares to care about the environment. With this as the basis, we can now look at BP's decisions and how these have influenced the already unstable industry.

As we have learned from the history chapter, BP has long been known to cut costs in order to maximize profit also when it comes to safety and human

resources. With the focus on the Deepwater Horizon rig, we know that BP chose to cut costs on the following drilling technology, safety regulations, number and education of employees.

BP chose a cheaper solution for its drilling technology in order to get it produced faster and therefore start the drilling process faster (Bergin 2011). Here we can argue that BP has chosen to take an additional risk in an already risky industry.

Even if this cannot be directly linked to the accident it could hardly have helped the situation.

Looking at the safety regulations there has also been evidence that BP has chosen cheaper alternatives or none at all in order to cut costs. First of all, the alarms on the rig which were supposed to warn the employees failed to function, causing the leak to be undetected (Bergin 2011). Additionally BP chose to cut costs on the labour hours, so the employees who were monitoring

the drilling on land were only working from 9 am to 4 pm (Bergin 2011). Consequently, since the drilling process was a 24-hour process, it was left unmonitored. Also, the employees on the rig who were monitoring the drilling process were under-educated and were working more than 12-hour shifts (Bergin 2011), and failed to detect the seriousness of the leak. All of these decisions had fatal consequences for the rig and added to the already high risks when drilling for oil.

The fact that BP was focused on profit more than the environment result in BP taking more risks affecting the already existing risk society. The decisions made by BP resulted in global risks as they affected not only the employees on the rig but also the entire ecosystem of the Mexican Gulf Coast and the global environment. The consequences of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill are evidence of how catastrophic the outcome of a high risk society combined with a risk taking company can

have on a global level.

With this in mind, we will look into how these consequences were received. We want to investigate whether the consumers and investors can influence BP to change and how BP communicates after the crisis in order to try to appease the stakeholders.

Power Relation Analysis

When looking into how BP communicates to its stakeholders and it is important to also look at the power relation between the two. We will look at who has the stronger power relation and whether they can influence the weaker part.

In the theory chapter we defined how power relations function and we looked at how consumers can influence a business. In relation to BP it is important to consider that the company is listed on the stock exchange and due to this fact should seek to satisfy its shareholders.

When it comes to the consumers of BP and the threat they pose, there are some things we should consider. First of all, we should keep in mind that a consumer on his/her own is not much of a threat. It must be a larger group in order to influence a large company, as BP. Another important notion is that BP's product is a necessity, which cannot be cut off from one day to another. Because of this, there is little chance that all of BP's consumers will disappear completely. In this case BP has most of the power, seeing as they cannot be completely cut off. As long as oil is the most used means of energy, BP will stay in its current position of power.

In contrast to the consumers, investors have the possibility of completely pulling their resources and cutting BP off. In this respect, the investors have most of the power.

Additionally, because of the size of BP and the nature of

the company (on the stock market) the threat from investors is bigger than the one from the consumers, seeing as the economic power from the shareholders is stronger than that from the consumers. In other words, it is a bigger financial blow for BP to lose its shareholders than it is to lose some of its consumers.

Nevertheless political consumers can pose a much larger threat as a group through boy-cuts and protests. This is the strongest power that the consumers can form.

To illustrate if we are to assume that the consumers form a protest against BP and start a boy-cut, this would mean that the profits of the company will be at risk.

This would be a red flag for the investors who might want to pull their investments, hereby invoking their *pull-out* option (Beck 2006). So by affecting both the investments and the profits, through the investors, the consumers of BP have most of the power in relation to BP. This could also be the motivation for BP to act as it

has and try to improve its image with the stakeholders, through its commercial on YouTube.

With this in mind, we can see that there is a strong power relation between the company and its investors and consumers. The relation between these is not as powerful as to immediately force BP to close, seeing as its product is a necessity, but could have a long-term effect on the company's chances to stay in business. The reason for this power is the increasing number of alternative to oil through electric cars, windmill power and other initiatives, which are becoming increasingly popular. This combined with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill only adds pressure on BP and might even push BP to take more risks.

However, as we have already established BP is currently dominating the power relation and as such cannot currently be heavily influenced. Nevertheless, they should be aware of the future threats of green energy

combined with a stronger power from consumers and investors.

We will look into how BP communicates through the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and afterwards look at how BP has used its commercial afterwards to communicate to the consumers.

BP's Crisis Communication

As stated in the theory chapter, we will apply theory from *Crisis Communication* in order to establish how BP has reacted to the crisis and how far in the process of communication the company is. The following model, also presented in the theory section, shows the different phases a company goes through when handling a crisis.

Before the crisis:

The first step is *signal detection*. Studies after the crisis have shown, that there were many warnings and signals before the Deepwater Horizon rig exploded. However

BP had cut corners in the company's training of its staff, so the signals went by unnoticed. The next step *Prevention* revolves around the precautionary actions, when identifying the warnings. However, when the warnings were finally identified on the platform, it was either too late to react or the staff were not trained or legally allowed to act (Bergin 2011). This meant that no precautionary actions were made.

The third step before the crisis is *Preparation*, which entails getting the company ready to deal with the crisis. The first official recognition of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill was when Tony Hayward was interviewed by CNN on 29th of April. Seeing as it took BP 9 days to start the communication after the rig exploded, we can argue that the company was unprepared to deal with this kind of crisis and when it happened reacted too slow in its communication to the public (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm3_kXnKrmc).

Additionally it is noteworthy that BP immediately refuse to talk about who was responsible for the crisis and shift focus to how BP was trying to stop the leak.

During the crisis:

The first step in this phase is *Recognition*. In the first interview given by BP, Tony Hayward commented on what happened at the oilrig, recognizing the accident as a "tragic accident" and stated that he was "shocked" to learn that the rig had exploded

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sm3_kXnKrm).

Hayward stated that it was still "far too early in the investigative process" to clarify how the rig exploded and if any of the safety measures were ignored. BP does meet the requirements for this step, as it recognises the accident and pledge a commitment to assist in the "clean-up".

In the second step of this phase *Containment*, which surrounds the fact that the company must respond to the

crisis and act with the intention of containing and limiting the effects of the crisis. BP tried in multiple ways to contain and correct the oil leak and clean up the crude oil gushing into the water and onto the shores and meanwhile trying to put the blame on the other companies involved e.g. Transocean (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2010/jul/08/bp-oil-spill-timeline-interactive?fb=ative>).

Through BP's attempts to put the blame on Transocean BP actively tries to limit the accusations against it and also finds a scapegoat to put the blame on.

