

**Exploring the Use of Social Media to
Mobilise Pseudo-Bystanders to Support
Victims of Corruption**

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Abstract

Corruption is pervasive, as the abuse of one's power for personal gain does not recognise borders, cultures or contexts. Should perpetrators of criminal acts use this power to cover up their crime, this is also an "abuse of power", and is thus another manifestation of corruption. As a result, victims of corruption suffer at the hands of others, and for some, this suffering is extensive and can be lifelong. Thus, corruption should not be tolerated and efforts to fight corruption need to be supported. In recent times, social media has emerged as a vehicle for victims to change the power imbalance, where the perpetrator has traditionally won out. Social media enables the mobilisation of literally thousands of "pseudo-bystanders" to support victims of corruption (I refer to those who act like bystanders in the online environment as "pseudo-bystanders" in this study). For instance, by calling on others to help them, victims may receive physical support, to the extent that people collectively protest in the streets due to their previous online engagement with the case (*e.g.*, the Gezi Park movement).

The current study explored the intersection between "corruption", "social media" and "bystander intervention", to discover how social media is used to mobilise pseudo-bystanders to help victims of corruption. In particular, I have identified three research gaps. Firstly, *whistle-blower* remains the only bystander role identified in a corruption context. In general, existing studies suggest that bystanders may adopt different stances in the intervention process. However, specific roles that differentiate these individuals, and to what extent they become involved in a social media context to address corruption, are unknown. Secondly, although Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process is a well-recognised theory, there is a scarcity of research on whether bystanders go through similar steps in an online context, as well as what online action they adopt to intervene and what factors might influence their decision. Lastly, it remains unclear as to what prompts bystanders to become involved, so that they take action to intervene.

This study intended to explore specific stances and roles that pseudo-bystanders adopt, how they intervene in corruption cases using social media, and the various triggers that prompt pseudo-bystanders to take action. For this purpose, I examined and conceptualised qualitative web-archival data extracted from various social media platforms across three

selected case studies involving corruption. By addressing the identified gaps in knowledge, the findings from this research contributed towards our theoretical understanding of the phenomena that intersects corruption, bystander intervention and social media. The findings suggest that pseudo-bystanders can be grouped into four broad pseudo-bystander stances (“*good Samaritan*”, “*in-between*”, “*bad Samaritan*” and “*troll*”). From these stances, this study further identifies eight specific pseudo-bystander roles (*Passenger*, *Witnessing Supporter*, *Keyboard Warrior*, *Activist Warrior*, *Leader Warrior*, *Celebrity Warrior*, *Cyber-Side-tracker* and *Cyber-Bully*). These specific pseudo-bystander roles are also categorised into *passive*, *active*, *proactive* or *reactive* to reflect their subsequent action. Depending on the extent of their involvement, pseudo-bystanders may choose to intervene in corruption cases using social media by adopting online action including: “*stating random comments*”, “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*”, “*questioning*”, “*expressing support*” and “*exemplifying collective action*”.

The current research has also contributed to existing knowledge by supporting, extending and refining Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process. The pseudo-bystander intervention process proposed by the current research consists of six steps: (1) gain access to social media platforms, (2) notice the event via social media platforms, (3) interpret the situation through information search, (4) assume personal responsibility, (5) decide appropriate action to help and (6) act to intervene and review action to inform future decisions. In line with existing literature, the current study found that the perception of responsibility influences pseudo-bystanders to intervene. Additionally, evidence from the three case studies examined suggests that various factors also mitigate pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene. These factors include perception of power; the perceived level of corruption; perceived barriers and risks; end-state goals; ethical stance, the knowledge about the corruption cases they progressively accumulate as well as the pseudo-bystanders’ roles and their level of involvement.

Moreover, the findings from this research suggest that the use of social media may significantly “fast-track” pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene. To illustrate this phenomenon, the Stages of Change Theory is used to explain how pseudo-bystanders progressed from inaction to adopting action to intervene. Accordingly, this study identified several specific triggers that prompt pseudo-bystanders to become involved in the pseudo-bystander intervention process. These triggers include exposure to the

corruption case via social media platforms, external influences (*e.g.*, opinion leaders, real-life events), threats to the pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance; direction for intervention; personal connection; as well as (re)assessment of end-state-goals.

This research has also made methodological contributions by shedding light on the examination of large volumes of qualitative online data extracted from various social media platforms. Building on Kozinets' (2002; 2010) six major criteria to evaluate suitable online communities when conducting netnographic studies (Relevant, Active, Interactive, Substantial, Data-rich and Heterogeneous); this study further incorporates five additional considerations: Accessibility, Duration Suitability and Intensity, Measurability, Significance and Comprehensibility/Language. A nine-step data analysis process was developed and validated across three case studies to extract themes from the dataset in a rigorous and systematic way. By focusing on identifying, comparing and contrasting explicit and implicit themes within qualitative online data drawn from various social media platforms, analytic categories and concepts were derived. This process should help to guide future studies that use online social media platforms to conduct qualitative research. Coupled with my own netnographic experience in this research journey, I was able to interpret meanings and theorise various findings. The current study may provide meaningful and practical implications, especially for victims of corruption. For instance, victims could employ social media more effectively to seek help from others and encourage them to intervene. Promoting bystander intervention is highly significant, as it may help people who are disadvantaged by power abuse in episodic or chronic, emergency or non-emergency situations. This is because when bystander intervention occurs on a large scale, there may be a higher chance to reduce the suffering of victims.

Knowledge derived from this study may also be useful for individuals like researchers, managers, teachers and social workers, as well as various organisations (*e.g.*, businesses, government organisations and non-profit organisations). Beyond corruption, understanding how the power of social media can be harnessed to support victims may further promote and facilitate helping behaviour in situations like bullying, violence, child abuse, rape, natural disasters and in other social contexts. Although insights from the current research are predominately drawn from an online context, the findings may also be valuable to address real-life situations.

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JUST KEEP GOING.

This thesis is dedicated to my father and sister,
who are incredibly strong, courageous and patient.

Declaration

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis:

- has not been previously submitted nor has it been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome;
- contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome; and
- any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged.

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Preface

During my research journey, it struck me profoundly that, “I”, can be a very powerful expression when used on social media platforms to convey lived experiences. This is because communicating in the first-person pronoun allows readers to step into the shoes of the narrator, and thus become empathetic. Therefore, by writing this doctoral thesis in the first-person, I intend to not only present my findings, but also partially demonstrate them.

Are you ready to travel with me?

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. A Tragic Tale

So the story goes like this. You just turned 29 when the girl you had been dating for a while deserted you. Your friend who is working in the Philippines keeps telling you that you should come and visit – “you know, things are cheap over here; it would be a nice getaway to heal that broken heart of yours”. You have never been overseas before. You are a bit nervous but somewhat excited. In the month that followed, you enjoyed an abundance of sunshine in the Pearl of the Orient Seas.

However, at the end of your holiday, your fate changed forever on your way back to the Manila International Airport. You are supposed to catch a return flight home that day, but your taxi suddenly comes to a halt. Two men jump out in front of you and forcefully seize all of your belongings – your money, your phone and even your watch. Your initial thought of a “thug robbery” vanished when the men who raided you softly whisper in your ear, “don’t worry, we are the police.” While being confused and devastated, you are escorted to another car and are driven to a police station. The police officers speak in a language that you cannot understand, though their request is clear – they demand two million pesos from you. You tell them you have no money. That same afternoon, you are taken to an apartment located on Panay Avenue. When you arrive, a few police officers greet you. They then leave you in that room. You have no idea why you are there. When they knock on the door again, they present you with a search warrant and instantaneously “discover” eight kilograms of crystal methamphetamine – in the apartment you arrived at five minutes ago. They point a gun to your head and command you to sign a document. You are scared to a point you almost wet your pants. You sign that document.

This nightmarish story was Tang Lung Wai’s reality 17 years ago. He has been in jail ever since. Over the years, he tried to seek help from the consulate, the government and NGOs, locally in the Philippines and overseas in Hong Kong, his former country of residency. He sent 67 letters in total, but only received responses that invariably stated: “we will look into it.” His voice remained unheard. On 30 March 2016, the 5,730th day behind bars in the Philippines, Tang Lung Wai finally found a way to share his experiences with the wider public. To make himself heard, besides setting up a Facebook

page from within prison, he also began posting in a popular Hong Kong-based online forum using a smuggled cell phone.

