

**Bangladesh: A comparative analysis on challenges  
and solutions of the garment industry**

**Eduard Hromkovič 74670**

**Sumaya Akter 73004**



**2023**

## Table of contents

<a href="#">Table of contents</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Abstract</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Summary</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">1. Introduction</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">1.1 History and context of the study</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">2. Problem statement and research questions</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">3. Literature review</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">3.1 Business Perspective</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">3.2 Humanitarian Perspective</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">4. Theoretical Perspectives</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">4.1 Business perspective</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">4.1.1 Liberalism</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">4.1.2 Dependency Theory</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">4.1.3 Stakeholder Theory</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">4.2 Humanitarian perspective</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">4.2.1 Liberal Theory</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">4.2.2 Labor governance system</a>	<a href="#">25</a>
<a href="#">4.2.3 World system theory</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">5. Methodology</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">5.1 Research design and approach</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">5.2 Longitudinal design</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">5.3 Data collection methods and sources</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">5.4 Philosophy of social science</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">5.4.1 Interpretivism</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">5.5 Limitation of the study</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">5.5.1 Data Limitations</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">5.5.2 Time and Resource Limitations</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">5.5.3 Alternative Approaches</a>	<a href="#">40</a>
<a href="#">6. Findings and Analysis</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">6.1 Findings And Analysis of the Business Perspective</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">6.1.1. Bangladesh and Banana Republics in Central and South America</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">6.1.2 Statistical Data</a>	<a href="#">43</a>
<a href="#">6.1.2.1 Safety Audits</a>	<a href="#">44</a>
<a href="#">6.1.2.2 Economical Analysis</a>	<a href="#">46</a>
<a href="#">6.2 Analysis and findings of the Humanitarian perspective</a>	<a href="#">49</a>
<a href="#">6.3 Comparison of Garment Industries of Bangladesh and Abroad</a>	<a href="#">54</a>
<a href="#">6.4 Key challenges and issues facing the country</a>	<a href="#">56</a>
<a href="#">6.4.1 Unskilled workers</a>	<a href="#">57</a>
<a href="#">6.4.2 Lack of safety precautions in local factories</a>	<a href="#">57</a>
<a href="#">6.4.3 Management and financial problems of the trade unions</a>	<a href="#">57</a>
<a href="#">6.4.4 Gender discrimination</a>	<a href="#">58</a>
<a href="#">6.4.5 Low wages</a>	<a href="#">58</a>

6.4.6 Insufficient government inspectors and enforcement:.....	58
<u>7. Discussion.....</u>	<u>59</u>
7.1 Implications of the findings on the future of the Bangladeshi garment industry.....	60
7.2 Recommendations for policy makers, industry stakeholders, and future research....	61
<u>8. Conclusion.....</u>	<u>61</u>
8.1 Suggestions for future research.....	62
8.2 Generalizability.....	63
<u>9. Bibliography.....</u>	<u>64</u>
9.1 Business perspective.....	64
9.2 Humanitarian perspective.....	68

## **List of Abbreviations:**

BGMEA- Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association

BNBC - Bangladesh National Building Code

BSCI - Business Social Compliance Initiative

CAP - Corrective Action Plan

COC - Code of Conduct

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

DEA - Detailed Engineering Assessment

DIFE - Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishments

FDI - Foreign Direct Investment

GVC - Global Value Chain

IBC- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

ILO- International Labor Organization

ITUC - International Trade Union Confederation

LEED - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LGS- Labor Governance System

MFA - Multi fiber arrangement

NTPA - National Tripartite Plan of Action

OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Association

RMG - Ready-Made Garments

RSC- RMG Sustainability Council

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

SMETA - Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audit

WRAP - Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production

## **List of graphs and tables:**

**Table 1:** Differences and Similarities between the Accord and Alliance

**Table 2:** Inspection Process: Pre- and Post-Rana Plaza

**Table 3:** Labor Governance Systems Division

**Table 4:** The garment export labor governance system in Bangladesh, 2019

**Graph 1:** Amount of garment factories in Bangladesh between 2010 and 2019

**Graph 2:** Economic growth of Bangladesh between the years 2013 and 2021

**Graph 3:** Value of Bangladeshi Garment Industry Exports in Trillions of American Dollars.

## **Abstract**

The garment industry has become one of the propelling forces behind Bangladesh's social and economic progress because of its substantial influence on exports, job creation, and helping to alleviate poverty. This thesis focuses primarily on employees, their working conditions, precautions for safety, compensation, and other directly related areas of interest that we must comprehend in order to grasp the concept of changes that have been implemented. The region of interest includes not only Bangladesh but also all of the garment-producing nations in southern Asia. A secondary objective of this study is to offer a comparison and contrast of the different perspectives and approaches to the issue from the business perspective, i.e., the government of Bangladesh, global value chains, and businesses, and the humanitarian perspective, i.e., the workers, non-governmental organizations, activists, and humanitarians.

## **Summary**

The purpose of this study and the aim of our research is to gain an in-depth comprehension of the Rana Plaza incident in Bangladesh in 2013, its causes, the aftermaths, what global value chains that are viewed as responsible are doing to avert similar incidents in the future, and to offer a comparative analysis of the differentiating views on the problem from the business perspective and the humanitarian perspective. We want to examine particular policies that the government and the GVCs both agreed upon and are currently implementing. The focus of the study is primarily aimed at the workers, working conditions, safety measures, wages, and other directly related areas of interest that we need to have an understanding of to better grasp the idea of innovations that are being implemented. The geographical area of interest does not contain only Bangladesh but, similarly, some other garment states in southern Asia. An additional goal that we have set for our study is an analysis of the different views and approaches to the issue as seen from the business perspective, i.e., comparing the viewpoints of the employees, non-governmental organizations, activists, and human rights organizations against those of the Bangladeshi government, global value chains, and corporations.

# 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 History and context of the study

Ever since the dawn of time, garments have played a fundamental role in human civilization. The use of clothing not only serves the purpose of providing warmth and protection but also plays a significant role in cultural expression and identity. The earliest evidence of textiles dates back to around 5000 BCE, when people began weaving fibers to create fabrics. In ancient times, garments were made primarily from animal hides and plant fibers. With the advent of spinning and weaving technologies, fabrics were produced in large quantities, and the clothing industry began to take shape. Garments have always been hand-made, which requires a lot of labor and time. The industrial revolution throughout the 18th and the 19th century transformed the textile industry with the introduction of mechanized looms and spinning machines, making the production process faster and more efficient. In the modern era, the garment industry has become a global phenomenon, with countries like South Asia, primarily Bangladesh, becoming major players in the industry. Bangladesh's garment industry has advanced to this point since the 1980s. Nurool Quader Khan founded the Bangladeshi ready-to-wear industry. He had seen the nation's potential for change. In 1978, he sent 130 trainees to South Korea to learn how to produce ready-to-wear clothing. He established the first factory, "Desh Garments," using those trainees to make clothing for export. The late Mohammad Reazuddin of Reaz Garments, the late Akhter Mohammad Musa of Bond Garments, Md. Humayun of Paris Garments, Engineer Mohammad Fazlul Azim of Azim Group, Major (Retd.) Abdul Mannan of Sunman Group, AM Subid Ali of Aristocrat Limited, and M. Shamsur Rahman of Stylecraft Limited, who served as the BGMEA's first president, also stepped up and started some of the country's earliest clothing factories (source: BGMEA available at: <https://www.bgmea.com.bd/page/AboutGarmentsIndustry> ).

Otherwise, RMG plants were started in the country as a result of industrious executives. The Bangladeshi apparel industry has not had to look back since that point. Despite the difficulties the sector has faced recently, it has managed to establish a place for itself and has continued to operate effectively.

The evolution of garments has been a long and fascinating journey that reflects the cultural, social, and economic changes of societies. Bangladesh has emerged as one of the largest

---

<sup>1</sup> Akter & Hromkovič

garment exporters in the world, with over 4 million people employed in the industry. The rise of Bangladesh in the garment industry can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, Bangladesh has a large workforce with a low wage rate, making it a cost-effective location for production. Secondly, the government has taken several initiatives to promote the industry, such as providing incentives to investors, setting up export processing zones, and improving infrastructure. Lastly, the country's proximity to major markets like the United States and Europe makes it an attractive location for export-oriented garment production. However, the garment industry in Bangladesh has also faced several challenges, including poor working conditions, low wages, and workplace safety concerns. One of the worst manufacturing disasters in history occurred in April 2013. It's been 10 years since, and it completely destroyed the image of the garment industry in Bangladesh. Rana Plaza, an eight-story commercial building, fell in Savar, a subdistrict of the Greater Dhaka Region, Bangladesh's capital, killing at least 1,134 employees and injuring another 2,515 others. The Rana Plaza tragedy sparked a massive upswing in national and worldwide advocacy in support of Bangladeshi garment workers, and many purchasers, under pressure from national and international campaigning, "decided" to compensate the victims and their families. To date, two inspection agreements have been drafted to avoid another Rana Plaza. The first one is "accord" with the European-led Bangladesh Agreement on Fire and Building Safety, and the second one is the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. Despite its focus on audits and its being legally enforceable only once voluntarily signed, others argue that the Accord "takes a huge step towards regaining brands' direct control." According to Mapped in Bangladesh, Bangladesh has around 3,720 export-oriented garment industries, which are the driving force behind the country's economic wheel. Since the December 2012 Tazreen Fashion fire, which killed more than 100 workers, and the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse, continual efforts have been undertaken to enhance workplace safety in the garment sector. Ten years after the Rana Plaza accident, Bangladesh's garment industry has undergone massive structural changes and has become a model for development in health and safety. Several structures have been assessed for structural, electrical, and fire compliance with the National Fire Code and the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC). A Sustainability Council was established in 2020 to bring together industry owners, brands, and labor unions. It's called RSC (RMG Sustainable Council). The RSC is a privately funded project. Their goal is to establish a supply chain and implement a program for workplace safety that is of the highest caliber in the world. They want to preserve and expand a reliable and secure RMG sector that will serve as the preferred manufacturing source for the global fashion industry, encouraging growth and employment in

terms of security. The goal of RSC is to maintain and develop a safe, compassionate, and sustainable Bangladeshi RMG industry through a tripartite approach involving industry, unions, and brands. To do this, they will work together to implement a sectorial safety standard that will reduce health risks, prevent accidents, and give factory management and employees more power through training and capacity building.

## **2. Problem statement and research questions<sup>2</sup>**

With the almost unfathomably rapid rise of the Bangladeshi garment industry among the elite garment producers worldwide, several questions arise in connection with it. Questions of infrastructural and workplace safety, worker treatment, workplace fairness, NT involvement, and other important topics need to be considered. An underlying issue that frequently acts as a time bomb is typically present along with such growth. This has also been the case in Bangladesh, where, in 2013, the Rana Plaza incident took place, claiming hundreds of lives. Undoubtedly, the Rana Plaza accident highlights the infrastructure issues affecting Bangladesh's clothing sector. It does, however, speak volumes about the sort of labor relations that have typified the garment business since its inception. In our research, we are going to focus on finding the answers to the following research question: "What are the steps regarding the social and economic development in Bangladesh that the corporations and government have taken in the ready-made garment industry after the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013?" Apart from the primary research question, we will also concentrate on subsequent ones:

1. What results has the Accord of Alliance brought to improve the RMG industry's social and economic situation?
2. How has the government contributed to the social and economic development of the RMG industry?

---

<sup>2</sup> Akter & Hromkovič



### **3. Literature review**

#### **3.1 Business Perspective Literature<sup>3</sup>**

In this section, we will be getting a detailed look at literature that considers the involvement of global value chains and international corporations, and especially the foreign direct investments made by them in the Bangladeshi and overall South Asian industries, as a positive change. The areas of focus will be improvements towards workers, working conditions and safety standards in the workplace, wages, environmental and sustainability improvements, and keeping the promises that were made after the Rana Plaza incident. To achieve the least possible amount of bias, we will analyze claims and research from several independent sources. Among the sources used for our research, there will be claims, research papers, articles, reports globally from global value chains and local companies involved in the garment industry of Bangladesh, non-profit humanitarian organizations, local government documents, and even interviews with workers directly involved in the industry at the lowest possible level who are primarily affected by the either positive or negative changes that are continuously being applied into common practice.

In the following section, we will briefly introduce both the local and global authors, scholars, and their works that will be continuously referenced throughout this paper. Starting with the local researchers, Siddiqui (2013) examines the impact of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) phase-out. According to the article, the removal of quotas that were previously introduced in Bangladesh has led to an increase in foreign direct investments in the industry, resulting in a positive impact on the local economy and employment levels throughout the country. Similarly, Raihan (2016) argues that the removal of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement and its quotas opened the door for increased competition and more foreign direct investments, which in turn had a positive impact on the overall economic growth and employment levels in Bangladesh.

There are several authors who contemplate the idea of foreign direct investments in their research. Islam & Bhowmik (2014) and Asif (2021) argue that FDIs provided an increase in employment opportunities and improved living standards for workers in the garment industry. The same argument can be heard from Rahman & Islam (2019) or Islam & Ali (2018), which claim that living standards have improved along with work opportunities throughout the country, all due to the FDIs. Hossain (2017) similarly examines the impact of FDIs but rather focuses on their impact on Bangladesh's export of garments. The author argues that the

---

<sup>3</sup> Hromkovič

increased exports have helped boost the country's overall economic growth. Rahman and Khan (2020) frequently discuss the subject of exports as well. The authors assert that the garment industry, which accounts for the majority of Bangladeshi exports and is dominated by foreign corporations, has largely had a positive impact on the economy of the nation by fostering job growth, raising workers' living standards, and increasing exports. Islam and Hossain add to the argument by stating that there wouldn't be room for such rapid industry growth and, by extension, even export growth, without the FDIs. Hossain & Mahmood (2013) praise the increase in wages, employment opportunities, and other significant benefits that appeared in the country as a result of the FDIs while simultaneously providing recommendations for solutions to potential challenges connected to them. Rashid & Ahmed (2020), who examine labor standards in relation to garment performance in the Bangladeshi garment industry, have chosen a somewhat different approach. While choosing an opposite approach to the previous authors mentioned, they end up with the same results, claiming that the presence of foreign corporations has helped improve labor standards in the industry, which has in turn led to increased export performance and economic growth in the country. Haque & Azmat (2015) discuss the challenges that the Bangladeshi garment industry faced after the Rana Plaza collapse, including the scrutiny that was present after the incident from both corporations and consumers. At the same time, the authors are highlighting the positive impact that the industry had on the country's economy and argue that it is of the utmost importance to find ways in which working conditions could be improved while maintaining the benefits of foreign direct investments. Yet another claim that appears in the literature viewing global value chains and direct investments in a positive light is by Gereffi (2014), who argues that the Bangladeshi garment industry is a perfect example of successful global value chains that have helped promote economic growth and development in the whole country as a result.

Further proof of global value chains being beneficial for the Bangladeshi economy appears in claims that the introduction of GVCs to the Bangladeshi market has greatly improved the employability of women in the country. Kabir et al. (2020) and Das (2022) argue that while the industry represents a lot of challenges that need to be tackled along the way, the presence of GVCs and the increase of FDIs have allowed for greater employability and increased economic independence for Bangladeshi women. These changes, as the authors claim, allow them to enter the workforce and earn their own money, which introduces and promotes gender equality in the country. Rani & Saravanan (2015) examine and analyze the factors that determine the participation of female labor in the Bangladeshi garment industry. They

support the argument that foreign investments and the overall presence of global value chains in the country, along with providing employment opportunities and comparatively better wages, have pushed the country further in promoting gender equality.

Some authors objectively view and weigh both sides of the arguments of the two opposing sides and, while seeing the downside of the industry, still consider that foreign direct investments and the presence of global value chains overall predominantly outweigh the negatives with the benefits that they provide to the country. Among these authors and scholars, we can find Helpman & Krugman (2013), who argue that despite the many problems that the industry possesses, such as low wages or inadequate working conditions, it has been a crucial factor in driving economic growth and reducing poverty levels in the country. On the same side of the barricade, we can find Dicken (1998), who claims that the garment industry overall has been a crucial part of the development of Bangladesh. Nordas and Rouzet (2014) analyze the impact of trade restrictions that have been present in the Bangladeshi garment industry and argue that liberalization of the market is the key to promoting economic growth and country development. Khan (2015) discusses the relationship between country development, economic growth, and structural adjustment policies alongside neoliberalism. He claims that while challenges have been prevalent in Bangladesh, the neoliberal policies introduced to the market have been an important driving force towards becoming a developed country with solid economic growth. Tandler (2015), similarly to the previously mentioned authors, discusses the significance of economic growth and development in the country but differs from the rest by providing a comprehensive overview of development strategies in the whole region, Bangladesh included. She argues that it has been mainly the garment industry that has opened the door for development in Bangladesh.

### **3.2 Humanitarian Perspective<sup>4</sup>**

Rahman & Rahman (2020) argue the impact of the Accord and Alliance commitments on the ready-made garment (RMG) industry in Bangladesh and answer the question, "In what ways do Bangladeshi factory executives think the influence of the multi-actor shared responsibility plans, the Accord and Alliance, on the factories?" The Bangladesh RMG business is known for failing to ensure the safety of its industrial employees. The author mentioned that several factory fires, such as Tazreen Garments in 2012, have occurred during the last 30 years

---

<sup>4</sup> Akter

(Rahman & Rahman, 2020). The authors highlighted several issues, including auditing, lack of transparency, and so on. According to the researchers Rahman & Rahman (2020) and Reinecke et al. (2019), they documented two situations in which social audits failed to enhance the safety of Bangladeshi textile companies. One facility within the Rana Plaza had previously achieved SA8000 certification. The aforementioned is a certification standard that is subject to audit and is aimed at promoting the development and sustenance of socially acceptable practices within organizations' workplaces. The significance of the matter lies in the fact that the Rana Plaza tragedy took place in a factory that had previously received certification for compliance from an audit firm. This demonstrates the inadequacy of audit certification with respect to the Canadian fashion and retail enterprise, Joe Fresh, by an audit organization called Bureau Veritas (ibid.). TUV Rheinland assessed another facility in this complex and gave the Business Social Compliance Initiative accreditation. Reinecke et al. (2019) looked into why audits fail and found that corporate social responsibility (CSR) has some major flaws. These flaws include (1) the inability of COCs to solve structural issues ; (2) the inability of personal initiatives to overcome structural issues; (3) the extreme mobility and transfer of business risk to providers; (4) inadequate transparency ; (5) the failure to integrate CSR into commercial purchasing decisions and strategy; and (6) the failure of CSR to address the enforced. As a result, poor standard audits, poor value of funds, unnecessary audit replication, and audit fraud are significant issues with the way social audits are currently implemented.

