Political Correctness in Crises on Social Media

Written by Anne Højen Justesen

A qualitative case study of the Swedish clothing company H&M, and how political correctness influenced the crisis regarding "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" on Twitter.

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1.0 ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates how political correctness influences crises on social media. The thesis takes departure in a case study of the Swedish retail company H&M and its recent crisis regarding an advertisement of a black boy modeling a hoodie with the words "Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" from January, 2018.

The thesis focuses on political correctness, crisis communication, and social media as the three main subjects. Many articles have been written and much research has been conducted regarding political correctness, crisis communication, and social media separately. Crisis communication and social media have been studied in relation to each other as well, however, there appeared to be a knowledge gap regarding political correctness in relation to crisis communication and social media. It therefore became relevant to study how political correctness influences crises on social media, as this has not previously been studied.

As the aim is to study the influence of political correctness, the ontological position social constructionist functions as the methodological foundation for this thesis. Political correctness is thus viewed as something, which is being constructed within the social context it is found. The epistemological position for this thesis is interpretivism, as the empirical data consists of interviews and Twitter-posts. It is thus opinions and interpretation, which is being studied, in relation to investigate how political correctness influences crises on social media. The notion of the hermeneutical circle is also taken into account, as the researcher is moving back and forth between the understanding of parts of a phenomenon and the understanding of the phenomenon in its whole.

The theoretical approach for this thesis takes departure in a literature review. The theoretical section elaborates on crisis communication and social media using theories from Frandsen and Johansen (2007) and Coombs and Holladay (2012). Furthermore, the section elaborates on stakeholder engagement using theories from Luoma-aho (2015) and lastly, the section elaborates on political correctness in relation to social media using theories from Wikström (2016), Szilágyi (2017), and Rost, Stahel and Frey (2017).

On the basis of a thematic analysis, it becomes clear that political correctness influences crises on social media to some extend. Political correctness is creating a censorship, which indicates that people are not expressing their real thoughts and opinions on social media. In that

matter, political correctness has become a matter of sensitivity, as people are hiding behind political correctness. In other words, people are afraid to speak their "real" mind, which makes issues, such as racism, a very sensitive subject. Lastly, it becomes clear that faith-holders of an organization could be characterized as such, without actively taking part in the rhetorical arena. Additionally, the active faith-holders do not hesitate to verbalize the H&M crisis, without hiding behind political correctness.

In that matter, it is possible to argue that political correctness influenced the H&M crisis on social media, as the perceived use of political incorrectness and unfiltered speech is an inflamed area.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Organizations within the modern society have to deal with many different aspects, when finding themselves within a crisis. A new spectrum of factors has to be taken into account, when it comes to crisis communication. Social media is just one aspect, but one which has been much studied, and still continues to be - and with very good reason, as social media takes up more and more space of our everyday life. Today, organizational crises might be portrayed on social media platforms, whereas the influence of social media and its users can have great, and possibly critical, impact on organizations. According to Coombs and Holladay (2010) and the SCCT theory, factors such as crisis history and prior reputation can intensify crises (Coombs and Holladay 2010, 39), and especially on social media, where many people can become part of the rhetorical arena and thus become crisis communicators (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 251).

When looking through the newsfeed on Facebook, it is possible to see that people argue and become offensive and rude, when other people do not share their point of view, or if people in some way tried to test the social norm of the social media world. It appears as if there are rules on how to behave on social media, yet at the same time social media is also the place where people can express and say whatever they feel like, without no further consequence, which in some cases can be offensive – people can easily post an offensive or aggressive comment, and then quickly disappear. (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2016) Social media thus becomes a platform, where people can hide behind their profile behind the screen.

"The Internet has had a significant effect on corporate communication." (Coombs and Holladay, 2010, 379). The role of social media's relation to organizational crises has been a widely investigated topic. With the constant development of the Internet, it is given that communication on social media develops along side the Internet, which thus also includes the crisis communication and the different aspects of it that takes place on social media.

Many scientific research papers have been conducted, in order to study the field of crisis communication, social media, and the two areas combined. As mentioned above, many factors can intensify crises on social media. A literature review for this study found that political correctness in relation to crises on social media had not been studied. So far, the topic of political correctness has been studied by, for instance, Dr. Anna Szilagyi, who studied the use

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of political correctness in political speeches (Szilágyi 2017). Peter Wikström studied the positivity of political correctness in Twitter-conversations, and argued that political correctness is often associated with something negative. In other words, he argued that no one is pro-political correctness, meaning that no one favors to be politically correct. That contradicts with the notion made by Dr. Anna Szilagyi, saying that people hide behind political correctness.

Political correctness thus appears to be very present on social media. Social media is a great part of people's everyday life, and an important factor in organizational crisis communication, it therefore becomes relevant to study the influence of political correctness, in order for organizations to be able to understand how to deal with it as an external factor during crises.

2.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

On the basis of the introduction made above, the following problem statement have been constructed:

➢ **How does political correctness influence a crisis on social media for an organization?**

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3.0 CASE DESCRIPTION

The case for this thesis has its basis in the case with H&M, a global clothing-retail company, seated in Sweden, and it's recent marketing on its British web shop. The advertisement showed a black child modeling a hoodie with a printed text saying "Coolest Monkey in The Jungle". In the same series of clothes, a white child was modeling a hoodie with the words "Survival Expert". The advertisement caused an online firestorm, and made H&M's stakeholders turn to Twitter to express their frustration and anger over H&M. Some posts showed both images placed next to each other, making the distinction greater. The organization quickly moved the image from the web shop and all other online platforms, and posted an apology. Later on the organization chose to withdraw the item, and it is therefore not possible to purchase the hoodie anymore.

However, despite an apology and the withdrawal of the hoodie, the online firestorm continued to expand. Several famous personalities also turned to Twitter to express their thoughts about the H&M advertisement. Amongst these were the Canadian singer The Weeknd and the American rapper G-Eazy. They both had collaborations with the organization, which they thus chose to end. (SoundVenue.dk 2018) On Twitter, H&M was accused of being racist, and the posts related to the situation kept growing. Furthermore, H&M stores in South Africa were attacked by angry stakeholders, which caused the company to shut down its stores in the area.

On the basis of the social media comments regarding "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle", the parents of the black child turned to the media to tell their side of the story. In relation to that, the mother of the child told the media and other people, who accused H&M of racism, to calm down.

H&M has previously been pointed out in online firestorms and in traditional media. The latest episode includes the organizations burning of 12 tons of clothes a year in Denmark from 2013 to 2017 (Berlingske.dk 2017).

4.0 THEORETICAL APPRAOCH

This theoretical section will function as a literature review. It will elaborate on relevant literature, which will provide the theoretical foundation for the thesis. The theory will provide insight into crisis communication and social media, along with a theoretical section, which elaborates on political correctness, in order to be able to identify the phenomenon in the analytical section, and its relation to crises on social media.

4.1 CRISIS COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen (2007) distinguish between a narrow and a wide perception of crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 15).

The narrow perception defines crisis communication as the type of communication that is being used *during* a crisis. A crisis is perceived as an event, and focus is on damage control (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 15). Additionally, the narrow perception views crisis communication as sender oriented, and as a tool, which provides information. Moreover, it has an operational approach towards crisis communication, meaning that the communication management has a prescription on how to handle a crisis. Frandsen and Johansen (2007) refer to it as a "*how-to*" approach (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 16).

The wide perception of crisis communication is also concerned with what happens *during* a crisis, but is additionally concerned about the *pre- and post-crisis phases* (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 16). The wide perception is therefore focusing on prevention of crises and on the post-crisis phase as a process of learning. Moreover, the wide perception views crisis communication as both sender- and receiver oriented. This means that several actors take part in the crisis communication (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 17). This could for instance include media coverage of a crisis, stakeholder communication on social media, and of course both. According to Frandsen and Johansen (2007) it is within the wide perception that crisis communication actually becomes crisis communication, as focus is upon image and reputation (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 17). In other words, this means that the wide perception of crisis communication does not have a correct or determined method of handling a crisis, as "*every communications-problem is in the last instance unique*" (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 17 – own translation).

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On the basis of the narrow and the wide perception of crisis communication, Frandsen and Johansen (2007) offer a new approach to crisis communication and have thus conducted a communication model, which they call "the rhetorical arena" (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 251). The model focuses on the complex process of crisis communication and the many voices, which either communicates to, with, against, past, or about each other. This is what the authors refer to as "*a multi-vocal approach*" (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 252 – own translation).

When a crisis occurs, a rhetorical arena opens up, and all actors, who participate in the communication regarding the crisis, become crisis communicators (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 275). Moreover, the rhetorical arena does not close when the crisis is over. This relates to the wide perception of crisis communication, where the pre- and post-communication is also given attention. This furthermore means that crisis communication needs to consider both the communication from the organizations in crisis, and the communication from the many actors within the rhetorical arena.

Frandsen and Johansen (2007) note that the rhetorical arena opens up before the crisis becomes an "actual" crisis. (Frandsen and Johansen 2007, 275) This is what Coombs and Holladay (2012) refer to as a paracrisis. "*A paracrisis is like a crisis*" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 408), and poses a threat to the organization's reputation (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 410). Coombs and Holladay (2012) defines a paracrisis as "*a publicly visible threat that charges an organization with irresponsible or unethical manner*" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 409). If stakeholders believe that an organization has acted in an unethical or irresponsible manner, the organization's reputation can be damaged (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 410). As mentioned above, the paracrisis is perceived as a threat, and will first be considered a crisis, when a great variety of stakeholders are taking part in the concern. In addition to that, the authors note that "social media is potentially public" (Coombs and Holladay 2010, 409), meaning that people might see what someone posts on social media and they might not see it. People see the content if they are either connected to the creator of the content, for instance, following a certain organization or person on Twitter, or if they actively search for the specific content. (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 409) Even though it is possible that an organization's stakeholders might not even see the crisis-oriented content that is being posted on social media, the potential publicity should still be addressed, in order to keep the crisis from escalating (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 409). Hence, social media can intensify a paracrisis, as

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it works with short quick messages, which can gain a great amount of attention (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 411). Moreover, if messages regarding the paracrisis are portrayed in both social and traditional media, more people are exposed to the crisis, and more potential actors could enter the rhetorical arena and thus become crisis communicators (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 411). This is also the case, if a message is echoed in social media, which is when others repeat a message on social media (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 411).

According to Coombs and Holladay (2012), social media becomes a perfect and preferred platform for stakeholders to present the organization's challenges and to express their thoughts regarding the organization's actions. Social media is thus a great communication tool. (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 408) In their article, they present three communicative strategies for utilization, when dealing with a paracrisis: *refute*, *reform,* and *refuse* (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 412).

Refute is when managers fight back and defend the organization. This can often escalate the crisis, as the stakeholders already feel that the organization has acted irresponsible or unethical. However, an organization can make use of the refute strategy, if it believes that other stakeholders will support the organization. (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 412) This type of stakeholder is what Luoma-aho (2015) defines as 'faith-holders' (Luoma-aho 2015, 9). An elaboration on faith-holders and stakeholder engagement will follow later on in section 4.2 Stakeholder Engagement, Crisis Communication, and Social Media.

Reform is when managers meet the demands and expectations of its stakeholders, in relation to the crisis. The organization recognizes its irresponsible or unethical behavior, and can thus meet the demands of its stakeholders in two possible ways – an implicit or explicit recognition of the problem (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 412). The implicit reform strategy, is when the management "*acknowledges [that] past behaviors were incorrect by changing those behaviors*" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 412). The stakeholders' demands are therefore being incorporated into the organization's future operations. With the explicit reform strategy, the managers also recognize the organization's irresponsible or unethical behavior and admit the wrongdoing, "*and work to correct the situation*" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 412). In other words, new operational strategies are not implied in to the organization's future.

"*Refuse is when management does not acknowledge the challenge*" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 413). Managers ignore the problems, hoping that it will "*disappear(s) due to lack of*

attention" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 413). The organization can thus choose to communicate matters that will boost its reputation. The positive information should then overrule the negative, and managers are thus depending on its faith-holders – those stakeholders who support the organization (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 413).

When addressing social media and crisis communication, Coombs and Holladay (2012) states three social media rules, when dealing with a paracrisis. The organizations must be *where the action is*; meaning that it should respond to the crisis on the medium the crisis has emerged (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 413). Moreover, the organization should *be present on social media before the crisis occurs*. This means that the organization should not use social media to respond to the crisis, if it has not used the type of medium before. As an example, the organization needs followers on Twitter, if anyone should receive its messages. Hence, it will be meaningless for the organization to communicate on social media, if it is not established there beforehand (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 413). Lastly, the organization should "*be redundant and sprawl*" (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 414). This means that the organization should use both social media and traditional media to address the crisis. It is important that the organization attempts to use as many channels as possible that are overlapping each other. However, the organization still has to have in mind where its target group is, in order to effectively communicate its messages. (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 414)

4.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, CRISIS COMMUNICATION, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

As mentioned earlier, this section will also elaborate on social media and stakeholder engagement. Luoma-aho (2015) has written an article, where she distinguishes between three types of stakeholders. With social media and the online environment as a major communications platform, it is important for organizations to understand the different stakeholders and their role in relation to crises (Luoma-aho 2015, 2).

The three types of stakeholders are divided into *faith-holders*, *hateholders*, and *fakeholders*. This theoretical section will not be focusing on fakeholders, as that type of stakeholder, is "*artificially generated by either individuals or persona-creating software and algorithms*" (Luoma-aho 2015, 13). Fakeholders are therefore difficult to identify, as they appear as a

person or organization. This thesis do not aim to investigate fakeholders and how these influence crisis communication on social media, and based on the above-mentioned, will therefore not further elaborate on fakeholders.

Faith-holders are the stakeholders, who positively engage in an organization and "*support it via their beliefs, emotions and behaviours*" (Luoma-aho 2015, 9). The faith-holders are very important to an organization, especially during a crisis, as they can keep the crisis from escalating. With their positive experiences and feelings towards the organization, the faith-holders are viewed as the organizational social capital. That is as well very important during a crisis (Luoma-aho 2015, 9). Luoma-aho (2015) furthermore notes that it is important for an organization to maintain and nurse its existing stakeholders, because they will recruit new stakeholders. Positive word of mouth and recommendations from faith-holders will also encourage new stakeholders to consume, and as existing faith-holders are already great consumers, their actions become very valuable for an organization (Luoma-aho 2015, 11). Stakeholder engagement must be public in order to be valuable for the organization, and social media is a very suitable platform for forth bringing positive engagement (Luoma-aho 2015, 11). In relation to the faith-holder concept, Luoma-aho (2015) notes that the faith-holders can turn into hateholders – that is if the faith-holders' needs and expectations are not met by the organization (Luoma-aho 2015, 11).

Hateholders "*are the negatively engaged stakeholders who dislike or hate the brand or the organization and harm it via their behaviours*" (Luoma-aho 2015, 11). Hateholding often occurs because of anger, and when the hateholder has a clear target to focus its anger towards. It is important for organizations to consider and focus on hateholders, as negative posts online, for instance posts on social media, are considered to be more reliable than positive reports. (Luoma-aho 2015, 11)

As mentioned earlier, content on social media spreads fast, and negative comments and posts can have great negative consequences for an organization. Even if these posts or comments are just from one single individual, they can damage the organization, when the online environment is taken into account (Luoma-aho 2015, 12). Remembering that Coombs and Holladay (2012) argue that when a social message is echoed on social media, more people are exposed to it (Coombs and Holladay 2012, 411). In such situations, an organization's former,

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and possibly forgotten, crisis can be brought up by the hateholders, as the Internet "*serves as a collective memory*" (Luoma-aho 2015, 12).

As much as hateholders and what they embody is negatively loaded, they can also be very valuable to an organization. They often shed light on neglected problems, and thus remind the organization to be aware. (Luoma-aho 2015, 13) Some hateholders can thus be turned into faith-holders, if the organization meets their needs and make "peace" (Luoma-aho 2015, 12).

It is therefore especially important for organizations to consider stakeholder engagement on social media during a crisis. Meeting the needs and expectations of the faith-holders are important, as they then will support the organization during a crisis, or prevent the crisis from escalating. Moreover, it is also important to meet the needs and demands of the hateholders during a crisis, as the organization then has the possibility to turn then into faith-holders.

4.3 POLITICAL CORRECTNESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

When searching for literature that addresses political correctness and crisis communication, it was mostly articles regarding political communication or political speech, which appeared from the search results. However, as the theoretical approach encompasses an elaboration on crisis communication itself, it is possible to create a connection between that and political correctness, and thus on the basis of the thesis be able to conclude on how political correctness influences crises on social media. When searching for literature that addresses political correctness and social media, it is possible to see that many writers have said something about it. Many articles have been written, but few scientific ones. Moreover, the connection made with political correctness is often with politicians, and not much with social media. However, Peter Wikström (2016) has conducted a study, in which he attempts to portray political correctness on the social media Twitter, in a positive manner (Wikström 2016). Wikström's (2016) study does not take crisis communications into account, but his focus on Twitter and political correctness on social media, can assist in the theoretical approach of this thesis.