Tang Lung Wai's online presence attracted many supporters, for example, there are 5,546 followers on Tang Lung Wai's Facebook page as of 5 February 2017. Because of his voluntary online exposure on social media, Tang Lung Wai's "story" continued to reach the wider public and amplified through radio programs, YouTube videos, magazines and newspaper articles. A volunteer group based in Hong Kong was set up to rally support by regularly distributing flyers on the streets to inform others about Tang Lung Wai's situation. It even attracted the attention of Ming Pao Publications Ltd., a major publisher in Hong Kong that subsequently funded the publication of Tang Lung Wai's autobiography.

Through social media, Tang Lung Wai was able to communicate with the outside world. In turn, the public's attention and involvement may increase Tang Lung Wai's chances of receiving help, or at the very best, a fair trial. If Tang Lung Wai's next appeal fails, he will remain in jail until 8 June 2032, that is, 32 years behind bars for committing no crime! While Tang Lung Wai's personal experience is unique, the phenomena of employing social media to expose corruption, raise public awareness and cultivate collective action are not atypical. Against this backdrop, the current study aims to discover how social media can be used to mobilise bystanders to help victims of corruption.

1.2. The Intersection of Corruption, Bystander Invention and Social Media

The overarching purpose of my research is to understand how social media may contribute to the mobilisation of bystander intervention to help victims of corruption. I intend to explore how corruption, bystander intervention and social media, each rubs shoulders with each other. I will now briefly introduce these three main areas of my research (see Figure 1).

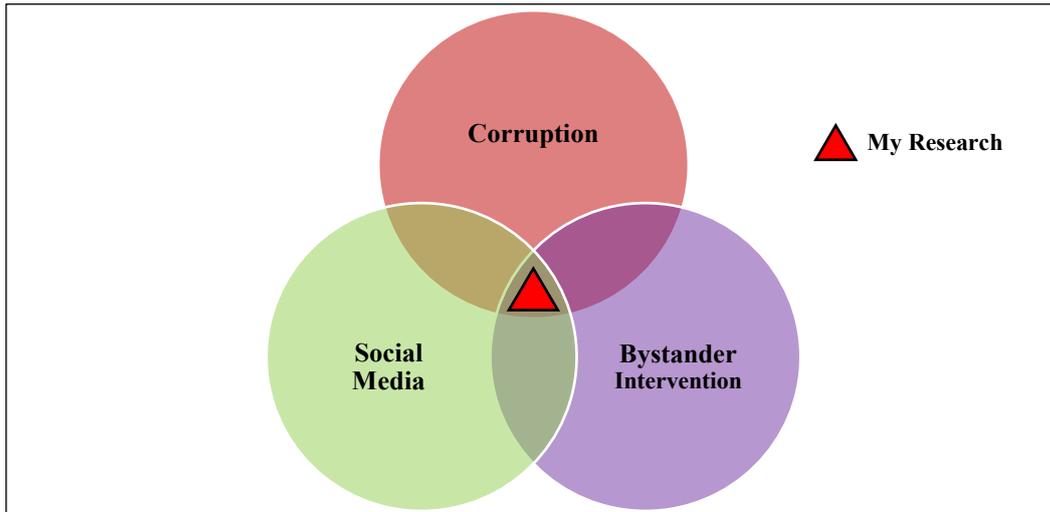


Figure 1: Overview of the Current Research

1.2.1. Corruption

The prevalence of corrupt behaviour has been scholarly examined as early as 1909 (see “The Nature of Political Corruption” by Robert Brooks published in the *Political Science Quarterly*) and has remained problematic for many societies for over a century. There are many forms of corruption. For example: bribery, forgery, tax evasion, revenue evasion, illegal drug dealing, blackmail, violence and homicide, violation of laws and regulations, abuse of information, breach of public trust, fraud, theft, embezzlement, election bribery, preventing the course of justice, illegal gambling and harbouring criminals (Brooks 1909; ICAC 1988).

In general, Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) labels corruption as a “predatory elite” behaviour, in the sense that “predatory elites can monopolize politics and engage in state capture with little opposition from society” (p.107). Therefore, corruption can also be understood as an abuse of power (Brooks 1909; Fan 2002; Mashali 2012). As seen in Tang Lung Wai’s story earlier in this chapter, victims of corruption are not only wounded from the initial crime – they often continue to suffer from the perpetrators’ ongoing power abuse as the perpetrator tries to cover up their wrong-doings. In fact, covering up and silencing victims should be treated as harmful as other forms of corruption. The current study regards the behaviour of covering up a crime or an initial corrupt behaviour to be equivalently “corrupt”. In this light, the corruption context in the current encapsulates “abusing one’s power to cover up one’s crime for his/her own gain (see Appendix 1). Thus, the focus of

the current study wishes to shed light on how these powerless victims can be helped. Mobilising support by increasing bystander intervention may be one effective way to reduce the suffering of corruption victims.

1.2.2. Bystander Intervention

At first glance, bystanders and intervention seem like two conflicting concepts, as bystanders are often associated with passivity, whereas intervention usually requires an individual to become more actively involved (Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014). Indeed, bystanders are a cohort that traditionally comes across as “inactive” (Burn 2009; Latané & Darley 1970). For instance, the “bystander effect” proposed by Latané & Darley (1970), a phenomenon which ascribes people as being less likely to intervene in emergency situations in the presence of others, has been driving bystander literature for decades. Such inaction may be associated with a reduction of personal responsibility, which fundamentally stems from the perception that others have the ability or willingness to help, and thus, in turn, inhibits one’s own decision to intervene themselves (Bickman 1972; Darley & Latané 1968).

Although the diffusion of responsibility to other onlookers has been a widely accepted theory in existing bystander literature, it is also evident that not all bystanders choose to remain inactive when confronted by emergencies (Manning, Levine & Collins 2007). One explanation is that we may interpret helping as a learned behaviour, in the sense that by witnessing others’ engagement, it may encourage similar action among bystanders (Guy and Patton 1989). Thus, understanding how bystanders are influenced to intervene may enhance the fostering and facilitation of subsequent helping behaviour.

As an intervention can only take place when bystanders decide to become involved (Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014), involved individuals will be the predominant focus of this study. Since bystander intervention may be more effective when carried out on a large scale, it would be worthwhile to examine the bystander phenomenon where its manifestation is widespread. Therefore, this study turns to social media, where an increasing number of grassroots action have taken place in recent years.

1.2.3. Social Media

Originally developed as a consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communication tool, social media essentially allows individual users within communities to exchange ideas and share content knowledge to achieve media richness (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). By intensifying the speed and spread of information exchange, social media has emerged as a powerful vehicle that continues to influence how businesses, governments, non-government organisations and individuals communicate ideas (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). Given that social media enables individuals with similar contentions to unite and generate collective action at a grassroots level to influence change (Mou *et al.* 2013; Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Lim 2012; Yang 2009; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005), it is likely to be a useful tool in addressing corruption.

Corruption has been occurring for a long time and invariably remains “unseen” by most people. However, due to the rapid development of social media, “stories” of corruption have become increasingly transparent and accessible (Lim 2012; Yang 2009). It is worth noting that being exposed to the corruption incident via victims retelling their story may be intrinsically different from being confronted by the real-life situation oneself. However, social media allows a unique opportunity for victims of corruption to share their lived-experience. By retelling their story, the “silence of corruption” is recorded and exposed, which enables others to learn about the ongoing power abuse for themselves. Furthermore, for some, the abuse of power is not a single incident, but is ongoing. Victims can use social media to reveal this ongoing experience of corruption, and can upload “evidence”, as it unfolds, to solicit greater support and deter the extent of corruption. Given that the people who subsequently obtain the knowledge of the corruption cases via social media platforms can, ultimately, side with either the perpetrator or victim, or remain neutral, it may be useful to borrow the “bystander” lens to explore how social media users might act in response to “cover-up” corruption cases as victims share their experience. In this study, I refer to those who act like bystanders in the online environment as “pseudo-bystanders” to reflect their role in this context.