BP begins the final step in this phase, *Restoration*, with its commercial as a way to restore its good image. The company tried to re-establish itself as a company who took care of its employees and the environment by conveying the message of the company's constant commitment to the Gulf. The wish to maintain a good image has also been attempted to do through its

webpage. The first thing viewers see when they enter the webpage is the new initiatives BP has made (www.BP.com).

Seeing as most of the clean up of the Gulf and recreation of BP's image is on-going it is unlikely that BP is finished with this step. Additionally the restoration of its image is also not complete, which becomes apparent in the continuously negative responses from its stakeholders towards its handling of the crisis (www.BP.com).

The after phase:

The *after phase* evaluates the process BP has been through dealing with the crisis. BP states that it has "changed its ways" (www.BP.com). This could mean that should BP find itself in a crisis like the Deepwater Horizon the prevention and preparation phase should be handled differently. The company should optimize the training of its employees, its safety system and invest in

better equipment etc. These were the factors that should have bettered the outcome, but instead did the exact opposite. From what BP featured on its webpage the company claims to have better overall conditions for its employees (www.BP.com). This indicates that BP has taken the *before* phase under consideration and made the necessary changes to improve this step in the future. Additionally BP should also take into account the reactions to the way it has communicated throughout the crisis and work on an updated version of how it should communicate in the future.

Analysis of the commercials

We have created the following analysis upon the commercial and the responses from the stakeholders, which is one of the main tools used by BP to communicate its initiatives with the restoration of the environment within and by the Gulf coast.

Analysis of BP's commercial *a* and responses.

We intend to analyse and interpret two commercials produced by BP to obtain an understanding of what message BP was trying to communicate after the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. We will refer to the two commercials as commercial *a* and *b*.

The commercials will help in the discovering of which role BP played concerning the environmental issues the oil spill caused.

We are under the assumption that the commercials are a step in the way of recreating BP's image as a responsible company, and to reassure the consumers that BP's products lives up to the "demands" of its corporate social behaviour and responsibility.

We will analyse the two commercials to investigate whether BP's communicative strategies differ from each other and which identity processes the two commercials

wish to create in relation to BP's viewers, in order to make the viewer perceive the world in a different light and thereby the company as well.

A further analysis of the responses to commercial *a* will be provided and by analysing the responses posted on YouTube, we wish to gain an overview of how the stakeholders have responded to the disaster, and thereby get a more diversified view of the consequences the oil spill had on BP's image.

For our first part of our analysis we have chosen to analyse the commercial "BP Gulf Coast Update: Our Ongoing Commitment", created by BP, which was uploaded to official website of Beyond Petroleum and later on the internet media "YouTube" The 20th of December 2011 (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoOfIR4Vk1o&feature=share>).

To analyse this commercial we will investigate elements

such as clothing, attitude and slogans critically. With the focus on the commercial and the comments, we will also include our method *The Gaze* by Michel Foucault, to investigate whether *The Gaze* have been used indirectly by BP, to make the viewer see the company in a positive light yet again.

With the focus on the commercial and the comments, we will also include *The Gaze* by Michel Foucault, to investigate whether the method has been used indirectly by BP, to make the viewer see the company in a positive light.

In the commercial there is a person who addresses the viewer, whose name is given and she both appears in person and is also used for voice-over. She is he representative from BP. Her name is Iris Cross and she is wearing a BP uniform in the commercial.

In the commercial Iris Cross mentions that she is born in

the Gulf of Mexico, which could make her a reliable source, though one might interpret her way of approaching the scandal to be biased due to the fact that she is not mentioning the accident itself.

While the commercial shifts between various scenes with different types of restoration projects in the Gulf of Mexico, Iris Cross' is stating that BP is still committed and she explains that BP is making sure that both people and environment around the Gulf are taken care of.

Through the commercial Iris Cross is indirectly explaining that BP is aware of the consequences the oil spill in 2010 has had on the Gulf Coast, though she is not, at any time mentioning the accident or what exact consequences the spill has had. This could be interpreted as if BP is trying to make the viewer forget or ignore the accident and instead focus on all the good and responsible initiatives the company has taken.

It could also be viewed as BP trying to put the oil spill

in a specific perspective to make the viewer think that it happened despite BP's commitment to the environment. One might argue that the representative, Iris Cross, is trying to shift the viewer's focus from the accident on to the restoration of the Gulf. The problem is that BP is not aware of what image the viewer has prejudged of the company, which we argue to be prevalingly negative. Therefore, one might tend to think the "power" of *The Gaze* have already been taken into use by the viewer. Before the commercial was published, the viewer could already have had a negative attitude towards the company, and therefore a simple commercial will not change that attitude.

In a separate interview with Iris Cross, also made by BP, she is describing the Deep Water Horizon oil spill as an incident. The way of describing the accident as an "incident" is an interesting choice of words. One might

interpret this choice of words as an attempt to downplay the significance of the oil spill.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6DQD3Bd9Zk&feature=relmfu:21-12-2011>)

One might linger on the fact that Iris Cross, as a representative from BP, does not in any way touch upon the outcomes, for some fatal and life changing, which were caused by the explosion of the platform.

However, one could argue that the discourse Iris Cross creates for the company is that they have always been committed to the environment, that the oil spill happened despite of that commitment and now they are “back to businesses” by preserving nature.

The sentence: “We are still committed “is one of the most used in the commercial. Again, this choice of words can be understood as a way to distract the viewer or possible consumer from focusing on the crisis itself

and to understand BP as a company, which has been environmentally committed – as BP wants the viewers to believe - even before the accident happened in the Gulf of Mexico. So BP’s commitment is not the result of or an attempt to restore the damage, but is something, which has been in progress even before the accident. In other words, BP has always been committed, and when an accident happens it is not seen as something extraordinary and is something parallel to BP’s general commitment.

According to Cross, BP has donated 20 billion dollars to the recovery of the Gulf coast, and has raised a fund of 500 million dollars for independent animal researchers to investigate the wildlife in the Gulf for the next 10 years. The many initiatives taken by BP, which are explained through the commercial, seems like a heroic act from BP, and the company wants viewer to believe, that it would have done all these things, whether there

had been an accident or not.

The focus of the commercial is on the present and the future, not on the past, and with no mentioning of the accident in 2010, BP appears as a responsible and reliable company that really is committed.