Wikström (2016) argues that diversity, tolerance, and multiculturalism are phenomena, which often are associated with political correctness (Wikström 2016, 165). In addition to

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that, Dr. Anna Szilágyi (2017) defines political correctness as something, which "*functions as a neutral, descriptive reference to the principles of avoiding utterances and actions that can marginalize or offend certain groups of people*" (Szilágyi 2017). In this manner, political correctness stand very neutral and as something people can chose to use, if they feel the need to avoid offending other people. However, political correctness is often associated with something negative. During Wikström's (2016) study, he found that political correctness could function as a censorship, meaning that people could hide their "real thoughts", if they were expressing themselves political correct (Wikström 2016, 168). Szilágyi (2017) applies the same word, when analyzing politicians' use of political correctness in speeches. She argues that political correctness is a censorship, which takes away the free speech (Szilágyi 2017). People are not expressing their real feelings or thoughts about a certain subject or the like, because political correctness is limiting. Additionally, if people then were to express their real thoughts or feelings, they could, for instance, be accused of being racists. In further relation to political correctness as a censorship, it also functions as deception. This means that when political correctness is being used as a censorship, it also functions as a deception, which makes actual problems become taboo (Szilágyi 2017). In other words, this means that people are using political correctness to ""*cover-up problems", of which people are "sick of*"" (Szilágyi 2017). Additionally, political correctness can be seen as an obsession, where Szilágyi (2017) notes that critics of political correctness argue that people are using political correctness to a point where it has become too much, and where the phenomenon are taking over peoples logical sense (Szilágyi 2017).

Furthermore, Szilágyi (2017) notes the "correctness" in political correctness. She argues that the word "correctness" indicates that there is a particular and right way to do something (Szilágyi 2017), which thus determines what people can say or do. In that sense, political correctness, if not being applied, can make people fell as if they are being talked down to (Szilágyi 2017). Moreover, she portrays political correctness as an obsession and thereby argues that it is being used to often (Szilágyi 2017). It is important to have in mind that these statements of political correctness, which Szilágyi (2017) points out, are based on politicians discrediting political correctness. However, the statements give a proper insight into political correctness and how it is being used.

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In relation to political correctness and social media, Wikström (2016) notes that political correctness is very evident in the social networking era, and especially in relation to "*social media movements for social justice*" (Wikström 2016, 160).

Noting Wikström´s (2016) findings regarding political correctness as a censorship it becomes relevant to discuss the social norm in the online environment. Katja Rost, Lea Stahel, and Bruno S. Frey (2016) conducted a research article, where they studied the influence of anonymity and social norm in online firestorms. They note that negative comments and online aggression have become more publicly visible, and that social media enforces the possibility for users to express their aggression everywhere at any time (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 1-2). On social media the users can sneak off after posting an aggressive or negative comment, which possibly can be associated with the possibility of anonymity. However, Rost et al. (2016) argue, "*individuals have strong motivation for being non-anonymous when being aggressive in social media*" (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 2). Hence, by not being anonymous, people are increasing their trustworthiness (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 5). Anonymous comments do not impact personal opinions as much as non-anonymous comments, as people cannot relate to the anonymity, and can therefore not identify themselves with the statement posted in the comment (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 6). Furthermore, people on social media have nothing to hide, thus their comments will not be anonymous. This is due to a belief that "*they stand up for higher-order moral ideals and principles*" (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 13).

When people post negative or aggressive comments on social media, it is a response to a perception of a violated behavior (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 3). If an organization is not behaving according to the social norms of the online media and its participants, people will attempt to uphold the social norm by disapproving the behavior (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 2). Norms are considered social, when they are shared by other people and maintained when these people approve or disapprove something (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 2). Social media is a place for digital social norm enforcement, which is being constructed by the comments of online firestorms (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2017, 13).

When public figures express something (in public), which is considered wrong, there appears to be a tendency to turn towards social media, in order to comment on the certain behavior. Heidi Herzogenrath-Amelung (2016) refers to a situation, where a scientist spoke about women in science, making a notion that they did not belong in the laboratory. This notion

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made people turn to Twitter, which then created an online firestorm (Herzogenrath-Amelung 2016, 1080). Herzogenrath-Amelung (2016) makes the interesting notion of how what might be seen as wrong not necessarily equals incorrect (Herzogenrath-Amelung 2016, 1082). However, "*the correct often tends to obscure the true: where we don't recognise the correct as being only 'partially true', this partial truth tends to be taken for the whole truth, and those aspects of the truth that correctness does not cover are lost.*" (Herzogenrath-Amelung 2016, 1082). In other words, what is political correct to say or do, might not necessarily be true. However, there is some sort of paradox online, due to an expectation of people behaving according to the social norms of the online media and its participant, yet the freedom of speech, the expectation of people telling the truth, and the use of jokes often collide with the political correctness. Furthermore, remembering the unfortunate episode with scientist mentioned above, the political correctness of his statement (or the political incorrectness, so to speak) created an online firestorm on Twitter, even though his statement was made at conference in Korea and not on social media. In relation to that, the role of the Internet thus becomes of great interest, as, according to Rost et al. (2017), people do not wish to be anonymous on social media when being aggressive. However, there appears to be a difference between what you say online and what you say to a person face-to-face. No one confronted the scientist at the conference, when he claimed that women did not belong in science – the confrontation only happened online, behind a screen. (Herzogenrath-Amelung 2016, 1081+1086)

5.0 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The methodological section of this thesis consists of an elaboration of theory of science, the research design and an account of empirical data. The methodological section functions as a guideline for conducting this thesis.

5.1 THEORY OF SCIENCE

This section provides an elaboration on the ontological and epistemological considerations for this thesis. Theory of science informs the readers of a study how the researcher views the world, and thus how knowledge is constructed. Hence, the ontological section of this thesis will entail considerations of "*the nature social phenomena*" (Bryman 2012, 6), and in this case how they are a product of social interactions. The epistemological section of the thesis will then entail considerations of how to study the social world and thus create knowledge.

5.1.1 ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When writing this thesis, the ontological orientation takes the position of social constructionism.

Constructionism views the world, social phenomena, their institutions, and meanings as being constructed by social actors; thus, they are socially constructed, and constructionism is therefore often referred to as social constructionism (Bryman 2012, 33). Additionally, social phenomena are constantly developing. When looking at social constructionism from a cultural perspective, the values and norms of a culture are agreed upon and not determined and command-like. In other words, humans themselves are constructing their meanings and actions. In that matter, this thesis views the world as socially constructed by humans.

When taking on the constructionist paradigm, the researcher is not able to free oneself from his or her own social reality (Bryman 2012, 34). The natural sciences imply the fact that a researcher should be able to stay objective and free from his or her social reality when conducting a study (Wenneberg 2002, 4). In Wenneberg's (2002) article about social constructionism, he argues how it can deconstruct the traditional sciences, yet at the same time function as the foundation of a new way of understanding knowledge (Wenneberg 2002, 3). Social constructionism is thus deconstructing the natural sciences by saying that the

researchers cannot be free from their own social reality, which then questioned the truth of the knowledge that was being discovered (Wenneberg 2002, 4-5). In that matter, the terms transparency and trustworthiness becomes important to a social researcher. Transparency and trustworthiness will occur throughout this thesis, as an elaboration on the research design, the data set, the collection of it, and the analytical approach will be provided. In that matter, the methodological section provides an account for and elaboration on how the different sections of the thesis are being carried out.

Constructionism views categories and their meaning as something constructed through interactions (Bryman 2012, 34). In other words, social constructionism views social phenomena as a product of social interactions (Bryman 2012, 6). According to that, political correctness is thus constructed through social interactions regarding what is political correct or not. Additionally, the phenomenon is then continuously being constructed through the interactions on for instance social media. Political correctness and its meaning in relation to crisis communication on social media is then something, which is being constructed through the interactions of H&M's stakeholders in relation to "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle". Social constructionism will thus provide an understanding of how political correctness influences a crisis on social media, which is the aim of this thesis.

5.1.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"*An epistemological issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline*" (Bryman 2012, 27). Within the epistemological orientation you can find different positions, which defines how knowledge is created.

It is appropriate to consider the position of interpretivism as the orientation of this thesis. Writers, who take the position of interpretivism, "*share a view that the subject matter of the social sciences is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences*" (Bryman 2012, 28), thus allowing some sort of subjectivity. Interpretivism views people and their institutions different from the natural sciences. Hence, as a research procedure that sees and reflects the differences of humans and the natural order. With positivism there is a belief that there is a reality separate from human's depiction of reality. In other words, this means that there is an external reality and a social reality, yet only the external reality is considered and studied by

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the scientist, because humans could 'contaminate' the knowledge with their meanings, interests and the like (Wenneberg 2002, 4). The researcher and the reality are thus separate within the position of positivism. With interpretivism, reality and researcher are inseparable. (Bryman 2012, 28-30)

As the focus of this thesis is to investigate how political correctness influences a crisis on social media, I will be studying meanings and interpretations. In that matter, I find interpretivism as the appropriate orientation towards the thesis. Additionally, the employment of hermeneutics is very suitable in understanding and interpreting the empirical data. "*Hermeneutics is seen by its modern advocates as a strategy that has potential in relation both to texts, as documents, and to social actions (…)*" (Bryman 2012, 560). However, when combining interpretivism and hermeneutics, the method of working with data and creating knowledge is referred to as the hermeneutic circle. When working through the hermeneutic circle, the researcher is moving back and forth between the understanding of parts of a phenomenon and the understanding of a phenomenon in its whole (Collin and Køppe 2014, 233). In relation to this thesis, this will be a moving back and forth between the understanding of political correctness and its relation to H&M's "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle" crisis on social media as the whole. Thus, working hermeneutically can help gain knowledge and an understanding of the phenomenon of political correctness in relations to the H&M crises. Moreover, it creates an understanding of the influence social media may have had on the crisis. The thesis aims to interpret and understand the social actions that social media and political correctness creates (Bryman 2012, 30).

When applying interpretivism and the notion of the hermeneutic circle as the epistemological paradigm to this thesis, the interpretation will be upon the human actions within the empirical data (Bryman 2012, 28). The empirical data will continuously be worked with throughout this thesis. By working within the interpretivist paradigm, a development of understanding and knowledge of how political correctness influences a crisis on social media will take place.

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5.1.2 ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

After discussing the epistemological considerations, an elaboration on the ontological considerations will follow. When talking about ontology, two positions – objectivism and constructionism – are distinguished between.

Objectivism view social phenomena as something that is external to humans, and as something that humans cannot influence, and thus is out of their reach (Bryman 2012, 32). In other words, if one takes a cultural aspect of objectivism, cultures has shared values and norms, which people socialize into, in order to function within a society or a workplace. The cultures limit people, as it is something, which they cannot influence, and it thus becomes a sort of command. (Bryman 2012, 33)

The opposite position to objectivism is constructionism. The view here is that social phenomena, their institutions, and meanings are being constructed by social actors; hence, they are socially constructed (Bryman 2012, 33). Social phenomena are constantly developing. If we again take a cultural aspect, the values and norm of a culture are more agreed upon than determined and command-like. In other words, humans and their actions are being constructed by humans themselves. When taking on the constructionist paradigm, I will not, as a researcher, be able to free myself from my own social reality (Bryman 2012, 34). However, I will remain as objective as possible when conducting my thesis.

Constructionism views categories and their meaning as something constructed through interactions (Bryman 2012, 34). According to that, political correctness is thus something, which is constructed through the interactions of H&M's stakeholders in relation to "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle". As the aim is to investigate how political correctness might enhance a crisis on social media, interpretation and constructionism will be able to guide this study well. These positions result in the empirical data being qualitative. An elaboration of that will follow in the next section.

5.2 QUALITATIVE VS. QUANTITATIVE

Roughly, the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research strategies is that the quantitative method applies measurements or numbers as data, and the qualitative method

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applies words and meanings (Bryman 2012, 35). However, the distinction goes further than that. We also see a difference within the epistemological and ontological orientations. The qualitative research method employs the position of interpretivism, whereas the quantitative research method employs positivism within the epistemological orientations. Within the ontological orientation, the qualitative research method employs the position of constructionism, and the quantitative research method employs objectivism. (Bryman 2012, 36)

The data, which was collected and analyzed for this thesis, consisted of qualitative data. The data consisted of collected Twitter-posts concerning "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle", along with semi-structured interviews with H&M customers. An elaboration of the empirical data will follow later on.

Different research methods are associated with qualitative research. Ethnography is a method to collect data by observing in a social setting, in order to understand a certain group and its culture (Bryman 2012, 383). A further developed edition of the ethnographic research method is Robert V. Kozinets' 'netnography' from 2002. Netnography is an online marketing research technique, where the researcher observes online communities (Kozinets 2002, 61). From Kozinets' (2002) netnography, the use of *"providing trustworthy interpretation"* and *"research ethics"* will be applied in the methodology of this thesis, and an elaboration of those can be under section 5.4.2.1 and 5.4.2.2.

The method of netnography has been applied, as this thesis entered the online community of Twitter to collect posts concerning the H&M crisis "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle". Furthermore, the method of interviewing was applied. The interviews consisted of semi-structured interviews, where the aim was to seek and obtain knowledge and an understanding of how the participant perceived political correctness and how it might influence a crisis on social media. Hence, a qualitative research method will be applied. An elaboration on semi-structured interview and its employment within this thesis will follow under section 5.4.1.1.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods differ in their process. The process of the quantitative research method employs a deductive strategy, from which the researcher tests a theory, in order to either verify or falsify it. The process of the qualitative research method

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employs an inductive strategy, which involves the generation of theories. (Bryman 2012, 36) The aim of the thesis was to investigate how political correctness influences crises on social media; hence the inductive strategy will be employed. The literature, which have studied what factors can affect an online firestorm, such as H&M's crisis on Twitter, does not include a review of political correctness. This means that this thesis generated a theory of such (Bryman 2012, 36).

Lastly, it is important to argue that when carrying out a research, it is not possible to exclusively be inductive or deductive (Bryman 2012, 26). As this thesis employed the notion of the hermeneutic circle, it has moved back and forth between the different elements of the study, thereby portraying an iterative process.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

In order to investigate whether political correctness might enhance a crisis on social media, this thesis will be conducting a case-study research on the Scandinavian retail company H&M and the crisis concerning the use of a black child wearing a sweatshirt with the words "Coolest Monkey in the Jungle". The case will be referred to as "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle".

According to Bent Flyvbjerg (2006), a case study is "*a detailed examination of a single example*" (Flyvbjerg 2006, 2). It is thus possible to argue that this thesis conducted a case study, as H&M's crisis on social media is a single example. Furthermore, an examination of posts on the social media Twitter and the reactions to "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle" within that community have been conducted. According to Robert K. Yin and his book on case study research from 2009, more factors need to be considered, when dealing with case studies. In order to identify a research strategy and design as a case study, the researcher needs to look at the type of research question being posed (Yin 2009, 8-9). According to Yin (2009), 'that'-questions entail the question of who, where, how much, and how many, which serves as an exploratory research (Yin 2009, 9). For that type of research Yin (2009) argues that surveys or archival analysis functions as the best strategy (Yin 2009, 9). Hence, suggesting that other questions need to be asked, when applying case study as a strategy. These questions are 'how' and 'why' questions and are more explanatory, which makes the strategy of either a case study, history, or experiment a more suitable strategy (Yin 2009, 9).

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In order to explain the distinction between case study, history, and experiments, Yin (2009) sets up two additional factors. The first factor is whether "*control over behavioral events*" is required, and the second factor, is whether the focus is on contemporary or historical events (Yin 2009, 8). A case study does not need to have control over the behavioral events; such as it is needed in a laboratory experiment. That means that the behavioral events cannot be manipulated. Additionally, a case study is the preferred strategy when examining contemporary events (Yin 2009, 8). The case study chosen for this thesis began in January 2018, where the first Twitter-posts showed some of the reactions to H&M's campaign from its British website (Appendix 8-6). This made the case a contemporary event. Moreover, there was no need for "*control over behavioral events*", as the aim of the thesis was to study how political correctness enhances crises on social media. In fact, there was no wish or aim to control the behavioral events, as the study will be upon meanings and interpretations of the crisis. Furthermore, case study had the strength of direct observation (Yin 2009, 8), which is the method used when conducting a netnographic research.

Case studies are argued to be a great learning tool, as they produce context-dependent knowledge, which allows a certain expertise to arise (Flyvbjerg 2006, 4-6). Hence, case study became relevant for this thesis. As mentioned before, not much literature could be found on political correctness and its influence of online firestorms. A case study thus worked as a great learning tool to investigate political correctness and its influence, and therefore became part of the reasons for choosing to conduct a case study for this thesis.

To sum up, Yin (2009) defines case studies as a study, where the researcher should be asking a 'how' or 'why' questions "*about a contemporary event over which the researcher has little or no control*" (Yin 2009, 13). Additionally, Flyvbjerg (2006) defines a case study as "*a detailed examination of a single example*" (Flyvbjerg 2006, 2), and with those two definitions the case study of this thesis thus became a detailed study of the H&M crisis "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle" and <u>how</u> political correctness influences the crisis on the social media Twitter.