Regardless of different types of corruption (whether powerful individuals and corporations abusing their power to gain advantage in businesses, political/social environments and/or use their power to cover-up wrongdoings), victims of corruption are

now, for the first time, easily able to expose corruption in public domains to raise public awareness (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). By allowing victims of corruption to share their experience, social media enables them to have a voice. In turn, this may also mobilise bystanders to generate collective action (Catterall 2013; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005; Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). Through social media, we can learn how social media users become pseudo-bystanders and choose to respond when they virtually witness others experiencing corruption. In this sense, bystanders around the globe may become “borderless warriors” to resist power asymmetry collectively. Since such “borderless warriors” may provide help for victims of corruption, it is important to understand how and why they become involved and thus, to know how they can be mobilised. To do so, the current study employs a marketing lens.

1.3. Looking Through a Marketing Lens

It is more than serendipity that marketing theories could be useful to inform a social phenomenon that takes place in a completely different context. In this section, I will discuss how the marketing angle may be relevant and useful to examine corruption, bystander intervention and the mobilisation of collective action via social media. Consumers who have bad experiences with a brand, a service or a product could also be seen as “victims” to an extent. This is because, like victims of “cover-up” corruption cases, consumers may not have the power to resist the situation when the bad experience occurs and that their bad experience often remains unknown to others. Social media thus provides a platform for them to vocalise their experience so that others can be warned. Consumers use social media in this way via either their own or others’ blogs, or by making comments directly on organisations’ websites. The aim is that exposing poor product performance or organisational conduct will avert other consumers from having the same bad experience and/or motivate change by the organisation.

In learning from this, we can see that exposing corruption cases may similarly subvert the abuse of power. Placing the perpetrators’ wrongdoing under a spotlight may send a “deterrence signal” to others in the same space (Lim 2012). In a way, this is akin to how consumers may learn and benefit from others’ negative experiences via word-of-mouth (WOM) (Kerr *et al.* 2012). Consumers may warn others against a particular product or service after having negative experiences with it. Sharing their “stories” enables them to

voice their dissatisfaction and potentially prevent others from having similar negative experiences. For instance, you may tell your family and friends about an unpleasant experience at a restaurant, so that they could avoid experiencing the same disappointment in the future. In turn, this may influence others' purchasing behaviour towards that particular company. This is because they may perceive you to be a source with "high credibility", and thus the information you share is deemed "credible" (Hovland & Weiss 1951; Kozinets *et al.* 2010). But when this is shared via social media, the organisation experiences increased negative exposure which may propel them to change (improve) their practices. Furthermore, other organisations may observe this exposure and thus be motivated to avoid it themselves and so improve what they do before the consumers have a negative experience. Therefore, improving the performance of organisations and deterring perpetrators of corruption could both be achieved via social media.

Kozinets *et al.* (2010) suggest that credibility stems from the intention *behind* informing. When the intention of informing is perceived as genuine and not incentive-based (*e.g.*, helping or warning others), it is likely to be trusted, and thus likely to influence consumers' attitude and behaviour (Chu & Kim 2011). Given that the information communicated from one "high credibility" source to another could potentially influence one's decisions in a consumer purchasing context (*e.g.*, via product reviews), word-of-mouth may also be an effective way to persuade individuals to become helpful bystanders who intervene in corruption cases. For example, in recent times, we witnessed a fast-paced grassroots social phenomenon fuelled by social media and the involvement of bystanders during the Gezi Park movement that took place in Turkey in 2013 (Catterall 2013; Kuymulu 2013). Despite mainstream media's silence in the wake of the Gezi Park protest (as official news outlets remain mouthpieces of the Turkish government), word continued to travel virtually and virally via various social media platforms (Civaner 2013; Diken 2014; Hacıyakupoglu & Zhang 2015; Kuymulu 2013). Consequently, many bystanders became involved participants upon discovering that the police violently attacked peaceful protesters.

Social media was initially developed as a consumer-to-consumer (C2C) tool to enable individuals to share ideas and co-create knowledge (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Kozinets *et al.* 2010). The Gezi Park example further illustrates that the intensity of electronic

word-of-mouth (eWOM) via social media may be an effective way to generate collective action beyond a consumer purchasing context. Perhaps our current understanding of how consumers propel eWOM to facilitate activism (with both cyber and real-life implications) could also be useful to shed light on ways which bystanders could employ social media to mobilise intervention to address corruption. For instance, bystanders may support victims of corruption in a similar way to how consumers may express solidarity through boycotting of a business.

Moreover, marketing philosophies fundamentally stem from a psychological perspective to illuminate consumer behaviour, as products and services are often designed to encapsulate consumers' wants and needs in order to solve their problems (Armstrong *et al.* 2014). Similarly, bystanders are often confronted by problematic situations that require them to make decisions to intervene. How people become involved to advocate and help a victim on social media may also inform ways which consumers must behave, and vice versa. In this light, the marketing slant may help us to understand bystanders' involvement by drawing specific attention to various aspects in relation to their intervention process. In addition, the roles which pseudo-bystanders subsequently adopt and the triggers that stimulate them to become involved is applicable in a consumer context. Therefore, this thesis proposes that it is be useful to borrow a marketing lens to examine the pseudo-bystander phenomenon.

1.4. The Significance of the Study

Corruption is unacceptable and unfair. It should not be tolerated in any society. No one deserves the painful and horrific experiences inflicted by corrupt behaviour. Therefore, it is important to tackle corruption, and efforts to fight corruption need to be supported. In recent times, social media has emerged as a vehicle for victims to change the power imbalance where the perpetrator has traditionally won out. By calling on others to help them, or share in a protest, social media enables victims to mobilise thousands of online users to support them (Farro & Demirhisar 2014). For instance, as evident in the mobilisation of the Gezi Park movement in Turkey, this can lead to physical support where people collectively protest in the streets due to their previous online engagement with the case.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore how social media can be used to mobilise bystanders to become involved to alleviate the suffering of corruption victims. By understanding how “inactive” bystanders differ from “involved” bystanders and what propels them to engage in intervention in a social media context, this study aims to provide new insights into how corruption can be disrupted. In turn, the current research will shed light on how helping behaviours may be better encouraged and facilitated in the future. My research is also significant as it contributes to realising the effectiveness of using social media to fight corruption by encouraging others to voice their support for, and to victims. This would not only expose the act of corruption but may also serve as a deterrent to potential perpetrators considering corruption in future.

1.5. Research Questions

This research identifies several research gaps in existing literature. Firstly, existing studies suggest that bystanders may adopt different stances in the bystander intervention process. While bystander stances have been broadly examined in existing literature (*e.g.*, within a bullying context in a school environment) (Salmivalli *et al.* 1996; Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco 2004), there is only one specific bystander role identified in existing literature within the corruption context – the *whistle-blower*. Other specific roles which bystanders may adopt to address corruption remain underexplored. Turning to the marketing discipline may offer insight on this. For example, consumers can adopt one of many roles in the purchasing decision making process (*e.g.*, “users”, “buyers”, “influencers” and “deciders” as suggested by Webster & Wind 1972 and “initiator” by Bonoma 1982), thus it is likely that bystanders could also adopt more than one role.

Secondly, given that Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process is a widely recognised model that shed light on bystander behaviour, it has not yet been validated whether pseudo-bystanders go through similar stages when intervening in corruption cases using social media. Moreover, there is a scarcity of research on the extent of bystanders’ involvement. Once again, drawing from the marketing field, the concept of “involvement” is often used to distinguish consumers’ efforts when making purchasing decisions. On a similar tangent, bystanders’ involvement may be intrinsically linked to the role they adopt as well as their subsequent action to intervene. However, this interconnection is unclear in existing knowledge.

Lastly, we know little about what prompts bystanders to become involved. Specific triggers that stimulate bystanders to take action have not been identified in existing studies. Thus, it is worthwhile to identify possible triggers that influence bystanders' decisions to intervene at different stages of the intervention process so that we can better understand what propels and maintains their collective action in a widespread bystander intervention context.

To address the research gaps discussed thus far, the following research questions are posed to direct the current study:

RQ1: What stances and/or roles might pseudo-bystanders adopt when they address corruption cases via social media?