Rahman & Rahman (2020) research the Accord and Alliance, find out their similarities and differences, and also figure out the inspection process for pre- and post-Rana Plaza. They (Rahman & Rahman, 2020) interviewed senior Accord employees, a representative of the Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), a participant in the ILO RMG project in Bangladesh, and the previous Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Employment as informants. In terms of factories, the Accord covered 67, the Alliance covered 15, and both programs covered 27 (Rahman & Rahman, 2020). Their way of collecting information made their research more reliable.

**Table 1:** Comparison of the Accord and the Alliance: Differences and Similarities (Rahman & Rahman, 2020)

Differences	Similarities
-------------	--------------

<p>Accord: Pluralist, resulting in international co-determination Alliance: Unitarist, promoting self-governing industries</p>	<p>Accruals over five years</p>
<p>Accord: Labour-driven governance Alliance: Corporate-driven governance</p>	<p>Accruals over five years</p>
<p>Accord: A contractual agreement that gives a promise credibility. Due to a voluntary agreement, the alliance has a flexible commitment.</p>	<p>Standardization based on Bangladesh's National Building Code</p>
<p>Accord: BGMEA is excluded from the steering committee Partnership: BGMEA as an associate</p>	<p>Standard reporting format</p>
<p>Accord: Places a focus on increasing workers' capabilities Alliance: Concentrates on coming up with quick fixes</p>	<p>Mutual recognition of audits performed at facilities where the Accord and Alliance brands are both sold</p>
<p>Accord: Employers must pay workers' compensation in the event that a factory closes. Alliance: Employers and buyers split the expense of remuneration</p>	<p>Follow-up inspections and remediation programs come after inspections.</p>
<p>Accord: Collective action by employees, unions, and consumers as a complaint method Alliance: Establish a free reporting hotline for employees</p>	<p>Failure to apply CAPs may result in factories being terminated (declared ineligible for business).</p>
	<p>Make it a point to create occupational safety and health committees in factories.</p>
	<p>Management and employee safety training</p>

	Post progress updates on the website
	Address worker grievances Pay impacted workers who were a result of the factory closure

Source: Donaghey and Reinecke (2018) and the author's own observations. (Rahman & Rahman, 2020)

**Table 2:** Process of Inspection: Before and After Rana Plaza

<b>Process of Inspection During the Accord and Alliance</b>	<b>Process of Inspection before the Accord and Alliance</b>
NTPA (National Tripartite Plan of Action) as a guide	No NTPA existed
examined building security in accordance with Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC)	BNBC had no jurisdiction to perform checks; instead, inspectors looked at things like plant layout, fire permits, and the Bangladesh Labour Act of 2006.
Structural, electrical, and fire engineers examine factories	Non-engineers frequently audit factories
Using technological instruments, DEAs evaluate the safety of buildings	A visual assessment was used to assess building safety. An engineering firm was only called in to resolve the matter if any cracks were discovered during the examination.
2,200 RMG producers are under the supervision of 100 engineers and certified assessment engineering organizations.	In DIFE, 12 engineers were in control of every factory, store, and business in the nation.

Established an employees' complaint hotline and a safety committee	Absence of an employees' complaints hotline or safety committee
Maintaining follow-up inspections	DIFE seldom conducts follow-up inspections, whereas buyers' audit frequently conducts follow-up inspections
Enough time to thoroughly investigate a manufacturing	The DIFE inspection was subpar due to a paucity of inspectors.
Installing equipment linked to fire, electricity, and structures in accordance with international standards	Inspectors just examined the ordinary fire alarm and the fire training; no sophisticated technology was set up.
Report of inspections are available to the general public. Workers might receive training on safety.	Inspection or audit reports weren't available to the general public. As part of the audit, no training in relation to safety was provided.

Source: Prepared by the authors (Rahman & Rahman, 2020).

Ansary & Barua (2015) offer an appraisal of the potential problems of Bangladesh's RMG business. It provides a detailed analysis of the actions implemented following the Rana Plaza disaster and the progress achieved in addressing the problems. The scholars (Ansary & Barua, 2015) highlighted how Bangladesh is progressing and trying to implement the five workplace safety points as follows:

1. To examine the real deficit of the building under consideration, rigorously adhere to the code design criteria.
2. The objective is to identify the feasible prerequisites and the compliant parameters that can be eased to attain a basic level of conformity for a non-compliant factor. This may involve, for instance, relaxing the floor loading requirements to achieve an acceptable level of punching shear resistance in situations where lateral loads result in imbalanced forces within the structural system.

3. On the basis of the scale of the work and the possibility of performing it in a cost-effective way, provide a comprehensive remediation plan. . Prepare alternate retrofitting strategies to address the structural flaw. Discuss construction difficulties and costs with the owner. Choose the best retrofitting option.
4. Send the renovation plan to the evaluation team for review.
5. Oversee the retrofitting process during the construction phase to ensure quality control and subsequently assess the structural integrity and safety in accordance with the Remediation and Oversight Protocol.

Another researcher, Mark Anner (2019), looks at the ways that major firms' purchasing practices affect the conditions of work and rights of employees within a supplier's plant. It likens these modifications to a pricing and sourcing squeeze, in which businesses need short lead times and high order volatility from their suppliers while gradually lowering the prices they pay them. He (Anner, 2019) claims that the pricing squeeze is a reflection of leading companies' motivations to maintain low production wages.

Due to the fact that wages were the procedure's most significant expense of production, this was historically the case while producing garments in processing for export sectors. As a result, lead firms' pressure on prices compelled supplier factories to maintain low real wages, frequently by delaying pay increases during inflationary periods, influencing governments to maintain the minimum wage, or pressuring governments to set minimum salaries for textile export workers lower than the minimum wage for workers in other industries such as manufacturing (Anner, 2011). The author also showed how a squeezed price impacts the working condition. According to Anner (2011), prices were a major factor in what transpired because suppliers under pressure to cut prices tend to shift to less-priced structures. That illustration shows that various levels of manufacturing are hazardous. Fast fashion order fluctuations and other aspects of the rush to market lead to inefficient structures, which provide risky working environments. In other words, business owners are reluctant to reject downorders because they risk being idle later since order volume is erratic. By outsourcing a portion of a manufacturing order to unlicensed and potentially unsafe contractors, they may be able to meet their production promises. Bair et al., (2020), the researchers examined the public and private governance roles in the RMG (ready-made garments) industry. They (Bair et al., 2020) argue that, in the beginning, it was thought that the Accord's higher success was



due to its more focused purpose, which was to enhance health and safety in clothing manufacturers, as opposed to the Compact's goal of more widely enhancing labor standards enforcement. Despite this, there are many parallels between the Accord and the Compact. Both programs emphasized the link between worker safety and labor rights and entailed factory inspections and corrective actions. Despite acknowledging this, the government did not carry through the Compact's recommendations to give workers the power to speak up for their own safety. The government further rejected and obstructed parts of the Accord's mandate that may have increased employees' voices and threatened managerial authority, working with the nation's powerful cadre of industrial owners. They (Bair et al., 2020) include case studies in their research to understand supply chain auditing. The study of supply chain auditing in Indonesia by Matthew Amengual and Laura Chirot (Amengual & Chirot, 2016) is one example of this emerging research frontier. They (Bair et al., 2020) were interested in learning how Indonesia's domestic labor rules in the clothing sector were enforced in light of the ILO's Better Work factory monitoring program. The authors discovered that notification of noncompliance did not always have an impact on regional manufacturers' actions. Instead, pointing out labor standard violations only made an impact when the problems raised by Better Work audits were problems that Indonesian employees and their unions had previously mobilized against.

According to Smith et al. (2018), the representation of workers in the textile sector is restricted and decreasing, despite the Moldovan constitutional guarantees and International Labour Organization (ILO) frameworks that emphasize the importance of freedom of association in the European Union's (EU) labor provisions. The sole recognized trade union was found exclusively among the nine textile companies that were formerly state-owned enterprises. In nascent private enterprises, the management of factories exerts considerable pressure against the representation of trade unions. For instance, an attempt was made to establish a union two years ago. Upon being apprised of the situation, the proprietor proceeded to terminate the employee, albeit under a different pretext. Furthermore, as per Smith et al. (2018), the management contended that the workforce was disinclined to establish factory unions owing to the supplementary expenses associated with membership and the perception that the advantages did not outweigh the costs.

Kang (2021) writes that high safety regulations came at a cost, mostly paid for by the owners of the factories. Most people were quite concerned about their finances, and they made

numerous vivid comparisons between the high expenses of fire hydrants, certified fire doors, and sprinkler systems and the inexpensiveness of their goods. He (Kang, 2021) also focuses on the labor movement, where a series of wildcat strikes that took place in December 2016 in Ashulia, an industrial town outside of Dhaka, and the violent repression that followed them serve as an example of the union movement's failure to adequately represent workers, unite around the Accord's regulatory model, and ensure the latter's survival. The participating employees he (Kang, 2021) spoke with emphasized that the strikes began as a result of inadequate pay and intensified when employees were put on the blacklist and arrested. As the strikes persisted, the government intensified its harsh measures, sending in the military and imprisoning unionists under a long-prohibited statute. The crackdown caught the attention of the world's media as the story spread. Soon after, in an effort to calm the tension, the government and employers' associations called for tripartite discussions with the unions (Kang, 2021). The author (Kang, 2021) added Through a recently formed national tripartite committee, the industry for the first time institutionalized a sector-specific dialogue, and the government and the BGMEA sought to strengthen interaction with trade unions after the Ashulia strike. An ILO official said in 2017 that the formal procedure would be advantageous to all parties, enabling employers to consider employees as significant negotiation partners. The officer claimed that the tripartite committee's members believed the IBC-affiliated, globally connected unions to be more legitimately representing the interests of the unions in the garment industry than unofficial leftist or partisan organizations. Some unions choose not to join the IBC due to irrational opposition, interpersonal ties, or legitimate trade union status. Trade unions were able to participate in sophisticated negotiation processes thanks to the IBC's strong institutional support and financial contributions. The ILO official underlined that it was critical for the unions to present a unified stance at the negotiating table (Kang, 2021).

#### **4. Theoretical Perspectives**

The theoretical framework, in the words of Osanloo and Grant (2014), serves as the foundation from which all information is developed for a study inquiry. It provides the framework and background for the study's justification, problem description, goal, importance, and research questions. The authors also contend that employing several theories will result in a variety of viewpoints on the same study issue and can improve the literature evaluation.

The key benefits of employing various theories are outlined by Sabatier (2007), According to the author, doing so provides "some assurance against presuming that a certain theory is the true one, and it indicates that multiple theories may have comparative benefits in different contexts." According to Cairney (2013), the benefit of applying different theories in a "complementary" manner is that it creates a variety of viewpoints from which to view empirical results. With this method, the ontological and epistemological problems that are most pertinent to design studies may come to light. Additionally, comparing explanations might reveal a number of fresh viewpoints and a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation. Through methodological pluralism, we acknowledge that various studies use diverse techniques, including comparison, synthetization, and correlation, as Cairney (2013) concludes in his defense of pluralism.

In this research, we rely on multiple different theories to relate to our chosen topic. It is very hard to find one particular theory that fits both of our perspectives. In our research, we found that liberal theories related to our topic the most and allowed us to intersect our views. We are also going to focus on some other relatable theories to describe our research in a clear way. In this section, we will discuss liberal theory, dependency theory, stakeholder theory, labor governance system theory, and world system theory.

## **4.1 Business perspective<sup>5</sup>**

### **4.1.1 Liberalism**

The first theoretical perspective that is represented in our thesis is liberalism. The theory of liberalism as a standalone concept first appeared throughout the 18th and 19th centuries in Great Britain as an important byproduct of the industrial revolution. Liberalism at that time provided a critical viewpoint against economic nationalists by claiming that protectionism and restrictions on economic activities impoverished states (Amadi 2020). Given that globalization has always represented a modernization advancement, it may be seen as a potential tool for all countries involved in the globalized liberal system to benefit from free trade (O'Brian 2020).

Liberalism in itself represents the primary prerequisite for unrestricted economic growth and profit-making, which, based on Rostow's (1960) conventional growth stages, is presumed to be equal for each and every country involved. Liberalism connects mainly with private

---

<sup>5</sup> Hromkovič

ownership and capital assets. It opposes government intervention and protectionism, supporting mainly free trade and competition. Liberal theory believes in minimal interference and a decentralized economy, which would allow countries to flourish without restrictions from above. Liberalism traditionally views the relationship between the countries in the Global North and Global South as mutually beneficial, primarily due to market liberalization in the countries of the Global South, which is rooted in international organizations and international economic free-trade agreements between developed countries and developing countries. These agreements allow for free flows of investments, technologies, and development between both sides of the agreement (O'Brian et al. 2020, p. 12–14). International companies, especially when integrated into global value chains, have a vital role in the free flow of capital investments, technology, and market access in the Global South (Białowas et al., 2022). The theory of comparative advantage can be implemented here as well. As early as 1817, David Ricardo, himself a liberal economist, introduced the theory of comparative advantage. The theory suggests that countries should focus their national production on the products or services over which they hold a comparative advantage. This means that countries which possess a particular comparative advantage, such as ability to produce specific goods or services with higher efficiency, lower opportunity cost, or potentially both than its trade partners, should focus primarily on the production of the given goods, at the cost of importing other goods and services from other countries that possess the comparative advantage on the imported goods. In theory, this would mean that Bangladesh should focus its economy primarily on the garment industry, agriculture, labor-intensive industries, and specific niche industries in which Bangladesh has developed highly skilled labor, such as pharmaceuticals, information technology, and software development, which seems to be exactly the way Bangladesh's economy is shaping up to be and aligns perfectly with Ricardo's Comparative Advantage Theory of Liberal Economy.

#### **4.1.2 Dependency Theory**

The theory of dependency first appeared in 1949. Interestingly, there were two authors who introduced it, each in an ever so slightly different form. The first one comes from Hans Singer, a German-British development economist. The second one comes from Raúl Prebisch, an Argentinian structuralist economist. It represents a theory that aligns greatly with the problem of the garment industry, on which our focus is. Dependency theory is generally seen as a flow of goods from a less developed country to a more developed country in exchange

for economic growth and the further development of the latter (Sonntag, 2001). The general consensus of this theory is that while the rich countries on the goods-receiving end grow richer, the poor countries on the production-end grow poorer. The theory was created as a direct response to the theory of modernization, which represents a previously used theory of development, arguing that every society to have ever existed experienced its progress via stages which are almost identical, and that the underdeveloped areas of today are therefore in the same stages in which the already developed areas have been experiencing sometime in the past (Ahiakpor, 1985). It is therefore the developed countries' responsibility to help the underdeveloped countries develop further until they reach developed country status and get rid of their poverty status. Modernization theory further argues that the goal of the West/Global North as the developed countries is to help the underdeveloped countries achieve development at an accelerated speed and shorten the development length. The process is to be done via various means, including technology transfers, direct and indirect investments, closer immigration into the global economy, free trade, and other means (Ahiakpor, 1985). However, dependency theory renounces this view, claiming that the countries that are considered to be underdeveloped do not simply represent mere rudimentary versions of the developed countries of the past, but rather possess features and structures that are unique to their own cultures and geographical areas. Furthermore, one of the arguments that still holds up and is of key importance is that the underdeveloped countries are already a part of the world economy, but compared to the developed nations, they, represent a much weaker economy and therefore cannot directly compete at the same level as western, developed countries (Economic Development, 2009). This theory allows us to analyze the relationships of Bangladesh with the Global North and how the corporations both directly and indirectly involved in the development of Bangladesh via the garment industry have shaped the country to become one of the world leaders in garment production, along with improving its standards of living, safety, and wages in the process. Rashid (2017) argues that while dependency on the West is certainly a positive aspect for the Bangladeshi economy, it also provides necessary development for the country and allows for further development to be executed. Additionally, for a country that has been developed primarily through direct foreign investments, it would be a hardly achievable scenario at this point to cut ties with the developed countries and corporations in the West / Global North and start over with self-propelled development. The same applies even for maintaining economic growth, which is supported primarily by foreign direct investments and held up by exports, which are allowed due to cooperation with the West / Global North. In the unanticipated case that

Bangladesh decides to overtake the guidance and governance of the global value chains and their foreign direct investments, it may have adverse consequences not only for the local economy, workers, and investment flows, but similarly for the world garment market as a whole.