Therefore, it is possible to argue that the use of H&M's crisis with "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle" could be characterized as a case study, as the aim was to investigate the contextual conditions of social media and political correctness in relation to the crisis (Yin 2009, 13).

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the chosen case study could be characterized as a representative or typical case. Bryman (2012) refers to it as an exemplifying case (Bryman 2012, 70). This type of case study seeks to investigate "*the circumstances and conditions of an*

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everyday or commonplace situation" (Bryman 2012, 70). According to Johansen and Frandsen (2007), crises appear to be a part of the everyday life of organizations. This is not to say that crises appear everyday, but the amount of crises have increased (Johansen and Frandsen 2007, 29). H&M has found themselves in crises similar to "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle", latest in 2017, where it was revealed that the large retail company was burning 12 tons of clothes in Denmark (Hendriksz and fashionunited.uk 2017). The retail giant was also accused of using only white models in their South-African marketing campaigns back in 2015 (Kolbeck and bureaubiz.dk 2018). These examples can indicate crises as being a common situation. As Bryman (2012) argues, this type of case study is not chosen because it is "*extreme or unusual*" (Bryman 2012, 70), but because it for instance "*will provide a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered*" (Bryman 2012, 70). The case study of H&M, which was chosen for this study, provided a context in which the research question could be answered.

5.4 EMPIRICAL DATA

In this section, I will provide an overview of the empirical data along with an elaboration of the empirical considerations.

One part of the empirical data consisted of posts from the social media Twitter. Twitter is a social networking site, founded in 2006 (OnmicoreAgency.com 2018). Users send out small messages, which are called 'tweets'. Some also define Twitter as a news media, as it is widely used for sharing news and latest trends (Lifewire.com 2018). In the last quarter of 2017, Twitter had more than 330 million users monthly and approximately 500 million tweets are sent out everyday (OnmicoreAgency.com 2018). The posts, which have been collected and analyzed, are posts that were concerned with H&M's recent crisis "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle" from January 2018.

The other part of the empirical data consisted of interviews, which was conducted with H&M customers found on Facebook. The interviewees were found through a post on my personal Facebook profile (Appendix 15). The initial idea of collecting interview-participants was to conduct small in-store interviews in an H&M store in Aalborg. However, as the interview questions were lined out, it became too difficult to discuss something as complex as political

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correctness. Moreover, the difficulties of having to stop customers, who might have been in a hurry, became too great, when including the timeframe left for conducting the thesis.

As this thesis has social media as an element of the problem statement, it was relevant to seek participants that were familiar with such. A Facebook-post was therefore created in order to gather interview-participants to participate in the semi-structured interviews. All participants were found on the day of posting the Facebook-post, and there were no distinction of gender, occupation, or the like. The only criteria for participating were that the participants purchased H&M products and 18+ years of age. I thus ended up with seven interview-participants, where three of them were male and four of them were female.

5.4.1 DATA SAMPLING

The Twitter posts used for the analysis were chosen in order answer the problem statement. This means that the sampling is consistent with the purposive sampling method. "*The researcher does not seek to sample research participants on a random basis*" (Bryman 2012, 418). The research participants did, in the case with the Twitter-posts, consist of relevant posts, which thus were related to the research question. Additionally, the sampling approach can be characterized as **typical case sampling**, as it "*exemplifies a dimension of interest*" (Bryman 2012, 419). In order to identify relevant posts, the use of hashtags in the social media's search-bar was applied. This was search-markers such as **#hm**, **#coolestmonkeyinthejungle #racism**. It was not possible to see a total number of search results, but all relevant posts, which said something about H&M and "The Coolest Money in The Jungle", was screenshot. The selecting process was then done randomly, as all posts contained a relation to "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle". However, it was important to select an equal number of posts against H&M and the advertisement and posts "supporting" H&M and the advertisement. The posts, which were analyzed, was posts that expressed rage or anger against H&M and their use of the black child in their marketing campaign. Moreover, posts that express some sort of incomprehensibility towards other people's rage or anger were analyzed. By analyzing these posts, knowledge about the role of social media and political correctness in relation to H&M' crisis emerged.

According to Bryman (2012), purposive sampling is the usual sampling approach for qualitative research (Bryman 2012, 416). However, he argues that the quantitative research sampling approach, probability sampling, also can be applied within the qualitative research area. This could for instance be applied "*if the research questions do not suggest that particular categories of people (…) should be sampled (…)*" (Bryman 2012, 416). The research question of this thesis did not imply for a certain unit of analysis, however, the purposive sampling approach was still applied, as this approach was found more suitable, in order to answer the research question.

The level of sampling was in this thesis a sampling of context and participants. The sampling of context was the social media, Twitter. Twitter functioned as the online platform where the posts were collected. As mentioned earlier, Twitter has more than 330 million monthly active users, and it is a platform where news and trends prevail very fast and very current. 79 % of Twitter-users are based in countries outside the United States, yet the US has more than 67 million users (OnmicoreAgency.com 2018). Twitter is thus a large global networking site, which made it suitable for research within social media.

The sampling of interview-participants took place at Facebook, and was mostly employing elements of both snowballing and theoretical saturation. The element of snowballing was employed, as the participants were "chosen" randomly. The reason for putting the word chosen in citation-marks is because it was not possible to choose participants, besides choosing the fact that it had to be H&M customers and 18+ years of age. The participants had the possibility to decline the request for an interview. Possible participants emerged by posting the request on Facebook, but there were no certainty of their participation. As mentioned earlier, there was no distinction between gender, occupation, education, and the like. Though, the aim was to approach people, who were 18+ years of age, as those of younger age might not have developed a sense of the term political correctness.

The element of theoretical saturation exists, as the sampling of interviewees continued until "*no new or relevant data seem to be emerging*" (Bryman 2012, 421).

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5.4.1.1 INTERVIEWS

The interviews, which have been conducted for the purpose of this thesis, are semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. A semi-structured interview functions as a guide through the interview, and allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions (Kvale 2007, 8). A semi-structured interview has "*the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interview with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena*" (Kvale 2007, 8). The purpose of the thesis was to investigate the influence political correctness had in relation to a crisis on social media, and the conducted interviews thus sought to obtain the perceptions and meanings of the interviewees in relation to political correctness, social media, and crises. The theoretical literature provides the foundation of the interviews. In other words, this means that "*a conceptual and theoretical understanding of the phenomena to be investigated*" (Kvale 2007, 39) has been established, in order to obtain and give new knowledge within that phenomenon. The purpose of the investigation and the theoretical knowledge is what Kvale (2007) refers to as the *'why'* and the *'what'* in thematizing an interview study (Kvale 2007, 37).

The conducted interviews were recorded for the purpose of being able to retain as many details as possible. Furthermore, a recording of the interviews made it possible to go back and listen to them to get a full understanding of the opinions and perceptions, thus enabling the hermeneutic circle. The recording of the interviews made it possible to fully transcribe the interviews, which made coding possible. The transcription of the interviews all included pauses, 'mh'-s and 'oh'-s, as well as small descriptions of emotional expressions, such as laughing (Kvale 2007, 95). These elements were included in the transcription, as they helped portray the feelings and immediate reactions of the participants.

5.4.2 ANALYTICAL APPRAOCH

The analytical approach for this thesis entailed elements from Robert V. Kozinets' netnography and the elaboration of thematic analysis. As one part of the empirical data consisted of posts collected on the social media Twitter, it became relevant to consider some of Kozinets' (2002) procedures related to netnographic research. The steps, which are included in the thesis, are: *providing trustworthy interpretation* and *research ethics*. A short elaboration of the two procedures, along with an account of the application of each of them

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will follow next. Furthermore, the procedures of Kozinets' (2002) netnography were combined with a thematic analysis.

5.4.2.1 PROVIDING TRUSTWORTHY INTERPRETATION

When conducting a qualitative research, it is important to consider the trustworthiness of the data collected. Kozinets (2002) notes that when studying computer-mediated online communication "*informants (…) may be presumed to be presenting a more carefully cultivated and controlled self*" (Kozinets 2002, 64). However, he also refers to Mead's (1938) notion of how one is to study and analyze the communicative act and not the person, thus the unit of analysis is behavior or actions (Kozinets 2002, 64). In relation to that, Katja Rost, Lea Stahel, and Bruno S. Frey have conducted a study where they tested the digital social norm enforcement, in order to "*understand online aggression in a social-political online setting*" (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2016). They argue that people can "*hide or alter their identity*" (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2016, 5) on social media, thus presenting a different person online compared to in-person. They argue how people use more aggressive word-of-mouth or criticize a public actor, such as H&M, on social media (Rost, Stahel and Frey 2016, 5). With that discussion, it could be argued how data collected on social media cannot be presented as trustworthy. Nevertheless, as the aim of this thesis is to investigate how political correctness influences crises on social media, hence to analyze the behavior and the communicative act, and not the person behind it, data collected on social media can be considered to provide trustworthy information. Moreover, the information on social media – and political correctness - is socially constructed, which additionally indicate that information on social media can be considered trustworthy. The aim was to analyze the behavior and the communicative act, and not the person behind it. This thesis provided trustworthy interpretation, as the ontological and epistemological orientations were outlined in the section of theory of science.

5.4.2.2 RESEARCH ETHICS

It can be argued that there is no such thing as privacy on social media. Twitter, for instance, do not make it possible for its users to create a private profile, which means that everyone everywhere can see everything. Twitter was, for the purpose of this thesis, therefore considered a very public place. The posts, which was collected for the purpose of this study, was chosen, as they were publicly available for anyone to analyze on. Furthermore, the

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posters (being those who have posted the posts) had not been informed about their content being used for research purposes, due to the fact that Twitter was considered a public place. In relation to that, the names and photos of the posters were covered, thus ensuring anonymity of the creators behind the Twitter-posts (Kozinets 2002, 65).

5.4.2.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In order to analyze how political correctness influenced a crisis on social media, a thematic analysis was conducted. Braun and Clarke (2006) define a thematic analysis as "*a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data*" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 6). The thematic analysis of this thesis was inspired by Braun and Clarke (2006), and their method of thematic analysis. To be transparent and trustworthy, the method of analysis, how it has been carried out, and the choices and de-selections that have been made must be explained throughout the thesis.

When going through the data set, which consisted of transcribed interviews and Twitter-posts, it was coded positively and negatively. The positive coding was identified by positive words or sentences with in the data, and the negative coding was identified by negative words or sentences. First, the data of consisting of the Twitter-posts was coded and then the data consisting of the interviews. The coding of the Twitter-posts was set up in schemes, with positive and negative charts. The initial coding scheme of Twitter-posts can be seen in Appendix no. 17. The coding of the interviews was more extensive. It was possible to color-code sentences, which appeared of interest. This was for instance a sentence, which said something in regards to social media, which was colored with yellow. The different color-codes can be seen in Appendix no. 16. The initial coding of the interviews can be seen in Appendix 18. The final coding of both interviews and Twitter-posts can be found in Appendix 19. This scheme will be explained further under **phase 3: searching for themes**.

Moreover, the thematic analysis was, in this case, data-driven, which means that an inductive approach was taken. This also means that the research question of this thesis could evolve during the coding of data. In other words, the data was read and re-read, in order to find themes related to the research question, and not coded in relation to any "pre-existing coding frame" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 12). Thus the data was collected specifically for this thesis. (Braun and Clarke 2006, 12) The thematic analysis for this thesis was conducted at a latent level, which means that interpretative work was carried out. It is thus the "*underlying ideas,*

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assumptions, and conceptualizations" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 13), which was investigated. Furthermore, it is relational to the constructionist position, where opinions and assumptions are socially constructed (Braun and Clarke 2006, 14). With that position, it indicates that opinions and assumptions of political correctness are socially constructed, which was what was being sought for in the data set. Therefore, the constructionist position, in relation to conducting a thematic analysis, sought to understand the social and cultural context, thus to theorize it, which lays the ground for what the interview-participants and Twitter-posts have said. The aim of this thesis was to understand how political correctness influenced crises on social media, and social media was thus the social and cultural context, which the meaning of the influence political correctness has, was based on.

The thematic analysis of this thesis initially began at the same time as the data collection. This will be further elaborated on in the analysis. The thematic analysis is a process of moving back and forth between the data set, which thus functions as the interpretation of the data, and hence provides the relevance of the underlying opinions and assumptions (Braun and Clarke 2006, 15). Braun and Clarke (2006) set out a step-by-step guide on how to do a thematic analysis. Even though there are no correct and strictly outlined method for doing a thematic analysis, the steps provides by Braun and Clarke (2006) functions well, and did thus provide the guidelines for this analysis. The six steps, or phases as they are called by the authors, are: **phase 1: familiarizing yourself with your data**, **phase 2: generating initial codes**, **phase 3: searching for themes**, **phase 4: reviewing themes**, **phase 5: defining and naming themes**, and **phase 6: producing the report**.

Phase 1: familiarizing yourself with your data

In order to become familiarized with the data, the interviews were fully transcribed. The transcriptions, as mentioned earlier in section 5.4.1.1 INTERVIEWS, included the notion of 'mh'-s, 'oh'-s, and pauses, in order to provide a deeper understanding of the participants' opinions and assumption of the topic. Moreover, the transcription of the interviews allowed an interpretation to take place at an early stage of the analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006, 17). Along with the transcription of the interviews, the data was read and re-read to search for initial opinions and patterns. The Twitter-posts, which were chosen to be a part of the data

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set, was read and re-read during the selection of posts, and I thus became familiar with the data.

Phase 2: generating initial codes

Phase 2 began after reading and familiarizing myself with the data. The coding of the data included a use of colors, as mentioned above. The coding in this phase was a raw coding, which means that all data, which appeared to be of interest, was coded. It is important to note, that the coded data did not function as the themes, which was applied in the analysis. Coding of the data entailed a process of pointing out all data of potential interest. Furthermore, the data will be coded with some "surrounding data", as context is relevant in order to fully understand the data (Braun and Clarke 2006, 18). The themes were conducted from a broader perspective, which will be outlined in the next phase. As the data of this thesis was data-driven, the coding depended on the data exclusively. Moreover, the coding of the data was done manually. (Braun and Clarke 2006, 18-19)

Phase 3: searching for themes

During the third phase of the thematic analysis, the coding was more or less done. During the coding of the data, the themes for the analysis began to emerge. The themes emerged on the basis of the coding, which means that the different codes were collated and thus forming themes. The final coding scheme can be seen in Appendix no. 19. All examples were then put under each theme to which they belong. Additionally, the authors recommend a sort of visual representation of the coding, which thus also is seen in Appendix no. 18. At this stage, all examples, which appeared to be useful, were included in the scheme, even if there were a doubt of having placed them under the correct theme. This was done in order to have the possibility to cast irrelevant examples away, yet at the same time secure them, if they became relevant to the analysis.

Phase 4: reviewing themes

The fourth phase included the final themes being ready for analysis. The phase included two levels. The first level included the reviewing of the data, which means that all data was read one more time in order to secure that the chosen examples represented the given theme. During this level of phase four, some few examples were move around, as it thus appeared to

be more coherent. The second level of phase four involved the relation of the entire data set. This included a re-reading of the data, in order to search for further or perhaps missed themes. During this level of phase four no further themes emerged, but the examples, which did not fit under any theme and did not contribute to the analysis were discarded.

Phase 5: defining and naming themes

In this phase, the names for the themes emerged. This was done by defining the themes, and describing the essence of each of them. The description of each theme can as well be seen in Appendix 18, under the names of the themes. By describing the themes, I made sure that each aspect of the thesis was being covered. In Appendix 18 it is also possible to see that the themes cover both the coding of interviews and Twitter-posts. The reason for collating the coding of both types of data under overall themes was due to the fact that this thesis does not seek to compare the reactions on Twitter with the statements from the interview-participants. The themes aim to cover the entire essence of the thesis, hence overall themes, which capture each aspect of the thesis, functioned best.

Phase 6: producing the report

When the final themes were in place, the sixth and last phase begun. The sixth phase also represented the beginning of the analysis, and will thus be continued in the next section – 6.0 Analysis.

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6.0 ANALYSIS

In the following section, a thematic analysis has been conducted, based on the first five phases of Braun and Clarke's (2006) process. The aim of the analysis was to investigate how political correctness influenced The H&M crisis on social media, and during the coding of the data two themes emerged and were thus analyzed. The two themes are: 'The H&M firestorm as perceived in a Danish context' and 'Political correctness in the H&M firestorm – from a Danish perspective'.

6.1 "The H&M firestorm as perceived in a Danish context"

The first theme that appeared from the conducted interviews was how the interview-participants found firestorms on social media as something that is part the online world, and that they do not pay much attention to such. This theme aims to investigate how the H&M firestorm "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle" on Twitter is viewed from a Danish perspective. In that matter, the theme includes how the interview-participants use social media themselves, in regards to online firestorms and their reactions to such.