RQ2: Do pseudo-bystanders go through a similar bystander intervention process to intervene in corruption cases using social media?

a) What influences pseudo-bystanders' decision to intervene in corruption cases using social media?

c) How do pseudo-bystander roles and their level of involvement influence their subsequent online action to intervene in corruption cases using social media?

RQ3: What stimuli triggers individuals to become involved from one stage to another in the online intervention process to take action to address corruption cases using social media?

By identifying various pseudo-bystander roles, their online intervention process, as well as the triggers of their involvement, a deeper understanding can be gained as to what ignites individuals to intervene in corruption cases using social media.

1.6. Proposed Contributions of the Study

Findings of this research intended to contribute to our current understanding of how victims of corruption may benefit from bystander intervention, and specifically, how they might use social media to cultivate and mobilise helping behaviour in others to assist them. On a theoretical level, this study aims to identify specific stances and/or roles which

pseudo-bystanders may adopt when they address corruption cases using social media; their online intervention process and what prompts them to become more involved.

The practical implications emerging from this research may be useful for various organisations including businesses, government organisations and non-profit organisations as well as individuals. For example, the knowledge derived from this study could inform victims (and their associates) in relation to how social media can be employed more effectively to mobilise bystanders to engage in intervening behaviour to disrupt, mitigate or otherwise counter corruption. Moreover, the findings of this study may be useful for researchers, managers, teachers and social workers about various relevant contexts, including but not limited to corruption, bullying, violence, child abuse, rape, natural disasters and various social movements. For instance, insights derived from this study may assist them in research, prevention, education, policy formulation and strategy development to cultivate a wider spread helping culture.

By harnessing the knowledge of how social media can be used to foster collective action and solidarity in response to episodic or chronic, emergency or non-emergency situations, a greater level of grassroots participation may be encouraged in the future. Particularly, when individuals are more conscious of the potential changes their action may bring, it may inspire them to contribute and facilitate helping behaviour to alleviate victims from contexts like corruption.

1.7. Roadmap of the Dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation is organised as follows:

Chapter Two to Four – Discuss and identify research gaps by reviewing existing literature in the fields of corruption (Chapter Two), bystander intervention (Chapter Three) and social media (Chapter Four). The research questions are progressively refined by the end of Chapter Four.

Chapter Five – Provides an outline of the methodologies used to address the research questions and justification for the selection of the case studies examined in the current research.

Chapter Six – Discusses the data analysis process which is predominately developed from the first case study and then refined in Cases Two and Three.

Chapter Seven to Nine – Presents results drawn from Cases One, Two and Three, with a summary of all cases at the end of Chapter Nine.

Chapter Ten – Provides a synthesis of the overall key findings from the three case studies examined in the current research and demonstrates how they address the research gaps identified in my study. Chapter Ten concludes this thesis by discussing various contributions to knowledge and methodology, practical implications, limitations encountered in this study, directions for future research as well as some personal implications.

Chapter Two: Shades of Corruption

2.1. Chapter Introduction

Despite ongoing attempts to tackle corruption, the prevalence of corrupt practices continues to be a problem for many nations. While the impact of corruption may have both micro and macro implications. To help victims of corruption and discourage perpetrators from further engaging in corrupt behaviour, we must first understand what corruption involves. This chapter provides an in-depth review of our existing knowledge on corruption. Specifically, I will discuss the different dimensions of corruption, the impacts associated with corrupt behaviour on various levels, as well as how corruption may be subverted.

2.2. Defining Corruption

Corruption is indiscriminately pervasive in the sense that it does not recognise borders, cultures or contexts. In general, corruption may emerge as a non-emergency and chronic situation that continues to cause personal, institutional and societal damage in a prevalent and persistent way (Meng & Friday 2014). Thus, improving anti-corruption measures continues to be a high priority for many nations (Nguyen & van Dijk 2012; Sampford 2009; Walton 2013; Williams 1999; Wu & Zhu 2011; Yao 1997).

However, there is no universal definition of corruption. The perceptions of corruption can also vary depending on the way it is examined. For instance, corruption can be seen as a social (Dong, Dulleck & Torgler 2012; Goel & Nelson 2007; Hall *et al.* 2012; Warren & Laufer 2009), political (Aidt, Dutta & Sena 2008; Chang & Chu 2006; Evertsson 2013; Lambsdorff 1999, 2005) and economic problem (Lim & Stern 2002; Nguyen & van Dijk 2012). In Australia (where I currently live and study), corrupt conduct from a legal perspective is defined in the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988* as:

(a) Any conduct of any person (whether or not a public official) that adversely affects, or that could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the honest or impartial exercise of official functions by any public official, any group or body of public officials or any public authority, or

(b) Any conduct of a public official that constitutes or involves the dishonest or partial exercise of any of his or her official functions, or

(c) Any conduct of a public official or former public official that constitutes or involves a breach of public trust, or

(d) Any conduct of a public official or former public official that involves the misuse of information or material that he or she has acquired in the course of his or her official functions, whether or not for his or her benefit or for the benefit of any other person.

The overemphasis of the public official role in the above definition suggests that corruption is most likely to take place in incidents involving public officials. This fails to capture all corrupt behaviour and circumstances. Rather than being fixated solely on the corruptors' roles, Brooks (1909) suggests it is also important to consider "duty" in the context of corruption. Such "duty" may extend to individuals, businesses and institutions including schools, non-government organisations and religious groups. For instance, tax evasion is also considered "corrupt" due to the exploitation of the taxpayers' "dutiful role" (Brooks 1909). In essence, corruption is a negligence or misuse of one's power or authoritative position and thus emerges as a betrayal of those to whom one is duty bound to serve. Therefore, without the existence of a recognised "duty", one cannot be considered "corrupt" (Brooks 1909).

As the exploitation of duty also exists amongst insects (Úbeda & Duéñez-Guzmán 2011), corruption can be viewed as a "natural" phenomenon to represent power to an extent. For example, in the world of ants, levels of dominance are substantially divided between queen ants, police ants and worker ants. Since only the "queen" ants have the supremacy to reproduce, the "police" ants are given considerable power to punish those besides the "queen" ant that lay eggs. However, the "police" ants are often "corrupt" and evidently reproduce eggs themselves while dodging punishment (Wenseleers *et al.* 2005, cited by Úbeda & Duéñez-Guzmán 2011). Rosenblatt (2012) suggests that tolerance towards the exploitation of power is rooted in Social Dominance Theory (SDT) where group-based hierarchies support the initiation and maintenance of organisational corruption. This is because hierarchy-enhancing institutions often allow them to cultivate power struggles and inequality (Rosenblatt 2012, p. 237). For this reason, victims of corruption remain powerless and continue to suffer from individuals with discretionary power, or what Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) refers to as "predatory elites".

Indeed, when these “predatory elites” decide to exploit their power, they often face little opposition in society. For instance, under the Suharto regime, “large-scale [illegal] logging concessions were granted to forestry conglomerates controlled by Indonesian-Chinese entrepreneurs, with government officials and the military as partners” (Smith *et al.* 2003, p.94). It was purported that shares in timber enterprises were offered to Suharto’s family as well as funds to advance his political objectives in exchange for privileged access to forests (Smith *et al.* 2003). Such institutionalised corruption may not only exacerbate the prevalence of corrupt practices, authorities are also likely to dismiss the pleas from victims for help. In turn, those who are powerless are likely to remain subjects of exploitation (Úbeda & Duéñez-Guzmán 2011). Therefore, to view that corruption is a natural phenomenon is fundamentally problematic, as it perpetuates the misunderstanding that corruption is common and insignificant, and thus continues to rationalise the victims’ suffering as being “normal”.

Alternatively, corruption can be viewed as a learned behaviour (Goel & Nelson, 2007; Mashali 2012). For instance, Goel and Nelson (2007) suggest that corrupt behaviour may be contagious. In their empirical study using longitudinal data generated from the United States, Goel and Nelson (2007) found that there is a significant and positive correlation between corruption rates in a particular state and its neighbouring states. This suggests that corrupt mechanisms can be learned from neighbours and associates (Goel & Nelson 2007). In this light, one could argue that people and organisations are corrupt only to the degree that their environment “teaches” them to be. Therefore, the environment plays a big part in cultivating “conditional corruption”, as “an individual is prone to be corrupt if there are a sufficient number of corrupt individuals around him” (Dong, Dulleck & Torgler 2012, p. 611). Such “conditioning” of corrupt behaviour can be seen in the example of China.