### **4.1.3 Stakeholder Theory**

The stakeholder theory is potentially the most interesting to use for the analysis of the Bangladeshi garment industry. While previously, corporations have been regarded as a negative influence, creating more negative than positive outcomes in the countries of the global south, destroying the environment, not treating and paying their workers fairly, or even making use of child labor, in the world of today, corporations are becoming increasingly aware of the power that is held above them by their customer base and their requirements over the production processes. The stakeholder theory has emerged as a new potential way of understanding and a solution to the three intertwined key problems of business - Understanding the creation and trade of value, connecting capitalist and ethical values, and lastly, helping managers better understand the first two problems and manage in a way that they are met in a satisfactory fashion. The theory suggests that by understanding the relationship among businesses and the groups of individuals that affect it or are themselves affected by it, the chances of solving the aforementioned problems present among them are much higher (Wicks, et. al, 2010). When we look at the issue from the stakeholder's perspective, we can see it as a series of relationships among multiple parties taking part in a business (Walsh, 2005). The core is an understanding of interactions that are taking place among customers, employees, suppliers, whole communities, banks, stockholders, bondholders, and managers to create and subsequently trade values. Where the stakeholder theory and approach differ from the purely capitalist approach is that with the stakeholder approach, whenever a conflict arises among the parties taking part in the process, executives and managers are obliged to ponder the problem and seek solutions that would represent acceptable value creation for all part-takers (Harrison, Bosse and Phillips, 2010). Similarly, in the case of a trade-off necessity, there needs to be a consensus reached, which allows for the trade-off to be executed, and subsequently worked on to improve the newly emerged situation for all sides (Wicks, 1996). Additionally, while capitalist theory views the highest possible profits at the lowest possible input as the sole purpose of a business, stakeholder theory also discusses the moral endeavor of a business. It is concerned with the values, potential harms,

and benefits for all the groups and individuals involved in the process of value creation (Phillips, 2003). When management focuses its attention on the creation, maintenance, and alignment of stakeholder relationships, the overall practice of value creation prevents moral failures in the majority of cases (Sisodia, Wolfe & Sheth, 2007). Given that stakeholder theory has been widely in use in a broad disciplinary variety ranging from healthcare, through law to environmental policies, we believe that applying it to our case will allow us to analyze the challenges and solutions in the garment industry after the 2012 Rana Plaza incident in a more precise manner, and support our expected findings. A further area incorporated into the stakeholder theory is corporate social responsibility, which the business part of our thesis mentions frequently. The definition of CSR encompasses a variety of concepts. Among those are corporate social performance (Wood, 1991), corporate accountability (Zadek, et. al., 1997), corporate social responsiveness (Sethi, 1975), corporate social entrepreneurship (Austin, Stevenson & Wei-Skillern, 2006), corporate governance (Sacconi, 2006), corporate citizenship (Waddock, 2004), and sustainability (Elkington, 1997). Every single one of the aforementioned concepts aims to broaden corporate responsibility to include more than just financial responsibility and actually provide progressive, influential, and beneficial solutions for all the stakeholders that the corporations remain intertwined with by any means. There are, however, varying approaches regarding CSR. Many authors, such as Carroll (1991), Waddock (2004), Graves (1994), or Zadek et al. (1997), defend and praise CSR and emphasize its potential to drive positive change. Some authors claim that CSR is but a mere front for businesses that is set up in a fashion that represents attempts to regard and face issues that are present and seek solutions for their eradication, while in reality, the mere base function of the business directly contradicts and exceeds these attempts, generally in the direct opposite direction. In other words, many scholars believe that CSR is a bandaid meant to only cover and hide away the negative effects that businesses have on the environment, the workers, work safety, wages, or other issues from the public's eyes. Wicks et al. (2010) argue that stakeholder theory has reached a crossroads where it needs to set course for one of two available options. Either a continuation of judgment about whether or not particular business practices are to be considered ethical or unethical, which would be defined by a grounded traditional approach rooted in morality standards set by Plato and Kant, leaving out the substantial part, which is the actual practice, alongside the historical approach to how value has been created and traded with each other, This option would represent a high probability of a slow but sure decrease in the relevance of business ethics and the potential for a complete moral decline of capitalism as a whole.

The second, more hopeful option presented by Wicks et al. (2010) presents the idea of the so-called management thinkers and business ethicists joining forces, resulting in a new, improved stakeholder approach that would pay closer attention to actual business practices. This would suggest treating marketing as corporate promises instead of simply potentially false advertisement, understanding the moral nature of exchange in finance, or implementing the human approach to human resources. Put simply, to improve business ethics, business ethics itself needs to become more relevant and practical.

## **4.2 Humanitarian perspective<sup>6</sup>**

### **4.2.1 Liberal Theory**

Liberal values are the main pillars of today's global economy. According to O'Brien & Williams (2020), the trade regime is built on the principle of free trade: all types of economic activity are becoming more liberalized, and money may move easily in and out of the majority of nations. Liberal philosophy comes in a vast variety, though. There are others who believe the state is vanishing in a developing liberal institutionalist world (Keohane and Nye, 1977), who emphasize the state's continued relevance but view it as entangled in webs of interdependence and international organization in a borderless world ruled by corporations (Ohmae, 1990). The *Wealth and Poverty of Nations* by David Landes, published in 1998, has a specific liberal perspective. It contends that individuals who hold liberal ideals have fared best in the global economy and suggests that people in Europe and the West voluntarily choose these beliefs. Landes disagrees with liberals who assert that personal preference trumps cultural institutions, nevertheless. Neoclassical economic theory is a subset of liberal economic theory, which builds a strong explanatory framework from the examination of individual desires and preferences. As part of an examination of the world economy, liberal theorists concentrate on how people, businesses, and governments act. In opposition to economic nationalism, the person rather than the state is the leading economic player. Self-interested people will make the most of the advantages of economic trade for society. The corporation is significant in liberal thought as well. Liberals perceive the corporation as a source of economic riches, in contrast to mercantilists, who have some misgivings about it. Since the state intertwines politics and economics, many liberals see the state with hatred. Liberals contend that everyone wins when people are free to engage in production, exchange,

---

<sup>6</sup> Akter



and consumption and that the introduction of government regulation distorts gains and raises costs for market players (O'Brien & Williams, 2020). According to liberal thinkers, the IPE and IR are basically cooperative. They do, after all, think that business dealings will provide favorable results for everyone. In other words, there is a net benefit from economic interactions. The notion of comparative advantage is a common liberal theory that exhibits this viewpoint. It demonstrates that commerce between two nations will be beneficial to both countries even when one country has a manufacturing advantage over the other in all products and services (O'Brien & Williams, 2020). It would appear to be a rather simple process to build a legal organization to regulate our labor relations around these fundamental ideas of legislative justice. The main challenge will be to define a set of values that will serve as restrictions on and assurances of participation in the legal systems that are used to establish the real terms and circumstances (the law) under which individuals are required to work. To establish democratic rights for workers that are in line with and stem from the liberal notion of what is just or proper in law, each of these legislative justice techniques would be incorporated into the laws that govern the employment relationship (Beatty, 2011). In a liberal democratic philosophy of law, the fundamental principles of social justice work to support the ethical, pluralist premise that underpins the system in two ways. First, one set of liberties—individual rights—creates practically impenetrable barriers to almost all governmental intervention with respect to the circumstances essential for one to select a lifestyle for themselves (independent of thinking, freedom of the individual, etc.). Second, these rights take the form of procedural equality principles in those organizations and procedures that establish the social cooperation norms to which everyone's life plans must adhere. The main legal instruments that liberal thinking employs to achieve its moral purpose of keeping a level space where every person is permitted to retain autonomy in her private life are these political, civil, and legal rights when regarded as a whole. They act as the basic framework of the law necessary to ensure that the intrinsic dispositions of certain persons respect the unalienable rights of others (Beatty, 2011).

#### **4.2.2 Labor governance system**

The term "labor governance system" (LGS) borrows from Clegg's (1976) industrial relations theory. Industrial relations theory refers to a group of institutions that influence the primary employment relationship and labor market outcomes. This system's view is helpful for analyzing the many components of a governance infrastructure as well as how they interact

and produce results (Frenkel & Schuessler, 2021). The Accord creates a sort of global co-determination by generally basing itself on industrial democracy ideas (Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). The labor governance system and industrial democracy are related to each other. The ILO defines labor governance as public administration initiatives pertaining to national labor policy. All public administration entities involved in or accountable for labor administration are included in the term "labor administration system." Furthermore, it is imperative to establish an organizational structure that facilitates the collaboration of duties among these entities. The system should also ensure the involvement of employees, business owners, and their respective organizations in the decision-making process. This applies to all types of independent management, including government departments, public agencies, parastatals, and regional or local agencies. Despite the lack of a definition in the 1978 Labor Administration Convention (No. 150), it is generally accepted that a national labor policy encompasses all labor-related issues, including the defense of employment and working conditions, the advancement of equal opportunity, and fundamental principles and rights at work (available on the ILO website). According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, effective governance is viewed as a vital prerequisite for establishing environments in which to achieve a decrease in poverty and long-term, ethical development (The SDGs state that 'policies must make sure that no-one is left behind') (Heyes & Ludek Rychly, 2021)

The ILO's goal and mandate, which have been in place since its founding in 1919, to safeguard employees against unfavorable working conditions and raise living standards generally, are now more important than ever. Because of this, it launched its centennial effort on the future of work in 2015, hoping to provide fresh perspectives and ground-breaking suggestions in a fluid environment while always being true to its constitutional duty. (ILO. The centenary initiative is relative to the future of work. International Work Conference, 104th meeting, 2015, Geneva Report of the Director General, Report I.) (Heyes & Ludek Rychly, 2021)

### **4.2.3 World system theory**

The idea of the "whole system" means that the whole system is made up of all local and global human interaction networks, no matter how big or small. The issue goes beyond merely "international relations" or supranational organizations like the World Bank, etc. The great majority of people on Earth now make up the world system, together with all of its

social, political, and cultural institutions, interactions, and linkages. In order to fully understand these intricate networks of interaction, the world-systems approach looks at human institutions, cultures, and social structures over long stretches of time.

With the advancement of transportation and communication technologies, interaction networks have grown, and minor regional world systems have expanded and merged to form the current global system. Chase-Dunn and Hall modified the ideas created for the study of the present global system for use in comparing the contemporary system with prior systems and for the study of long-term sociocultural change in their 1997 book, "Rise and Fall": *Comparing Global Systems* (Chase-Dunn, 2017). Classical sociology, Marxist political economy, geopolitics, and anthropological theories of sociocultural evolution are the intellectual antecedents of world-systems theory. Beginning in the 1970s, Samir Amin, Andre Gunder Frank, and Immanuel Wallerstein developed the concepts and related the analytical history of the contemporary global system (Chase-Dunn, 2017). The modern world system has been and remains significantly arranged in a hierarchy of the core and periphery, with certain regions holding powerful powers both militarily and economically and others containing much weaker and less developed polities. The fundamental powers of the modern system are the so-called "advanced" nations, which have developed their economies to such heights with an educated force of workers, a high income level, and a potent state with ample resources. The contemporary core consists of the United States, Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. There are weak states in the contemporary periphery that need to be better supported by their populations and have little sway in contrast to other system states. The imperial colonies of the core powers of Europe ruled the majority of the modern periphery until the late eighteenth century, when waves of decolonization drove them out. Peripheral regions exhibit lower levels of economic development due to the comparatively lower capital intensity of agriculture and industry in these areas. Although some industries in peripheral countries, like the mining and exploitation of hydrocarbons, may require a lot of capital, core capital frequently controls these industries. Peripheral countries have traditionally exported mostly agricultural and mineral-based goods. Even though they have created some industrial manufacturing, it has often required less labor and capital than standard production techniques. Examples of contemporary periphery nations are Bolivia, Haiti, Senegal, Bangladesh, and Senegal (Chase-Dunn, 2017).

Bangladesh's garment industry is a liberal industry. One of the leading trade groups in the nation, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), represents the ready-to-wear industry, notably the equally important woven garments, knitwear, and sweater sub-sectors. Beginning its journey in 1983, BGMEA now looks after a sector that forms the foundation of Bangladesh's economy. Since its foundation, the BGMEA has been committed to advancing and facilitating the garment sector by advocating for government policies, providing members with services, and safeguarding employees' rights and social compliance in factories. To foster the growth of Bangladesh's garment sector, BGMEA interacts with national and international stakeholders, including brands and development partners. Approximately 4,000 garment factories are registered with BGMEA at the moment (source: BGMEA website <https://www.bgmea.com.bd/page/aboutus> ). Regarding ensuring safety, the Accord was way more successful than the government compact. The authors (Bair et al., 2020) showed the differences between public and private regulation. They (Bair et al., 2020) argue that the Accord is the biggest factory inspection project established in the wake of Plaza. (Accord and Alliance brands received their supplies from some of the same 660 factories.) As of April 2019, 1,674 manufacturers in Bangladesh hired close to two million people to produce goods for Accord participant companies. Compared to the overall number of factories, this figure is the lowest ever covered by the Accord since some facilities closed, others were terminated, and still others quit supplying signatory brands. Between the start of the program in 2014 and the end of March 2019, Accord staff carried out more than 35,400 distinct inspections. These inspections included both initial and follow-up inspections, as well as verification visits. 142,970 distinct fire, electrical, or structural safety concerns were found during these examinations, some of which were incredibly prevalent. For instance, throughout the course of the program's inspections, 77% of the factories lacked insufficient fire detection and alarm systems, and more than 50% of the time, the companies' actual construction did not match their original design plans and drawings (Accord 2019). This occurrence of dangers is a result of Bangladesh's governmental agencies consistently failing to uphold their own construction regulations (Bair et al., 2020). In Donaghey & Reinecke (2018), we found that the Alliance established a free, independent reporting line for employees so they could anonymously voice their safety concerns. Amader Kotha, which translates to "Our Voice" in local Bangla, is a collective name approach (Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). According to the manager of the hotline, "Amader Kotha" serves as a "bridge between management and employees." The 'Amader Kotha' hotline card will need to be worn on the badge of each of the projected 537,214 Alliance industrial

employees once it is implemented. By November 2016, the hotline had been installed in 806 factories, including almost all Alliance manufacturers and some non-Alliance factories. Workers with little expertise may easily call the hotline because there is no active worker-management communication or collective representation. In an effort to win the trust of the workforce, cooperation with the NGO "Phulki," which served as a childcare provider for many years in factories, was made. When a complaint is received, production management is notified. However, when major safety concerns are reported, Alliance technical specialists get involved right away. The Alliance can analyze caller trends using statistical diagnostics. Between July 2014, when it was launched, and October 2016, 98,580 calls were placed. Seventy-nine percent of reported difficulties fell into the "non-safety" category, while 21% were classified as "safety" issues. Factory fires, blocked escapes, flaws in beams, columns, and walls, shaky walls or windows, sparking, or short circuits were all urgent safety concerns. This shows that a hotline is a helpful tool for reporting life-threatening problems like barred fire escapes, which led to 112 fatalities in Tazreen in November 2012. However, the arbitrary categorization of worker issues into what constitutes "safety" or "urgent safety" raises worries about how employees, who are frequently hushed and penalized by factory management for voicing concerns, may articulate complicated grievances that may not be readily categorizable. The helpline is used as a one-way communication channel for individual voices that workers find easier to access outside of the workplace rather than a mechanism to raise grievances collectively in the workplace where they occur, as evidenced by the fact that 67% of calls are placed from outside the workplace. With 67% of hotline users being men, the helpline also experiences a lack of female users, perhaps contributing to the current silence of female voices in the workplace. In conclusion, the Alliance Worker Helpline serves as an example of a problem-solving system that is quick and flexible to install but depends on external brand-sponsored intermediaries rather than utilizing or building employees' own capacities to manage such problems (Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). The global domain now has jurisdiction over labor regulation instead of only national industrial relations systems, at least in part due to the rapid growth of GVCs (Hyman 1999). Multiple employers—buyers based mostly in rich nations and suppliers based primarily in developing countries—as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and unions at the national and international levels are all part of the labor regulation in GVCs (FRENKEL & SCHUESSLER, 2021). On top of various national and sector-specific systems, international labor conventions have been added. As a representative and legitimate public body that supports private regulation activities, the ILO has been instrumental in

encouraging the development and ratification of labor conventions by nation-states (Niforou 2014; Thomas 2021). The formal labor market is the sole setting for the LGS idea. Informal employment and labor are hallmarks of sweatshops, which primarily cater to the local market or occasionally subcontract to bigger export companies, resulting in results that fall well short of international norms (Dewey 2018). From the following tables, we can understand the strong and weak LGS and the situation of Bangladeshi LGS.

**Table 3:** Labor Governance Systems Division

<b>LGS dimension</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Strong</b>
Institution-specific traits Size of the rule	Narrow	Wide
Number of institutions	Few	Several
Type of institution	Individual: firms only	Multiple: firms, unions and NGOs
Form of regulation Public, multiple organizations	Yes, law not enforced	Yes, at various levels; includes trade agreements
Private, single organization	Yes	No
Private, single organization	No	Yes (collective bargaining)
Institutional relations (coordination) Strength of agreement	Very limited	High
Explicitness of rules	Low, implicit	High, explicit
Structure of coordination	Authoritarian	Democratic
Character of coordination	Conflictual	Consensual

Labor outcomes Procedural, e.g. worker representation	Weak	Strong
Substantive, e.g. pay, working conditions	Below international standards	At or above international standards

Source: (FRENKEL & SCHUESSLER, 2021)

Table 4: The garment export labor governance system in Bangladesh, 2019

<b>LGS dimension</b>	<b>Bangladesh garment exports</b>
Institutional characteristics Scope of regulations	only first-class export companies
Number of institutions	Several
Type of institution	numerous: businesses, unions, and NGOs
Form of regulation Public, multiple organizations	Yes, labour law and trade agreements
Private, single organization	Yes, audit and codes
Private, collective	Yes, Accord and Alliance
Institutional relations (coordination) Strength of agreement	Low, increasing
Explicitness of rules	Low, increasing
Structure of coordination	mostly autocratic (ILO effort at social dialogue)
Character of coordination	Lack of complementary relationships, even deliberate undermining
Labour outcomes Procedural, e.g. worker representation and treatment	Weak but improving via worker participation committees; anti-unionism

	remains despite change in regulations; presence of abuse but improved management behaviour
Substantive, e.g. pay, working conditions	Wages higher but below living wage; working hours not effectively regulated; safety and opportunities for consultation improved

Source: (FRENKEL & SCHUESSLER, 2021)

Bangladesh's government depends on the economic and political backing of the garment industry, which is why it is reluctant to enforce labor laws. Despite Western nations' efforts to exert pressure on the Bangladeshi government through trade-related accords, this scenario remained. For instance, in response to criticism from NGOs and labor groups, the US government banned some of Bangladesh's benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), a trade deal that applied to commodities other than clothing, immediately following the incident at Rana Plaza. The EU and the ILO soon started negotiating a "Sustainability Compact" that called for improvements in labor standards (after the United States and Canada joined). A national industrial inspection program called the National Initiative was required under the Compact. The Compact was not effectively implemented or enforced overall, and the government of Bangladesh discovered that violations did not lead to financial penalties (Vogt 2017). In the meantime, foreign governments supported factory-based initiatives to enhance certain labor outcomes. However, programs like the National Action Plans for Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (hereinafter, the UN Guiding Principles) were largely voluntary and restricted in scope to larger, publicly traded companies. Additionally, Western governments recommended that major corporations actively consider labor standards and human rights in their supply networks (FRENKEL & SCHUESSLER, 2021). GITNEX (2023) estimates that the RMG sector serves 40 million Bangladeshis indirectly and directly employs 4.2 million people, 60% of them are women. To ensure the economic and social development of this enormously important sector, a strong and efficient governance system is required.