It is possible to argue that H&M's "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle"-crisis is a paracrisis, as it poses a threat to the organization and the organization's reputation. H&M's crisis can be characterized as a paracrisis, as it takes place on social media, mainly on Twitter, which thus functions as a rhetorical arena. The crisis therefore becomes publicly visible, and people are charging H&M with unethical, irresponsible, and political incorrect manner, which thus can harm the organizations reputation. The following five statements from Twitter show some of these charges.

> "*Marketing fail. H&M puts a black child in a hoodie that reads: "I'm the coolest monkey in the jungle." And the white child is the "survival expert." And now folks are pretending like they don't know that black children have long been racially characterized as monkeys.*" (Appendix 1 – Twitter-post no. 1)

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> *"There's a White Supremacist who works for H&M who thought it was funny to make a black boy model a hoodie that said "Coolest Monkey In The Jungle"* (Appendix 3 – Twitter-post no. 3)

> *"They got a lil black boy in a monkey hoodie. Of course it's offensive but it's so obvious, I'm hysterical over the lack of awareness by H&M."* (Appendix 6 – Twitter-post no. 6)

> *"Fuck you @hm I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They don't want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! #FuckYou #HM #Racism #Africa."* (Appendix 9 – Twitter-post no. 2 for the interviews)

> *"Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it"* (Appendix 10 – Twitter-post no. 3 for the interviews)

These stakeholders seem to believe that H&M have acted in an unethical manner, by using a black boy as the model for a hoodie that says "Coolest Monkey in The Jungle". These charges, which have been posted online can damage H&M's reputation, and can therefore develop into a paracrisis. These posts can also indicate that social media can intensify a paracrisis. According to Coombs and Holladay (2012) social media is a perfect platform for stakeholders to express their opinions and attitudes towards an organization, in relation to an organization's challenges. The Twitter-posts above show this, however it is not only the negative posts and comments towards H&M that are posted online. The following five posts are examples of positive reactions to the H&M advertisement.

> *"The H&M *** is just irony. I highly doubt they were like "let's put the monkey hoodie on the ***** baby" like yáll making it seem."* (Appendix 2 – Twitter-posts no. 2)

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> "*H&M is not an American company. Non native brands do not have to be familiar with USA's (or other countries) historical conflicts. No one has to do a background research for advertising a simple hoodie.*" (Appendix 4 – Twitter-post no. 4)

> "*Y'all can feel how y'all feel about the h&m hoodie situation, I thought the hoodie was cute (emoji) sue me.*" (Appendix 5 – Twitter-post no. 5)

> "*@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people! #racism #ThisMorning*" (Appendix 8 – Twitter-post no. 1 for the interviews)

> "*Everyone is losing their shot over @hm advert. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn #CalmDown #TheCoolestMonekyInTheJungle*" (Appendix 11 – Twitter-post no. 4 for the interviews)

These examples show that people express their opinions, attitudes, and feelings towards H&M online. From the interviews with Danish H&M consumers conducted for this thesis, it becomes clear that none of the participants take part, or wish to take part in the rhetorical arena regarding "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle", at least not on social media. This also means that none of them falls under the category of *faith-holders* or *hateholders*, as they all expressed that they preferred not to comment on such crises.

> "*I think a lot about how I express myself on social media, because, eh... if it isn't something in a private conversation or if you don't have a private profile, if it's something that comes out to everyone, then it's often something that's going to be there forever.*" (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 122 – own translation)

> "*Eh, I don't really share posts. I'm very inactive on social media. But if I had to share something, it would probably be some of those who consider the issues about what we should really care about*" (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 97 – own translation)

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"I try not to use social media for that kind of things. Also because, everything can be misunderstood on social media" (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 100 – own translation)

"Again, misinterpretations of everything as soon as you share something that has something do to with racism, or has something to do with pedophiles, or animal cruelty or what ever, well, then people interpret it in different ways, and then you will be judged in one way or another. So no, that's why I don't care about sharing." (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 111 – own translation)

"Those firestorms and contributing to them, I am not going to do that. I mean, if I have an opinion about something, I would think that it was cool enough, but to ride along on some wave just to be a part of it, is irrelevant, I think." (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 121 – own translation)

These examples indicate that the participants did not take part in the rhetorical arena that developed, and did therefore not become crisis-communicators. These participants do not express their feelings and attitudes on social media, as they find it frivolous and unnecessary, and it can therefore indicate that they do not believe that H&M has acted in an irresponsible or unethical manner. Hence, the participants do thus not believe that H&M's reputation will be damaged. The following examples show how the interview-participants do not believe that H&M has acted in an irresponsible or unethical manner.

"Yes… it's a pretty extreme statement. I mean, I don't …, even when I saw it the first time, I didn't even think about it." (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 45 – own translation)

"(…) I don't think that is was H&M's intension. I think they were caught in a world, where we talk a lot about racism, and where we are very considerate about." (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 153 – own translation)

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Most of the participants mentioned how they have become aware of "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" through social media, which could indicate that social media is a perfect and preferred platform for stakeholders to express their opinions and attitudes towards an organization, as argued by Coombs and Holladay (2012). It can also indicate that social media is a perfect place for people to become aware of misconducts by organizations. The following examples show an indication of this.

"*Yea, social media was the first place I saw it*" (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 18 – own translation)

"*Eh, I think I saw it the first time on Facebook, perhaps.*" (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 12 – own translation)

"*I think I saw it on social media, actually. After someone said some different things about it.*" (Appendix 24, participant no. 4, ll.19 – own translation)

"*Eh, on Facebook. Actually. There were a lot of fuss about it, and then I think... it was some kind of opinion-forming site that posted it.*" (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 14 – own translation)

"*The first time I saw it was when it became a firestorm. On Facebook, I think. It exploded and people were writing 'this is terrible and horrible'*" (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 19 – own translation)

One interview-participant saw "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" in a traditional media; a Danish newspaper called BT:

"Participant no. 3: *I think the first time I saw it was when it was in the media with this quote on the hoodie.*
Interviewer*: And which medium was it, do you remember that? Was it the News?*
Participant no. 3: *It was either Esktra Bladet or BT, so one of those newspapers.*"
(Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 12 – own translation)

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The fact that the crisis is portrayed in both social and traditional media means that more people are exposed to the paracrisis, and it can thus become even more important for H&M to handle the situation. It can also be a matter of crises arising on social media and thus spreads to the traditional media, which then means that the paracrisis intensifies further. The fact that the participants have become aware of the crisis on social media can indicate that some stakeholders believe that H&M has acted in an irresponsible or unethical manner. This type of stakeholder is referred to as *hateholders.* Hateholders has also entered the rhetorical arena of Twitter, as, according to Luoma-aho (2015), these are the ones who believe that an organization has acted in an irresponsible or unethical manner. In other words, this means that more stakeholders become aware of the crisis, and thus more potential crisis communicators can enter the rhetorical arena. When looking at the Twitter-posts regarding the H&M crisis, both faith-holders and hateholders express themselves on social media. The hateholders of H&M on Twitter are both directly and indirectly accusing H&M of being racist and indicates that they find H&M actions politically incorrect.

> *"They got a lil black boy in a monkey hoodie. Of course it's offensive but it's so obvious. I'm hysterical over the lack of awareness by H&M."* (Appendix 6 – Twitter-post no. 6)

> *"There's a White Supremacist who works for H&M who thought it was funny to make a black boy model a hoodie that said "Coolest Monkey In The Jungle"* (Appendix 3 – Twitter-post no. 3)

> *"Fuck you @hm I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They donøt want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! "FuckYou #HM #Racism #Africa"* (Appendix 9 – Twitter-post no. 2 for the interviews)

> *"Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it* (Appendix 10 – Twitter-post no. 3 for the interviews)

These statements express negative opinions and attitudes towards H&M, which can characterize the writers of the posts as *hateholders*. This could furthermore indicate that H&M have not met the needs and expectations of its stakeholders, as they express their anger and frustrations on social media.

The statements have been posted publicly, in order for it to be possible to find and view them. By using words such as "racism", "lack of awareness" and "white supremacist", these posts indicate anger towards H&M. Additionally, by using hashtags the writers make it easy for people interested in the crisis to search for posts, which say something about it. This also means that more people are exposed to the posts, which then means that more people are exposed to the negative point of view on H&M and the crisis. Luoma-aho (2015) argues, hateholders are often more reliable than the positive reports on social media, which thus creates an urgency of handling the crisis. However, when showing some negative post to the interview participants, it became clear they did not find firestorms on social media, of this kind, to be of much impact to them.

> *"It's because it seems so exaggerated. 'Fuck you', I mean, it's the type of communication you see on the Internet today. It's so, eh, I mean, it's so strait forward, so it's like the thoughts we have, at the moment we have them, we need to write them, I mean, it's so careless in some way"* (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 64 – own translation)

> *"But again, it's this thing, if it's just a firestorm, then I think it's a little one-sided, kind of like a herd mentality. Try to find your own opinion, instead of just going with what's easy. I mean, some kind of trend, like. Now we hate on H&M, then it's Jensens Bøfhus, then it's something else."* (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 135 – own translation)

> *"More like such a torchlight parade saying 'death over H&M'. I think it's ridiculous."* (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 127 – own translation)

These examples can indicate that some of the participants find firestorms to be something that is "just" a part of the online world today, which could indicate that they do not pay much

attention to them. According to the interview-participants, there are so many firestorms on social media that it has to be of great significance for them to care about it. The participants find firestorms to be one-sided and to be a careless way of communicating on social media. This indicates that the crisis-communicators on social media do not see things from several perspectives, which then could indicate that the organizations reputation might not be as damaged as stated by Luoma-aho (2015). The participants also argue how, firestorms on social media often are exaggerated and describe it as something, which other users of social media just go along with.

To keep a crisis on social media from escalating, faith-holders are important to the organization. In the case with H&M, faith-holders entered the rhetorical arena and posted more positively loaded posts with a notion to the hate-holders to calm down.

> "*The H&M **** is just irony. I highly doubt they were like "let's put the monkey hoodie on the ***** baby" like y'all making it seem*" (Appendix 2 – Twitter-post no. 2)

> "*H&m is not an American company. Non native brands do not have to be familiar with USA' (or other countries) historical conflicts. No one has to do a background research for advertising a simple hoodie*" (Appendix 4 – Twitter-post no. 4)

> "*Y'all can feel how y'all feel about the h&m hoodie situation, I though the hoodie was cute (emoji) sue me.*" (Appendix 5 – Twitter-post no. 5)

> "*@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people! #racism #ThisMorning*" (Appendix 8 – Twitter-post no. 1 for the interviews)

> "*Everyone is losing their shit over @hm advert. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn "CalmDown "TheCoolestMonkeyInTheJungle*" (Appendix 11 – Twitter-post no. 4 for the interviews)

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These statements appear to have been posted by faith-holders of H&M. The posts indicate that the faith-holders do not think that H&M has acted in an irresponsible or unethical manner, and can therefore indicate that the organization meets the needs and expectations of the faith-holders. The posts by the faith-holders were also posted publicly, in order for them to be available for this thesis, which also makes them valuable for H&M, and can thus possible help to calm down the situation online. Thus, both hateholders and faith-holders act as crisis communicators. As mentioned earlier, the hateholder-posts are often considered to be more reliable than positive reports. However, the reactions from the interview-participants, when reading the Twitter-posts that represented both hateholding and faith-holding, indicate that they were not much affected by them. When reading the hateholder-posts, the participants view them as an overreaction of the situation, and can thus not identify themselves with the reaction. This can be seen in the following extracts.

"*I also think it's… it's a really heated statement.*" (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 50 – own translation)

"*Eh, I maybe also think that it's just, well it has been an overreaction to all of this.*" (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 85 – own translation)

"*So I understand in some way, but I think it is a heated reaction, because I think it's old-fashioned to have this way of thinking.*" (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 55 – own translation)

"*Eh, on the face of it, I also think it's a petty issue*" (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 55 – own translation)

"*Well, I know of the case, but my first thought was that is was just two boys wearing hoodies. Eh, I must admit that.*" (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 25 – own translation)

"*I think it's overblown. I think sets off way too much*" (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 80 – own translation)

> "*Yes… it's a pretty extreme statement. I mean, I don't …, even when I saw it the first time, I didn't even think about it.*" (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 45 – own translation)

The examples show an indication of the participants not comprehending the issue of the H&M situation, and are therefore not able to understand the reactions posted on Twitter. All seven interview-participants stated that they would continue to shop at H&M, despite "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" crisis, which therefore could indicate them as being faith-holders to H&M, despite the fact that they do not take part in the rhetorical arena on social media.

The interviews also showed that none of the interview-participants wanted to express themselves on social media or share posts, which described their own feelings and opinions towards the crisis. All participants hesitated and appeared to be thinking thoroughly before answering the question whether they would share posts online or if they would defend and organization.

> "*I don't like to give it air time, when it's things like this*" (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 114 – own translation)

> "*Well, I think… again, this thing about… I think like this, that it could also hit me, if I share something and people don't agree with me. I mean, if you have someone in your circle of friends, or something like that, that agree on the post I'm sharing is racist, then 'why would you share this persons meanings about…'.*" (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 112 – own translation)

> "*I wouldn't if it was negative. I don't like to share negative things, because I don't see any reason to do that or to spread that kind of message.*" (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 122 – own translation)

However, one participant argues that he would defend an organization, if everyone else appeared to be going along with the firestorm:

> *"This is like an Internet-warrior syndrome, that every time something happens that we can share and get angry about, I would probably defend, if I was to share something."* (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 101 – own translation)

The above-standing examples show an indication of contrary behavior. The interview-participant is indicating that people are going along on firestorms, without having actual facts to act according to. He does not find firestorms on social media to be of any relevance, as they cannot provide the real insight into a certain situation, which he believes to be necessary when entering a debate.

> *… because I know that you'll rarely get a matter-of-fact kind of debate, if you start it a place like that (social media).*" (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 107 – own translation)

In relation to that, another interview-participant argues how much information is lost on social media, thus indicating that entering firestorms online, will not turn out the way it was supposed to:

> "*there are just so much that's lost on a written medium*" (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 120 – own translation)

This corresponds with the examples shown above, where the participant states how misinterpretations happens very often on social media, and it thus underlies that participant's reason for not wanting to share posts or defend an organization online, yet still being a faith-holder of H&M. From those examples, it is possible to argue that faith-holders not necessarily need to participate in the online firestorms, hence enter the rhetorical sub-arena, in order to be considered faith-holders.

From the analysis conducted above, it is possible to conclude that social media played a great role in the H&M crisis "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle". The rhetorical sub-arena, in which the crisis took place, entailed both hateholders and faith-holders. The interview-participants obtained information regarding the crisis on social media, mainly Facebook, as hateholders

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found H&M to have acted in an irresponsible and unethical manner. Moreover, the H&M crisis has been portrayed in both traditional and social media, which has increased the potential actors of the rhetorical arena. Such factors require H&M to take action, which also happened in the form of an apology on its Twitter and Instagram (Appendix 12+13). Social media is a great communication tool for stakeholders, but also for an organization. H&M has thus apologized on both Twitter and Instagram, and the organization has removed the item from its website, and it is therefore no longer possible to purchase the hoodie.

> "*The recent incident was entirely unintentional, but it demonstrates so clearly how big out responsibility is as a global brand. We have reached out, around the world, inside and outside H&M to get feedback. Our commitment to addressing diversity and inclusiveness is genuine, therefore we have appointed a global leader, in this area, to drive our work forward. There will be more from us soon.*" (Appendix 12)

This statement could indicate that H&M has applied an implicit reform strategy, as they have hired new leaders to ensure that similar crises will not occur. H&M used social media to reach out to its stakeholders, which corresponds well with its presence on social media. In addition to that, the organization used more than one social media, along with apologies on its website. The apologies were written about in several online newspapers, for instance ABC News and The Washington Post (The Washington Post 2018) (abc13 News 2018). This could indicate that H&M has been *redundant and sprawl* in their apology, in order to reach as many stakeholders as possible. However, the main apology has been on the organization's social media, which can indicate that the organization is aware of its target group, especially in relation to the online firestorm, which the advertisement has caused.

From the above-mentioned examples it is possible to argue that the online firestorm "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" influences H&M's stakeholders in both a positive and negative manner. The positive influence is expressed through the organizations faith-holders, who are trying to calm down the situation, and reduce the value of the posts written by the hateholders. Faith-holders do not need to act as crisis communicators in order to be characterized as faith-holders, yet they will still support the organization, for instance in the form of purchasing products. According to the interview-participants online firestorms are viewed as "everyday life" on social media, and do therefore not pay much attention to such.

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The interview-participants neither wants to express themselves on social media in relation to crises, such as "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle", or share posts, which expresses their opinions and feelings. This is due to the fact that the participants are influenced by other people's reactions on social media, which lead further to the next theme of hiding behind political correct.