The shift from state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to joint stock companies in China has purportedly made the interdependent nature of business-to-government (B2G) more prone to corruption (Broadhurst & Wang 2014). This is because when shareholders (who are controlled by the state) are given the power to elect the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the supervisory board, one’s personal connection to these influential “decision-makers” often plays a more important role than merit. This enables top positions to be “cherry-

picked” by senior party leaders (Braendle, Gasser & Noll 2005; Broadhurst & Wang 2014). Consequently, it was purported that between 1994 and 2008, over 18,000 corrupt Chinese officials fled the country with an estimated \$120 billion from state-owned enterprises and other criminal activities (Broadhurst & Wang 2014). In this sense, the highly concentrated ownership of the state and the weak legal system that governs Chinese corporations provides a lucrative breeding ground for corrupt officials to “trade” power. As Yang (2013) put it:

...power itself is traded as a scarce commodity. In China, power trades for money, power trades for power, and power trades for sex. This has permeated into every field of life including education, human resources, and the law. In today’s China, if you want to achieve something, it doesn’t matter how talented you are but whether you are connected with people in power. Those in close relationships with government officials, such as their sons and daughters, secretaries, drivers, and lovers, become power brokers.

Regardless of whether the prevalence of corruption is a nature or nurture phenomenon, it signifies power-based inequalities (Rosenblatt 2012). Therefore, whether the motivation behind a corrupt act stems from a personal or institutional interest (or sometimes both), corruption can be broadly understood as an abuse of power that results in private gain (Brooks 1909; Fan 2002; Mashali 2012). Historically, the public spotlight has predominately focused on institutional corruption that involves large sums of money and/or high-profile officers. However, the parameters of what is perceived as “normal” business practice is now shifting, which means that some business practices are being increasingly seen as “corrupt”. In China, for example, former Australian Rio Tinto executive Stern Hu was detained in July 2009; and sentenced to 10 years in jail after being found guilty for accepting bribes and stealing trade secrets. Hu’s three colleagues, Wang Yong, Liu Caikui and Ge Minqiang, were also sentenced to jail (Sainsbury 2010). In recent years, China’s anti-corruption efforts have significantly increased under Chinese president Xi Jinping’s leadership. Addressing corruption for countries like China is thus especially important and timely, as its previous prevalence is under high international scrutiny and criticism. Thus, understanding how corruption can be exposed and deterred will be extremely valuable, while also supporting victims of corruption. In particular, the rise of

social media and its potential to expose corruption empowers victims and allows more people to become aware of the detriments corruption can cause.

2.3. The Magnitude of Corruption

Efforts to subvert corrupt practices are often determined by the magnitude of corruption. In general, there are two types of corruption in terms of scale: grand corruption and petty corruption (Rose-Ackerman 2008; Walton 2013). According to the leading anti-corruption organisation Transparency International, grand corruption is defined as “the abuse of high-level power that benefits the few at the expense of the many and causes serious and widespread harm to individuals and society. It often goes unpunished.” Grand corruption is also likely to attract the media and public’s attention. An example of this is the high-profile corruption scandal involving China’s former Chongqing party secretary and elite 24-member Politburo of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Bo Xilai. His case has received much attention nationally and globally (Broadhurst & Wang 2014).

Prior to his fall from grace, Bo Xilai was widely recognised as a putative figurehead in China. For instance, the “Chongqing model” developed under Bo Xilai’s ruling party pioneered in adopting strategic social and economic policies to tackle challenges like criminal activities, corruption, public services, public housing and transportation costs in China’s rapidly expanding cities. However, Bo Xilai was found guilty of pocketing RMB20 million (US\$3.3m) in bribes, the embezzlement of about RMB5 million (US\$817,000) in total during his time as mayor of the city of Dalian between 1993–2000, as well as attempts to cover-up the murder of British businessman Neil Heywood, who was poisoned by Bo Xilai’s wife Gu Kailai (Broadhurst & Wang 2014). Consequently, the Jinan Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Bo Xilai to life imprisonment on 22 September 2013. Bo Xilai’s incident highlights that grand corruption can be seen as an outcome of political and administrative malfeasance that usually take place at the national level and involves central decision makers and politicians (Nystrand 2014; Mashali 2012; Walton 2013).

Petty corruption, on the other hand, seems to attract less attention from the public, media and policymakers. This is because petty corruption incurs relatively low transaction costs and usually generates a lower degree of societal impact (Mashali 2012; Rose-Ackerman 2008; Walton 2013). For example, in spite of the “free” education system in China from

primary school through to junior high school, it is not unusual for socially pressured parents to pay bribes to schools (especially top-ranked high schools or ones located outside of a family's official residency permit) for admission to ensure a "better quality education" for their children (Levin 2012). Given petty corruption tends to operate on a smaller scope and in an unorganised way, its occurrences are often difficult to recognise or they may become disguised as a way of life (Mashali 2012; Nystrand 2014).

Mashali (2012) further points out that the main difference between grand and petty corruption is the repeatability factor, which delineates the likelihood of corrupt behaviour generating repeat offences. For instance, individuals may assess corrupt behaviour on a case-by-case basis and adopt anonymous criteria to make their own judgement about corruption (Méndez & Sepúlveda 2012). Such criteria could be based on situational factors such as the "value" involved in a corrupt transaction and/or the "frequency" of its occurrence over a specific period of time (*e.g.*, reciprocating a \$1,000 bribe once, as opposed to \$100 ten times) (Andvig & Moene 1990; Méndez & Sepúlveda 2012).

In general, petty corruption has a higher chance of reoccurrence compared with grand corruption (Walton 2013). However, this is not to say that petty corruption cannot have a detrimental impact on a larger scale. For instance, as mentioned earlier, corruption in the education sector in China is alarmingly pervasive. Consequently, poorer students are likely to face unfavourable treatment and ongoing discrimination at their schools, as they are the most vulnerable under such a culture of bribery in China (Ruan 2017). Therefore, the proliferation of corruption can be detrimental to the victims involved and the traumatising of victims can be long-lasting, regardless of whether the corruption event has a macro implication or not. For instance, Tang Lung Wai (as mentioned in the Introduction chapter of this thesis) remains imprisoned after 17 years (at the time of writing) – for a crime he never committed. Given that pain and suffering remain subjective experiences that are indirect, intangible and/or non-pecuniary (Craig 2009; Meng & Friday 2014), what Tang Lung Wai is going through cannot be directly measured or compared, but must be horrific. Therefore, it is a mistake to regard corruption events that have a lower transaction cost to be less harmful to victims of corruption. Furthermore, it risks dismissing the act, which undermines victims' efforts to seek help from others.

This raises a perplexing phenomenon. Those who suffer from power abuse are often not the focus of investigation or support (Meng & Friday 2014). Victims who suffer from corruption cases, regardless of whether the corruption is “petty” or “grand”, are rarely recognised in existing literature. Moreover, corruption literature mostly aims to resolve macro constraints or to provide insights to discourage future corruption behaviour. While the preventative angle with the intention of improving people’s lives, in general, is an important aspect in eradicating corruption, it fails to address the powerless and marginalised individuals, who are *already* victims of corruption or to explore ways they could be helped. In response to this gap, the current study intends to provide useful insights to inform how helping behaviour in others can be better facilitated and promoted to assist corruption victims.

2.4. Difficulties in Subverting Corruption

With the objective of helping victims of corruption, this section reviews why corruption is so difficult to subvert in the first place. One explanation as to why corruption remains challenging to eradicate is that not everyone perceives corruption in the same way. Therefore, it is important to understand how such differing of perceptions (towards corruption) may affect not only those who are in the position to address corruption, but also the perpetrators, the victims and others in the same space who may or may not directly be affected by the corrupt behaviour. For instance, while gift-giving may be perceived in Western cultures as bribes to advance personal gain, receiving commissions and gratuity exhibitions (*e.g.*, tipping) are considered socially acceptable because of their “lawful” definitions (Steidlmeier 1999). Indeed, Chang and Chu (2006) suggest, “what is considered unethical and corrupt in one culture may be regarded as a routine transaction in another” (p. 262). Therefore, what is considered “corrupt” may further challenge how policy-makers develop laws and regulations, which may subsequently affect ongoing efforts to subvert corruption. Since the perceptions of corruption may be influenced by many factors (*e.g.*, historically, politically, culturally and socially), it may be useful to review these different “shades” of corruption.