The commercial as mentioned revolves around the future and “the new life of the Gulf coast”; we see people enjoying the beach, restaurants, café’s, and healthy animals living in or by the Gulf. Cross mentions that the seafood from the Gulf is now “better than ever”, this idyllic picture of the life by the Gulf coast seems quite manipulative due to the fact that we after all know what happened the 20th of April 2010. Iris Cross ends the commercial by stating: *“I was born here, I am still here, and so is BP”*. Which indicates that she knows what she is talking about, seeing as she is a local to the Gulf Coast.

One might venture to argue that its way of trying to

move the focus from the accident, is easy to penetrate, and that BP's commercial would have had a greater impact if it was more focused on the accident as a starting point.

We will analyse the comments posted as a response to the commercial on YouTube, due to our interest in the stakeholder’s opinion and reaction both to the oil spill and to the commercial. This is done to obtain a more insightful understanding of how the public has responded to the accident and the commercial itself and to discover whether the stakeholders believes in the way BP wishes to be perceived and if the stakeholders find BP to be a more reliable company after watching the commercial.

We have chosen 20 responses from 20 different people, which were posted as a response to commercial *a* on YouTube. We chose to highlight five specific responses in order to conduct a qualitative analysis. The rest of the

responses chosen from YouTube will provide us with a quantitative view of the viewers overall opinion these will be included in appendix 2.

It serves as a counterpart to BP's perhaps one-sided portrayed vision as we chose numerous different comments from different authors and thereby tried to create a diversified platform in the analysing of the viewer's point of view. Thereby we might be able to conclude if BP has been able to regain its good image in the eyes of the viewers by creating this commercial. In the appendix we have put the 20 responses picked out from the website YouTube.

The responses posted to commercial *a* show no sign of forgiveness of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The viewers seem generally offended that BP posted the commercial because it is used, as a manipulative tool to make people forget about the accident and instead focus

on the bright future that BP will provide. We chose these exact responses due to their explicitness. We find them to be the most informative responses from YouTube because they portray the strongest opinions out of the 20.

The commercial is about BP's good initiatives in the area of the Gulf, but people are responding by shooting the commercial down with words like "LIARS" and "RIP BP" (Appendix).

They respond in an aggressive or negative manner and this could be interpreted as a way of telling BP, that it is not okay for them to release this kind of commercial, without mentioning the actual problem, which is the major oil spill of the Deepwater Horizon. It could also be a sign of the consumers' lack of willingness to forgive and forget. None of the comments posted on YouTube to date were positively laden, which paints a clear picture.

In the *history of BP*, it is described how BP developed fast in the years John Browne was CEO. This had to do with his branding strategy, which BP has held on to since then. BP still uses commercials to make people believe that it is a responsible and reliable company. This time the consumers are not fooled by these attempts to manipulate the truth. The consequences are too damaging this time.

BP is known to use strategies enhancing its green policy as a way of improving its image. It is described in the *history of BP* that when the company launched its “green policy” BP did it in a way that made the company out to be the first to do so. One might venture to argue that the commercial is an attempt to do something similar; to convince the viewers that the company was committed before the oil spill and is still committed today.

“BP is? the poster child for greedy, fat-cat corporate

liars. Willing to kill the environment and not give a crap about the consequences. Yeah right....you're paying. How long did it take you? Most of the people who were severely affected by your actions are now bankrupt. Your corporate propaganda isn't fooling anyone. Instead of making fancy commercials and buying millions of dollars of air time, you should be giving that money to the local people whose lives you destroyed”.

Jim Voz (1 month ago) 6 likes

This writer shows with the response that this attempt BP has made to redeem itself and improve its image, has not worked on any viewers according to our research. He calls the commercial “corporate propaganda” and argues that the company should, instead of spending millions on commercials, be spending the money on helping the local people.

“I recently went fishing down in the Gulf. It's disgusting. The fish we caught were bad; their guts were

rotten and they smelled off. Something is wrong? with the seafood coming out of the Gulf now. BP is lying about the Gulf seafood and tourism. The tourism is down (blatant lie). The seafood is bad. The beaches are dirty and dead sea are creatures washing up in stacks. I can't believe these people make ads like this! It insults my very existence. If y'all were here you'd see the truth." [mr8ballz](#) (1 month ago) 3 likes

The immense focus on the environment has resulted in people being more concerned with whether companies as BP do enough to respect and take care of it, which it seems like BP is trying to do. It is just not enough. This response could be an example of a person who has been to the Gulf and experienced the consequences of the oil spill first hand.

*"BP should have been sold off and dismantled and every cent? should have gone to? the clean up and restoration of the gulf. That black sh*t is still lying at*

the bottom of the ocean where all the small critters live in it everyday." [mathewjohndesigns](#) (1 month ago)

This writer seems to be concerned about the environment and the wildlife within the ocean of the Gulf. The writer is obviously angry about the way BP has handled the crises, and disappointed that the company was not forced to be shut down after this enormous catastrophe.

"You can set out these videos, and claim to making these huge strides and spending all this "Money." You are not buying any customers back (ones with brains at least). I will never buy BP gasoline or any other future products again. RIP BP"

[goldengoal12089](#) (2 months ago) 55 likes

The writer of this response is very determined not to

support BP in buying the oil from the company. We must see this response as though it is written by a former consumer of BP's products, since the writer states "*I will never buy BP gasoline or any other future products again*".

This could be interpreted as though the consumer feels betrayed by BP, and is ashamed of being a previous consumer. One might tend to think that this response is a mixture of anger, regret and embarrassment.

"You were ordered by our government? to do those cleanups and independent scientist studies. If it wasn't for that you would never do it on your own. Just another lie from BP." [thetravelingboy](#) (2 months ago) **24 likes**

This writer is obviously angry and feels that the company has lied with its intentions of the clean up in

the Gulf. This writer argues that BP has been ordered to clean up the Gulf by the government, and would not have done it if this was not an order. This is of course a very serious accusation, and we are not to determine whether this is true or not. The writer seems very pessimistic towards BP as a company. The sentence: "*Just another lie from BP*" is very clarifying in order to understand how this writer thinks about the company.

These responses posted to the commercial show that the viewers in general are very unsatisfied with the way BP has chosen to communicate the accident by creating this commercial. One might understand the responses as though the viewers feel BP is making a fool out of them, by making a commercial that only focuses on the initiatives the company has taken in order to restore the life in and by the Gulf. The responses show that the viewers are both angry and disappointed with the company, and view the commercial in a very negative

way. One might think that the commercial by BP has had the exact opposite effect on the viewers than what BP intended. One could argue that the writers of the comments are not just upset about the accident itself but also that BP seems to be lying about what is really happening at the Gulf.