6.2 "Political correctness in the H&M firestorm – from a Danish perspective"

The second theme that appeared in the conducted interviews was that none of the interview-participants believed that H&M has acted politically incorrect, and that they viewed political correctness as an obsession. However, this was when they were looking from a personal perspective. When they considered the broader perspective, which includes the social norms, they argued that H&M had acted politically incorrect. The interviews indicate that participants are careful about how they address the issue of political correctness in relation to the H&M situation. The following examples show an indication of this.

> "*Well, you can, according to themselves, when they... if they go out an apologize for something, then they must have acted political incorrect in some way, so yes.*" (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 198 – own translation)

> "*Well, it's difficult, because I think that political incorrectness is a question of sensitivity, and I actually think that it is a problem that we are so sensitive about our political debate, or correctness. But you would have to say that when you look at the tendencies in the society, then this is probably political incorrect, if you look at a tendency in the society. In relation to my political correctness, I don't think it is an issue, again because I think it in some way creates a debate, etc. But if you look at the tendencies, then it's probably political incorrect, but for me personally, I don't think it's a problem to do it, because political incorrectness also can contribute to breaking some taboos and move boundaries, which in some cases, are a bit stupid, I think.*" (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 141 – own translation)

"They should probably have had more people to look through their marketing material, before they sent it out. Eh, but then again, it's a discussion about whether it is political incorrect, because… I don't see anything wrong about it, but some people do, so it is a matter of interpretation. So some would say yes, they have, and others would say no, they have not. I personally don't think it's political incorrect, men I understand why some people might misinterpret this commercial, but again, I think it's an old-fashioned way of thinking. Not because, you should of course acknowledge that racism is horrible and not support it at all, but I don't think that it's the issue here." (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 155 – own translation)

"Well, again I think it is a little two-parted, because if you take this naive approach towards it, which I kind of think it is, and say that they (H&M) really didn't think about it, and that it was a mistake, and that… I mean, if it's like that, then I think, well okay, it's stupid, but it's a mistake, it happens, its human. But if it's like 'okay, listen, let go stir things up, and get our name all over the world press', which I might believe is the case, then I think it is political incorrect, because then I think you play on something that is already a major issue I many societies, namely racism. And then I think it's wrong. But it depends on the approach." (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 189 – own translation)

"Politically, yes. I mean, if you have to look political, look at skin color, or how to say it, then it wasn't a smart move, and when the shirt says monkey, I mean… they could have told themselves that it wasn't smart to put a black boy in the sweater with monkey on." (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 185 – own translation)

"I mean, to say, why do people think like this. It is a very developed mind that a person do not think color, or how do I say it." (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 81 – own translation)

According to the hateholders, H&M has not acted in accordance with diversity and multiculturalism, which caused the firestorm. The posts from the hateholders indicate that the stakeholders find it racist to use a black child to model a hoodie, which said "Coolest

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Monkey in The Jungle". In other words, H&M has not show diversity and multiculturalism in the correct manner, according to its stakeholders. Political correctness can function as censorship, thus meaning that people are using political correctness to hide their real thoughts and opinions. The above-mentioned examples also show an indication of censorship, as some of the participants show insecurity about how to address the model of the hoodie. Remembering that, all of the interview-participants stated that they would not share or post anything in relation to "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" or similar, online, as they feared to be misunderstood, misinterpreted or even called out as racists themselves. Such statements can also indicate that political correctness functions as a censorship, and thus plays a role in online firestorms. This is both in the sense of hiding behind political correctness, hence the censorship, and in the sense of being called out, if *not* acting political correct, according to other social media-users. Political correctness is therefore, in some way hindering the interview-participants from publicly supporting H&M, and the organizations reputation can thus be damaged. Wikström (2016) argues that social media is a platform where political correctness is often applied, and very often in relation to social media movements. It is not possible to argue that the H&M crisis can be characterized as a social media movement, yet the aspect and the issue of racism, which is being ascribed to it, indicates that social justice is not being met.

> *"Marketing fail. H&M puts a black child in a hoodie that reads: "I'm the coolest monkey in the jungle." And now folks are pretending like they don't know that black children have long been racially characterized as monkeys."* (Appendix 8.1 – Twitter-post no. 1)

> *"There´s a White Supremacist who works for H&M who though it was funny to make a black boy model a hoodie that said "Coolest Monkey In The Jungle"."* (Appendix 8.3 – Twitter-post no 3)

> *"Fuck you @hm I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They don't want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! #FuckYou #HM #Racism #Africa."* (Appendix 8.9 – Twitter-post no. 2 for the interviews)

> *"Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it."* (Appendix
> 8.10 – Twitter-post no. 3 for the interviews)

According to H&M's hateholders, the organization's use of a black child modeling a hoodie with an unethical quote, the organization is racist. Racism does not imply diversity, and can thus indicate that political correctness plays a role, when it comes to online firestorms. People on social media express their thoughts, opinions, and feelings on social media, and do not feel the need to be anonymous, due to a belief that *"they stand up for higher-order moral ideal and principles"*. The above-mentioned Twitter-posts show an indication of people employing political correctness on social media, which can indicate that it is believed to be a digital social media norm, in relation to online firestorms. The Twitter-posts above can furthermore indicate that the stakeholders do not believe that H&M has acted according to the digital social media norms, by using a black child as a model for the "Coolest Monkey in The Jungle"-hoodie. In other words, the posts can indicate that the stakeholders of H&M are attempting to uphold the social norm, by disapproving H&M advertisement. The digital social norm is being enforced on social media, which might be the reason for people turning towards social media, such as Twitter, to express their feelings, thoughts, and opinions. In order for the stakeholders to uphold the digital social norm, they need to disapprove a behavior, which does not correspond with the norm. This can also be a reason for people expressing their feelings, thoughts, and opinions in public. In that matter, the posts on Twitter, which expressed disgrace towards H&M, construct how political correctness influenced the H&M crisis on social media.

It is possible to see that not all posts on Twitter are negative and accusing H&M of being racists. The following five posts are examples of faith-holders attempting to disregard the hateholders.

> *"The H&M **** is just irony. I highly doubt they were like "let's put the monkey hoodie on the n***** baby" like y'all making it seem"* (Appendix 2 – Twitter-post no. 2)

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"H&M is not an American company. Non native brands do not have to be familiar with USAs (or other countries) historical conflicts. No one has to do a background research for advertising a simple hoodie." (Appendix 4 – Twitter-post no. 4)

"Y'all can fell how y'all fell about the h&m hoodie situation, I though it was cute (emojie) sue me." (Appendix 5 – Twitter-posts no. 5)

"@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people! #racism #ThisMorning" (Appendix 8 – Twitter-post no. 1 for the interviews)

"Everyone is losing their shit over @hm advert. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn #CalmDown #TheCoolestMonkeyInTheJungle" (Appendix 11 – Twitter-post no.4 for the interviews)

The posts indicate that faith-holders also help construct the digital social norm, regarding political correctness. The posts do not indicate that racism is all right, however, it appear as if they are attempting to create another perspective on the situation. Moreover, it appears as if the faith-holders are downgrading the hateholders' perspective, and thus attempting to create a digital social norm, where political correctness does not influence in the same manner.

In this case the creators of the Twitter-posts, who are characterized as hateholders, are hiding behind political correctness, hence using it as a censorship. The faith-holders are in that matter *not* hiding behind political correctness, as they stand up for H&M, and they are downgrading the racial issue, found by the hateholders. Even though the issue of racism is a sensitive subject, the faith-holders are still speaking their mind about the crisis created online. The posts indicate that the faith-holders are attempting to create some perspective to the crisis. In that matter, the posts can also indicate that what is seen as political correct might not necessarily be the truth. The faith-holder posts could thus indicate that the posts from the hateholders are not speaking the truth.

From the conducted interviews it furthermore appears as if the interview-participants see political correctness as an obsession. The following posts can indicate that the interview-

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participants believe that people have lost their common sense, and political correctness is in that matter taking over.

"That eh, the perspective in relation to what else is going on in the world, then it seems like… like some kind of sought issue in my eyes that eh. You ascribe it a greater taboo than it actually should have, because it's a commercial for clothes, and of course I can see that it can be an, eh, issue, but yea, I think it is to kind of like take focus away from problems that might be more real." (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 33 – own translation)

"Eh, well again I think it's kind of a eh, hyper-reaction. Eh, I can see that one, maybe colored people, could se it as a bigger problem, because it figuratively looks like, you know, it is like putting two things up against each other. But I don't know, I just think, again, that people's reaction makes it a race-issue, instead of what it really is. Again, because it a commercial with two children with clothes, I mean." (Appendix 22, participant no. 2, ll. 50 – own translation)

"Why does it have to be about race all the time? Because a black boy is standing there in a hoodie that says "Coolest Monkey in The Jungle"… I know that 'monkey', around black people have been a really ugly insult once, but I just think that we have developed enough and live in a modern society that it should not be a problem anymore to think about what you dress your kids in. I mean, it should fit to all kids, no matter your skin color…" (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 85 – own translation)

"Well, we are so educated that you would think that people would have a more developed though of mind than what has turned out to be the truth. To think, that they probably didn't have this point of view on the world anymore. But there will always be people that does." (Appendix 27, participant no. 7, ll. 194 – own translation)

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As the first two parts of the analysis has shown, political correctness can function as a censorship. The first quote from this section, mentions that the hateholders are ascribing the issue of racism a greater taboo, as the hateholders associate the H&M advertisement with racism. This could indicate that political correctness also functions as a deception, as the use of political correctness, in the matter of the H&M advertisement, makes the issue of racism a taboo, as it become to sensitive to address it.

The fact that the interview-participants find the reactions from the hateholders on Twitter to be overreactions can also indicate that they believe political correctness to be taking over people's common sense.

> "*Eh, I maybe also think that it's just, well it has been an overreaction to all of this.*"
> (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 85 – own translation)

> "*The controversy arises only because of people ascribing it, I think.*" (Appendix 22,
> participant no. 2, ll. 68 – own translation)

> "*I think it's overblown. I think sets off way too much*" (Appendix 26, participant no.
> 6, ll, 80 – own translation)

> *I don't think about racism at all. I mean, I think it's staged racism then, to create*
> *some sort of debate.*" (Appendix 26, participant no. 6, ll. 94 – own translation)

The interview-participants appear to think of the reactions as being exaggerated, which might be due to the fact that they do not see any racism in the image.

> "*Well, a first my thought is that it's just two kids wearing shirts in a commercial*
> *trying to sell some clothes.*" (Appendix 21, participant no. 1, ll. 21 – own
> translation)

> "*Well, pretty sweaters, haha" eh, yea I don't know. I just see the clothes*" (Appendix
> 22, participant no. 2, ll. 18 – own translation)

"That it's two sweet children in some nice sweatshirts" (Appendix 23, participant no. 3, ll. 18 – own translation)

"Well, I know of the case, but my first thought was that is was just two boys wearing hoodies. Eh, I must admit that." (Appendix 25, participant no. 5, ll. 25 – own translation)

From the extracts above, political correctness appears to be viewed as an obsession by the faith-holders, which could indicate that political correctness influences crises on social media negatively. People are obsessed with being political correct, which leads back to political correctness as a censorship. People are not speaking their mind, because they have to act politically correct, which can make it difficult for people to see beside the political correctness. As some of the interview-participants note in the examples mentioned above, people are seeking the issue of racism and see only the politically incorrect action. By ascribing a commercial of a hoodie an issue of racism, political correctness also functions as a deception, where is becomes too sensitive to address racism on social media. The interview-participants' view on the reactions as being exaggerated and their expressions of not comprehending them could also indicate that political correctness is being viewed as an obsession. They do not believe that H&M has acted in a political incorrect manner, and find the crisis to be an exaggeration, which could indicate that political correctness does not influence a crisis on social media, in their point of view. However, as the examples in the beginning of this theme show, the interview-participants believe that H&M has acted political incorrect, when they take the hateholder statements into consideration. It is therefore possible to argue, that political correctness influences crises on social media, as both hateholders and faith-holders of the organization in crisis are to express their attitudes on social media.

7.0 DISCUSSION

On the basis of the analysis it becomes very interesting to discuss the faith-holder type of stakeholder, as it appears as if there are different types to distinguish between.

The analysis of the case study showed that political correctness in some matter influences crisis in a negative manner. It became clear the both faith-holders and hateholders are influenced by political correctness, and that both types of stakeholders take part in the rhetorical arena as crisis communicators. On the basis of the findings in the analysis, it became interesting to discuss the role of the faith-holders. According to the theory of stakeholder engagement, Luoma-aho (2015) argues that faith-holders are the stakeholders who are positively engaged in an organization and participate in the crisis communication in a positive manner. This participation must be public in order to be valuable for the organization. Faith-holders are thus expressing their positive experiences and opinions, hence acting as crisis-communicators and participating in the rhetorical arena. Furthermore, Luoma-aho (2015) argues how positive comments from faith-holders are important for an organization, and Coombs and Holladay (2012) argue that when a message is repeated on social media more potential actors could enter the rhetorical arena. This must thus mean; if faith-holders' opinions and feelings are shared on social media, more people are exposed to these positive comments regarding the crisis, which would thus result in lowering the crisis.

During the analysis it became clear, that stakeholders do not need to participate in the rhetorical arena, and share or comment on the crisis on social media, in order to be characterized as a faith-holder. From the conducted interviews, it became clear that the interview-participants could be characterized as faith-holders, as they supported H&M by continuing to purchase its products. In other words, faith-holders do not necessarily need to enter the rhetorical arena on social media to be considered a faith-holder. It is therefore possible to consider two types of faith-holders – *active* and *passive* faith-holders.

The *active* faith-holders are the faith-holders, who participate in the crisis communication on social media, by either posting their opinions and feelings regarding a crisis or sharing posts that support the organization. Thus, the active faith-holders are supporting and defending the organization in crisis.

The *passive* faith-holders are not participating in the crisis communication on social media, and are only watching the crisis playing out in the rhetorical arena on social media. The passive faith-holders do not comment or share posts that portray their point of view, as they do not wish to be misinterpreted or hung out on social media. They find social media to be a place of relentless and unfiltered posting of feelings and opinions, and believe that much of the intended communication is lost. This means that the passive faith-holders are not participating in the rhetorical arena on social media. It is possible to argue that they perhaps participate in another rhetorical arena, which is more private, such as a conversation in a closed group, lunch at work or in the private conversation between friends and family. However, the value of these faith-holders is perhaps not as high, as those who share their opinion online, as the opinions and feelings has to be publicly visible, in order to be valuable for an organization.

Luoma-aho (2015) argues that faith-holders can turn into hateholders, if their needs and expectations are not met. The analysis showed that the interview-participants would not turn into hateholders, as they indicate that they cannot comprehend the posts posted by the hateholders, and thus not identify themselves with them. The passive faith-holders of this case study do not wish to publicly participate in the crisis communication on social media, as they simply do not see any issue with the advertisement. As mentioned earlier, misinterpretations and the possibility of being negatively hung out and judged on social media keep them from portraying their opinions and feelings online. This might be due to the language that is being used on social media, as one participant pointed out the use of the word "fuck" is a typical way of expressing oneself on social media. The unfiltered and top-of-mind thoughts thus make political correctness on social media a very sensitive and maybe even inflamed area. If people are speaking their minds on social media, other actors are quick to point out these people, and, as one of the interview-participants mentioned, one could risk being hung out on social media, either in closed groups or in public places, for something, which was not intended they way is was received. This again brings up the notion of misinterpretations, which perhaps also brings inflammation to political correctness. The professional and factual side of important issues is often not possible to bring fourth in online firestorms, as people appear to be very one-sided.

8.0 CONCLUSSION

A conclusion will be elaborated on in the following section, in order to finish this thesis. From the methodological perspective and theoretical framework, it was possible to analyze the influence of political correctness in relation to crises on social media. The problem statement mentioned beneath will be answered in the following conclusion.

> **How does political correctness influence a crisis on social media for an organization?**

From the analysis conducted above, it has become clear that political correctness influences crises on social media in a negative manner. The belief by hateholders that H&M had acted politically incorrect generated negative opinions via publicly visible posts on the social media Twitter. These posts indicated that H&M had acted in an irresponsible and unethical manner. "The lack" of political correctness could thus damage the organizations reputation. The belief by faith-holders that H&M had not acted politically incorrect generated positive posts, portraying opinions and feelings, in the other end. The posts by the faith-holders indicated that they did not believe that H&M had acted in an irresponsible and unethical manner. These two types of stakeholders were the main actors within the rhetorical arena on social media, and were thus crisis communicators of the H&M crisis. During the analysis it became clear that some faith-holders did not take part in the rhetorical arena on social media, but continued to purchase H&M products, and thus supporting the organization in that manner. Some of the faith-holders were of the impression that firestorms were "just" a part of the online world today, and did thus not pay much attention to them.

Political correctness still appears to influence crises in a negative manner, and on the basis of the analysis, it is possible to argue that political correctness function as a censorship. The interview-participants did not wish to speak their mind on social media – neither regarding the H&M crisis nor other issues of same character, as they are afraid of being misunderstood, misinterpreted or even hung out in public. Political correctness is thus hindering some faith-holders from taking part in the rhetorical arena on social media, and the organization in crisis is therefore more exposed to negative associations. This can damage the organizations reputation furthermore. With the Twitter-posts from the faith-holders, it is however possible

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to argue that political correctness does not function as a censorship, as they express their opinions about the crisis and the hateholders reactions, and thus supports H&M during the crisis.