2.4.1. Corruption as a “Cultural Norm”

Corruption remains a prevalent problem for many countries, regardless of whether the affected countries are considered rich or poor (Aidt, Dutta & Sena 2008; Úbeda &

Duñez-Guzmán 2011; Walton 2013). One explanation is that corruption may be perceived as a “cultural norm” (Tonoyan *et al.* 2010; Walton 2013). For example, citizens in Papua New Guinea (PNG) often rely on their *wantok* (who may be a friend, family or tribal member to whom one is obligated to reciprocate social favours in exchange for medicine, jobs, money, shelter and food) (Walton 2013). Since such “informal and ‘traditional’ modes of exchange between individuals of the same clan, family or region” (p. 178) is frequently practiced, many respondents in Walton’s (2013) study considered corrupt practices (*e.g.*, nepotism) to be normal rather than corrupt.

Moreover, Ko and Weng (2012) suggest that some corrupt behaviours are distinctively more common in one country than another. For instance, Chinese nationals are likely to view corrupt practices such as bribery and tax evasion differently to those who are residing in Western countries (Ko & Weng 2012). Although bribery is considered one of the most common forms of corruption, the two different terms should not be used interchangeably. Essentially, bribery is a corrupt practice; whereas, corruption does not necessarily always involve a bribe. According to Brooks (1909), corruption may incorporate bribery and/or auto-corruption. To be specific, bribery usually involves a giver and a taker. Whereas, auto-corruption can be an independent act that is driven by one’s own initiatives, knowledge, desires and personal interests, hence the “autonomous” aspect. Tax evasion is one example of auto-corruption, where the act can be carried out independently. In the tax evasion instance, it may be perceived as “acceptable” as many Chinese citizens continue to view tax declaration as “voluntary” rather than “compulsory”, and thus continue to elude their “duty” to pay tax (Ko & Weng 2012).

Tax evasion may become a widespread business practice when it is orchestrated at an institutional level. Japan is another example where tax evasion remains a prevalent practice. Since the Tax Bureau in Japan recognises entertainment expenses as being a legitimate tax deduction, many corporations and individuals rush to take full advantage of this law at the end of the fiscal year by fabricating entertainment receipts to maximize the tax rebate from their government (Whiting 1999). Truex (2011) explains that perhaps such “‘corruption norms’ are perpetuated not because citizens believe corruption and malfeasance are desirable outcomes, but because the behaviours deemed legally and officially corrupt are often justified by local social practices” (p. 1134). Indeed, this illustrates that when corruption is normalised and becomes socially acceptable,

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perpetrators are given the social license to engage in corruption behaviour, and this makes corrupt practices more difficult to recognise (Truex 2011). This is more so the case when the perceptions of corruption may also be deeply linked to a country's cultural, political and economic ties. An example of this lies within Japan's *yakuza* (organised crime syndicates).

Yakuza was originally a derogatory term to describe those with an ultimate losing hand combination of eight (*ya*), nine (*ku*) and three (*sa*) in a Japanese card game (Kaplan & Dubro 2012). Since then, the term has evolved and now refers to those who are renowned for their explicit illegal activities on both domestic and international levels (e.g., drug trafficking, prostitution, extortion, blackmail, stock manipulation, gambling, human trafficking and the sex trades) (Adelstein 2010). The emergence of *yakuza* dates back to the Tokugawa period (1600–1867) with antecedents from two distinct groups (*bakuto* or gamblers and *tekiya* or street peddlers). Instead of persecuting these groups for their crimes, authorities historically saw them as “useful agents of social control and sources of intelligence” (p. 97), and thus strategically utilised their labour power to manoeuvre various political movements (Hill 2004).

While modern *yakuza* groups remain heavily involved in corruption and other organised crimes, they also contribute to the restoration and facilitation of Japan's social order (Adelstein & Noorbakhsh 2010; Hill 2004). For example, *yakuza* would help banks to recover bad debts, settle disputes informally (alternative to legal means) and safeguard neighbourhoods (Hill 2004; Kaplan & Dubro 2012; *Young Yakuza* 2008). The *yakuza* are also purported to have provided substantial aid (both financial and labour) during and after the devastating tsunami that hit the northeast coast of Japan in 2011 (Adelstein 2011). Therefore, *yakuza* have become a unique part of the Japanese culture by intertwining with Japan's historic, social and political evolutions.

One explanation as to why Japanese society remains exceptionally tolerant towards the *yakuza* is perhaps due to Japanese people's sympathetic attitude towards them. For example, when one regards unemployment as the main reason behind juvenile delinquents becoming *yakuza*, he/she tends to see these organised crime groups as fundamentally “job providers” (Adelstein 2011; *Young Yakuza* 2008). Indeed, the

findings from Walton’s (2013) study on the attitude of PNG citizens towards corruption also supports such a “sympathetic” explanation. Walton’s (2013) empirical study is based on 64 focus groups in four provinces in Papua New Guinea over six months, where rural participants responded to five possible corrupt scenarios with different scales, actors and types of corruption (see Table 1).

Table 1: Hypothetical Scenarios for Rural Respondents in PNG

Scenario	Scale
1. A teacher occasionally takes a box of note pads and pens from the school stores cupboard, without permission, to donate to the local community centre (e.g., a health facility).	Petty
2. Tax is a payment that all businesses operating in Papua New Guinea need to pay to the government. A group of businessmen influence the government to decrease the amount of tax their business pays. They influence the government without breaking any laws. This helps their businesses keep more money.	Grand
3. A candidate stands for election and tells a voter that he or she will give the voter 50 kina [approximately \$25] if the voter votes for him or her. The voter takes the money and tells the candidate he or she will vote for him or her.	Petty
4. A logging company comes to a Papua New Guinean village and flies two local landowners to Australia. The company does this to help convince the two landowners to give them access to their land. The two landowners’ accommodation, flights and meals are paid for by the logging company. The two landowners agree that the company can have access to their land, without getting consent from the rest of the community.	Grand
5. Mary works in the government of Papua New Guinea and gets a job for her <i>wantok</i> [a family or clan member] as a driver. But she does not follow the correct government procedure to employ her <i>wantok</i> . Her <i>wantok</i> is a safe and reliable driver.	Petty

(Source: Walton 2013, p. 180)

Walton’s (2013) study found that respondents (particularly women from two of the most remote villages in his study) were most likely to sympathise with the given scenarios. Furthermore, Walton (2013) points out that most respondents in the focus groups could recall similar instances, either in their own experiences or from people whom they know. This suggests that a sympathetic attitude towards corruption can mean that the corrupt act can be rationalised, especially when the perceiver can relate to it in a personal or emotional way (Walton 2013). The findings from Walton’s (2013) study provide valuable insights and illustrate that when corrupt behaviour is deemed socially acceptable, it can morph into a common practice and eventually develop into a norm. However, the hypothetical corruption scenarios used in his study also appeared to be “victimless”.

Perhaps this is why respondents tend to sympathise with the corruptors, as corruptors are the only people depicted in these scenarios.

2.4.2. Corruption as an “Opportunity”

Corruption can be also seen as an “opportunity” in the sense that corrupt practices are often highly innovative (Aidt, Dutta & Sena 2008). Corruptors can be interpreted as “entrepreneurs” in similar ways to capitalise on uncertainties and economic opportunities creatively. Corruption under this light can be viewed as an opportunity “to realise individual gains through a lack of candour or honesty in transactions” (Williamson 1973, p. 317, cited in Rosenblatt 2012). One explanation is that entrepreneurs have the tendency to carry out corrupt behaviour due to inefficient court systems and law enforcement (Tonoyan *et al.* 2010; Whiting 1999). In this sense, corruptors may share a similar skill set to individuals with entrepreneurial qualities. For instance, corruptors may be able to see and act on previously unnoticed profit opportunities, just like entrepreneurs. In the corruption context, corruptors may abuse their power creatively to exploiting existing information, legal loopholes and public good for their own interest at the cost of the society (Hall *et al.*, 2012). This is alarming, as the justification of these “opportunistic engagements” of corruption may hinder efforts to help victims of corruption.