## 5. Methodology<sup>7</sup>

The methodology chapter is critical in providing a thorough grasp of the study strategy and techniques employed in investigating the research questions or objectives. This section provides a road map for the researchers to follow in order to perform a systematic and thorough investigation. It provides an overview of the overall approach, data gathering methods, data processing procedures, and any limits or constraints encountered during the study process. We present the methodology used for our master's thesis in this chapter, building on insights from prominent authors who have commented on the methodology process in their scholarly works. Leung (2015) highlights the importance of selecting a suitable research approach to assure the study's findings' validity and reliability. A well-designed methodology aligns research objectives with data gathering methods and analytic procedures, thereby increasing the authenticity of the study's results. The iterative aspect of the methodology process is emphasized. He also emphasizes the need for changing and improving the research approach depending on emerging insights and unforeseen problems experienced during the study. According to some authors, technique flexibility can lead to greater examination and knowledge of the research problem. Other authors, such as Taherdoost (2021), concentrate on data collection methods, highlighting the significance of triangulation in improving the robustness of the findings. They suggest that using a variety of data collection methods, such as surveys, interviews, and observations, allows for a more comprehensive and multi-faceted knowledge. Finally, Aguinis and Solarino (2019) emphasize the need for transparency and repeatability in methodological development. They suggest that by releasing full details of the research methodologies, such as participant selection, data collection instruments, and data analysis techniques, other researchers will be able to repeat the study and validate its conclusions. Transparent approaches contribute to the growth of scientific knowledge by laying the groundwork for future study. This methodological chapter outlines a methodical way to address the research topics of our master's thesis, drawing inspiration from these great authors and building on their ideas. We detail the research strategy, the data gathering methods used, and the data analysis methodologies used to reach significant results. In addition, we describe any restrictions or constraints identified during the research process and provide solutions to lessen their impact. We attempt to assure the integrity and dependability of our study by adhering to a rigorous and well-considered methodology. This chapter presents a thorough summary of the research procedure, allowing

---

<sup>7</sup> Akter & Hromkovič

readers to comprehend the systematic approach used and assess the validity of our findings. Finally, the methodology chapter acts as a critical foundation upon which the other chapters are built, ultimately leading to the attainment of the study objectives and contributing to the field's existing body of knowledge.

## **5.1 Research design and approach:**

The abductive research approach starts with observing and simulating the social context of the individuals or events that are the subject of our investigation. It is crucial to pay close attention to their stories, their language, and their unique reality at the moment they are being investigated. To understand the meanings associated with these social activities, the researcher must interact with the actor's surroundings (Blaikie, 2010). The next step in this methodology is for the researcher to describe these motivations and meanings based on the data they have gathered and their own observations. The research method consists of five steps for gathering and analyzing the narratives, listed in chronological order. Rewriting the narratives while using theories involves identifying the global and local narratives, reconstructing the narrative, and theorizing, which involves finding the pertinent theories that may shed light on the narratives' substance. Abductive research, the qualitative analysis of data approach used for theory formation, discloses factual facts between many existing ideas through meticulous scientific studies. (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). We selected to use the abductive research approach because of its defined framework and the reality that our study is largely focused on qualitative data collection and the use of concepts like reports and communication. The project likewise adheres to the logic of the abductive research strategy, holding the last step by determining the pertinent ideas that can illuminate the tales' content. The design of the research techniques and procedures that the researchers select will enable them to use the most effective strategies for the purpose of the research project (Kuada, 2012). The goal of the research design selected for a given project is to combine many research approaches into a single study methodology (Anastas, 2000). In accordance with how the selected facts were organized and with the logical and social idea concepts on which they are based, a research design may include quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods of data collection. Additionally, it might be in the form of an informative, observing, historic, exploratory in nature etc ( De Vaus, 2002)

## **5.2 Longitudinal design:**

The repeated observations made using the longitudinal method of investigating and gathering data allow for the tracking of a single aspect through time (Anastas, 2000). From this perspective, we'll utilize longitudinal design to track the social and economic growth of Bangladesh following Rana Plaza at regular intervals.

Measurements and observations gathered across two or more separate time periods are used in longitudinal design to characterize patterns of change. Consequently, the researcher may monitor how factors shift over time (USC Libraries, Research Guides, 2022).

Cherry (2020) identifies three primary subcategories of longitudinal studies: Panel studies, founded on personal answers, analyze a phenomena through time; Cohort studies, typically assigns a group to a subject based on their common experiences; The investigation of evidence from earlier times is called retrospective research. Longitudinal research can reveal distinctive insights that would not be discernible in any other way. The ability to examine changes over time is a key feature of the strategy utilized in the current study endeavor. While examining the social and economic development of the Bangladeshi garment sector through time, the longitudinal approach also ties changes with environmental factors, as well as changes that emerged during this process. "Given that all of the individuals have the same genetic makeup, any genetic variations are thought to be the result of environmental influences. The qualities that are most strongly impacted by either genetics or experience may then be determined by comparing what the individuals have in common with where they differ (Cherry, 2020).

## **5.3 Data collection methods and sources**

The methodical process of acquiring information on a certain subject is known as data collection. In order for the analysis to be reliable, it is essential to make sure that the data obtained for the research is thorough and that it is acquired ethically (Cote, 2021).

In our study endeavor, we primarily rely on qualitative data collection techniques from secondary sources, such as:

- Thematic analysis; Content analysis; Textual and visual analysis

Qualitative information from secondary sources is a fluid supply of information that is in line with the project's logic and the study methodology, strategy, and philosophy of science approach that were chosen. Quantitative data has been utilized less frequently, as the primary aim of our research has been to analyze the specific conditions in the garment industry and its improving condition. Given the fact that our analysis relies heavily on qualitative data, the only area where we had the opportunity to reasonably include quantitative data was the business perspective, where quantitative data is represented in the form of tables and graphs, with subsequent explanations, only to represent and illustrate the industry's economic situation and some of the effects of particular societal trends.

## **5.4 Philosophy of social science:**

This discipline has been used largely to support understanding the social and natural conceptions that have been revealed by a scientific endeavor by Aristotle (384-322 BC), who is recognized as the founder of science and the philosophy of science.

The goal of the philosophy of science is to establish a logical link between known scientific principles and unknowable social realities. It also provides techniques and opportunities for interpreting scientific ideas in terms of social or natural conceptions. According to Howard and Giovanelli (2019), Einstein thought of philosophy as the "Science of Sciences" and saw philosophy as having a place in physics.

Regarding the significance of using the philosophy of science in research efforts, we quote: As per the findings of Laplane, L. et al. (2019), it is suggested that philosophy can play a crucial role in not only scrutinizing scientific assumptions but also in enhancing the precision of concepts. Furthermore, it can also take the lead in developing novel, verifiable, and predictive theories that can pave the way for new possibilities for empirical investigation.

### **5.4.1 Interpretivism:**

Interpretivism, sometimes referred to as interpretive thinking, includes researchers in the interpretation of study components; as a result, interpretivism incorporates the interests of people into research (Dudovskiy, 2022). Interpretive researchers hold the assumption that reality, whether given or socially constructed, can only be accessed through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments (Myers, 2018). The critique of positivism in the social sciences forms the foundation of

interpretivism. As a result, this mindset places more emphasis on qualitative than quantitative analysis (Dudovskiy, 2022). The methods that deny the objectivist notion that meaning exists in the world apart from consciousness include social constructivism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics. The application of interpretivism, which unites several perspectives, has been "connected with the philosophical viewpoint of idealism." (Collins, 2010). The interpretive method states that it is crucial for the researcher to recognize individual distinctions as a social actor (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Additionally, interpretivism studies frequently concentrate on meaning and may use a variety of techniques to reflect various facets of the problem (Dudovskiy, 2022). We have found interpretivism related to our project. It supports qualitative data analysis, as we are using secondary data for our research.

## **5.5 Limitation of the study**

The meaning and validity issues with the studied and published data must be interpreted in order to acknowledge limits (Ioannidis, 2006). The goal of the qualitative research approach is to arrange for a thorough, comprehensive account regarding the phenomenon or issue being studied, and rare events get (or may get) the equal amount of focus as commonly occurring events," claims Atieno (2009). The ability of human language ambiguities to transfer into analysis is another flaw that Atieno has identified. But he identifies the lack of generalization as qualitative research's fundamental drawback. In comparison to quantitative research methodologies, qualitative methods' conclusions cannot be generalized to a larger population (Atieno, 2009). Qualitative research does not aim for replicability in the same way that it does not seek interpretation (Stahl & King, 2020). The topic we chose for our research is broad. It covers a wide range of topics, including human relations, the economy, development, and more. The scope, budget, and paper length of this research project are all constrained. We were unable to delve deeply into the topic for these reasons.

### **5.5.1 Data Limitations**

Among the limitations that are present in our thesis, the most significant one is the lack of primary data on both approaches represented. This limitation arises from the core challenges that are connected with primary data collection. The first of the two main reasons for the data collection is the considerable geographical distance between our university in Roskilde, Denmark, and arguably any garment factory in Bangladesh that would need to be conquered

to be able to gather the data in person. This distance presented both practical and logistical challenges in conducting primary data collection, including interviews, questionnaires, and direct terrain research. To be able to gather the data in person, directly from the source that was determined to be the most suitable, there would have had to have been long-term preparation done beforehand, including connecting with the people directly involved in the garment production processes who possess the information necessary for our research, i.e., the workers and low-tier managers who spent the most time in the environment that is being analyzed in this study and would be able to offer an insider perspective. Secondly, we would have to arrange several meetings with multiple groups of workers, ideally from different companies, to achieve the least possible bias levels and a wide-enough sample size, and lastly, acquire flight tickets, accommodation, and other necessities to be able to carry out in-person primary-data direct terrain research.

Similarly, conducting the same research online would be accompanied by a high risk of data bias being present in the collected data and even low accessibility to respondents. The limitations in this case arise from the fact that the collection of such data via online communication, i.e., questionnaires or online interviews, would not be as efficient or even as easily accessible as if the same process were to be carried out in person. The accessibility problem would be caused by the reality of a massive chunk of the workers that are working in the garment industry in Bangladesh and represent the primary focus group of our research are oftentimes lacking the opportunity to take part in such research if conducted online. The cause of this research complication is rooted in the low accessibility of Bangladeshi garment workers to the internet. While the situation is improving along with working conditions and safety standards, the majority of workers still lack online access. Furthermore, it would be challenging to approach the employees who do have internet access without first gaining any direct access to a larger sample group, which could be useful for our research. Additionally, the data collected via online communication has a higher potential for being biased because it is not received directly from the people affected but rather from officials who may have a biased opinion. If we had decided to contact the potential respondents online indirectly, meaning via online forums, social media, or by attempting to establish communication with the companies' offices, we may have been faced with information that would be potentially biased, adjusted to benefit the corporations, or possibly even fraudulent. Therefore, the decision was made to use secondary data for our thesis, which allowed us to preserve the low bias levels while using data that sufficiently represents the desired data, which would, under different circumstances, be obtained as primary data by us personally. For further research

purposes, primary data would be recommended, as it allows for up-to-date data directly relevant to the specifically tailored research question, and the sample size can be adjusted according to the needs of the researchers.

### **5.5.2 Time and Resource Limitations**

This section touches upon limitations that were mentioned in the previous section-, and explains them further in depth. The lack of both time and resources played a crucial part in the decision process that took place before starting our research and similarly in the overall construction of our research question, research methods, and the thesis itself as a whole.

In terms of time, we have been allowed almost six full months for the creation of our thesis as an official time frame. Immediately after having decided upon the topic of our choice, it became apparent that the time frame allowed for our thesis would not be sufficient to allow us to pursue the primary data approach. The reason for this immediate realization was that a group of two researchers simply does not possess the capacity for successful primary data based research that would require long-term preparation, much greater manpower, enormous timely and monetary allocation, and preferably direct contacts with responsible individuals that would be beneficial for the research in any meaningful way. The time that would be necessary to carry out full-scale primary data in-person research on a topic as broad as the challenges, their subsequent potential, and already implemented solutions in the garment industry in a country that is one of the leaders in garment production worldwide simply vastly exceeded any timely means available for our research.

Similarly, the resources necessary for such research were simply unfathomable for our research group. While one of our members is Bangladeshi and was responsible for the primary idea of the topic, it was not achievable for us to establish a direct connection with any Bangladeshi citizens that actively participate in the garment industry. Furthermore, even if this connection would allow us to network with the correct people who take part in the process that we were to research, the costs connected to realizing such field research would quickly add up and cancel the whole primary-data-based research even before attempting to carry it out.

With the realization of the improbability of the research being based on self-gathered primary data, we were forced to accept the less accurate and potentially dated approach via the usage of secondary data while trying to maintain the high accuracy and relevance of the information used throughout the whole paper. By choosing the secondary data approach, we have

managed to avoid the financial burden that would be set upon us if we pursued the more effective and relevant primary data approach, at the cost of undoubtable relevance and completely bias-free information.

### **5.5.3 Alternative Approaches**

This section focuses on potential changes that would undoubtedly serve as improvements, simplifications, and further adjustments for further and more successful research attempts on the topic of the Bangladeshi garment industry, its challenges, and its solutions. There are several suggestions for further research that would provide future researchers with an even deeper and better understanding of the topic, along with practicalities that would make subsequent research sufficiently less demanding.

Among the undoubtedly most important changes that we suggest is the collection of in-person primary data directly in the factories in Bangladesh or directly from the workers and people affected by the challenges and changes put in place either by the government or the multinational corporations. The availability of directly sourced primary data allows for a clearer and easier research question focus, however narrow, without the need to adjust to the availability and scope of secondary data. Equivalently, potential expansion or narrowing of the research question would be permissible without the need for further literature research and reviews or dependency on their availability.

Similarly, the presence of bias would without a doubt be retained at a very low level, provided that the source of data would be planned and carefully chosen in advance to avoid any sources representing potential alterations to the research in the form of biased, fraudulent, or dishonorable information.

Furthermore, we suggest that the research team that would undertake the decision of following up on this research either further narrow the focus down to a singular approach, or acquire a higher number of researchers for such research topics. While a dual approach represents the perspectives of both sides and offers a better global understanding of the topic as a whole, it does not allow for an understanding of the topic as deep as may have been estimated and required. In the case of a further, limited focus on a specific area of the research topic chosen for this thesis, the results will create a clearer and perhaps more focused representation of the data gathered and analyzed. Alternatively, by expanding the research team, the possibilities for research focused on either side of the problem would be



far more conceivable and would once again allow for a further deepening of the understanding of the problem that was attempted to be covered and solved in this thesis.

## 6. Findings and Analysis<sup>8</sup>

### 6.1 Findings And Analysis of the Business Perspective

The consequences of the Rana Plaza incident, accompanied by the backlash that has struck the garment industry worldwide but especially in Bangladesh, can be seen even today. Today, already more than ten years later, we can see major improvements in the garment industry's condition in Bangladesh. Throughout this chapter, we will mention, analyze, and summarize some of them. Almost immediately after the tragic incident, in May 2013, the International Accord on Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry was signed. This document meant the beginning of a new, safer future for Bangladeshi garment workers. Under the accord, corporations are no longer permitted to prematurely end cooperation with producers from whom electrical, fire, or other workplace safety issues arise. In such cases, the corporation is wholly responsible for sufficiently cooperating on the reconstruction of the faulty areas and aiding the producer in establishing desirable safety standards. Furthermore, there are multiple third-party audit programs put in place that secure establishing a satisfactory level of meeting the required standards and obligations. Among the most recognizable third part organizations and their subsequent departments that directly deal with the aforementioned issues are the following:

- **Safety audit programs:**
  - SMETA*, operating under *Sedex*
  - BSCI* operating under *Amfori*
- **Factory-level certification programs:**
  - SA8000 certification, administered by *WRAP*
- **Health and Safety Programs:**
  - Nirapon
  - Life and Building Safety Initiative (LABS)

Official reports state that with the introduction of safety audits, certification programs, and health and safety programs, the number of incidents, not only in Rana Plaza but even minor ones, has decreased immensely almost immediately after their introduction. This astonishing success can be viewed as a direct result of massive industry-wide audit execution. By the year

---

<sup>8</sup> Akter & Hromkovič

2018, ever since the collapse of Rana Plaza, the organizations mentioned above had conducted at least 1600 standalone audits, uncovering over 130,000 potentially life-threatening safety hazards, including electrical and structural integrity issues and a lack of safe fire exits. At the same time, between 85% and 90% of these potential hazards have been eradicated completely. Another 50 companies were, at the time, temporarily evacuated and ordered to immediately tend to the detected issues, eradicating them as quickly as possible. Additionally, 333 factories belonging to American Global Value Chains, which represents half of all the American-owned factories that operate under the Accord, have fully completed their fixes in less than 5 years since joining the companies working under the Accord. The other half, meaning the other 333 American-owned factories, have finished an estimated 80% of their required fixes. Given the fact that these numbers were reported in April 2018, it is not out of the question to presume that the rest of the repairs required have been finished by now. Finally, reports mention 109 factories that refused to abide by the rules established by the Accord and were therefore restricted from cooperating with corporations working under the Accord. These 109 companies later followed through with the demands of the Accord, installed all the required safety standards, became eligible for cooperation with the corporations again, and have subsequently re-applied for such cooperation (Epatko, Oldenziel, 2018).