It could be argued that BP has created this commercial only to try to restore its image and to make the viewer remove its focus away from the accident. Although, according to these responses, the commercial has attracted attention to the fraud by BP and the company's intention only to create a profit.

Analysis of commercial b

We have also chosen to analyse the newest commercial by BP "*BP's ongoing commitment to the Gulf*" released to the official webpage of the company the 30th of April 2012.

([http://www.bp.com/extendedsectiongenericarticle.do?c](http://www.bp.com/extendedsectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9039957&contentId=7073053)

[ategoryId=9039957&contentId=7073053](http://www.bp.com/extendedsectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9039957&contentId=7073053))

The commercial's content is presented by the representative from BP, Mike Utsler, who is the president of BP's Gulf Coast Restoration Organization. Mike Utsler is wearing a BP uniform similar to Iris Cross' uniform from commercial *a* posted on YouTube. Throughout the commercial Utsler, explains in a Louisianan dialect, how BP is still committed to the restoration of the Gulf, while describing how the areas around the Gulf are now more "productive and beautiful than ever"

(<http://www.bp.com/extendedsectiongenericarticle.do?categoryId=9039957&contentId=7073053>).

He states that the seafood is better than ever and many "areas reported record tourism seasons". Settings of beautiful sunsets and birds nesting create an idyllic picture of the Gulf just like commercial *a* intended.

The noteworthy aspect of this commercial is its

similarity to the first commercial. Various portrayals of the Gulf are close to being the exact same as the ones presented in commercial *a* made in December 2011. The enumeration of the initiatives taken by BP is equally similar in commercial *b* made approximately 4 months after the first one e.g. it is the same amounts of money, that are mentioned in the commercial. The commercial is not presenting any new material or information about the restoration of the Gulf.

Additionally Mike Utsler is not mentioning the Deepwater Horizon oil spill at any time throughout the commercial. This can be interpreted as a manipulative choice of words or lack of the same. In not mentioning the accident, BP puts a lid on the fact and removes the focus from the accident. This manoeuvre is not successful.

The only new thing BP has presented the viewer with is the replacement of the black woman Iris Cross. Instead

BP has chosen Mike Utsler – a white man and the president of the Gulf’s Restoration Organisation. This change of representative can be interpreted as BP wishing to hit an expanded target group. Mike Utsler has a strong Louisianan accent and can thereby be argued to speak not only to the white people of Louisiana but also to the target Iris Cross’ hits namely the “average American”. His superiority as a president of a large organisation immediately puts him in a position of power and respect. He appears as an academic front figure of BP and his ability to convince people into believe what he is saying may be better than Iris Cross’.

In addition to this, the commercial might also target a different segment of BP’s stakeholders, who believe what he says and who will feel convinced of BP’s responsibility towards the restoration of the Gulf after

watching the commercial. Where a representative such as Iris Cross might appeal more to the average American, Mike Utsler could appeal more to the corporate stakeholders, such as shareholders, by his authoritative state.

The shareholder's interest in BP is the company's profit and therefore also everything they do to make profit.

The shareholders of BP might view these commercials positively in two ways. Firstly the difference between the two representatives might have different outcomes regarding the stakeholders and secondly the professional appearance of Mike Utsler could make him seem like a liaison to them.

It seemed like BP found that it was not necessary to change the content of the commercial, but simply change the representative and by this changing the receiver.

The commercial lead by Iris Cross was posted on

YouTube by BP but we found that the second commercial is now, a month after its release on BP's official website, not posted on YouTube. This choice is one of interesting character on different levels.

When posting a video on YouTube, it creates an opportunity for people to react and share their opinion by posting a web-based response. We experienced this with commercial *a* "BP Gulf Coast Update: Our Ongoing Commitment", and chose to use a variety of responses as a communicative tool in order to understand how the stakeholders of BP have reacted to this accident and to the commercial itself. We found that the attitude towards BP is predominantly negative.

BP uses these commercials as a branding strategy. The company wants the receivers, the stakeholders, to think the very best of the company. This is probably why there is no mentioning of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The true jest of the commercials is BP's constant mentioning of its commitment. One might suggest that beneath BP's message is its desire of the stakeholders' and consumers' commitment to BP. The consumers who are convinced after watching the commercial could potentially achieve a sense of devotion towards BP equally to BP's engagement to the Gulf. Ergo BP's commitment to the Gulf of Mexico serves as a catalyst and could make the consumers feel committed to BP.

Analysis of BP's use of CSR in the commercials

In correlation to our analysis, we will look at the commercial to analyse how BP uses CSR as a way of branding itself as a company, which responds to the company's Corporate Social Responsibility and how BP portrays itself as a company concerned with issues showing its CSR.

In order to analyse this, we will use the *four-part*

framework of CSR the economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. After Analysing BP's use of CSR, we intend to look at the responses used in the analysis to discuss whether the authors of the responses represent a political consumerist's point of view. BP tries to live up to its economic responsibilities towards the restoration of the Gulf, by highlighting its newly created funds to research the wildlife in the area in the next ten years. The company also thoroughly describes how it has given 20 billion dollars to several restoration projects in the Gulf. These scenes imply its accomplishment of BP's economic responsibility of CSR, which is the first part of *the four-part framework*. One of BP's main focuses in the commercial is to show that the company is loyal to its CSR policy. A way to do this is by showing the initiatives the company has taken. These are mainly focused on *the four-part framework's* ethical, moral- and philanthropic responsibilities, and

are necessary to highlight in order to recreate its image as a company upholding its CSR commitments in the eyes of its share- and stakeholders. At the same BP's effort becomes apparent in the mentioning of its moral behaviour and helps to restore its image as the responsible and ethically oriented company. After the Deepwater Horizon oil spill BP's image was destroyed, forcing the company to try to convince its stakeholders, that the company was still a responsible company.

Stakeholders are possible political consumers, which can be both harmful and helpful for companies in raising its profits. As we mentioned in the chapter about political consumers, they are “(...) *more worried about environmental problems and climate change (...)*” (Micheletti et.al. 2005:6). The quotation cements the impact political consumers have on companies and they can be one of the determining factors when companies

make decisions, which concerns the environment or ethical and moral questions.

The authors of the responses could possibly be regarded as political consumers.