Indeed, Hall *et al.* (2012) suggest that two-thirds of entrepreneurship outcomes are either destructive or unproductive. China, for example, can be seen as a “pirate nation” as it continues to be a popular production hub for many counterfeit goods and services (Pang 2008). Counterfeit merchandisers have creatively replicated luxury goods. For example, branding everyday products like paper bags with Louis Vuitton or Chanel logos is one creative and economic way of being “luxurious” (Jiang & Cova 2012). A functional view is that these merchandisers are merely capitalising on “business opportunities” by providing for “people who cannot afford luxury brand products...to gratify their vanity” (Jiang & Cova 2012, p.5). However, while knock-off products like designer handbags and related adaptations may seem harmless, in other instances, certain counterfeit products can cost people’s lives. For example, when fake resources in the building and construction industry are used instead of high-quality earthquake proofing materials and accredited engineers, the results can be catastrophic (Kenny 2009).

Kenny (2009) pointed out that “fragile construction, alongside higher-risk land use practices, account for much higher death rates in similar-sized earthquakes close to population centres in the developing, as opposed to the developed, world” (p.2). This was evident in the 8.0 magnitude Sichuan Earthquake that took place in 2008, which killed over 70,000 people in China (Kenny 2009). Moreover, even if corrupt practices were rationally calibrated choices by those who endorsed the behaviour, it remains difficult to pinpoint exactly where corruption starts and ends within the “chain of corruption”. This is because corruption is often not a single event, but rather, a “state” or a chronic “condition” that potentially involves a string of stakeholders (for instance, in the current example, government officials, suppliers, builders and management companies may all be part of this “corruption chain”) (Kenny 2009). Thus, corruption remains difficult to counter, especially when the perpetrators are well supported and connected to a web of powerful entities and organisations (Rosenblatt 2012).

Additionally, the way in which corruption takes place is constantly changing. For instance, Ko and Weng (2012) suggest that there is a structural shift in Chinese corruption. Despite increasing anti-corruption efforts and legal enforcement (various anti-corruption laws and regulations rose from 249 laws in 1998 to 542 laws in 2007), corruption in China did not decline as a result. In fact, corrupt practices in China grew along with its “control” agents by becoming highly “adaptive” to the changing environment (Ko & Weng 2012). In other words, corrupt practices may continue to “improve” in various ways to accommodate new laws and regulations, and by discovering loopholes in these new laws, perpetrators of corruption have become creative and entrepreneurial in their endeavours. In some cases, these loopholes may even support corrupt businesses to operate within legal grounds, so that the perpetrators of corruption may fully utilise the grey areas of the legal system and effectively “go around the rules” to remain lawful. Therefore, the corrupt behaviour may not only be known and tolerated within government departments, but also operates under the nose of the anti-corruption departments and laws. I will use the following table to illustrate some of these loopholes in the legal grid.

Table 2: Chinese Corruption Chart

Corruption Variants	Economic Corruption	Non-economic Corruption
Types	Bribery (贿赂)	Dereliction of duty (渎职)
	Misappropriation (挪用公款)	Abuse of power (滥用职权)
	Illegal gains (非法所得)	Neglect of duty (玩忽职守)
	Tax evasion and resistance (偷税漏税)	Nepotistic malpractice (徇私舞弊)
	Counterfeit of trademark (假冒商标)	Bigamy (重婚)
	Illegal speculation and profiteering (投机倒把)	Illegitimate feasting, feudal rites (cadres staging lavish, traditional-style weddings and funerals)
		Illegal imprisonment and torture

(Source: Ko & Weng 2012, p. 720)

Table 2 shows that the Chinese government defines corruption by dividing various corrupt behaviour into two main categories: economic and non-economic (Ko & Weng 2012). However, the list of corrupt activities presented in Table 1 does not identify all types of corruption. As it remains inadequate to capture other corrupt activities that are overlooked, it can only be used as a loose *guideline* to view corruption. For instance, in 1997, China launched a merit system with a national civil servant exam for recruitment to raise civil servant standards (Ko & Weng 2012). As of 25 November 2012, over one million hopeful candidates are purported to have sat the National Public Servant Exam (*Chinadaily* 2012). Unsurprisingly, it remains common practice for civil servants to “hire” someone else with better competencies to undertake the exam on their behalf. Such practice is arguably an act of corruption, yet it belongs to none of the categories of economic or non-economic corruption, as outlined in Table 2. The fact that this opportunistic and strategic petty act of cheating is not stated in the provision in the first place may encourage offenders to continue to engage in corrupt practices, and further hinder anti-corruption efforts to subvert such practices.

Another example of “going around the rules” can be seen in Japan, where prostitution has been illegal since 1957 (Hongo 2008). However, this has not stopped the *fuzoku* (sex) industry from flourishing. Prostitutes are often presented as bathing attendants, “*fashion health*” masseuses, public relation officers, karaoke companions and the like (Adelstein 2011; Hongo 2008). The prevalence of quasi-legitimate businesses such as *soapland* (formerly known as *Turkish bathing houses*) is a prime example that allows organised prostitution and sex trafficking without attracting legal repercussions (Adelstein 2010; Hongo 2008; Kadokura 2007).

The operation of these *soapland* is usually backed by the *yakuza*. By arguing that these businesses provide “genuine bathing services” for clients, it exempts them from being viewed as organised prostitution on the legal grid. They argue that it is essentially beyond the business providers’ control when their clients “fall in love” with employees and subsequently partake in “consensual” sexual activities. After all, the law cannot restrain one’s right to find “true love”, nor can it dictate the time and place of the reciprocated physical expression of that “love”. Moreover, Japan’s Prostitution Prevention Law is fundamentally flawed. By prohibiting “intercourse with an unspecified person in exchange for payment”, the law can be rendered ineffective if the “unspecified person” argues that they are an “acquaintance”, or even better, a “friend” (Hongo 2008). These legal constraints disadvantage victims of human trafficking for two reasons.

Firstly, when foreign female workers are lured to Japan to become sex slaves, the victims are not only living in fear and shame, but also are unable to seek help from the police (Adelstein 2010). This is because prostitution is illegal in Japan, and thus by admitting to having engaged in such illegal activities, they may face prosecution themselves (Adelstein 2010). Secondly, even if the police decide to intervene, it may nevertheless be difficult to “prove” the existence of such organised crime. When the cost (*e.g.*, chance of being caught) is low and the potential private benefits are lucrative, it further encourages the prevalence of corrupt behaviour (Dong & Torgler 2012). Therefore, by capitalising on the victims’ vulnerability and the grey legal areas that govern the *fuzoku* industry, it enables *yakuza* to exploit helpless victims in organised crime such as human trafficking (Adelstein 2011).

2.4.3. Corruption as a “Business Favour”

In a business context, corruption is often perceived as a “business favour” rather than as being “corrupt” (Lambsdorff 2002b; Wong & Chan 1999). As the exchange of “small favours” (e.g., “string pulling” or “favouritism”) is not atypical in a business context, the difference between business practice and corruption can be a very thin line (Chan, Cheng & Szeto 2002; Wong & Chan 1999). Whiting (1999) suggests that some of these “run-in’s with the law over corruption” may often come across as “standard operating procedure[s]”, or simply a “way of business”, and thus become part of the business cost or necessities to succeed (pp. 171-172). For example, gift-giving is a widely acceptable business practice in China – it is an essential part of the *guanxi* (networking of relationship) formation (Steidlmeier 1999; Tian 2008). The dynamics of *guanxi* can be interpreted as the art of maintaining relationships within one’s social and/or business network, and thus fundamentally dictates the way Chinese people do business (Chan, Cheng & Szeto 2002).