### **6.1.1. Bangladesh and Banana Republics in Central and South America**

A ‘banana republic’, which is considered a derogatory term by many, is a term used for countries that are solely or predominantly dependent on the production of a single commodity or service. As such, these countries are typically controlled by international corporations or, oftentimes, whole industries. The term ‘banana republic’ originated in Central and South America, specifically in the countries of Honduras and Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua, which have quite literally become corporation-run countries throughout the 19th century, under the rule of United Fruit Company, currently operating under the name Chiquita Banana, Cuyamel Fruit Company, and at the time Vaccaro Brothers Company, which later became Standard Fruit Company, known today as Dole Food Company. For the purpose of our thesis, we will further focus on Honduras. The Honduran government received fractions of the profits that the companies were turning, and therefore, it became impossible

for the government to run the country and take care of its infrastructure. This led to the corporations taking the lead and building the entirety of the Honduran infrastructure themselves, which in turn helped them increase their profits even further. The infrastructural changes that they introduced were, among others, roads, railways, ports and shipping routes, telegraphs, telephone lines, radio towers, and even changing the country's currency to USD. The relationship between the corporations and the state of Honduras was mutually beneficial, but entirely unevenly beneficial. While the corporations received considerable tax breaks and land grants, along with possessing a monopoly over the majority of the country's major industries, and the high-class minority received substantial payoffs, Honduras as a whole benefited from the trade only with modernized infrastructure, which was used to further benefit and develop the business, and very few to no benefits for the rest of the population, which were left with no land of their own, minimal salaries, and oftentimes slave-like working conditions with no safety standards.

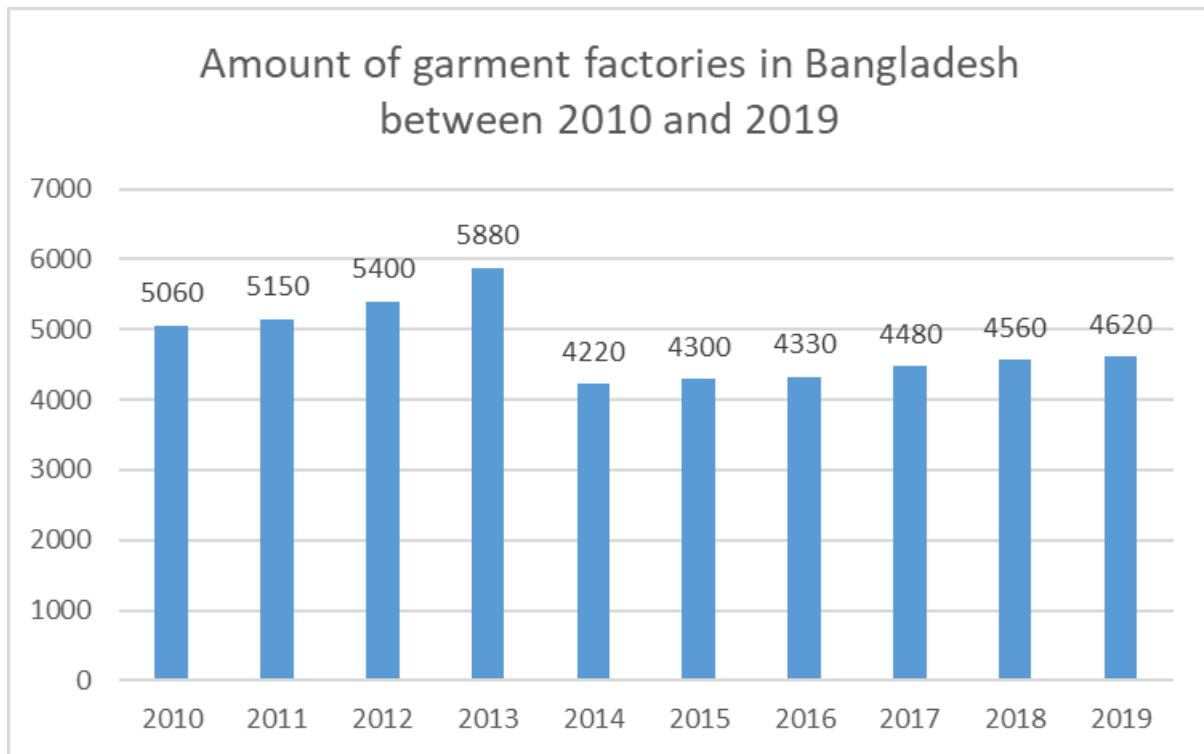
The primary reason why the history of the so-called 'Banana Republics' is mentioned in our thesis is due to the unfavorable resemblance appearing in the economy of Bangladesh. While Bangladesh is not entirely run by corporations and has a government that rules over the country, which is supported by scholars such as Maniruzzaman (1983), there are clearly recognizable similarities that need to be pointed out.

In this section, we primarily make use of secondary data found in articles, databases, and statistics, with the addition of primary data collected via in-person and online interviews with Bangladeshi residents.

### **6.1.2 Statistical Data**

Statistical data regarding the garment industry in Bangladesh and any information related to it are considerably scarce and hard to find. However, the data that we have been able to find allows us to gain a better understanding of the changes that have been introduced since Rana Plaza in recent years. In this section, we have summarized and subsequently analyzed the most relevant statistics that we have found. When we look at the statistical data regarding the number of garment factories in Bangladesh, there are multiple correlating facts that immediately catch one's attention.

### 6.1.2.1 Safety Audits



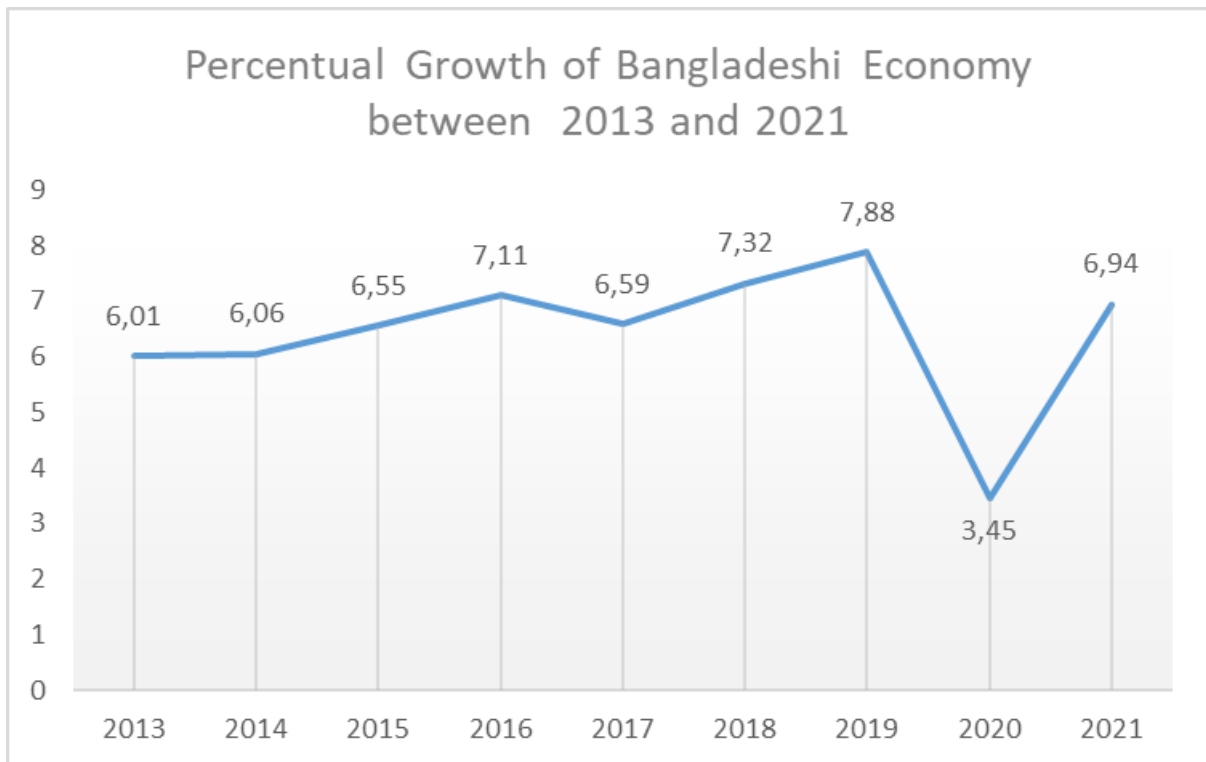
**Graph 1:** Amount of garment factories in Bangladesh between 2010 and 2019

**Source:** Mia, MD, & Akter, Masrufa. (2019). Ready-Made Garments Sector of Bangladesh: Its Growth, Contribution and Challenges. *Economics World*. 7. 10.17265/2328-7144/2019.01.004.

Not only have there been drastic amounts of favorable changes in terms of workplace safety and working conditions, but as visible in Graph 1, there is a clearly recognizable reduction of factories that were in use throughout Bangladesh after the Rana Plaza incident. The reduction amounted to almost one third of the total number of factories that were in use in Bangladesh in 2013, compared to the number of actively used factories throughout the country in 2014. This rapid and extensive shutting down of factories can be easily connected to and explained by the introduction of safety audits that began to appear widely and spread throughout the country after the tragic 2013 Rana Plaza incident. Not only did the audits reduce the number of factories, mainly due to the unsatisfactory conditions and hazards connected to letting factories in such conditions be functional, but they simultaneously deflated the market. In addition to the reduction, and arguably more importantly, they have also improved the overall quality and safety of the factories that remained, as the owners and operators of the remaining

ones have been forced to agree with and sign the alliance agreements and subsequently improve their standards to match the standard industry requirements set by the Accord of Alliance. Even today, we can see the aftereffects of the drastic changes that were implemented since 2013. While in the years prior to 2013, there was a rapid annual rise in the number of newly built factories, after 2013, the rise has been almost stagnant. The primary reasons for this are the raised standards in terms of overall building safety, fire safety, and worker safety, as well as the raised costs of building such factories, which may not have been as profitable after implementing all the safety measures required.

### 6.1.2.2 Economical Analysis

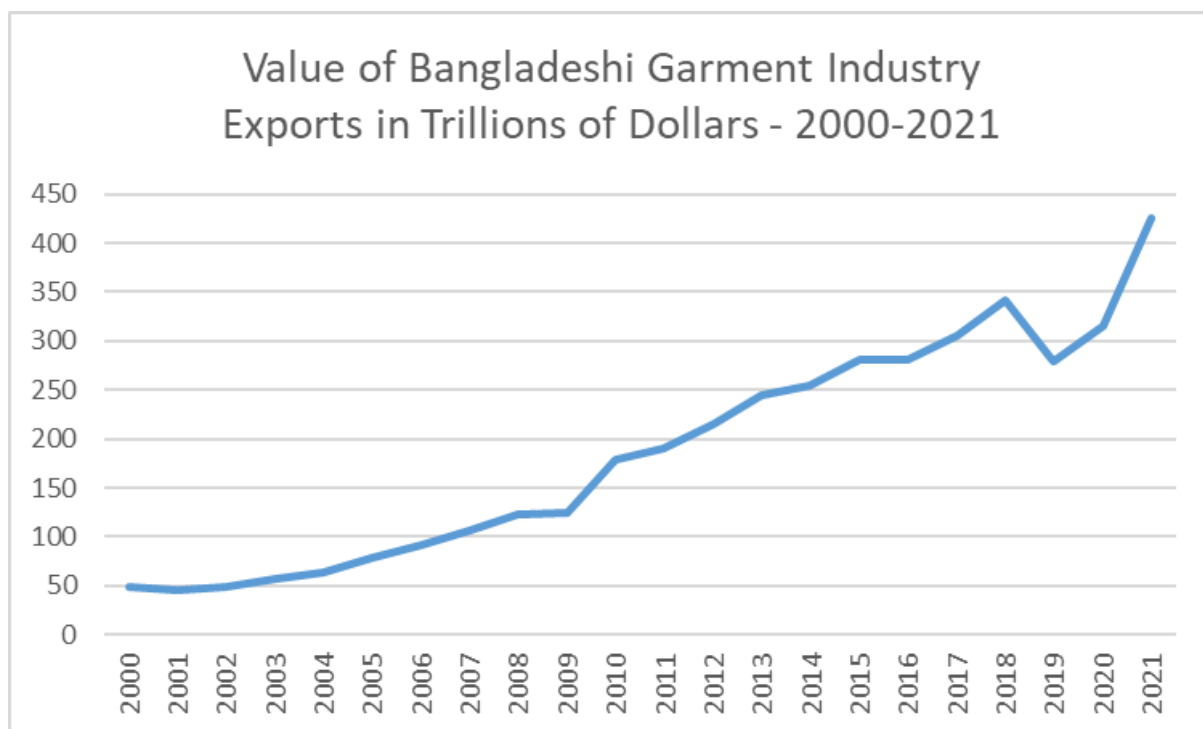


**Graph 2:** Economic growth of Bangladesh between the years 2013 and 2021

**Source:** BGMEA, 2021. Available at [https://bgmea.com.bd/page/Export\\_Performance](https://bgmea.com.bd/page/Export_Performance)

The improvements in safety standards that have been brought into the garment industry have meant massive growth for the Bangladeshi industry as a whole. Having brought in vastly improved safety and working conditions, exceedingly growing salaries, and a greatly improved public image of Bangladesh in the eyes of both foreign investors and customers worldwide, this has meant tremendous growth numbers not only for the industry but for the whole national economy overall. As clearly depicted in Graph 2, the Bangladeshi economy has been seeing steady growth ever since the Rana Plaza incident and the consequent changes, including the corporations supporting the Alliance treaty, which has revamped the entire industry from the ground up to provide better working conditions and overall work safety for everyone involved. To further support the importance and significance of the improvements, we can see that even despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bangladeshi economy has experienced economic growth throughout the whole duration of the pandemic. This fact single handedly characterizes the core strength of the garment industry in Bangladesh. While the majority of the developed countries experienced economic decline, whether it was minimal, or resolute, the fact that a country that is regarded as developing

managed to outperform the majority of them while reporting growth is simply astonishing. It may not have been a growth equal to the pre-pandemic years, but a growth nonetheless. Arguably even more staggering is the fact that Bangladesh managed to achieve the pre-pandemic growth percentages immediately the year after, while the majority of the world was still helplessly fighting the pandemic. This fact points simultaneously towards the strength of the Bangladeshi garment industry and its whole economy and the importance of the garment industry or the global economy, even throughout a global pandemic like CCOVID-19 At the same time,



**Graph 3:** Value of Bangladeshi Garment Industry Exports in Trillions of American Dollars

**Source:** BGMEA, 2021. Available at [https://bgmea.com.bd/page/Export\\_Performance](https://bgmea.com.bd/page/Export_Performance)

Similarly to the previous sections including growth graphs, which represent different areas of economic and industry growth in Bangladesh, this section, including Graph 3, showcases the expeditious growth of exports of garments from Bangladesh. The exports recorded since the year 2000 have been at most times growing, with the exception of the 2008 crisis, where growth has been recorded, though at a minimal level, and the COVID-19 pandemic, where we can see a clear downturn in exports. This downturn has, however, been only temporary, as the industry returned to pre-pandemic levels the very next year with an even steeper growth index of 35%, which exemplifies the steepest yearly growth rate ever since the 1980s, when

the local garment industry growth exceeded 115% and 227%, 2020–2021, respectively, on two separate occasions. The key differences between the two occasions in the 1980s and the 2020–2021 interannual growth are that in the 1980s, safety standards in the garment industry of Bangladesh were essentially nonexistent, labor was extremely cheap, and that in 1982, the number of garment factories grew from a mere 47 to 587 in a single year. The egregious 1248% growth in the number of shipments, which occurred in a single year, showcases the standard that was set for the garment industry back in the 1980s in Bangladesh. To further back this claim, there are numerous statistics mentioning at least 25 major Bangladeshi factory fires and collapses between 1990 and 2012, accompanied with yebyother claim stating that approximately 2100 people have died and over 5000 people were injured in the garment factories between 1990 and 2012, which excludes the tragedy of Rana Plaza. Additional arguments that would suggest ruling in favor of the standard-lacking growth in the 1980s would be Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Indexes, in which Bangladesh has been registered since 1996. Ever since Bangladesh appeared on this list, it has never left the bottom part of the list, even with tens of more countries appearing throughout the years.