The responses we picked from YouTube showed a predominant negative attitude towards BP, and describe the authors' reluctance to buy BP's product, which is what BP wants to avoid. The authors' negative responses to the video can be seen as political consumers' actions, because according to the concept we see in the chapter of political consumers, they are not always necessarily organized or institutionalized. BP's upload of its commercial on YouTube provides the opportunity of a wider range of people to be able to watch the commercial. Equally it gives viewers a chance to argue against BP's commercial on the page and allows everyone to read the negative opinions towards the commercial.

The Internet and globalisation allows stakeholders to react faster and easier than ever. Additionally there are no restrictions on the Internet limiting political consumers when they believe a company have made a wrong decision conflicting with its CSR policy.

Globalisation serves as a connecting power between political consumers across the globe, allowing them to discuss and agreeing on matters concerning their joint interest field. This behaviour can be as described in the *theory chapter* as *Collective, organized, negative political consumerism*. (Micheletti 2001).

The following chapter includes a discussion of the material analysed previously in our project. It is divided into three parts consisting of *the risk society*, *crisis communication* and commercial *a* and *b*.

Discussion

Discussion of the *Risk Society*

A risk society is a society, which revolves around risks.

In our society the element of nature is easily suppressed by human beings. The ignoring of the power of nature can return in form of various risks.

As long as we are exploiting natural resources to the extent that e.g. BP does we can never be sure of a risk free society.

BP is known for its risk-takings. The government is not in a position to prevent companies from drilling, even though drilling for oil is a major risk factor. Taking the year-long history of drilling for oil into consideration, one might wonder why an alternative have not been found. The reason why BP is still able to drill for oil and thereby taking the risks that follows is due to the lack(ing) of an alternative effective enough to take the

place of oil.

BP tried to promote gas and even changed the name from British Petroleum to Beyond Petroleum, but without any luck due to the complicated and expensive character of the development of gas as a resource.

In today's society companies have increased their focus on producing the easiest and cheapest products in order to make profit. This is an example of why BP and other oil companies still have an important impact on the business market. As long as BP is able to make profit the company does not put any effort in developing alternatives.

The oil industry only seems to be catching consumers' interest when something goes wrong as it did with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and not when they have everything under control.

One may argue that it is a severe problem, that no one can prevent BP from taking further risks. The American

government seems to be focussing on indemnifying to the businesses, environment as well as people affected by the oil spill, instead of focusing on forcing the oil companies to find a sustainable long-term solution.

Eliminating the risks in our society, more specifically the risks tied to the ones following the oil industry, is a task of difficult character. One step in the right direction could be for governmental leaders to create a bill and force companies to comply with the piece of legislation, eliminating every loophole that might occur.

Discussion of the crisis communication

From the analysis we know, that BP was unprepared for the crisis and that the company's commercials have not been received as wanted. We have learned that the responses to commercial *a* have been focused on how BP did not take responsibility for the consequences of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, but only

acknowledging its responsibility of restoring the Gulf. It generally seems that BP's stakeholders view BP as a company who is predominantly interested in making a profit and not respecting the environment.

When it comes to the theoretical part of this section, we used the framework from the book *Crisis communication* by Johansen, which included the three phases a company goes through when communicating through a crisis. The framework has helped us in the understanding of BP's communication, through the crisis and has also helped us to see how unprepared BP was.

One could argue that because the framework was meant as a guide to companies on how to communicate through a crisis it cannot be used as an analytical tool. However, we believe that it is applicable, because it is a framework of how successful communication during a

crisis could be practiced. This leads us to thinking that if BP strays too far from this framework, it is an indication that it might be doing something wrong. This belief was strengthened when we discovered how unsuccessful BP's communication has been after analysing the responses to commercial *a*.

Discussion of commercials

The two commercials created by BP provide the viewer with an image of how BP wishes to be perceived. The company tries to restore its own image by using a number of elements in the company's commercials e.g. the beautiful sunsets over the Gulf coast and the information about the numerous animals living in and around the Gulf who all seem to be in good health. Lastly scenes portraying the white sandy beaches and crystal clear blue water, in which people in and around this area are enjoying themselves.

These images create and portray a certain symbolic value, in the context of BP's desired message of this commercial.

The choice of language in this commercial also plays an important role of the creation of the portrayed values.

The word 'commitment' is a positively value-laden word. We venture to argue that this word is a key notion throughout both commercials. BP uses it as a tool in stating the fact, that it takes responsibility for its actions. The company does not mention the specific actions it is responsible for, which might be why the meaning of its commitment loses its value.

This commercial's main goal is to prove to BP's stakeholders and shareholders, that the company is committed and responsible. It seems like BP is under the impression that an idyllic portrayal of the Gulf and the highlighting of the various initiatives taken by the company, will be able to convince the stake- and

shareholders that the consequences of the 2010 oil spill are insignificant. In addition to this, *The Gaze* is a helpful way of understanding the relation between the sender and the receiver, which in this case is the relation between BP and its share- and stakeholders.

Aforementioned, BP is not apologizing for its actions on the 20th of April 2010, which caused the oil spill, let alone mentioning it. One might argue that this is a deliberate choice BP made to direct the viewers attention elsewhere. The relation between the commercial as the object and the viewer as the subject becomes clear to us through the responses posted to the first commercial on YouTube. BP has an idea of how the commercial is supposed to be received by the viewer, while the viewer might have a prejudged attitude towards BP as a company. This might create an unbalanced relation between the commercial and the

viewer. Michel Foucault believes that *The Gaze* is a discourse through how the subject perceives the world. In this exact case, the world of BP and the world of its stakeholders are quite different, when thinking of what the stakeholders, and what the company is trying to gain.

The viewer might be hoping for a humble apology in these commercials, while the company is trying to gain new found trust and thereby new consumers and bigger profit. These misinterpretations lead to a conflict between *object* and *subject*.

Iris Cross is the representative of commercial *a* analysed and tries to exhibit a feeling of shared commitment towards the restoration of the Gulf.

The two commercials are almost identical, but one clear distinction lies with the representatives of BP. In the first commercial the representative is a black woman, who is born in the Gulf and mirrors an image of the

average American citizen, to level with other average American citizens. In commercial *b*, which we argue to be intended for the shareholder, Mike Utsler, a white man, and the president of the Gulf's Restoration Organization is the one communicating the message throughout the commercial. This way of using a certain type of character can possibly divide the target groups and appeal to the one he represents more successfully. If this goal is achieved, we argue that BP's message will be received in a successful manner in relation to commercial *b*.