Political correctness can furthermore functions as an obsession, as the analysis indicates that the phenomenon has taking over people's common sense, and that the use of political correctness has become too much. Political correctness is being used to a point, where faithholders find it to be too much, and do therefore not wish to participate in the crisis communication. The further consequence of that is that only the hateholders participate in the crisis communication, making the negative comments the majority.

This thesis shows an overall contradiction of political correctness in relation to crises on social media. People do not favor political correctness, and disassociate themselves with people practicing the phenomenon. However, political correctness is often related to sensitive issues, which makes people practice it when addressing such issues – or not even addressing them, at all. It is therefore important for organizations to consider the role of political correctness in both crisis communication, but also in relation to its marketing and PR-strategy, as it appears to have influenced the H&M crisis.

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10.0 APPENDIXES

10.1 APPENDIX 1 – TWITTER-POST NO. 1

Marketing fail. H&M puts a black child in a hoodie that reads: "I'm the coolest monkey in the jungle." And the white child is the "survival expert." And now folks are pretending like they don't know that black children have long been racially characterized as monkeys.

6:18 PM - 8 Jan 2018

10.2 APPENDIX 2 – TWITTER-POST NO. 2

The H&M [illegible] is just irony. I highly doubt they were like "let's put the monkey hoodie on the [blurred] baby" like y'all making it seem.

5:26 PM - 8 Jan 2018

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10.3 APPENDIX 3 – TWITTER-POST NO. 3

10.4 APPENDIX 4 – TWITTER-POST NO. 4

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10.5 APPENDIX 5 – TWITTER-POST NO. 5

10.6 APPENDIX 6 – TWITTER-POST NO. 6

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10.7 APPENDIX 7 – PICTURE OF THE TWO H&M HOODIES'

10.8 APPENDIX 8 – TWITTER-POST NO. 1 FOR THE INTERVIEWS

@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people! #racism #ThisMorning

10.9 APPENDIX 9 – TWITTER-POST NO. 2 FOR THE INTERVIEWS

Fuck you @hm I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They don't want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! #FuckYou #HM #Racism #Africa

10.10 APPENDIX 10 – TWITTER-POST NO 3 FOR THE INTERVIEWS

Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it

10.11 APPENDIX 11 – TWITTER-POST NO. 4 FOR THE INTERVIEWS

Everyone is losing their shit over @hm advert. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn #CalmDown #TheCoolestMonkeyInTheJungle

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10.12 APPENDIX 12 – H&M APOLOGY ON TWITTER

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H&M ✔ @hm · Jan 13

We are aware of the recent events in several of our South African stores. Out of concern for the safety of our employees and customers we have temporarily closed all stores in the area. We strongly believe that racism and bias in any shape or form, deliberate or accidental, are simply unacceptable.

We stress that our store staff had nothing to do with our poor judgement of producing the children's hoodie and the image.

💬 1.5K   ⟲ 7.1K   ♡ 21K   ✉

H&M ✔ @hm · Jan 16

WE ARE LISTENING

The recent incident was entirely unintentional, but it demonstrates so clearly how big our responsibility is as a global brand. We have reached out, around the world, inside and outside H&M to get feedback. Our commitment to addressing diversity and inclusiveness is genuine, therefore we have appointed a global leader, in this area, to drive our work forward.
There will be more from us soon.

💬 162   ⟲ 260   ♡ 1.3K   ✉

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10.13 APPENDIX 13 – H&M APOLOGY ON INSTAGRAM

WE ARE LISTENING

hm • Following

hm The recent incident was entirely unintentional, but it demonstrates so clearly how big our responsibility is as a global brand. We have reached out, around the world, inside and outside H&M to get feedback. Our commitment to addressing diversity and inclusiveness is genuine, therefore we have appointed a global leader, in this area, to drive our work forward.

There will be more from us soon.

Load more comments

p1stolpeter Revok MSK

fkn_aye.all_day #boycotthandm

fkn_aye.all_day Pay revok

benjiapps What I don't get is why is it worth it in the first place???

karlprojektorinski @hm maybe start by

147,700 likes

JANUARY 16

Add a comment…

We would like to put on record our position in relation to the controversial image of our hoodie.

Our position is simple – we have got this wrong and we are deeply sorry.

We have a responsibility to be aware of and attuned to all racial and cultural sensitivities – and we have not lived up to this responsibility this time.

This incident is accidental in nature, but this doesn't mean we don't take it extremely seriously or understand the upset and discomfort it has caused. We have taken down the image and we have removed the garment. We will now be doing everything we possibly can to prevent this from happening again in future.

hm • Following

hm We have got this wrong and we are deeply sorry. Link in bio.

Load more comments

niiamhdownes Last?? 🤔

alamedaunifiedschooldistrict Nah b^

usernamewithclout Last

.peacee I'd like to get a modelling job for my 21 month old cousin. What modelling agency should she join?

king.alsa @hdii_t so true

theash84 I would love to model for you all, please check out my page.

kxvin_lz @sara_ann05 Go to hell.

hipsterchainsaw @hm #boycotthm

rip.out.your.spleen #payrevok

hunterheitz All good, way to kill you biz! #marketing101

234,583 likes

JANUARY 10

Add a comment…

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We understand that many people are upset about the image of the children's hoodie. We, who work at H&M, can only agree.

We're deeply sorry that the picture was taken, and we also regret the actual print. Therefore, we've not only removed the image from our channels, but also the garment from our product offering.

It's obvious that our routines haven't been followed properly. This is without any doubt. We'll thoroughly investigate why this happened to prevent this type of mistake from happening again.

hm ✔ • Following

Load more comments

cutieandabeauty I love your clothing especially for my son I agree that the sweater was distasteful however if something else came to my attention there is no diversity with your models majority of them are white when Americans my Philippine African dark all sorts of flavors I think you guys should be fair as far as the models and when you do have a African-American model not to have her with a short haircut and masculine-looking I'm just saying I look through the pictures and all the site

ashlyyyherrera23_ Hey @hm I was interested in modeling for y'all I just don't know how to get up. With y'all or where to start

rose.major @susanastagram it's the

314,253 likes

JANUARY 9

Add a comment...

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10.14 APPENDIX 14 – H&M'S PRECENSE ON TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM

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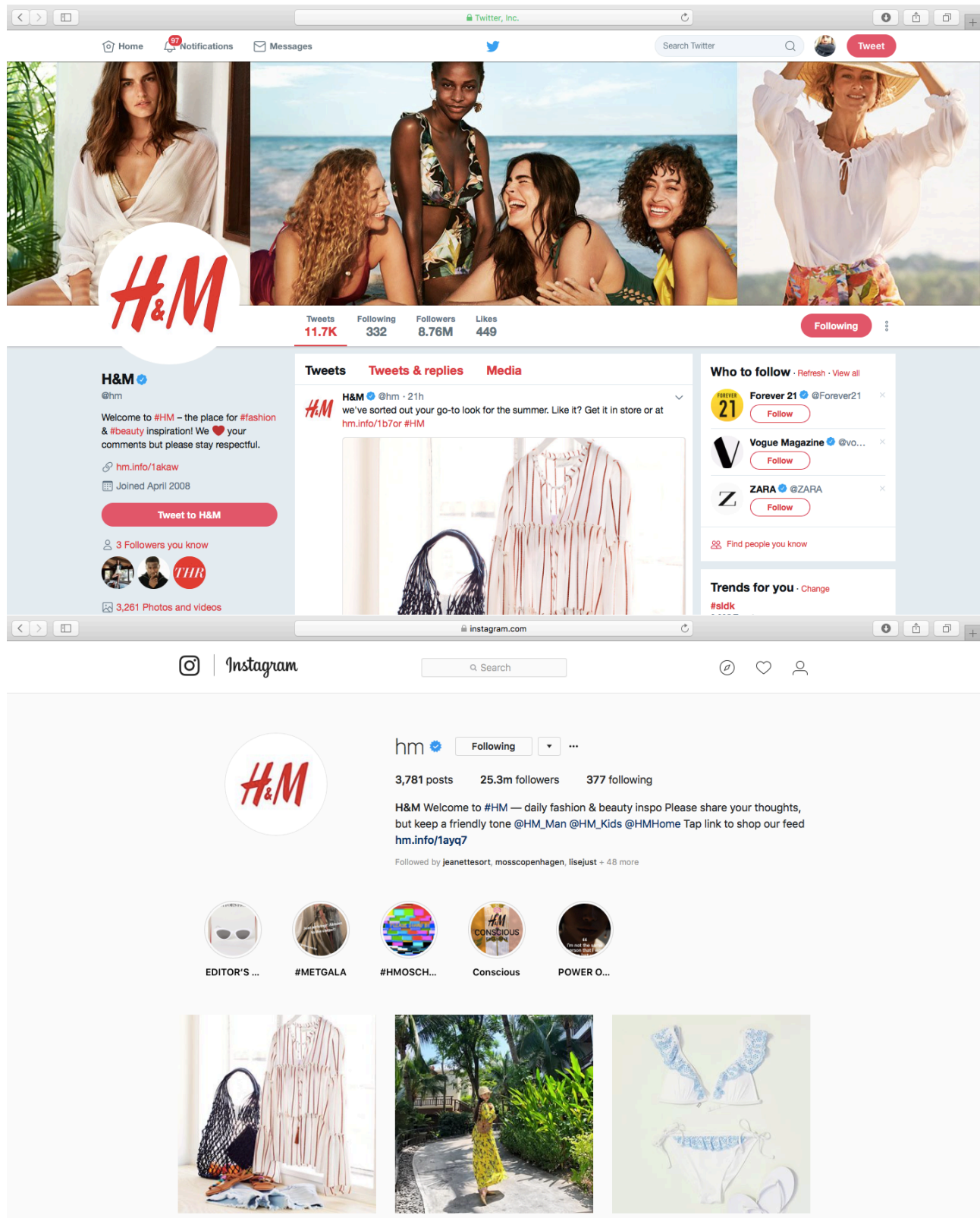
10.15 APPENDIX 15 – FACEBOOK-POST RECRUITING INTERVIEW-PARTICIPANTS

English translation:

> "!HELP! Do you have approximately half an hour that you can take out of you calendar, are you 18+ years of age, and do you shop at H&M, then I would really like to borrow that half an hour!
>
> In relation to my thesis, I am seeking interview-participants, who wants to answer some questions regarding H&M and their "The Coolest Monkey in The Jungle" – situation.
>
> I am willing to jump on my bike or take the bus to come to you, and are you not living in Aalborg, a telephone-interview will do.
>
> Please send me a mail at ahju13@student.aau.dk or text me here or on Messenger, then I can explain further. I'll give coffee and chocolate! Or share, for Gods sake! Thank you so much!"

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10.16 APPENDIX 16 – COLOR-CODING

SOCIAL MEDIA

COMMUNICATION

POSITIVE

NEGATIVE

OVER-REACTION

HARMLESS

UNDERSTANDING

WONDER

SOCIAL BACKGROUND

RACISM

UNCOMPREHENSING

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

10.17 APPENDIX 17 – INITIAL CODING SCHEME FOR TWITTER-POSTS

Code	Description of code	Examples
Positive	When positive expressions/feelings are made towards H&M and the crisis	• APP. 8.2, Twitter-post no. 2: *"The H&M *** is just irony. I highly doubt they were like "let's put the monkey hoodie on the n***** baby" like y'all making it seem* • APP. 8.5, Twitter-post no. 5: *"Y'all can fell how y'all fell about the h&m hoodie situation, I though it was cute (emoji) sue me."*
Negative	When negative expressions/feelings are made towards H&M and the crisis	• APP. 8.1, Twitter-post no. 1: *"Marketing fail. H&M puts a black child in a hoodie that reads: "I'm the coolest monkey in the jungle." And now folks are pretending like they don't know that black children have long been racially characterized as monkeys."* • APP. 8.3, Twitter-post no. 3: *"There´s a White Supremacist who works for H&M who though it was funny to make a black boy model a hoodie that said "Coolest Monkey In The Jungle"."* • APP. 8.9, Twitter-post no. 2 for the interviews: *"Fuck you @hm I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They don't want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! #FuckYou #HM #Racism #Africa."* • APP. 8.10, Twitter-post no. 3 for the interviews: *"Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it."*
Political correctness	When it is expressed that the use of a black child and the word monkey together is wrong or right	• APP. 8.1, Twitter-post no. 1: *"Marketing fail. H&M puts a black child in a hoodie that*

		reads: *"I'm the coolest monkey in the jungle." And now folks are pretending like they don't know that black children have long been racially characterized as monkeys."* • APP. 8.6, Twitter-post no. 6: *"They got a lil black boy in a monkey hoodie. Of course it's offensive but it's so obvious, I'm hysterical over the lack of awareness by H&M."* • APP. 8.8 – Twitter-post no. 1 for the interviews: *"@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people! #racism "ThisMorning."* • APP. 8.10, Twitter-post no. 3 for the interviews: *"Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it."* • APP. 8.11, Twitter-post no. 4 for the interviews: *"Everyone is loosing their shit over @hm advert. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn "CalmDown "TheCoolestMonekyInTheJungle ."*

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10.18 APPENDIX 18 – INITIAL CODING SCHEME FOR INTERVIEWS

Code	Description of code	Examples
Social media	When a participant expresses something about social media, the use of it and its relation to "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle"	• P1, ll. 18: "*Yes, social media was the first place I saw it*" • P1, ll. 122: "*I think a lot about how I express myself on social media, because, eh… if it isn't something in a private conversation or if you don't have a private profile, if it's something that comes out to everyone, then it's often something that's going to be there forever*" • P2, ll. 97: "*Eh, I don't really share things posts. I'm very inactive on social media. But if I had to share something, it would probably be some of those who consider the issues about what we should really care about*" • P2, ll. 101: "*This is like an Internet-warrior syndrome, that every time something happens that we can share and get angry about, I would probably defend, if I was to share something*" • P2, ll. 107: "*… because I know that you'll rarely get a matter-of-fact kind of debate, if you start it a place like that (social media).* • P3, ll. 100: "*I try not to use social media for that kind of things. Also because, everything can be misunderstood on social media*" • P3, ll. 120: "*there are just so much that's lost on a written medium*" • P4, ll. 134: "*Because, if you talk to each other, then you have the possibility to get more*

		things out, and you have the possibility to understand body language and how… you know, get it all, instead of just sitting at home behind your screen. Then you might write something that you wouldn't have said, if you were standing…"
		• P5, ll. 64: *"It's because it seems so exaggerated. 'Fuck you', I mean, it's the type of communication you see on the Internet today. It's so, eh, I mean, it's so strait forward, so it's like the thoughts we have, at the moment we have them, we need to write them, I mean, it's so careless in some way"*
		• P5, ll. 114: "*I don't like to give it air time, when it's things like this*"
		• P6, ll. 19: "*The first time I saw it was when it became a firestorm. On Facebook, I think. It exploded and people were writing 'this is terrible and horrible'*"
		• P6, ll. 135: "*But again, it's this thing, if it's just a firestorm, then I think it's a little one-sided, kind of like a herd mentality. Try to find your own opinion, instead of just going with what's easy. I mean, some kind of trend, like. Now we hate on H&M, then it's "Jensens Bøfhus", then it's something else."*
		• P6, ll. 147. Interviewer: "*Do you think it is easier on social media than in real life?*" Participant no. 6: "*Mh, then you can sit there and hide behind you screen. Then you won't be confronted, and you aren't met be someone who ahs a different*

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attitude than yourself. So you are challenged in the same way. Everyone can be a warrior on a keyboard."