It is imperative to note that this area of our research has proven to be more difficult to analyze in depth than we had expected, both throughout the planning stage and at the beginning of the actual research. Given the lack of primary-data sources, lack of access to data directly from people involved, and being forced to conduct the whole analysis using purely secondary data, we were ultimately unable to undoubtedly rule out bias with absolute certainty. While we have found extremely scarce evidence of further disasters similar to the one in Rana Plaza, there is no possibility of ruling out the option of unreported cases with certainty without reviewing the frequently aforementioned primary data. Certain sources with direct ties to Bangladesh, though not directly connected to the industry, suggest that there is a rather high probability of suppressed primary-data availability due to government interference and the disallowance of sharing such cases, research, and papers with the public. These claims suggest that the Bangladeshi government experiences a high level of corruption and only allows positively aimed statements, research, articles, papers, and other research materials about the industry to be publicly available, willingly creating bias towards a greater positive image of the industry, which further benefits both the industry and the government itself. We were unable to either prove or disprove the truthfulness of these claims, and therefore we were unable or indirectly forced to consider the data gathered to be believable and truthful for the sake of the research and thesis as a whole.



## **6.2 Analysis and findings of the Humanitarian perspective**

The information provided above showed us how important the garment sector is to Bangladesh's economy. The garment industry embodies one of the main foundations of the Bangladeshi economy, which is very dependent on the labor force. Bangladesh is treasured among international investors due to its accessible labor force. To sustain the economic and social success of the nation, both the government and the business sector have a responsibility to safeguard the safety of the working class. After the Rana Plaza catastrophe, there have been noticeable changes in Bangladesh's RMG industry. Many steps have been taken to safeguard the worker's and the workplace's safety. However, there are still gaps that need to be filled, and both the government and the corporations should be obliged to take the required actions to enhance the economic and social situation of the sector as much as possible. The RMG sector in Bangladesh has advanced significantly in areas including working conditions, worker health, worker empowerment, and infrastructure risk reduction. These developments have significantly accelerated thanks to the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety and the Accord on Building and Fire Safety in Bangladesh, both initiatives set up by foreign buyers. The Bangladeshi minimum salary for garment employees was 3,000 taka (\$28) before the Rana Plaza collapse in 2013, although it was later raised to 5,300 taka (\$49,5) in November 2013 and 8,000 taka (\$74,5) in 2018 (Biswas, 2023). In comparison to daily living expenses, the basic salary is still far too low. Even though inflation is rising daily, wages remain unchanged. For the workers to be able to adapt to the market, it must be increased in line with the current rate of inflation.

Hossain & Alam (2022) showed in their research that the COVID-19 epidemic has had a negative effect on Bangladesh's clothing industry. It was projected that between March and June, Bangladeshi RMG employees lost \$500 million in salaries. There were 580,836 factories under the ministry of labor and employment; of these, 8029 enterprises, including 1915 garment manufacturers, closed as a result of COVID-19, which resulted in the loss of jobs for around 1,710,221 individuals. For instance, according to The Financial Express, (2020) report, between March and June 2020, during the COVID-19 period, the clothing industry lost \$4.33 billion in exports as a result of the cancellation of international orders and the postponement of payments. 2.28 million garment workers are affected directly or indirectly as a result of overseas buyers and brands canceling substantial numbers of orders

(982 million pieces), with millions of employees—many of them women—falling into financial difficulties (Hossain & Alam, 2022). As lead corporations canceled, delayed, and delayed paying for orders, Bangladeshi textile exports fell (Anner 2020; ILO 2020a). Some significant stores closed their doors. Major leading corporations agreed to pay for old orders after pressure from unions and NGOs. Still, other companies looked for discounts from suppliers or escaped responsibility by using a contract's force majeure provision. After a one-month government-imposed lockdown in May 2020, industries were reopened and operated at 55% capacity while adhering to statutory health regulations. According to CCC 2021 estimates, 11% of workers lost their employment between December 2019 and September 2020, and the average income fell by about 8%. Take-up, particularly among On March 31, 2020, the Bangladeshi government announced a \$595 million stimulus package and an interest rate of 2 percent on loans for factory companies for the payment of workers' wages for up to three months in response to worker protests. small manufacturing owners, has been gradual (FRENKEL & SCHUESSLER, 2021). Like the rest of the globe, Bangladesh is dealing with an unparalleled economic problem. According to research by Sultan et al. (2020) about COVID-19's effects on the RMG sector and union efforts to mitigate the effects, a significant number of garment workers are anticipated to be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, with effects ranging from wage cuts to job loss. These problems had an influence on the nation's socioeconomic situation, and in order to address the RMG industry's crisis, the government and trade leaders should develop the appropriate policies. In 2020, Genoni et al. conducted research on the effects of COVID-19 on Bangladesh's labor market. That study was based on a household survey from three susceptible locations, namely the underprivileged parts of the cities of Cox's Bazar, Chittagong, and Dhaka. The COVID-19 has a range of consequences on the labor market, both at the vast and intense edges, with noticeable regional and gender inequalities, according to Hossain & Alam's (2022) study. This study (Hossain & Alam, 2022) also discovered that the COVID-19 issue results in longer-term effects on poverty, food security, and future earnings due to the loss of market workers' jobs. The study also made clear that high levels of labor market uncertainty also lead to stress and worry, which can lead to physical and mental health issues that are related to the pandemic. Poor workers won't be able to do their regular tasks throughout the month as a result. The workers' biggest issue would be this. According to Mohiuddin (2020), the current national prohibition imposed by the governing body to halt the transmission of COVID-19 has caused the per capita daily income of rural and urban slum inhabitants to drop by 80%., Between 40 and 50 percent of this group borrowed money to cover their everyday costs in

Bangladesh. Ahmed et al. conducted research in 2021 on the effects of COVID-19 and solutions to its issues in Bangladesh's textile industry. According to this analysis, the clothing industry lost \$3.15 billion because of the cancellation of a significant number of international orders as a result of COVID-19. This report also emphasized the fact that during the COVID-19 era, nearly 1 million garment workers were laid off, which drove many families back into poverty (Hossain & Alam, 2022). According to the BGMEA report (Apparel Story January–February 2021), the COVID-19 epidemic has served as a big wake-up call for them, highlighting the need for a robust healthcare system to safeguard their economic way of life. This became clear to them as soon as the epidemic reached their nation; at the time, they were more worried about safeguarding their employees' health than they were about running a successful company. As a result, they sent the employees on paid leave to go home for a month before taking a cautious step to re-open under a strict healthcare directive developed in collaboration with the Bangladeshi government's Ministry of Health, the ILO, and the WHO and combining appropriate homegrown solutions while keeping in mind the necessity and viability of the suggested measures. The BGMEA has constructed and launched a cutting-edge PCR laboratory to screen textile workers for coronavirus. BGMEA and Inspectorio collaborated to aid member industries in reducing the COVID comeback. According to a contract between the BGMEA and Maya, a provider of digital worker wellness services, RMG employees will have access to complimentary services to help with COVID-19 prevention and control as well as general physical and mental health-related issues. The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) had the idea to include garment workers in the digital payment system. May or June of last year The use of digital payments provides financial security, simpler transactions, and position-independent financial services. The most significant benefit of a digitalized wage payment system is that it has successfully integrated a sizable portion of Bangladesh's economically marginalized population into the formal economy's institutional banking system. The result is that it makes it possible for textile employees to get their paychecks and other payments through a personal bank account, mobile money service, or payment card option instead of antiquated cash-based systems (BGMEA apparel story, January–February 2021). The RMG industry has advanced over the past 40 years, and worker lives have also gotten better. However, there are some exceptions. Workers in some factories claim that they didn't get payment for two months and were also fired from the job. According to The New York Times (Paton, 2021), Mr. Ali worked as a knitting operator at the A-One facility in Dhaka, Bangladesh, for a decade prior to its closure in April 2020, which led to the

unemployment of 1,400 workers. The factory was listed as a supplier by Benetton and Next, was tardy in paying employees during its last months, and it still hasn't provided any severance compensation, which, according to Bangladeshi law, is equivalent to about one month of earnings for each year of service. Since then, Mr. Ali has had difficulty finding anything other than sporadic construction work. He is due 350,000 taka, or roughly \$4,130. Mr. Ali remarked in Bengali, "Since so many individuals have lost their employment, the situation is much more dire." "The money would change everything for me, so I want to believe it will come." Emails sent to the former owner of A-One seeking feedback received no response.

Benetton did not reply to inquiries concerning severance benefits and described the business worth of its connection with A-One as "marginal" in an email message.

A Next representative said that the factory has previously filled orders for the Lipsy subsidiary brand and that checks were placed in the brand's code of conduct to make sure employees paid their dues in the event of plant closures or layoffs. In regards to any inquiries regarding A-One's unpaid severance, the corporation remained silent (Paton, 2021). According to a survey report (Rabbani et al., 2020), 90% of the respondents claimed they did not receive any of the government assistance that the Prime Minister had promised to the employees of the garment factories. Now the question is: What would the money be used for if the garment workers didn't receive assistance? It is quite unclear, which shows that labor law enforcement is taking place in the sector and is once again creating job opportunities. It is reopening the door to employment opportunities thanks to industry enforcement.

Regarding the safety issue, Bangladesh has improved a lot. The industry has improved significantly in the 10 years since Rana Plaza. According to BGMEA data, there are already 187 LEED-certified garment manufacturers in Bangladesh, and 500 more are expected to receive the certification soon. Only two production units in the nation were LEED-certified prior to the Rana Plaza catastrophe (Mahmud, 2013). However, there is still much work to be done. According to Al Jazeera's 2023 report and an International Labor Organization (ILO) study from 2016, Bangladesh has seen at least 35 textile plant accidents since the Rana Plaza tragedy. A single boiler explosion at Tampaco Foils Ltd., a packaging firm in Tongi on the outskirts of Dhaka, claimed the lives of 24 people in total that year. A boiler explosion at Multifabs Ltd., a textile mill in the Gazipur area, resulted in 13 fatalities a year later. Interestingly, Accord or Alliance only had the authority to inspect fire, electrical, and

structural safety. However, the RSC has included a boiler safety program ever since it was founded in 2020 (Mahmud, 2023).

The government of Bangladesh is taking initiatives to improve the industry. Bangladesh recently began a nationwide campaign to promote workplace security. The program, which began in April 2023, aims to increase understanding of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) issues and strategies for preventing them in Bangladesh's ready-made clothing industry and other businesses (source: ILO, 2023).

The government is also helping to form a trade union for workers. According to : International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), more than ever, trade unions in Bangladesh are essential to protecting workers' rights and interests across the nation. Top priorities for labor unions include the following: Improve working conditions, provide feedback on laws and policy design, and end violence and harassment against both women and men in the workplace; increase direct interaction between employers' and workers' organizations on issues relating to labor inspection and OSH, two topics that are relatively uncontroversial among the social partners (compared to, for example, strikes); enhance Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) systems, capacity, and awareness; and improve victim assistance, staff training, and rehabilitation. To advance the rights of female employees, gender problems should be included in all policies and programs, including collective bargaining. The primary focus of the activities and responsibilities of trade unions is OSH.

The Bangladesh Labour Act (2006) and the Labour Rules (2016) contain regulatory restrictions that require trade union operations to be narrowly focused, rights-based, effective, and compliant with those rules.

Additionally, initiatives to increase capacity have had a substantial influence on union activities and actions. According to OSH trainers questioned in Dhaka in March 2017, more than 1,300 employees, mostly women, had joined RMG unions for the first time since the OSH training initiatives began. Unions were able to unite and work with other stakeholders as a result of the activities that were undertaken. For instance, on April 28, 2017, unions, social partners, and civil society all came together to commemorate OSH Day.

Another important issue that we find out about is gender discrimination and harassment of female workers. According to a research study (Islam et al., 2018), the most significant issue that affects women at work is supervisory conduct since managers and supervisors frequently

mistreat female employees. The other elements include the significance of younger female employees, insufficient safeguards, male coworkers' disruptions, maternity leave, hostile coworkers, risks associated with the job, lack of rest at work, attention given to complaints, pay for extra hours, the lack of promotion processes, the freedom to work from anywhere, the ability to commute from home to the workplace, the low salary, and the tardy payment. These are the problems that affect women who work.

### **6.3 Comparison of Garment Industries of Bangladesh and Abroad**

The South Asian region is characterized by a high population density and is currently experiencing growth as a market for textiles and garments. The region is endowed with advantageous features, including the presence of a sufficient and cost-effective workforce, water resources, and other essential inputs for textile production, substantial cultivation of cotton, and proximity to expanding markets, among others. Hence, the South Asian region has emerged as a promising global hub for the export of clothing and textile goods.

The major players in this sector are Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka. There is no doubt that Bangladesh is making tremendous progress in the RMG industry. However, when we look at the other countries' industries, we can see that there are some differences in several areas. According to Wickramasingha & Coe (2021), the Bangladeshi clothing market has consistently come under fire for its abusive labor methods. According to the Clean Clothes Campaign (2014), wage theft in the Bangladeshi apparel industry includes underpayment or incorrect estimation of overtime pay, refusal of paid maternity leave, denial of payments for social security, opaque salary computations, delaying payment, and reluctance to provide termination benefits. Additionally, workers—and women in particular—frequently experience income disparities, job insecurity, and discrimination (Saxena 2014; Anner 2015; 2020). Outsourced work, part-time jobs, contract labor, and lack of formality in the workplace— what Anner (2015, 22) refers to as a "despotic market labor control regime"—all contribute to the workers' perception of acute vulnerability. Child labor continues to be a serious problem in an industry where, according to a 2015 UNICEF survey in Dhaka, According to UNICEF (2015), 59 percent of the roughly 185,000 employees questioned were below the age of 18. Additionally, in 2013, the Rana Plaza tower collapsed, killing over 1,100 people. serves as a stark illustration of how poorly constructed and overcrowded manufacturing buildings continue to pose a severe threat to the health and safety of workers.

The state's unwillingness to address the industry's bad working conditions and the absence of trade union representation have made the situation worse. For instance, owners of the factory are not held responsible for maintaining a safe working atmosphere since national labor regulations, building standards, and local zoning rules are not consistently enforced (Saxena 2020). Thus, the government is frequently accused of ignoring the systemic flaws that allow manufacturers to engage in unlawful and abusive labor practices such as anti-union activity, failure to pay minimum wages, and forced labor. As a result, it should come as no surprise that Bangladesh is one of the top three global garment exporters that violate labor rights, along with China and Vietnam (Wickramasingha & Coe, 2021).

But better working conditions are often found in Sri Lanka. High levels of education, relatively high labor standards, strong social development indices, and welfare states all help to explain this. Due to Sri Lanka's lengthy history of supporting trade union organizations that successfully defended workers' rights, these were institutionalized in the early 1900s (Gunawardana, and Biyanwila 2008).

According to Wijayasiri and Dissanayake (2009), Ruwanpura and Wrigley (2011), and Ruwanpura (2016), the aforementioned legislation provided legal safeguards to employees across several domains, encompassing remuneration, the liberty to form associations and engage in collective bargaining, the resolution of industrial conflicts, occupational health and safety, work hours, absences, and the employment of female and juvenile workers. As the backbone of these pillars, Sri Lanka was one of the first countries to adopt the moral guidelines created by top businesses in the 1990s. (Ruwanpura 2016). According to many sources, Sri Lanka's garment sector has higher overall workplace norms than those of other nations that produce clothing (Wijayasiri and Dissanayake 2009; Ruwanpura and Wrigley 2011). Building safety regulations in the sector contribute to the favorable reputation it has since no fatalities have been documented in the five decades of its history (Ruwanpura 2016). However, it should be noted that human rights scholars studying the sector have found that its image is kind of a facade, with workers experiencing low pay, long workdays, and inequality without any substantial influence at their places of work or on government channels.(Hewamanne 2009, 2020; Ruwanpura 2012, 2015, 2016; Goger 2013).

The recent dispute over minimum salaries and the violent response from arrangement manufacturers indicate that there remains work to be done in order to achieve positive social change, even though there don't appear to be as many tragic incidents in Cambodia as there

have been in Bangladesh (Arnold & Hess, 2017). Due to its non-participation in the Multi-Fiber Arrangement Manufacturers in the early phases of export garment production. As a result, there were no restrictions on exports to the US and other countries, giving importers the chance to diversify the MFA quota system of the WTO. Cambodia gained appeal to international clothing sourcing and got around current MFA limitations (Polaski, 2009). The increase in Cambodian exports to the US prompted domestic US textile and clothing manufacturing organizations to seek import restrictions in 1998 (Polaski, 2009). In comparison to Bangladesh, Cambodia has a better minimum wage. The minimum wage in Cambodian garment factories is \$200, and it will take effect on January 1, 2023, according to the ASEAN Briefing Report. In contrast, Bangladesh, the second-best exporter of clothing in the world, pays only \$74,5 as the minimum wage. When the country is facing huge inflation, how is it going to be possible for workers to survive? From the comparison of different countries, it can be said that the garment industry has seen tremendous growth in business, but the living standard of its workers is still very poor.

#### **6.4 Key challenges and issues facing the country:**

The garment industry in Bangladesh has a good chance of maintaining its position among the largest RMG manufacturers worldwide and of continuing to narrate its remarkable story of development and growth. Nevertheless, the country's garment industry is having trouble and has to act quickly in numerous areas if it wants to prosper. It must be able to compete without the privilege of access to high-volume trade, meet dwindling client market demand, and radically alter its sourcing strategy to a demand-driven and more eco-friendly one. The RMG business in Bangladesh has also seen tremendous transformation and development over the past 10 years, but it has also faced significant difficulties. However, it now confronts a new set of challenges due to a global pandemic and a shifting global apparel sourcing market. In the upcoming years, the industry will need to embrace a more thorough shift while cooperating with manufacturers, overseas buyers, labor organizations, the government, and other stakeholders. International buyers must build more sustainable, demand-driven supply chains while navigating a world that is always evolving. According to our analysis, we found these are the challenges and issues Bangladesh is facing nowadays that need to be addressed and solved for the betterment of the industry.