Through the analysis of commercial *a*, lead by Iris Cross, it became apparent to us, that the authors of the responses on YouTube, were well-aware of the lack of truth of BP's message. The stakeholders expressed themselves to be predominantly offended by the commercial, which obviously covered up the fact that BP's actions throughout the last couple of years have

been way more harmful than rewarding, as they try to portray through the commercials.

This clash in the communication between BP and its stakeholders creates a conflict between the sender and receiver, which seems almost impossible for BP to solve.

We argue that BP should have taken all considerations into account and asked itself what the outcome would have been with the mentioning the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Considering BP's long history of accidents following the ignoring of safety regulations, a way of catching the viewers attention and convincing them of the message, would be focusing on the increasing of safety regulations and how to prevent a new oil spill in the future, like the one in the Gulf of Mexico in April 2010. This could have prevented the angry outbursts from numerous frustrated viewers, as we experienced with

the responses posted to the commercial *a*.

Another point BP was highly criticized for was the late reaction from the company after the oil spill.

Commercial *a* was sent out more than a year after the disaster in the Gulf, which is quite difficult to comprehend given the seriousness of the disaster.

Inevitably a certain period of time is “allowed” for BP figure out the company’s next move, but the amount of time, might be unacceptable in the eyes of BP’s stake- and shareholders.

We wonder if the idyllic pictures of the Gulf, the corner stones of the commercials, were not attainable to BP before a year later, and whether that was the reason for the company’s late response. If so we venture to argue that this is another reason why BP should have undertaken a different approach to the commercials.

These wonderings of ours, lead us to the questions of first how BP perceives the outcome of its commercials

and whether the company believes it served its purpose or not, and lastly we wonder if BP have learned from the experience. The questions unanswered for BP might be the one of how the company will be able to restore its image and find a way to regain its stake- and shareholders’ trust.

Knowing the importance of political consumerism and the focal point’s from the consumer’s point of view, we believe that BP has to acknowledge the responsibility of the consequences the oil spill had on the environment and the local people in Gulf in order to truly move on.

A different commercial showing that BP owned up and took responsibility for its actions might have had a more positive outcome. The company could elaborate on what it did wrong and not assuming the consumers to just “forgive and forget”. Additionally any ignoring of important facts would have no place in a commercial received by political consumers’, who are opinionated

people when regarding e.g. the environment. If BP wants the viewers to commit to the company it should not let out specific important details, which would help the viewer to understand the action of the commercial. When people do not have the possibility to respond, it is important that BP lets the viewer know what has happened, and how much BP regrets the happening of this accident, before mentioning the progress of the Gulf Coast restoration.

The validity of the use of the responses on YouTube can be discussed as they are more or less of the same belief and do not help in the gaining of a versatile insight into the consumers' view on the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and BP. YouTube is a forum which can be accessed by everyone, but we wonder who the authors are and what their relation to BP is.

We chose to use the responses to the commercial posted on YouTube to highlight and cement the importance of

the development of political consumerism and to show that political consumerism is indeed a well-developed phenomena.

A different reason to the fact that there are no positive responses to be found on YouTube might also be because the stakeholders in favour of BP are of the same conviction as the consumers against BP and its commercials. They too do not believe that BP's commercial is fulfilling the demands of its CSR policy or convinced that the Gulf of Mexico will ever be the same as before the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Conclusion

In this chapter we will conclude on our new found knowledge on the way BP communicates to its stakeholders.

Based on the knowledge we have gained through writing this project, we can conclude that BP is a risk taking company out of the ordinary. In addition to this, we found that it is almost impossible for a company like BP to control the outcome of its risk takings, due to the fact that it deals with natural resources e.g. oil. The only action BP can control is its safety regulations. We learned that in order to regain the respect and earn positive interest from its stakeholders, it is necessary for BP to acknowledge its part in The Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010.

From our analysis of commercial *a* and *b*, we experienced that BP tried to send out a message, which goal is to capture the stakeholders' interest and make

them feel a sense of commitment towards the company. By sending out these commercials BP tries to recreate its image as a trustworthy and environmentally concerned company.

Through our analysis we can conclude that this was not successful, since the responses posted to commercial *a* were predominantly negative. According to the authors of the responses posted to commercial *a* it was the way the company approached the accident, that made the company untrustworthy. When not mentioning the accident in the commercials BP created a feeling for the consumers of being left in the dark and the feeling of BP trying to fool the viewers.

Regarding the communicative tools taken into use by BP when constructing the commercials, we argue that the consumers are not satisfied with BP's attempt, which resulted in BP's wish to regain its image being unsuccessful.

The purpose of the commercial from BP's point of view is to change the perception of the company.

We argue that the commercials are trying to alter the viewer's discourse, in which they see the world, in order to change their view on the company. By using Foucault's term *The Gaze* as a method in our analysis, we have been able to conclude that BP is deliberately trying to do so.

BP has, according to our research, tried to brand the company's Corporate Social Responsibility policy to help improve the company's image by focusing on what it has done to improve the environment in and around the Gulf of Mexico.

Another element the company uses in a strategic manner is the use of language. The key sentence through both commercials is, as mentioned, "*We are still committed*". This sentence implies that BP has always been committed to the area around the Gulf Coast and at the

same time this mantra removes the focus from the accident.

The mass distribution of the Internet and the accessibility are trades followed by globalisation. We state that the importance of the informational source – the Internet – makes it much easier to state an opinion and create contact with other consumers who share the same field of interest.

We argue that the authors of the responses from YouTube are political consumers due to their political interest in the environment and their interest in encouraging companies to uphold standards of environment and safety regulations.

BP puts itself in a position of the teacher by enlightening its viewers of its numerous initiatives taken to restore the Gulf Coast after the oil spill, thus giving the viewer the role of the student. We argue that the role of the teacher and the student become vice versa in

the light of our findings in the analysis. The analysis of commercial *a* showed us that the responses tried to teach BP that the construction of commercial *a* did not fulfil the demands of the viewers, and that BP should have learned from this mistake when creating commercial *b*.

From our analysis of the crisis communication we have learned that BP was unprepared to handle the crisis in 2010 and that this may have had an impact on the unsuccessful nature of the communication to the consumers.