- P7, ll. 52: *"Well, it's a typical reaction in general. People would also react like that away from social media, but yes, even more typical reaction on social media. I mean, that you just infuriate yourself, and then because the person is anonymous, or who do I say it, it doesn't say a name, then it is just easier to get angry about something and then hide."*

- P7, ll. 112: *"Well, I think… again, this thing about… I think like this, that it could also hit me, fi I share something and people don't agree with me. I mean, if you have someone in your circle of friends, or something like that, that agree on the post I'm sharing is racist, then 'why would you share this persons meanings about…'."*

- P7, ll. 122: *"I wouldn't if it was negative. I don't like to share negative things, because I don't see any reason to do that or to spread that kind of message."*

- P7, ll. 138: *"I think I would rather talk face-to-face, if I have to. I f for instance one of my friends posted such a thing, I would probably bring it up, when we would be together, instead of online."* Interviewer: *"Why don't you want to do it online?"* Participant no. 7: *"I think it has something to do with people twisting it. I mean, you can take screenshots of things, and the be like 'see what this idiot says'. You know, post them I different forums, where*

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		it's kind of like, well this idiot defends H&M, or something like that. You can do it like that. I don't use social media that much for those kind of things. I just quickly take a look, and then that's just it."
Political Correctness	When a participant expresses his or her opinion about political correctness/or when a participant expresses something related to political correctness	• P2, ll. 18: "*Well, nice sweaters, haha! Eh, yea, I don't know. All I see is the clothes*" • P5, ll. 153: "*(…) I don't think that is was H&M's intension. I think they were caught in a world, where we talk a lot about racism, and where we are very considerate about."* • P5, ll. 174: "*I think it's a very pretty green sweater that they have put this sweet boy in, and eh, I think it is really sad that we see skin color and not just a sweet boy. That's the world I hope my own son grows up in – that you are just a sweet boy, no matter if you have one or two arm, if you're black, blue or white."* • P6, ll. 26: "*Coolest Monkey in the Jungle, it's a black boy in a hoodie, and it's a white boy in a hoodie, eh. 'survival expert'. Eh, yea what do I think? Well, I wouldn't get that association myself… or, yes I actually think I might, if I think it's a black boy. I remember when Line Baun Danielsen in "Go'aften Danmark" said 'it that a monkey', and then it was a black guy. So its probably a common association."* • P6, ll. 110: "*Because, I think the racism-card is drawn way too often. You can't do anything, then you're stigmatizing, and then you're racists, and then you´re bla, bla, bla, bla. Why*

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		not just be around each other, and then say we are all humans."
		• P6, ll. 167: *"Well, I think this racism-card is being drawn way too often. I think we have got a fear of involvement of, with a Danish point of view, ethnical Danish people, like 'oh no, we don't dare to say that, but also… yea, probably mostly ethnical Danish people. That we have become afraid of expressing our self, not to say that we should express our self in a racial manner, but that we have become so afraid to involve, and many new Danish people also draw the racism-card and say 'well, we can't, they are just racist all of them'."*
		• P6, ll. 189: *"Well, again I think it is a little two-parted, because if you take this naive approach towards it, which I kind of think it is, and say that they (H&M) really didn't think about it, and that it was a mistake, and that… I mean, if it's like that, then I think, well okay, it's stupid, but it's a mistake, it happens, its human. But if it's like 'okay, listen, let go stir things up, and get our name all over the world press', which I might believe is the case, then I think it is political incorrect, because then I think you play on something that is already a major issue I many societies, namely racism. And then I think it's wrong. But it depends on the approach."*
		• P7, ll. 81: *"I mean, to say, why do people think like this. It is a very developed mind that a person do not think color, or"*

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		how do I say it." • P7, ll. 170: "*I don't think about that at all! I have seen it, then I actually forgot about it, and shopped at H&M.*" • P7, ll. 185: "*Politically, yes. I mean, if you have to look political, look at skin color, or how to say it, then it wasn't a smart move, and when the shirt says monkey, I mean… they could have told themselves that it wasn't smart to put a black boy in the sweater with monkey on.*"
Uncomprehending	When a participant is uncomprehending towards a statement	• P6, ll. 127: "*More like such a torchlight parade saying 'death over H&M'. I think it's ridiculous.*" • P7, ll. 18: "*Well, I didn't think that much about it. I didn't think about it the first time either, I just thought it was a pretty sweater. I didn't think about that fact that it was a black child that was wearing it, if I can say it like that? (…) I didn't think about the meaning of it at all.*" • P7, ll. 174: "*Where you think, I mean H&M, I have shopped clothes at H&M all the time, and when there's nothing wrong with the quality, I mean. Then I don't see any reason to not shop there anymore.*" • P7, ll. 194: "*Well, we are so educated that you would think that people would have a more developed though of mind than what has turned out to be the truth. To think, that they probably didn't have this point of view on the world anymore. But there will always be people that does.*"

Overreaction	When a participant expresses that the reactions to the H&M crisis are exaggerated	• P2, ll. 89: "*I very much agree with those, who says that people need to relax*" • P5, ll. 55: "*Eh, on the face of it, I also think it's a petty issue*" • P6, ll. 66: "*I don't really think that you can put these two things up against each other. I mean, 'all the terrible things happening in the world right now', I mean, of course there are terrible things happening, there always will be. I don't think that is comparable. I don't think that you can put all the terrible things happening in the world up against a picture of a little boy.*" • P6, ll. 80: "*I think it's overblown. I think sets off way too much*" • P6, ll. 94: "*I don't think about racism at all. I mean, I think it's staged racism then, to create some sort of debate.*" • P7, ll. 33: "*Yes. Well, its… I see what this person means. I mean, there are so many other things that you should do more about, than this in quotation marks, little thing. You can consider other thing instead, I think.*" • P7, ll. 45: "*Yes… it's a pretty extreme statement. I mean, I don't …, even when I saw it the first time, I didn't even think about it.*"

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10.19 APPENDIX 19 – FINAL CODING SCHEME

Theme	Code	Description of code	Examples
The H&M firestorms from a Danish perspective - *How firestorms are viewed on social media. How people use social media, when it comes to firestorms, and peoples reactions to firestorms*	Social media	- When a participant expresses something about social media, the use of it and its relation to "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle"	• **P1, ll. 18:** "*Yea, social media was the first place I saw it*" • **P1, ll. 122:** "*I think a lot about how I express myself on social media, because, eh… if it isn't something in a private conversation or if you don't have a private profile, if it's something that comes out to everyone, then it's often something that's going to be there forever*" • **P2, ll. 12:** "*Eh, I think I saw it the first time on Facebook, perhaps.*" • **P2, ll. 97:** "*Eh, I don't really share posts. I'm very inactive on social media. But if I had to share something, it would probably be some of those who consider the issues about what we should really care about*" • **P2, ll. 101:** "*This*

			is like an Internet-warrior syndrome, that every time something happens that we can share and get angry about, I would probably defend, if I was to share something"
			• **P2, ll. 107:** "*… because I know that you'll rarely get a matter-of-fact kind of debate, if you start it a place like that (social media).*
			• **P3, ll. 100:** "*I try not to use social media for that kind of things. Also because, everything can be misunderstood on social media"*
			• **P3, ll. 111:** "*Again, misinterpretations of everything as soon as you share something that has something do to with racism, or has something to do with pedophiles, or animal cruelty or what ever, well, then people interpret it in different ways, and then you will*

			be judged in one way or another. So no, that's why I don't care about sharing."
			• **P3, ll. 120:** *"there are just so much that's lost on a written medium"*
			• **P4, ll. 19:** *"I think I saw it on social media, actually. After someone said some different things about it."*
			• **P4, ll. 134:** *"Because, if you talk to each other, then you have the possibility to get more things out, and you have the possibility to understand body language and how… you know, get it all, instead of just sitting at home behind your screen. Then you might write something that you wouldn't have said, if you were standing…"*
			• **P5, ll. 14:** *"Eh, on Facebook. Actually. There were a lot of fuss about it, and then I think… it was some kind of opinion-forming site that posted*

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			it."
			• **P5, ll. 64:** *"It's because it seems so exaggerated. 'Fuck you', I mean, it's the type of communication you see on the Internet today. It's so, eh, I mean, it's so strait forward, so it's like the thoughts we have, at the moment we have them, we need to write them, I mean, it's so careless in some way"*
			• **P5, ll. 114:** "*I don't like to give it air time, when it's things like this*"
			• **P6, ll. 19:** "*The first time I saw it was when it became a firestorm. On Facebook, I think. It exploded and people were writing 'this is terrible and horrible'*"
			• **P6, ll. 121:** "*Those firestorms and contributing to them, I am not going to do that. I mean, if I have an opinion about something, I would think that it was cool*

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			enough, but to ride along on some wave just to be a part of it, is irrelevant, I think." • **P6, ll. 135:** *"But again, it's this thing, if it's just a firestorm, then I think it's a little one-sided, kind of like a herd mentality. Try to find your own meaning, instead of just going with what's easy. I mean, some kind of trend, like. Now we hate on H&M, then it's "Jensens Bøfhus", then it's something else."* • **P6, ll. 147**. Interviewer: *"Do you think it is easier on social media than in real life?"* Participant no. 6: *"Mh, then you can sit there and hide behind you screen. Then you won't be confronted, and you aren't met by someone who has a different attitude than yourself. So you aren't challenged in the same way. Everyone can be a warrior on a*

			keyboard."
			• **P7, ll. 52**: "*Well, it's a typical reaction in general. People would also react like that away from social media, but yes, even more typical reaction on social media. I mean, that you just infuriate yourself, and then because the person is anonymous, or how do I say it, it doesn't say a name, then it is just easier to get angry about something and then hide.*"
			• **P7, ll. 112:** "*Well, I think… again, this thing about… I think like this, that it could also hit me, if I share something and people don't agree with me. I mean, if you have someone in your circle of friends, or something like that, that agree on the post I'm sharing is racist, then 'why would you share this persons meanings about…'.*"

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			• **P7, ll. 122:** "*I wouldn't if it was negative. I don't like to share negative things, because I don't see any reason to do that or to spread that kind of message.*" • **P7, ll. 138:** "*I think I would rather talk face-to-face, if I have to. If for instance one of my friends posted such a thing, I would probably bring it up, when we would be together, instead of online.*" Interviewer: "*Why don't you want to do it online?*" Participant no. 7: "*I think it has something to do with people twisting it. I mean, you can take screenshots of things, and then be like 'see what this idiot says'. You know, post them in different forums, where it's kind of like, well this idiot defends H&M, or something like that. You can do it like that. I*"

			don't use social media that much for those kind of things. I just quickly take a look, and then that's just it."
	Overreaction	- When a participant expresses that the reactions to the H&M crisis are exaggerated	• **P1, ll. 50:** "*I also think it's… it's a really heated statement.*" • **P1, ll. 85:** "*Eh, I maybe also think that it's just, well it has been an overreaction to all of this.*" • **P1, ll.** 114: "*Well, yea… I maybe think it's an overreaction to say that the entire H&M-concern is racists.*" • **P2, ll. 68:** "*The controversy arises only because of people ascribing it, I think.*" • **P2, ll. 89**: "*I very much agree with those, who says that people need to relax*" • **P3, ll. 30:** "*I think I agree a lot in her way to react, in relation to this. It was probably kind of my own reaction, even though you should take things like*

			racism really seriously, but I just think that it's because people have a wrong way of thinking, if they think that that is what the commercial is about."
			• **P3, ll. 55:** *"So I understand in some way, but I think it is a heated reaction, because I think it's old-fashioned to have this way of thinking."*
			• **P5, ll. 55:** *"Eh, on the face of it, I also think it's a petty issue"*
			• **P5, ll. 25:** *"Well, I know of the case, but my first thought was that is was just two boys wearing hoodies. Eh, I must admit that."*
			• **P5, ll. 93:** *"Because, the more we talk about racism, the more racists it becomes, or the more it gets to live, instead of… Wouldn't it also be racists if he didn't wear that hoodie, because he is black?"*
			• **P6, ll. 66:** *"I don't really think*

			that you can put these two things up against each other. I mean, 'all the terrible things happening in the world right now', I mean, of course there are terrible things happening, there always will be. I don't think that is comparable. I don't think that you can put all the terrible things happening in the world up against a picture of a little boy."
			• **P6, ll. 80:** *"I think it's overblown. I think it sets off way too much"*
			• **P6, ll. 94:** *"I don't think about racism at all. I mean, I think it's staged racism then, to create some sort of debate."*
			• **P6, ll. 127:** *"More like such a torchlight parade saying 'death over H&M'. I think it's ridiculous."*
			• **P7, ll. 33:** *"Yes. Well, its… I see what this person means. I mean, there are so many other*

			things that you should do more about, than this in quotation marks, little thing. You can consider other thing instead, I think." • **P7, ll. 45**: _"Yes... it's a pretty extreme statement. I mean, I don't …, even when I saw it the first time, I didn't even think about it."_
Political correctness in the H&M firestorm – from a Danish perspective **-** _How the interview-participants did not find anything politically incorrect regarding the H&M advertisement, and how they find political correctness to be an obsession and the negative expressions to be an overreaction._	<u>Political Correctness</u>	- When a participant expresses his or her opinion about political correctness/or when a participant expresses something related to political correctness. When it is expressed that the use of a black child and the word monkey together is either wrong or right	• **P1, ll. 84:** _"Well, I was just about to say that, you know, it's maybe kind of like how, eh... I feel about it. That eh, I might think as well that it is a overreaction to all of this.. But I also think it has something to do with where you come from, what upbringing you have had, and what eh, yea what story you bring to the table and which culture you come from."_ • **P1, ll. 198:** _"Well, you can, according to themselves, when they... if they go out an apologize_

			for something, then they must have acted political incorrect in some way, so yes." • **P2, ll. 18**: *"Well, nice sweaters, haha! Eh, yea, I don't know. All I see is the clothes"* • **P2, ll. 141:** *"Well, it's difficult, because I think that political incorrectness is a question of sensitivity, and I actually think that it is a problem that we are so sensitive about our political debate, or correctness. But you would have to say that when you look a the tendencies in the society, then this is probably politically incorrect, if you look at a tendency in the society. In relation to my political correctness, I don't think it is an issue, again because I think it in some way creates a debate, etc. But if you look at the*

			tendencies, then it's probably politically incorrect, but for me personally, I don't think it's a problem to do it, because political incorrectness also can contribute to breaking some taboos and move boundaries, which in some cases, are a bit stupid, I think." • **P3, ll. 155:** *"They should probably have had more people to look through their marketing material, before they sent it out. Eh, but then again, it's a discussion about whether it is politically incorrect, because… I don't see anything wrong about it, but some people do, so it is a matter of interpretation. So some would say yes, they have, and others would say no, they have not. I personally don't think it's politically incorrect, but I*

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			understand why some people might misinterpret this commercial, but again, I think it's an old-fashioned way of thinking. Not because, you should of course acknowledge that racism is horrible and not support it at all, but I don't think that it's the issue here." • **P5, ll. 153:** "*(…) I don't think that is was H&M's intension. I think they were caught in a world, where we talk a lot about racism, and where we are very considerate about.*" • **P5, ll. 174**: "*I think it's a very pretty green sweater that they have put this sweet boy in, and eh, I think it is really sad that we see skin color and not just a sweet boy. That's the world I hope my own son grows up in – that you are just a sweet boy, no matter if you have one or two*

			arm, if you're black, blue or white."
			• **P6, ll. 26:** *"Coolest Monkey in the Jungle, it's a black boy in a hoodie, and it's a white boy in a hoodie, eh. 'survival expert'. Eh, yea what do I think? Well, I wouldn't get that association myself... or, yes I actually think I might, if I think it's a black boy. I remember when Line Baun Danielsen in "Go'aften Danmark" said 'it that a monkey', and then it was a black guy. So its probably a common association."*
			• **P6, ll. 110**: *"Because, I think the racism-card is drawn way too often. You can't do anything, then you're stigmatizing, and then you're racists, and then you´re bla, bla, bla, bla. Why not just be around each other, and then say we are all humans."*
			• **P6, ll. 167**:

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			"Well, I think this racism-card is being drawn way too often. I think we have got a fear of involvement of, with a Danish point of view, ethnical Danish people, like 'oh no, we don't dare to say that, but also… yea, probably mostly ethnical Danish people. That we have become afraid of expressing our self, not to say that we should express our self in a racist manner, but that we have become so afraid to involve, and many new Danish people also draw the racism-card and say 'well, we can't, they are just racist all of them'." • **P6, ll. 189:** *"Well, again I think it is a little two-parted, because if you take this naive approach towards it, which I kind of think it is, and say that they (H&M*

			really didn't think about it, and that it was a mistake, and that… I mean, if it's like that, then I think, well okay, it's stupid, but it's a mistake, it happens, its human. But if it's like 'okay, listen, lets go stir things up, and get our name all over the world press', which I might believe is the case, then I think it is politically incorrect, because then I think you play on something that is already a major issue in many societies, namely racism. And then I think it's wrong. But it depends on the approach." • **P7, ll. 81:** "*I mean, to say, why do people think like this. It is a very developed mind that a person do not think color, or how do I say it.*" • **P7, ll. 170:** "*I don't think about that at all! I have seen it, then I actually forgot about it, and shopped at*

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			H&M." • **P7, ll. 185:** *"Politically, yes. I mean, if you have to look political, look at skin color, or how to say it, then it wasn't a smart move, and when the shirt says monkey, I mean… they could have told themselves that it wasn't smart to put a black boy in the sweater with monkey on."*
	<u>Positive</u>	- When positive expressions/feelings are made towards H&M and the crisis	• **APP. 2, Twitter-post no. 2:** *"The H&M *** is just irony. I highly doubt they were like "let's put the monkey hoodie on the n***** baby" like y'all making it seem"* • **APP. 4, Twitter-post no. 4:** *"H&M is not an American company. Non native brands do not have to be familiar with USAs (or other countries) historical conflicts. No one has to do a background research for advertising a simple hoodie."* • **APP. 5, Twitter-**

			post no. 5: *"Y'all can fell how y'all fell about the h&m hoodie situation, I though it was cute (emojie) sue me."*
			• **APP. 8, Twitter-post no. 1 for the interviews:** *"@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people! #racism #ThisMorning"*
			• **APP. 11, Twitter-post no. 4 for the interviews:** *"Everyone is losing their shit over @hm advert. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn #CalmDown #TheCoolestMonkeyInTheJungle"*
	<u>Negative</u>	- When negative expressions/feelings are made towards H&M and the crisis	• **APP. 1, Twitter-post no. 1**: *"Marketing fail. H&M puts a black child in a hoodie that reads: "I'm the coolest monkey in the jungle." And now folks*