### **6.4.1 Unskilled workers:**

An industry's expansion and development depend on having the necessary knowledge and abilities. Nevertheless, despite the industry's growth, a lack of qualified workers is limiting its development. 90% of the 4.2 million employees in the nation today are women; the majority of them are uneducated, unskilled, and from rural areas. As a result, the productivity rating is lower. Larger factories have a training facility, but the majority of local factories lack such a facility, and those that do have it are of poor quality due to a lack of professional trainers with the necessary qualifications, a weak training program (which only covered workers), a lack of training aids, a lack of a systematic program for evaluating training needs, a lack of follow-up and feedback activities, and a lack of a correlation between training and job performance.

### **6.4.2 Lack of safety precautions in local factories:**

When the RMG sector first started, industrial structures were constructed haphazardly, leading to the conversion of common buildings for factory use. Numerous catastrophic collapses followed, including those at Rana Plaza and Tazreen, which led to thousands of fatalities and another thousand injuries at the end. These have elevated the safety problem to a top priority. Local and small enterprises, in addition to global companies, require renovation.

### **6.4.3 Management and financial problems of the trade unions:**

Although the diversity of unions is an essential aspect, it also represents one of the biggest flaws in workers' representation. However, due to low organizational strength brought on by a lack of membership, the factory-level unions' lack of representation and the diversity of organizations that are constantly expanding suffer. Unions and their members have a significant level of political influence. The majority of trade unions have connections to political parties on a financial and interpersonal level. The majority of connected unions belong to the federation of the ruling party. Trade union strengths have been divided and disconnected as a result of ideological and factional division.

In order to serve the interests of the workforce, RMG sector trade unions experience severe financial hardship. Average union salaries have always been too low and inadequate to finance regular direct or indirect campaigns. The bulk of unions are more focused on

expanding their membership than they are on regularly collecting subscription money because of their competitive multiplicity. Insufficient financial resources can hinder the efficacy of low-coverage unions in advocating for the rights of workers. In contrast, some unions may resort to seeking support from governmental aid, political party contributions, employer endowments, and contributions from international non-governmental organizations. However, this reliance on external funding sources renders their positions susceptible to manipulation, even if such actions are contrary to the best interests of the workers they represent.

#### **6.4.4 Gender discrimination:**

One of the main issues in the industry has been the gender gap and worker empowerment. Work rights have substantially increased, and wage payments are increasingly being sent digitally. The disparity between men and women is still an issue, though, when it comes to opportunities for professional growth after entry level. Gender diversity and opportunities for career progression are given more importance nowadays. The slow pace of change has drawn attention to many Bangladeshi textile workers' precarious circumstances, which COVID-19 may have further exacerbated.

#### **6.4.5 Low wages:**

Bangladeshi garment workers make very low wages relative to other nations, which are insufficient to support a family's living expenses. Between 2018 and 2022, the Bangladeshi market environment saw a significant upheaval. It has become hard for workers to afford a respectable standard of living due to increasing inflation. In August 2022, Bangladesh's inflation rate reached 9.5%, the highest level in eleven years. Between July 2022 and January 2023, RMG exports from the nation climbed by 14.31% to \$27.418 billion. To fix the problem, the government and industry leaders should concentrate on it.

#### **6.4.6 Insufficient government inspectors and enforcement:**

There aren't many government inspectors. There aren't many inspectors accessible to check out clothing manufacturing. In the city of Dhaka, there are about 10,000 garment industries. Therefore, there are not nearly enough inspectors. To assess the level of compliance, the ministry of labor and employment inspects the factories. Among the primary problems with

the government inspection system are the following. The government must hire more people if it is to operate more effectively. The Bangladesh Labor Law does not specify punishment for breaking labor laws. In other circumstances, such as the restriction against forced labor, the law is merely silent. Other times, the punishment is minimal, such as when maternity leave, hiring of children and adolescents, or minimum wage laws are broken and the fine is Tk. 5000. Other times, the application of the punishment contradicts reason. For instance, breaking the rule governing the minimum wage provision is punishable by up to a year in prison, while breaking the law governing maternity leave and hiring young children and teenagers is not. The labor agreement has to be revised to reflect a new perspective and take into account the industry's shifting conditions.

These difficulties and problems are the ones that, from a humanitarian standpoint, we believe are most crucial to address in order to strengthen the bonds between the state, business, and labor unions.

## **7. Discussion<sup>9</sup>**

In this section, we are going to discuss the findings in relation to our research question and objectives. Our study's goal is to acquire a thorough insight into the Rana Plaza incident in Bangladesh in 2013, including its causes and repercussions, and what global value chains that are held accountable are doing to prevent future occurrences. Additionally, we will provide a comparative analysis of the conflicting viewpoints on the issue from both business and humanitarian perspectives. In reference to the study subject, we learned that several initiatives have been made for the industry's safety and social and economic advancement. The Alliance's and Accord's success demonstrates the progress of the improvements. Bangladesh's clothing industry is diversified. Even while adjustments are occurring, there is still room for improvement. There are still many areas of the business that require significant attention. Like the worker's education and skill development, the inclusion of female representatives in the unions, and more of the things we've already said. The major force behind industry is human resources, which have enormous potential. The government and representatives of the industry ought to take more significant and practical actions to raise workers' social welfare, protection, and standard of living. It will support the growth and productivity of the industry and encourage more people to work and invest in Bangladesh. As we all know, this sector of the economy contributes significantly to Bangladesh's GDP and

---

<sup>9</sup> Akter & Hromkovič

serve as an example for other developing nations. It is the duty of the government to focus on this industry more and take more control of it in a constructive way to establish a safe and improved work environment for its workers. Additionally, the government should reorganize its labor ministry department more creatively to cope with the changing situation. The Bangladeshi government has complete authority over every sector of the country. It should take action to provide social welfare and enhance the workplace environment for clothing. Additionally, the BGMEA, an association of clothing owners, should take proactive steps to put the efforts it has previously made into action.

The state might take several actions to enhance the working conditions in Bangladeshi garment manufacturers, such as: - Increase the force of senior inspectors for routinely inspecting the factories, Enhance the inspection rate, ensure proper inspection, tracking, and attention to detail in the work environments, expand inspections to all occupations and enterprises, arrange training to develop current knowledge and skills, make the labor law more constructive, take action to implement various initiatives, and create a monitoring commission to assess the performance of the inspectors. Create pressure on the clothing industry to follow the rules and regulations of the nation's labor or industrial law, ensure the industries are providing a standard working environment, and work to foster positive relations between the employer and the employees of clothing factories.

## **7.1 Implications of the findings on the future of the Bangladeshi garment industry**

The preceding discussion demonstrates that Bangladesh has managed to recover from the Rana Plaza tragedy. In these ten years, the nation has learned the significance of worker safety and life. However, it is still insufficient to state that the workplace is completely safe and worker-friendly. We are aware that change does not occur effortlessly. All industry-related organizations should collaborate to make the garment industry a secure workplace. Bangladesh has an excellent possibility of ranking first in the global export market. To attain this position, it is essential to address the challenges and issues uncovered by the analysis. It will aid in the development of both the employer and the employee.

The primary force pushing the whole industry forward these days are corporations, aided by NGOs. Bangladesh offers us an unusual vision. A vision of a country where the government does not seem to be interested in the conventional governmental involvement that would constitute the urgently needed further growth of the country out of the developing group into

the already developed one. If the government does not step up and retake the initiative soon, which is doubtful based on the data gathered, there is a high probability of Bangladesh becoming an indirect copy of the South American ‘banana republics’. The basis of this change can already be detected in the industrialist notions of the government, which has been in power ever since 2009 and is increasingly supporting dependency on global value chain involvement. Given that such an orientation continues, it cannot be ruled out that Bangladesh will fall under corporate rule, which it is already inclined towards.

## **7.2 Recommendations for policy makers, industry stakeholders, and future research**

Bangladesh has a high population density. Dhaka and Chattogram are the country's two largest cities. The majority of garment factories are located in Dhaka and its surrounding areas. Which is causing urban pressure. Here, the majority of factory catastrophes occur. Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashion, for instance, were located in Dhaka. According to our research, the government, policymakers, and BGMEA authority should take the necessary measures to renovate the factory. We have some recommendations that can help the authority develop the industry.

1. The government must relocate the factory out of Dhaka and construct an industrial zone with every amenity for both employees and employers.
2. Develop each region of the country, provide business facilities, and construct worker facilities such as schools, colleges, and training centers for the well-being of the people. It will aid in the development of every region of the nation and relieve pressure on a particular city also it will create new employment and attract more people to invest in the sector. In addition, it will prevent industrial accidents.

## **8. Conclusion<sup>10</sup>**

The main objective of our thesis was to acquire a deeper and improved knowledge of the solutions put into place in the garment industry by both the government and businesses in the wake of the tragic Rana Plaza incident in 2013 and the changes that followed as either their direct or indirect consequences on Bangladesh's entire garment industry. Subsequently, we have focused on how the implementation of the Accord of Alliance has affected the industry in Bangladesh as a whole and what tangible results there have been ever since it was put into practice throughout Bangladesh. Finally, the last supporting question that we focused on was

---

<sup>10</sup> Akter & Hromkovič

the question of whether and what kind of governmental contribution to both the social and economic development of the garment industry of Bangladesh as a whole was actually implemented. Based on the data collected and subsequent analysis executed, we have come to the conclusion that the changes introduced to the Bangladeshi garment industry were introduced primarily by corporations, which in turn were primarily led to such solutions by NGOs, public image pressure, and news coverage. It has become apparent throughout our research that the government of Bangladesh is quite rotten with corruption, and instead of fighting for their people's wellbeing, the politicians only support the industry and pass laws that enrich them, keeping the working class in factories ever more poor in comparison to the high-class citizens and politicians. The corruption and bad leadership in the country are treated as public secrets, which do not receive much coverage in the media, and there are limited resources to support this argument. Despite this lack of information on the matter, there are statistics that support this claim. One of the most reliable sources that does support the argument is Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index. According to this index, which ranges between 0 (total corruption) and 100 (no corruption overall), Bangladesh scored 25 points, which translates to a highly corrupt country and the 147th place out of 180 countries ranked (Transparency International, 2022). To make matters worse, the 2022 results were the lowest ever since 2015, with a stagnant to descending trend ever since 2013, with the only positive deviation being visible in 2017, when Bangladesh scored 28 points out of the possible 100 (Transparency International, 2022). Despite corruption and other issues, Bangladesh has managed to shine in the world and holds the 2nd position in the world. Bangladesh has the potential to become the number one exporter in the apparel industry. To become the number one and to compete with the other competitor the country need to overcome from all its internal issues.

## **8.1 Suggestions for future research**

This chapter aims to address the limitations and constraints that we have encountered throughout our research and writing of this thesis, which represent likely weaknesses and areas that may have been left out of the research, whether due to limited time, resources, or availability of data. While we have managed to gather a substantial amount of data for both

sides of the discussion from different, unassociated sources, to avoid as much potential bias as possible, it is necessary to admit that there have been different limitations that did not allow us to achieve an absolute absence of bias. These limitations may have influenced the research and analysis of the thesis itself, along with the allowance of potential bias. This chapter is divided into the subsequent seven such chapters to provide a more detailed overview of the limitations contained in our thesis.

## **8.2 Generalizability**

We consider the generalizability of our research to be high for the majority of the Global South and especially high for the South Asia region. Given that the majority of countries in both of these areas are primarily developing countries dealing with challenges of similar or identical nature, the solutions presented in this thesis represent viable options for improving local situations. We realize that different countries are represented by different industries, and the solutions may not be directly applicable globally to each and every one of them. This is especially true given the focus of our thesis on the garment industry. However, key takeaways from this thesis may be considerably generalized, tailored to the specific needs of a different industry, and applied to countless different areas of interest. Countries, their subsequent economies, the general population, including workers in the industries, and, after all, even corporations have the potential to benefit from an approach that would be inspired, though tailored specifically to the needs that are present in the individual areas of interest.

## 9. Bibliography

### 9.1 Business perspective

Ahiakpor, James C. W. (1985). "The Success and Failure of Dependency Theory: The Experience of Ghana". *International Organization*. 39 (3): 535–552.

Aguinis, H., & Solarino, A. (2019). *Transparency and replicability in qualitative research: The case of interviews with elite informants*. Online Library. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/smj.3015>

Ahmed, S., & Ahmed, S. U. (2018). Does Foreign Direct Investment matter for Economic Growth in Bangladesh? An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Business and Policy Research*, 13, 96-117.

Amin, S. (2014). Rana Plaza Collapse: A Wake-up Call for Global Retailers. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 49, 14-16.

Asif, M. (2021). The Impact of Multinational Companies on Bangladesh's Garment Industry. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 11(1), 1-18.

Austin, J., H. Stevenson 1 and Jane Wei-Skillern. 2006. Social and Commercial Entrepreneurship: Same, Different, or Both?, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 30 (1): 1 – 22.

Białowas, T. and Budzynska, A. The Importance of Global Value Chains in Developing Countries' Agricultural Trade Development. *Sustainability* 2022, 14, 1389.

Carroll, A. B. 1991. The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34, 39-48.

Das, D. and Swazan, I.S. 2022. Bangladesh's Emergence as a Ready-Made Garment Export Leader: An Examination of the Competitive Advantages of the Garment Industry. *JGBC* 17, 162–174 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42943-022-00049-9>

Dicken, P. (1998). "Global Shift: Transforming the World Economy". (London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd)



Economic Development. (2009). Wayback Machine. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20090714063027/http://homepage.newschool.edu/het/schools/develop.html>

Elkington, J. 1997. *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*, Capstone, Oxford.

Epatko, Larisa, Oldenziel, Joris (2018), “5 years after the world’s largest garment factory collapse, is safety in Bangladesh any better?” Available at <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/5-years-after-the-worlds-largest-garment-factory-collapse-is-safety-in-bangladesh-any-better>

Faguet, J. P., 2015. Transformation from below in Bolivia and Bangladesh: Decentralization, Local Governance, and Systemic Change. Available at: [www.researchgate.net/publication/272784074\\_Transformation\\_from\\_Below\\_in\\_Bolivia\\_and\\_Bangladesh\\_Decentralization\\_Local\\_Governance\\_and\\_Systemic\\_Change](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/272784074_Transformation_from_Below_in_Bolivia_and_Bangladesh_Decentralization_Local_Governance_and_Systemic_Change). Accessed 30 May 2023

Gereffi, G. (2014) Global value chains in a post-Washington Consensus world, *Review of International Political Economy*, 21:1, 9-37, DOI: [10.1080/09692290.2012.756414](https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2012.756414)

Graves, Samuel B., and Sandra A. Waddock. “Institutional Owners and Corporate Social Performance.” *The Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 37, no. 4, 1994, pp. 1034–46. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/256611>. Accessed 29 May 2023.

Haque, M. Z., Azmat, F. 2015. Corporate social responsibility, economic globalization and developing countries: A case study of the ready made garments industry in Bangladesh | Emerald Insight. (2015, May 5). Discover Journals, Books & Case Studies | Emerald Insight. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/SAMPJ-04-2014-0028/full/html?fullScreen=1>

Harrison, J.S., Bosse, D.A. & Phillips, R.A. 2010. Managing for stakeholders, stakeholder utility functions and competitive advantage. *Strategic Management Journal*, 58-74.

Helpman, E., and Krugman, P. R., (1985), “Market structure and foreign trade: Increasing returns, imperfect competition, and the international economy”, The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

Hossain, M. A. (2017). The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on Bangladesh's Export-Oriented Garment Industry. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues*, 7, 449-454.

Hossain, S., & Mahmood, A. (2013). Foreign Direct Investment and the Bangladesh Garment Industry: Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Economic Integration*, 28, 100-130.

Islam, M. A., & Bhowmik, R. (2014). An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on Economic Growth in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 9, 196-204.

Islam, M. A., & Hossain, M. A. (2021). The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on the Performance of the Bangladesh Garment Industry: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 7(2), 49

Islam, M. R., & Ali, M. Y. (2018). Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on Economic Growth in Bangladesh: Evidence from Garment Industry. *Journal of Management and Sustainability*, 8, 80-92.

Kabeer, N., Huq, L., & Sulaiman, M. (2020, February 24). *Paradigm Shift or Business as Usual? Workers' Views on Multi-stakeholder Initiatives in Bangladesh*. Wiley Online Library. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/dech.12574>

Khan, M. A., Brymer, K., & Koch, K. (2020). The Production of Garments and Textiles in Bangladesh: Trade Unions, International Managers and the Health and Safety of Workers. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, 7(2), 276–292. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2322093720944270>

Leung, L. (2015, July). *Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research*. Researchgate. Available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281172234\\_VValidity\\_reliability\\_and\\_generalizability\\_in\\_qualitative\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281172234_VValidity_reliability_and_generalizability_in_qualitative_research)

Maniruzzaman. (1983, May 1). *"The Bangladesh Revolution and its Aftermath"*. ProQuest | Better research, better learning, better insights. Available at:

<https://www.proquest.com/openview/db02948f0d17ee7f0afb44880dee6710/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1817327>

Nordas, H. K. and Rouzet, D., et al. (2014), "Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI): Financial Services", *OECD Trade Policy Papers*, No. 175, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5jxt4nhssd30-en>.

O'Brien, R., and Williams, M. (2020). *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics*. Macmillan. Chapter 1: 'Theories of Global Political Economy', pp. 5-22.

Paul-Majumder, P., & Begum, S. (2014). Bangladesh's Garment Industry in the Aftermath of Rana Plaza. *Asian Economic Policy Review*, 9(2), 298-316.

Phillips, R. 2003. *Stakeholder theory and organizational ethics*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Rahman, M. H., & Islam, M. A. (2019). The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on Economic Growth in Bangladesh: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Economics and Behavioral Studies*, 11, 1-12.

Rahman, S. M. S., & Khan, M. A. (2020). Contribution of the Garment Industry in Bangladesh Economy: A Review. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 15(4), 178-189.