Limitations

Returning to our chosen theories and methods we will reflect upon the material's capability to cover our dimensions and help us answer our problem definition. We will argue if the material has been beneficial to our project or if it has limited us in any way. Additionally we intend to linger on the possibility of our subjectivity in the analysis of BP as a company and the responses to commercial *a*. We, as investigators, represent a part of BP's stakeholders and because of the significance of issues e.g. the environment, which are valued by our generation, we can be argued to be political consumers. This results in us, as investigators, being biased and having a prejudiced approach to BP and its commercials. Additionally the fact that the responses analysed on YouTube were negative also help in our conclusion on the matter being that BP did not attain a better image, by communicating through these

commercials. In order for our conclusion to not be as subjective as it has become, a video from the consumer's point of view could have been accounted for, reasoning our assumptions with something factual. Our analysis of the *history of BP* is based on the book by Tom Bergin called "*Spills and Spins*". One could argue upon the validity of the book, since a part of the book is not first hand material but second hand, which could easily have been manipulated in the authors favour. His character was taken under consideration and it was the fact that Bergin is a former oil broker and he has a 12-year career in journalism behind him, we think of him as a reliable source (<http://www.tombergin.net/about.html>). As a counterpart we could have included interviews with employees or searched for a book, revolving around the same issues, but written by a different author to prove Bergin's validity.

Reflections and Perspectives

In this chapter we will reflect upon further work of our chosen subject and how we could have approached it differently.

We will reflect upon the changes in how the world is perceived through the eyes of the political consumers using *The Gaze*, and how the importance and value of the business market has developed.

One of the aspects the project focuses on is the communicative tools BP makes use of through its commercials. We have analysed the commercials in regard to BP's strategic use of its Corporate Social responsibility policy, with a starting point in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in April 2010 as a study case. Within this field there are many approaches, and in this chapter we will reflect upon some of the possibilities we found to be interesting.

Within this subject, we could have focused on how society has changed and with these changes, how our view of society changed with it. Ulrich Beck describes how industrialization has brought many changes to the modern world. When technology was first introduced it idolized the many possibilities technology offered; more money, more consumption and risks which established the risk society (Beck 2011).

If we were to use this as the basis for a project, we could compare it to the worldview of *The Gaze* and of the political consumer. We have seen growing tendencies of consumers that value “green energy” and “green products”. This could indicate that the general worldview of consumers is changing.

Following this aspect we could have focused on the development of consumers in a wider perspective, and the development within political consumerism compared with BP's nature of risk-taking, which led to

the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. We could have included other empirical work, e.g. interviews with political groups such as GreenPeace, or handed out questionnaires at RUC in order to get an opinion of a certain target group. We could also have found a number of political consumers directly linked to BP and conducted a more depth-full interview in order to investigate their attitude towards the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the consequences that followed.

It could be interesting to conduct surveys in America or more specifically in the area around the Gulf to get a more narrowed and exact image of how people in general have reacted and the reactions of BP's consumers.

To get the preferred response to BP's communicative strategy, we could have shown the consumers the commercials created by BP and asked them for an immediate reaction to the commercials. This way of

doing empirical work could have provided us with a more personal and direct look into the minds of the consumers. We would also be able to answer more specifically which kind of people BP wants the viewers to become after watching the commercials.

As mentioned, another aspect which is more closely related to the philosophical dimension is the term from Michel Foucault called *The Gaze*. This term could have been used more depth-full in the research of relations between BP and its consumers.

Lastly for further research of the dynamics between the business and the consumers, we could conduct a comparative analysis of how the separate changes of these two groups might have affected each other.

Conclusively, we are aware of the many possibilities in researching a field such as this and acknowledge the fact

that there might have been a better way for us to have
conducted our empirical work.

Summary

Summary in Danish

Vi vil i denne opgave redegøre for de kommunikative redskaber brugt af BP i relation til deres krisekommunikation efter Deepwater Horizon olie udslippet.

Vi vil analysere budskabet i to reklamer anvendt af BP efter hændelsen for at opnå et billede af hvilken virkelighed firmaet ønsker at portrættere til deres mulige forbrugere og andre interessenter. Ydermere ønsker vi at undersøge hvordan henholdsvis riskosamfundet samt magt forhold mellem firma og forbruger har haft en effekt på udfaldet af hændelsen og kommunikationen heraf.

Den underliggende dynamik mellem forbruger og virksomhed og udviklingen af denne af denne afspejles i udviklingen af den politiske forbruger.

For at opnå en forståelse af firmaet samt industrien

bagom denne opgave, har vi inkluderet et historisk perspektiv, for at klarlægge BPs udvikling som firma. Til dette er også knyttet en introduktion til Ulrik Becks koncepter risikosamfund og magtforhold samt en introduktion krisekommunikation, for at kunne danne en teoretisk baggrund for projektet og dermed skabe en dybere analytisk kontekst.

På baggrund af dette har vi udfærdiget følgende problemformulering;

”Hvordan formår BP gennem deres kommunikation til deres interessenter at balancere at opnå et økonomisk overskud og samtidigt respektere miljøet?”

Ligeledes har vi udfærdiget tre underspørgsmål:

-Hvad består *Corporate Social Responsibility* af og hvordan implementerer BP det i strukturen af deres firma?

-Hvordan bruger BP medier til at genvinde henholdsvis seeren eller interessentens tillid og til at genopbygge

deres omdømme efter Deepwater Horizon olie udslippet i 2010 og hvordan har offentligheden reageret?

-Hvordan har samfundet ændret sig siden introduktionen af begrebet; politisk forbruger og hvilken effekt har disse på et firma som BP?

Med afsæt i denne problemformulering har vi som nævnt taget udgangspunkt i to reklamer produceret af BP hvoraf den ene er uploadet på internetsiden YouTube og den anden på BP's egen hjemmeside. Fra reklamen hentet fra YouTube er der brugt kommentarer tilknyttet videoen, til at analysere hvordan denne er blevet modtaget af seerne. Vi har konkluderet at denne reklame er blevet modtaget overvejende negativt, og vi anslår at dette kan være medvirkende til, at BPs anden reklame - indtil videre - ikke er uploadet til YouTube. Vi har ud fra disse opstillede teser diskuteret projektets empiriske arbejde, samt hvorvidt den teoretiske

baggrund har været fyldestgørende i henhold til vores først fremstillede problemstillinger. Med udgangspunkt i disse diskussioner har vi sammenfattet en konklusion, der besvarer de opstillede teser og slutteligt har vi inkluderet en perspektivering over et muligt videre studie af dette problemfelt.