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			are pretending like they don't know that black children have long been racially characterized as monkeys." • **APP. 3, Twitter-post no. 3:** *"There´s a White Supremacist who works for H&M who though it was funny to make a black boy model a hoodie that said "Coolest Monkey In The Jungle"."* • **APP. 9, Twitter-post no. 2 for the interviews:** *"Fuck you @hm I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They don't want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! #FuckYou #HM #Racism #Africa."* • **APP. 10, Twitter-post no. 3 for the interviews:** *"Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #racism when I see it."*

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	<u>Uncomprehending</u>	- When a participant is uncomprehending towards a statement	• **P1, ll. 21:** "*Well, at first my thought is that it's just two kids wearing shirts in a commercial trying to sell some clothes.*" • **P2, ll. 18:** "*Well, pretty sweaters, haha". Eh, yea I don't know. I just see the clothes*" • **P3, ll. 18:** "*That it's two sweet children in some nice sweatshirts*" • **P2, ll. 33:** "*That eh, the perspective in relation to what else is going on in the world, then it seems like… like some kind of sought issue in my eyes that eh. You ascribe it a greater taboo than it actually should have, because it's a commercial for clothes, and of course I can see that it can be an, eh, issue, but yea, I think it is to kind of like take focus away from problems that might be more real.*" • **P2, ll. 50:** "*Eh, well again I think it's kind of a eh, hyper-reaction.*

			Eh, I can see that one maybe, colored people, could se a bigger problem, because it figuratively looks like, you know, it is like putting two things up against each other. But I don't know, I just think, again, that people's reaction makes it a race-issue, instead of what it really is. Again, because it is a commercial with two children with clothes, I mean." • **P3, ll. 85:** *"Why does it have to be about race all the time? Because a black boy is standing there in a hoodie that says "Coolest Monkey in The Jungle"... I know that 'monkey', around black people have been a really ugly insult once, but I just think that we have developed enough and live in a modern society that it should not be a problem anymore to think about what you dress your kids*

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			in. I mean, it should fit to all kids, no matter your skin color…" • **P5, ll. 16:** *"And then I saw how people went totally crazy about it, and then it was a huge thing, all of a sudden."* • **P5, ll. 25:** *"Well, I know of the case, but my first thought was that is was just two boys wearing hoodies. Eh, I must admit that."* • **P6, ll. 127:** *"More like such a torchlight parade saying 'death over H&M'. I think it's ridiculous."* • **P7, ll. 18:** *"Well, I didn't think that much about it. I didn't think about it the first time either, I just thought it was a pretty sweater. I didn't think about that fact that it was a black child that was wearing it, if I can say it like that? (…) I didn't think about the meaning of it at all."* • **P7, ll. 174:** *"Where you*

			think, I mean H&M, I have shopped clothes at H&M all the time, and when there's nothing wrong with the quality, I mean. Then I don't see any reason to not shop there anymore." • **P7, ll. 194:** *"Well, we are so educated that you would think that people would have a more developed though of mind than what has turned out to be the truth. To think, that they probably didn't have this point of view on the world anymore. But there will always be people that does."*
	Overreaction	- When a participant expresses that the reactions to the H&M crisis are exaggerated	• **P1, ll. 50:** *"I also think it's… it's a really heated statement."* • **P1, ll. 85:** *"Eh, I maybe also think that it's just, well it has been an overreaction to all of this."* • **P1, ll.** 114: **"***Well, yea… I maybe think it's an overreaction to say that the*

			entire H&M-concern is racists."
			• **P2, ll. 68:** *"The controversy arises only because of people ascribing it, I think."*
			• **P2, ll. 89:** *"I very much agree with those, who say that people need to relax"*
			• **P3, ll. 30:** *"I think I agree a lot in her way to react, in relation to this. It was probably kind of my own reaction, even though you should take things like racism really seriously, but I just think that it's because people have a wrong way of thinking, if they think that that is what the commercial is about."*
			• **P3, ll. 55:** *"So I understand in some way, but I think it is a heated reaction, because I think it's old-fashioned to have this way of thinking."*
			• **P5, ll. 25:** *"Well, I know of the case, but my first*

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			thought was that it was just two boys wearing hoodies. Eh, I must admit that." • **P5, ll. 93:** *"Because, the more we talk about racism, the more racists it becomes, or the more it gets to live, instead of… Wouldn't it also be racists if he didn't wear that hoodie, because he is black?"* • **P6, ll. 55:** *"Eh, on the face of it, I also think it's a petty issue"* • **P6, ll. 66:** *"I don't really think that you can put these two things up against each other. I mean, 'all the terrible things happening in the world right now', I mean, of course there are terrible things happening, there always will be. I don't think that it's comparable. I don't think that you can put all the terrible things happening in the world up against a picture of a little boy."* • **P6, ll. 80:** *"I think it's*

			overblown. I think sets off way too much" • **P6, ll. 94:** *"I don't think about racism at all. I mean, I think it's staged racism then, to create some sort of debate."* • **P7, ll. 33:** *"Yes. Well, its… I see what this person means. I mean, there are so many other things that you should do more about, than this in quotation marks, little thing. You can consider other thing instead, I think."* • **P7, ll. 45:** *"Yes… it's a pretty extreme statement. I mean, I don't …, even when I saw it the first time, I didn't even think about it."*

10.20 APPENDIX 20 – EXAMPLE OF COLOR CODES APPLIED ON TRANCRIBED INTERVIEW

TRANSCRIPTION no. 2 – participant no. 2

April 17, 2018 – interview conducted in person

00.00, interviewer: Først skal jeg bare lige høre din alder?

00.03, participant no. 2: Jeg er 28.

00.05, interviewer: Og hvor ofte kommer du i H&M?

00.08, participant no. 2: En, to gange om måneden vil jeg skyde på.

00.12, interviewer: Ja. Og har du set H&M's reklame med "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle"?

00.16, participant no. 2: Ja.

00.17, interviewer: Hvor henne?

00.17, participant no. 2: Øøøøh, jeg tror jeg så den første gang på Facebook, måske.

00.23, interviewer: Ja. Har du set den andre steder?

00.24, participant no. 2: Nej, altså så har jeg set den i forhold til debatterne osv. Men Facebook så jeg den som post.

00.33, interviewer: Nu viser jeg dig lige billedet af t-shirten, eller af hoodien, og den anden hoodie, og så vil jeg bare gerne høre din umiddelbare tanke, når du ser billedet.

00.44, participant no. 2: *A short pause, before he answers*… Jamen, pæne trøjer, haha! ØØh, ja, det ved jeg ikke. Jeg ser bare tøjet.

00.58, interviewer: Så har lige nogle Twitter-posts, som du får lov til at læse en efter en. Og så skal jeg egentlig bare høre hvad du tænker, når du har læst dem. Så vi starter bar elige med denne her.

Pause, where the participant is reading a Twitter-post regarding "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle".

Twitter-post no. 1: *@thismorning @hm This seems like such a petty issue considering all the terrible things happening in the world right now. Get some perspective, people!*

01.15, participant no. 2: Ja.

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01.16, interviewer: Ja. Hvad tænker du?

01.17, participant no. 2: Øøøh, jeg tænker det sådan er meget reelt, i forhold til hvad jeg tænker. At øøøh, perspektivet i forhold til hvad der ellers sker rundt omkring, så virker det som at, altså… der er sådan lidt et søgt issue, i min optik, at øøh, man tillægger det en større tabu-værdi end det egentlig bør have, fordi det er en tøjreklame, og jeg kan selvfølgelig godt se, at der kan være en øøh, et issue, men ja, jeg synes det er reelt, at det er sådan at fjerne fokus fra nogle problemer der måske er mere reelle. Og hvis man virkelig vil se på det racistiske, så skal er der nok nogle andre ting i verden, end H&M, der giver børn tøj på, altså.

02.06, interviewer: Ja. Og en til (Twitter-post).

Pause, where the participant is reading another Twitter-post regarding "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle".

Twitter-post no. 2: *Fuck you @hm@ I'm glad your stores are shut down in South Africa! They don't want you there! Next time fucking think before you do some stupid shit like that! #FuckYou #HM #**Racism** #Africa*

02.16, participant no. 2: Ja.

02.16, interviewer: Hvad tænker du her?

02.17, participant no. 2: Øøøøh, jamen igen så synes jeg det er sådan en øøøh, en hyper reaktion. Øøøh, jeg kan godt se, at man måske, farvede mennesker, så kan man måske godt se det som et større problem, fordi at rent billedeligt, så ser det jo også, altså, det er at sætte to ting op mod hinanden. Men, jeg ved ikke, jeg synes bare igen, at det er folks reaktion, der gør det til et race-problem, fremfor hvad det måske egentlig reelt er. Igen, fordi det er en reklame med to børn, der har tøj på, altså. Og lige i det, at det også et børn, så bør der måske også være lidt at det her uskyld, som nu engang gerne vil tillægge børn. Så jeg synes det er en hyper reaktion.

03.04, interviewer: Ja. Og en mere (Twitter-post).

Pause, where the participant reads yet another Twitter-posts regardig "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle"

Twitter-post no. 3: *Boycott @hm . that's not coincident. I know #**racism** when I see it*

03.12, participant no. 2: Jamen, igen synes jeg måske racisme aspektet kan man godt tillægge det her. Men jeg synes det er noget man gør som, som consumer af det her ad-produkt. Det er noget man selv tillægger det, så hvis du måske selv er sådan neutral, i forhold til racen, så synes jeg ikke, det burde være et problem, øh. Kontroversen opstår kun på grund af de folk der tillægger det, synes jeg.

03.48, interviewer: Og den sidste (Twitter-posts).

Pause, where the participant reads the last Twitter-post regarding "The Coolest Monkey in the Jungle"

Twitter-post no. 4: *Everyone is losing their shit over @hm advertd. Why make everything or anything racial? #MoveOn "CalmDown "**TheCoolestMonkeyInTheJungle***

03.55, participant no. 2: Ja, lige præcis! Øøøh..

03.58, interviewer: Der er du enig eller hvad?

03.59, participant no. 2: Ja, igen som jeg siger, at det er, det racistiske i det, er at folk tillægger det selv. Det er ikke nødvendigvis, at H&M har givet en mørk dreng en trøje på, hvor der står "The Coolest Moneky in the Jungle", altså, det er jo ikke fordi de kalder ham en abe. (SOCIAL BACKGROUND) Jeg kan godt se, at man kan tillægge det, men igen, så er det den subjektive holdning, frem for en objektiv holdning, synes jeg. Jeg kunne forstå, hvis man havde givet ham abe-ører på, eller et eller andet, og givet ham en hale også, så kan jeg se det. (UNCOMPREHENSING) Men, hvad heddet det øøh, i forhold til det her, der synes jeg det er, det er mere søgt tilgang, at det skal være racistisk.

04.1, interviewer: Så der er nogle af udmeldingerne du er enig i, og nogle du er uenig i?

04.45, participant no. 2: Ja. Jeg er meget enig i dem der siger, at folk skal slappe lidt af. Øøøh, og dem der tillægger H&M som racister, der synes jeg egentlig bare, at der er lidt søgt. For på et eller andet punkt må man jo også sige, at folk er jo kloge indenfor advertisement, så de ved jo godt, at det kan have været kontroversielt, så egentlig synes jeg også det er en måde at bryde med den her tilgang og folks opfattelse. Så et eller andet sted er det jo modigt nok, det gav bare bagslag, ikke.

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05.19, interviewer: Ja. Ville du kunne finde på at dele sådan nogle posts på de sociale medier?

05.23, participant no. 2: *A short pause, before he answers…* Øøøh, jeg deler ikke rigtig posts. Jeg er meget inaktiv på de sociale medier. Men skulle jeg dele noget, så ville jeg måske dele nogle af dem, der så på den har bekymring omkring, at vi skal gå op i, hvordan det her er et problem, når der egentlig… Jeg ved godt, at man ikke kan bekæmpe alle problemer i verden, men jeg synes måske ikke, det er… det her det er sådan et internet-kriger syndrom, at hver gang der sker et eller andet vi kan dele og vi kan blive sure over, så er det der man går ind, så jeg ville nok mere forsvare, hvis jeg delte noget, så ville jeg tage nogle af de sådan lidt mere defensive posts og dele, og så prøve, at få det aspekt frem.

06.08, interviewer: Ville du så selv kunne finde på at forsvare et brand eller en virksomhed på de sociale medier?

06.13, participant no. 2: Igen, jeg gør det ikke så meget, men øøh… fordi jeg ved, at det er sjældent man får en rigtig saglig debat, hvis man begynder noget sådan et sted, og det er det jeg synes der er problemet, det er at de har shitstorms, der er ikke saglighed (COMMUNICATION) Altså, du ser ikke på hvad det er der egentlig er problemet, osv., det er, at du egentlig går ind med din helt egen subjektive holdning, og sviner nogle til, eller.. og dem der så også støtter det, for mange gange svines alle mulige andre til, så jeg vil sige, jeg ville nok ikke gøre det, men jeg ville helt klart taget et mere defensivt end offensivt stands på den her.

06.57, interviewer: H&M har været ude at undskylde mange gange for den her situation, eller hvad man skal, og de har faktisk også fjernet reklamen fra nettet og det er heller ikke alle steder du kan købe hoodien mere. Hvad tænker du om den handling?

07.10, participant no. 2: Jeg synes det er fint nok, at man ligesom undskylder for den måde folk har kunne opfatte det på, fordi det har jo selvfølgelig ikke været deres hensigt, kunne jeg forstille mig. At trække den tilbage, synes jeg maske er, øøh, jamen det er lidt igen det her consumer-society vi lever i, der synes jeg der er sådan et lidt overdreven reaktion, men det er igen de her folk, som er så præcerende på det, så det synes jeg nogle gange det er lidt at presse en virksomhed ud i noget åndssvagt. Men jeg synes undskyldningen den er fin, fordi det godt kan blive opfattet anderledes.

A little interruption from a friend of the participant.

07.57, interviewer: Har krisen, eller den her situation ændret dit syn på H&M?

08.03, participant no. 2: Øøøh, nej, ikke nødvendigvis. Egentlig, så synes jeg lige da den kom frem, synes jeg det var meget fedt, fordi jeg synes det ligger, et eller andet sted ligger det jo op til debat, altså den bryder lidt sådan tabu, og jeg synes faktisk det var modigt, taget i betragtning af hvad den kunne skabe af debat, hvilket den så også har. Så jeg synes et eller andet sted, at det er et bolt statement, og det.. .jeg synes at, altså nu er det svært i denne her tid, men jeg synes det er sådan noget, der ligger op til debat, og det synes jeg egentlig er meget spændende, at en virksomhed tør gøre det.

08.42, interviewer: Så du vil fortsat handle i H&M?

08.44, participant no. 2: Ja, for pokker, deres tøj er billigt, haha!

08.47, interviewer: Det sidste spørgsmål: Synes du, at H&M har handlet politisk ukorrekt?

08.50, participant no. 2: Øøh.. *a short pause before he answers..* Ja, det må man jo nok sige.

09.00, interviewer: Hvorfor?

09.01, participant no. 2: Jamen, det er jo svært, fordi at jeg synes, at politisk ukorrekthed er en, er et sensitivitets-spørgsmål, og jeg synes egentlig, at det er et problem, at vi er så sensitive omkring vores politiske debat, eller korrekthed. Men man må jo så nok sige, at når man ser på tendenserne i samfundet, så er det her jo nok politisk ukorrekt, hvis man skal se på samfundstendens. I forhold til min politiske korrekthed, så synes jeg ikke, at det er et problem, igen fordi jeg synes det er sådan lidt debat skabende, osv., men hvis man ser på tendenserne, så er det nok politisk ukorrekt, men for mig personligt, synes jeg ikke det er et problem at gøre det, fordi politisk ukorrekthed også kan være med til at, altså bryde nogle tabuer og rykke nogle grænser, som i nogle tilfælde, måske er lidt åndssvage, synes jeg. Så ja, det har de nok, men for mig er det fint nok at lege med politisk ukorrekthed, for det åbner for nogle nye opfattelser af ting.

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10.21 APPENDIX 21 – PARTICIPANT NO. 1

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.

10.22 APPENDIX 22 – PARTICIPANT NO. 2

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.

10.23 APPENDIX 23 – PARTICIPANT NO. 3

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.

10.24 APPENDIX 24 – PARTICIPANT NO. 4

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.

10.25 APPENDIX 25 – PARTICIPANT NO. 5

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.

10.26 APPENDIX 26 – PARTICIPANT NO. 6

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.

10.27 APPENDIX 27 – PARTICIPANT NO. 7

Appendix can be found in a separate document, as it contains line numbers.