Raihan, S. (2016). Bangladesh's Apparel Sector in the Post-MFA Era: Implications of the End of Quotas. *Journal of International Commerce, Economics and Policy*, 7(2), 1650008.

Rashid, S. F., & Ahmed, S. (2020). Labor Standards and Export Performance of the Bangladesh Garment Industry. *Journal of International Commerce, Economics and Policy*, 11(2), 2050010.

Sacconi, L. 2006. A Social Contract Account for CSR as an Extended Model of Corporate Governance (I): Rational Bargaining and Justification. *Journal of Business Ethics*, (68), No. 3, 259-281.

Sethi, S. P. 1975 (Spring). Dimensions of corporate social performance: An analytic framework. *California Management Review*, 17, 58-64.

Siddiqui, K. A. (2013). The Textile and Clothing Industry in Bangladesh: An Analysis of the Impact of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) Phase-Out. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 47, 207-233.

Sisodia, R., Wolfe, D.B., and Sheth, J. 2007. *Firms of Endearment: How World-Class Companies Profit from Passion and Purpose*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Wharton School Publishing.

Sonntag, H.R., 2001. Dependency Theory, Editor(s): Neil J. Smelser, Paul B. Baltes, *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Pergamon, 2001, Pages 3501-3505, ISBN 9780080430768,

Taherdoost, H. (2021). *Data collection methods and tools for research; a step-by-step guide to ...* hal.science. Available at: <https://hal.science/hal-03741847/document>

Transparency International, 2022. CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2022, accessed on 29.5.2023. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>

Waddock. 2004. *Parallel Universes: Companies, Academics and the Progress of corporate Citizenship*, Business & Society.

Walsh, J. P., Taking stock of stakeholder management. *Academy of Management Review*, (Vol. 30, No. 2, 2005), 426–438

Wicks, Andrew C. 1996. “Overcoming the Separation Thesis.” *Business & Society*, 1(1): 89-118.

Wicks, A. C., Harrison, J. S., Freeman, R. E., Parmar, B. L., & Colle, S. d. (2010). *Stakeholder Theory: The State of the Art*. Cambridge University Press. 7-9.

Wood, D. 1991. Corporate social performance revisited. *Academy of Management Review*, 16: 691-718.

Zadek, Simon. “Balancing Performance, Ethics, and Accountability.” *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 17, no. 13, 1998, pp. 1421–41. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25073977>. Accessed 29 May 2023.

## **9.2 Humanitarian perspective**

Ahmed, S. U. M., Azmin, A. A., & Harada, Y. (2021). The effects of COVID-19 in the garment industries of Bangladesh and ways to overcome its challenges. *PROCEEDINGS of*

8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on ADVANCED MATERIALS ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY (ICAMET 2020). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0051575>

Alamgir, F., & Banerjee, S. B. (2018). Contested compliance regimes in global production networks: Insights from the Bangladesh garment industry. *Human Relations*, 72(2), 272–297. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718760150>

Amengual, M., & Chirot, L. (2016). Reinforcing the State: Transnational and State Labor Regulation in Indonesia. *Amengual*, 69(5), 1056–1080. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/1721.1/107658>

Anastas, J. W. (2000). *Research Design for Social Work and the Human Services*. Columbia University Press.

Anner, M. (2011). The Impact of International Outsourcing on Unionization and Wages: Evidence from the Apparel Export Sector in Central America. *ILR Review*, 64(2), 305–322. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/001979391106400205>

Anner, M. (2020). Squeezing workers' rights in global supply chains: purchasing practices in the Bangladesh garment export sector in comparative perspective. *Review of International Political Economy*, 27(2), 320–347. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2019.1625426>

Anner, M. 2015. Labor control regimes and worker resistance in global supply chains. *Labor History* 56 (3): 292–307. doi:10.1080/0023656X.2015.1042771.

Anner M 2020. “Abandoned? The Impact of Covid-19 on Workers and Businesses at the Bottom of Global Garment Supply Chains”, Research Report, 27 March 2020. State College, PA: PennState Center for Global Workers' Rights.

Ansary, M. A., & Barua, U. (2015). Workplace safety compliance of RMG industry in Bangladesh: Structural assessment of RMG factory buildings. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 14, 424–437. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdrr.2015.09.008>

Arnold, D., & Hess, M. (2017). Governmentalizing Gramsci: Topologies of power and passive revolution in Cambodia's garment production network. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 49(10), 2183–2202. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x17725074>

Bair, J., Anner, M., & Blasi, J. (2020). The Political Economy of Private and Public Regulation in Post-Rana Plaza Bangladesh. *ILR Review*, 73(4), 969–994. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019793920925424>

Beatty, D. (2011). Industrial Democracy: A Liberal Law of Labour Relations. *Valparaiso University Law Review*, 19(1), 37–69. Available at: <https://scholar.valpo.edu/vulr/vol19/iss1/3>

BGMEA apparel story january-february 2021. Available at: <https://www.bgmea.com.bd/uploads/newsletters/apparel-story-january-february-2021.pdf>

Biswas, P. (2023, April 14). Bangladesh’s Garment Industry, a Decade After Rana Plaza Collapse. *The Diplomat*. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/04/bangladeshs-garment-industry-a-decade-after-rana-plaza-collapse/>

Briefing, A. (2022, October 3). *Cambodia Increases Minimum Wage for Textile and Garment Sectors for 2023*. ASEAN Business News. Available at: <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/cambodia-increases-minimum-wage-for-textile-and-garment-sectors-for-2023/>

Cairney, P. (2013), Combining the Insights of Multiple Theories. *Policy Stud J*, 41: 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/psj.12000>

CCC (Clean Clothes Campaign). 2021. “Live Blog: How the Coronavirus Affects Garment Workers in Supply Chains”, 23 and 24 January 2021. Available at: <https://cleanclothes.org/news/2021/live-blog-on-how-the-coronavirus-influences-workers-in-supply-chains>

Chase-Dunn, C. (2017). World-Systems Theory. *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, 1(1), 1–8. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118430873.est0830>

Cherry, K. (2020). The Pros and Cons of Longitudinal Research. Accessed online at 18.05.22, available at <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-longitudinal-research-2795335>.

Clean Clothes Campaign. 2014. Living wage in Asia. Available at: <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/xmlui/handle/1813/102230>

Clegg, Hugh Armstrong. 1976. Trade Unionism under Collective Bargaining: A Theory Based on Comparisons of Six Countries. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Collins, H. (2010) “Creative Research: The Theory and Practice of Research for the Creative Industries” AVA Publications

Cote, C. (2021). 7 Data Collection Methods in Business Analytics. Business Insights Harvard Business School Online. Accessed at 14.05.22, Available at: <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/data-collection-methods>.

*Covid-19 and the RMG Industry: The Pandemic Effect How Industry Balances Between Lives and Livelihoods*. (2021). Available at:

<https://www.bgmea.com.bd/uploads/newsletters/apparel-story-january-february-2021.pdf>

De Vaus, D. (2001). Research design in social research. *Research design in social research*, 1-296.

Dewey, M. (2018). Domestic obstacles to labor standards: law enforcement and informal institutions in Argentina’s garment industry. *Socio-Economic Review*, 16(3), 567–586. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ser/mwx028>

Donaghey, J., & Reinecke, J. (2018). When Industrial Democracy Meets Corporate Social Responsibility - A Comparison of the Bangladesh Accord and Alliance as Responses to the Rana Plaza Disaster. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 56(1), 14–42. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12242>

Dudovskiy, J. (2022, January). *Interpretivism (interpretivist) Research Philosophy*. Research-Methodology. Available at:

[https://research-methodology.net/research-philosophy/interpretivism/#\\_ftn1](https://research-methodology.net/research-philosophy/interpretivism/#_ftn1)

FRENKEL, S. J., & SCHUESSLER, E. S. (2021). From Rana Plaza to COVID-19: Deficiencies and opportunities for a new labour governance system in garment global supply chains. *International Labour Review*, 160(4), 591–609. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ilr.12208>

Genoni, E. M., Khan, I. A., Krishnan, N., Palaniswamy, N., & Raza, W. (2020). Losing Livelihoods: The Labor Market Impacts of COVID-19 in Bangladesh (pp. 1-16). World Bank Group, Poverty and Equity Global Practice. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1596/34449>

GITNUX. (2023, March 13). *Bangladesh's Garment Industry 2023: A Look at the Statistics* • GITNUX. Available at: <https://blog.gitnux.com/bangladesh-garment-industry-statistics/#:~:text=The%20RMG%20sector%20in%20Bangladesh>

Goger, A. 2013. Ethical branding in Sri Lanka: A case study of garments without guilt. In *Workers' rights and labor compliance in global supply chains: Is a social label the answer?* ed. D. Miller., J. Bair., and M. Dickson, 47–68. London: Routledge.

Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. (2014). Understanding, selecting, and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blueprint for your “house”. *Administrative Issues Journal*, 4(2), 4.

Gunawardana, S., and Biyanwila, J. 2008. Trade unions in Sri Lanka: Beyond party politics. In *Trade unions in Asia*, ed. J. Benson and Y. Zhu, 195–216. London: Routledge.

Hardy, T., & Ariyawansa, S. (2019). *Literature Review on the Governance of Work Governance and Tripartism Department*.

Hewamanne, S. 2009. Duty bound? Militarization, romances, and new forms of violence among Sri Lanka's free trade zone factory workers. *Cultural Dynamics* 21 (2): 153–84. doi:10.1177/0921374008105069

Hewamanne, S. 2020. Surveillance by another name: The Modern Slavery Act, global factory workers, and part-time sex work in Sri Lanka. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 45 (3): 653–77. doi:10.1086/706471.

Heyes, J., & Ludek Rychly. (2021). *The Governance of Labour Administration*. Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781802203158>

Hossain, Md. S., & Alam, S. (2022). Impacts of COVID-19 on the Garment Sector of Bangladesh. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 12(03), 443–487. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4236/ajibm.2022.123026>



Howard, D. A., & Giovanelli, M. (2019). Einstein's Philosophy of Science.

*Plato.stanford.edu*. Available at:

<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2019/entries/einstein-philsceience/>

Hyman, R. (1999). National Industrial Relations Systems and Transnational Challenges: An Essay in Review. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 5(1), 89–110. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/095968019951006>

ILO. 2020a. "The Supply Chain Ripple Effect: How COVID-19 Is Affecting Garment Workers and Factories in Asia and the Pacific", Research Brief, October 2020. Bangkok.

ILO-2023 available at:

[https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Eventsandmeetings/WCMS\\_881424/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Eventsandmeetings/WCMS_881424/lang--en/index.htm)

ILO-Available at:

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/article/wcms\\_120687.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/article/wcms_120687.pdf)

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Available at:

([https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms\\_615874.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_615874.pdf))

Islam, N., Ghosh, S. K., Islam, A., Salam, N. M., Khosru, Md. T., & Al Masud, Md. A. (2018). Working Conditions and Lives of Female Readymade Garment Workers in Bangladesh. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2921867>

Kang, Y. (2021). The rise, demise, and replacement of the Bangladesh experiment in transnational labor regulation. *International Labour Review*, 160(3). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ilr.12199>

Kennedy, B. L., Thornberg, R. (2018). The SAGE handbook of qualitative data collection. Ed. by Uwe Flick, SAGE;

Kuada, J. (2012). *Research methodology: A project guide for university students*. Samfundslitteratur.

Laplaine, L., Mantovani, P., Adolphs, R., Chang, H., Mantovani, A., McFall-Ngai, M., Rovelli, C., Sober, E., & Pradeu, T. (2019). Opinion: Why science needs philosophy. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 116(10), 3948–3952. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1900357116>

Mahmud, F. (2023, April 24). *Ten years of Rana Plaza: How safe is Bangladesh garment industry?* Available at:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/24/ten-years-of-rana-plaza-how-safe-is-bangladesh-garment-industry>

Mohiuddin, A. K. (2020). A Pandemic Review of Covid-19 Situation in Bangladesh. *Journal of Bioscience & Biomedical Engineering*, 1, 1-9

Myers, M. D. (2019). Qualitative research in business and management. *Qualitative research in business and management*, 1-364.

Niforou, C. (2014). International Framework Agreements and the democratic deficit of global labor governance. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 35(2), 367–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831x13484815>

Ohmae, K. (1990). The borderless world. *McKinsey Quarterly*, (3), 3-19. Accessed online on 25.04.22, Available at: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1058505.pdf>.

O'brien, R., & Williams, M. (2020). *Global political economy : evolution & dynamics*. Red Globe Press, An Imprint Of Macmillan Education.

O'Brien, R., and Williams, M. (2020). *Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics*. Macmillan. Chapter 1: 'Theories of Global Political Economy, pp. 5-22.1

Paton, E. (2021, April 6). Garment Workers Who Lost Jobs in Pandemic Still Wait for Severance Pay. *The New York Times*. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/06/fashion/garment-workers-severance-pay-theft.html>

Polaski S. (2009) *Harnessing Global Forces to Create Decent Work in Cambodia*. International Institute for Labour Studies, Research Series 119. Geneva: ILO

Prentice, R. (2021). Labour Rights from Labour Wrongs? Transnational Compensation and the Spatial Politics of Labour Rights after Bangladesh's Rana Plaza Garment Factory Collapse. *Antipode*, 53(6), 1767–1786. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12751>

Rabbani, A., Saxena, S. B., & Islam, M. F. (2020). The impact of Covid-19 on the lives of workers in the Bangladesh garments industry. Mapped in *Bangladesh*. Available at: [https://mappedinbangladesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Research-Brief\\_Final.pdf](https://mappedinbangladesh.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Research-Brief_Final.pdf)

Rahman, M., & Siddiqui, A. (2015). Female RMG worker: Economic Contribution in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 5(9). <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=d41edd4b9faf1981acac227c8d2565b19c4354dd#page=508>

Rahman, S., & Rahman, K. M. (2020). Multi-actor Initiatives after Rana Plaza: Factory Managers' Views. *Development and Change*, 51(5), 1331–1359. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12572>

Reinecke, J., Donaghey, J., Bocken, N., & Lauriano, L. (2019). *Business Models and Labour Standards: Making the Connection*.

*RMG export earnings in July 1-18 total \$1.57b*. (2020, July 20). The Financial Express. <https://thefinancialexpress.com.bd/economy/rmg-export-earnings-in-july-1-18-total-157b-1595218398>

Ruwanpura, K. N., and Wrigley, N. 2011. The costs of compliance? Views of Sri Lankan apparel manufacturers in times of global economic crisis. *Journal of Economic Geography* 11 (6): 1031–49. doi:10.1093/jeg/lbq036.

Ruwanpura, K. N. 2012. Ethical codes: Reality and rhetoric-a study of Sri Lanka's apparel sector. Available at: <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/337113/1/ESRC-EndofProjectReport2012.pdf>.

Ruwanpura, K. N. 2015. The weakest link? Unions, freedom of association and ethical codes: A case study from a factory setting in Sri Lanka. *Ethnography* 16 (1): 118–41. doi:10.1177/1466138113520373.

Ruwanpura, K. N. 2016. Garments without guilt? Uneven labor geographies and ethical trading—Sri Lankan labor perspectives. *Journal of Economic Geography* 16 (2): 423–46. doi:10.1093/jeg/lbu059.

Sabatier, P. A. (2007). The need for better theories. Sabatier PA (ed.) *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder, Colorado.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2012) “Research Methods for Business Students” 6th edition, Pearson Education Limited.

Saxena, 2020. Labour, global supply chains and the garment industry in South Asia: Bangladesh after Rana Plaza. London: Routledge.

Saxena, S. B. 2014. Made in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka: The labor behind the global garments and textiles industries. New York: Cambria Press.

Selwyn, B. (2018). Poverty chains and global capitalism. *Competition & Change*, 23(1), 71–97. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1024529418809067>

Smith, A., Barbu, M., Campling, L., Harrison, J., & Richardson, B. (2018). Labor Regimes, Global Production Networks, and European Union Trade Policy: Labor Standards and Export Production in the Moldovan Clothing Industry. *Economic Geography*, 94(5), 550–574. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00130095.2018.1434410>

Sultan, M, Hossain, M. S., Islam, S., Chowdhury, K., Naim, N., & Huq, F. (2020). Effect of COVID-19 on RMG sector and Trade Union Efforts to Mitigate Fallout Brac Institute of Government and Development. Available at: <https://bigd.bracu.ac.bd/study/effect-of-covid-19-on-rmg-sector-and-trade-union-efforts-to-mitigate-fall-out>.

*THERE IS HOPE AMID DESPAIR Sourcing shift from China is a silver lining for Bangladesh RMG industry in otherwise dark times for global trade November-December 2022.* (2022). Available at: <https://www.bgmea.com.bd/uploads/newsletters/apparel-story-november-december-2022.pdf>

Thomas, H. (2021). A “Decent Cuppa”: Worker Power and Consumer Power in the Sri Lankan Tea Sector. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 59(1), 114–138. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjir.12489>

Tighe, E. G. 2015. Stakeholder capitalism and workers' rights in the Bangladesh garment industry. Ph.D. diss. University of Southampton.

UNICEF, 2015. The Ready-Made Garment Sector and Children in Bangladesh. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/csr/files/CSR\\_BANGLADESH\\_RMG\\_REPORT.PDF](https://www.unicef.org/csr/files/CSR_BANGLADESH_RMG_REPORT.PDF)

USC Libraries, Research Guides, (2022). Accessed online at 13.05.22, Available at: <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns#:~:text=The%20research>

Wickramasingha, S., & Coe, N. M. (2021). Conceptualizing Labor Regimes in Global Production Networks: Uneven Outcomes across the Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan Apparel Industries. *Economic Geography*, 98(1), 68–90. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00130095.2021.1987879>

Wijayasiri, J., and Dissanayake, J. (2009). The ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement and innovation in the Sri Lankan textile and clothing industry. *OECD Journal: General Papers* 2008 (4): 157–88.