Summary in Japanese

このプロジェクトでは、BPによって引き起こされた2010年メキシコ湾原油流出事故のあと、BPがクライシスコミュニケーションの概念の元でどのように消費者に対して情報伝達をしようとしているのかを説明します。

事故後にBPがどのように消費者にBP自身が求める企業イメージを伝えようとしているのかを、BPに

よって作成された2つのCMを通して分析していきます。

さらに、危機管理社会や消費者と企業との力関係がどのように事故とその事故に関しての社会への情報伝達に影響しているのかに焦点をあてていきます。

企業と産業との関係性と、BPの企業としての展開を理解するために、まずこのプロジェクトの基礎として、消費者と企業の根底にある利害関係を歴史的背景とともに簡潔に述べたのち、ウルリッヒ・ベックによる危機管理社会をクライシスコミュ

ニケーションの概念とともにプロジェクトの理論的な背景を構成するための前置きとし、さらに深い分析的文章を作成します。

そのために、私たちは次の点をプロジェクトの中心として取り組んできました。

1. BPはどのように利益の追求と環境への配慮とのバランスを、ステークホルダーとのコミュニケーションを通して取ろうとしているのか。
2. 企業の社会的責任(CSR)とは何を含んでいるのか、そしてどのようにBPはCSRを企業活動の根底として認識しているのか。

3. BPは2010年メキシコ湾原油流出事故の後、どのように消費者からの信頼とイメージの回復のためにメディアを使っているのか。

4. 消費者活動の概念が形作られてから、社会がどのように変化してきたのか、その変化がBPのような企業にどんなインパクトを与えたのか。

この問題提起から、私たちはYouTubeとBPのホームページにアップロードされた2つの異なったCMの分析を基本として、YouTubeにアップロードされたCMに対して、視聴者がどのように反応しているのかを分析するためにYouTube利用者のコメン

トを使用しました。

私たちはCMが視聴者に否定的に受け取られているとわかり、この発見が、BPがなぜもう1つのCMをYouTubeにアップロードしていないのかの要因の1つとして推測しました。

そして、このプロジェクトで使用した理論や分析について、また、冒頭に述べたプロブレムフィールドに理論的背景が適応しているか議論していきま

ました。これらの議論を基礎として、私たちは冒頭に述べた問題提起に対する答えとしての結論を作成しま

した。そしてプロブレムフィールドのさらなる研
究を深化させるための展望を加えました。

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Appendix

Appendix 1

The timeline is included as a PDF-file

Appendix 2

Appendix 2 include the 20 responses posted to commercial *a* on YouTube, these are listed below.

- You can set out these videos, and claim to making these huge strides and spending all this "Money." You are not buying any customers back (ones with brains at least). I will never buy BP gasoline or any other future products again. RIP BP

[goldengoal12089](#) 2 months ago 55 likes

- You were ordered by our government to do those cleanups and independent scientist studies. If it wasn't for that you would never do it on your own. Just another lie from BP.

[thetravelingboy](#) 2 months ago 24 likes

- Any independent scientists that took samples from the waters around the Gulf spill had them confiscated.(how ther hell was that legal???) We'll all know a real mea culpa when we see it.

[steves2020juno](#) 1 week ago

- Now search youtube for "60 Minutes - BP Oil Disaster "Poison Tide" and see what really happened
- Shrimps are growing with no eyes because of your oil. Will your money bring their eyes back?

[fhusain](#) 1 week ago 3 likes

- With these impacts already here, some scientists are alarmed by what they're finding. Unfortunately their concerns are largely drowned out by BP and the "powers that be" shouting through very large megaphones that "all is fine, BP is making it right, come and spend your money." But the truth is far different. The Gulf of Mexico, our nation's energy sacrifice zone, continues to suffer.

[centerM87](#) 1 week ago

- The beaches are open and the food you can eat, so you will get sick and die. But before that, you must give all your life savings to the government run health care. Go away BP, no one wants you here.

[anythingfordollar](#) 1 week ago

- My dad works for one of the more environmentally-friendly oil companies. He says the problem today is that a lot of the oil companies look like they're all the same,

when they're not. Companies that do care spend their money on environmental cares, while companies who don't spend that money on PR and getting good lawyers. Ironically, the good companies can often get in more trouble for less than the bad ones because they spend less on their legal teams.

- Iris Cross is still there, so what if she was born there, she wouldn't be telling America this stuff if BP had not spilled the oil and ruined the Gulf forever in the first place. I will never go to that part of the country, you can get sick from the air at that beach its so filthy.

[LaReinaDelBarrio](#) 2 weeks ago **2**

- LIARS!

[johnnieace45](#) 2 weeks ago

- wow why is BP still alive? isn't a mass oil spill enough to say bye bye?

[flashfire320](#) 3 weeks ago **2 likes**

- BP should have been sold off and dismantled and every cent should have gone to the clean up and restoration of the gulf. That black sh*t is still lying at the bottom of the ocean where all the small critters live in it everyday.

[mathewjohndesigns](#) 1 month ago

- awww, good ol' propaganda. The only thing BP had going for them was their BP Credit Card, but now they ruined that too. You SUCK BP!

[kingv911](#) 1 month ago

- Did so much harm to the environment. Talking about some environmental recovery. Get outta here!

[tinkerbelle91290](#) 1 month ago

- All beaches and waters are open. Oil is hidden under the ocean to hide the truth. Less phony videos more action. Clean the Gulf Coast including under the water.

[pianovocal](#) 1 month ago **3 likes**

- BP is the poster child for greedy, fat-cat corporate liars. Willing to kill the environment and not give a crap about the consequences. Yeah right....you're paying. How long did it take you? Most of the people who were severely affected by your actions are now bankrupt. Your corporate propaganda isn't fooling anyone. Instead of making fancy commercials and buying millions of dollars of air time, you should be giving that money to the local people whose lives you destroyed.

[Jim Voz](#) 1 month ago **6 likes**

- why can't you post a video response? I have a video of my 9 year old on the beach, I asked her what she was doing? She said "I'm writing my name with dead Jelly fish.! She

wrote her full name...with plenty to spare... what's that say???

[crazy4utube](#) 1 month ago

- Not trying to defend BP or anything but jelly fish die all the time as do other animals it most likely died of natural causes...

[TheNillaPuddn](#) som svar på [crazy4utube](#) 1 month ago

- I recently went fishing down in the Gulf. It's disgusting. The fish we caught were bad; their guts were rotten and they smelled off. Something is wrong with the seafood coming out of the Gulf now. BP is lying about the Gulf seafood and tourism. The tourism is down (blatant lie). The seafood is bad. The beaches are dirty and dead sea are creatures washing up in stacks. I can't believe these people make ads like this!

It insults my very existence. If y'all were here you'd see the truth.

[mr8ballz](#) 1 month ago [3 likes](#)