However, this type of “special relationship” is not exclusive to China (Callick 2001, p. 11). Particularly, countries with less business-friendly financial institutions are likely to encourage businesses to look for creative alternatives to ensure survival (Tonoyan *et al.* 2010). Russia is another country where many businesses are fundamentally driven by a “you help me, I help you” mentality (Ledeneva 1998, p. 185). Djankov *et al.* (2006) identify that the main problem entrepreneurs in both Russia and China face is credit constraints, so that they often turn to their network of “friends” for assistance. Reciprocating “favours” between affiliations may be seen as essential ways to create harmony in the business context, and thus the development of *guanxi* often intend to reach a maximum benefit on a mutual basis. As such, many scholars conclude that *guanxi* is an element that fundamentally contributes to safeguarding opportunism and facilitating corrupt behaviour in business practices (Braendle, Gasser & Noll 2005; Chu *et al.* 2011; Fan 2002; Tonoyan *et al.* 2010).

Guanxi is purported to commonly provide “privileged treatments” to facilitate under-the-table deals (Chan, Cheng & Szeto 2002, pp. 327-328). However, these exchanges of favours may not necessarily be confined to parties that share a special web of friendships, nor does it necessarily lead to economic outcomes. For instance, Adelstein (2008) reported that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) made a “deal” with one of Japan’s

notorious *yakuza* members, Goto Tadamasa, the former boss of a subdivision of Japan's largest *yakuza* clan, the Yamaguchi-gumi. This mutual agreement involved Goto Tadamasa "jumping the queue" for his liver transplant in exchange for details regarding *yakuza* front companies, as well as the names of senior crime figures and the mob's links to North Korea's criminal activities (Adelstein 2008; 2010). As a result, Goto Tadamasa shifted from number 80 to number two on the transplant waiting list at the Ronald Reagan U.C.L.A. Medical Center and received his liver transplant in just six weeks (Adelstein 2008, 2010; CBSNews 2009). While the highly useful information gained by the FBI from Goto Tadamasa may benefit the greater society, obtaining such information arguably came at a cost for other patients who were also waiting for a liver replacement.

The "deal" between the FBI and Goto Tadamasa highlights an important aspect of corruption in terms of victims' "visibility". Existing literature suggests that there are three types of corruption in general: collusive, coercive, and non-conjunctive (Hodgkinson 1997; Mashali 2012; Smith *et al.* 2003). Collusive corruption assumes that participants in the corruption act are willing in the process and corruption is employed as an instrument to counter authorities and/or for private gain (Hodgkinson 1997). In the coercive type, by contrast, participants are unwilling to engage in the corrupt behaviour but are forced to do so by those in power (Mashali 2012). Lastly, non-conjunctive corruption can be understood as an abuse of power that benefits the perpetrators at the expense of the victims and they are often unaware of their victimization (Mashali 2012; Smith *et al.* 2003).

However, while all three types of corruption may impact victims directly or indirectly, the existing literature often overlooks the "visibility" of corruption victims, and thus imply that corruption is a "victimless crime" (Meng & Friday 2014, p. 359). To verify this, I have decided to do a word search on existing corruption literature. I found that only 34 of more than 200 academic publications on corruption mentioned the "victim". Of which, only four studies mentioned "victim" more than 10 times (see Table 3).

Table 3: Corruption Literature that Mentioned the “Victim”

Corruption Literature	Frequency of Mentioning the "Victim"
Aidt (2003)	1
Alam (1998)	10+
Eliasberg (1951)	1
Everett <i>et al.</i> (2007)	6
Fan (2002)	4
Fassin (2005)	1
Goodman (2011)	1
He (2005)	1
He (2000)	4
Hill (2004)	5
Hindriks, Keen & Muthoo (1999)	8
Huang & Snell (2003)	1
Hunt (2007)	10+
Kadokura (2007)	4
Lambsdorff (2002a)	1
Lambsdorff & Frank (2011)	1
Li, Liu & Li (2006)	1
Mashali (2012)	2
Meng & Friday (2014)	10+
Osipian (2012)	1
Park (1997)	3
Rabl & Kühlmann (2008)	4
Rosenblatt (2012)	2
Sandholtz & Koetzle (2000)	1
Seligson (2006)	10+
Smith (2012)	1
Song & Cheng (2012)	1
Strauss (1994)	2
Sung (2002)	8
Treisman (2007)	5
Ufere <i>et al.</i> (2012)	4
Vaccaro (2012)	3
Walton (2013)	1
Wang (2011)	1

Instead of shedding light on how actual victims of corruption can be helped, the corruption victims depicted in these existing studies in Table 3 are either conceptual or general. For instance, Meng and Friday’s (2014) exploratory study is one of the very few

attempts to shift the spotlight back to victims. Meng and Friday (2014) suggest that “...a poor man who dies because of lack of efficient and affordable health care; a poor woman who is malnourished, hopeless and is not sure of where the next meal will come from; and a woman who dies in childbirth because of lack of access to medical care” are all victims of corruption (p.359). Meng and Friday’s (2014) “visibility” slant on victimisation may provide a broad sense of how victims may be affected. The victims in their study are general victimisations conceptualised on various levels (structural, institutional and individual) and in systemic, sporadic and incidental ways.

However, Meng and Friday (2014) did not specify “knowing victims” of corruption (people who know that they are suffering from corruption) from the general “unknowing victims” of corruption (people who are generally unaware of their victimisation). For example, the patients in the same liver transplant list as Goto Tadamasa should be considered “unknowing” corruption victims. It is likely that they were not informed, and thus unaware that they had to wait longer for their liver transplant, as a result of Goto Tadamasa’s privileged treatment. Therefore, they are unlikely to engage in further action to address the misuse of power. This cohort of victims is inherently different to the “knowing” victims of corruption. When victims are fully aware of the situation, they may or may not be able to address the situation themselves. It is often a choice when these “knowing” victims seek help from others. Thus, it makes them more visible than those who take no action. When the victims are visible, they may have a better chance in subverting the problem. This is illustrated in Figure 2.

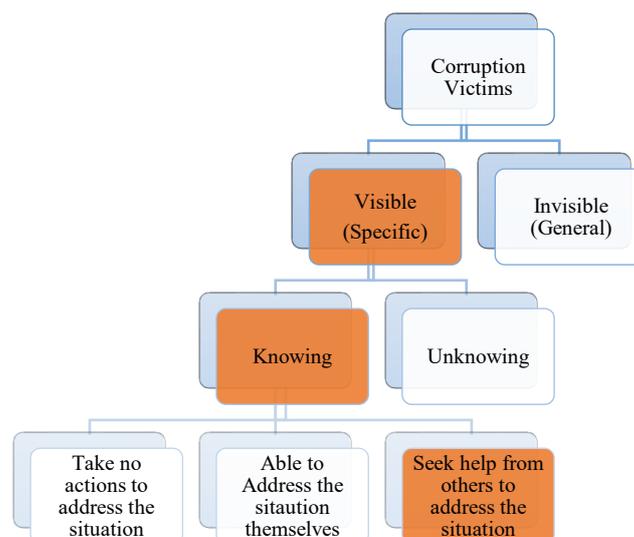


Figure 2: Types of Corruption Victims

In order to better understand what victims of corruption may do to seek support, this study, therefore, focuses on those “knowing” victims, as they are the ones who may become active in seeking help. Therefore, the rationale of the current study focuses on visible victims, particularly those who have experienced non-conjunctive corruption and conscious of their victimisation. They are unable to counter or stop the abuse of power along and so seek help from others.

2.4.4. Corruption as a “Necessary Evil”

The functions of corruption may be also viewed differently depending on one’s position in the context (Walton 2012). The famous quote “absolute power corrupts absolutely” by historian and moralist Lord Acton (1834–1902), is actually part of a passage taken from his letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887 which only paints half the picture. I am more intrigued by the sentence that followed. The full quotation is:

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.

Acton (1887) implies that power and corruption are inseparable. And with this, comes both “good” and “evil”. Therefore, as noted in the discussion insofar, not all corrupt behaviours are considered “evil”. Reflecting this dichotomy, there are two opposing views of corruption evident in existing literature: functional and dysfunctional (Walton 2013). Although most corrupt behaviours have underlying dysfunctional implications in terms of negative impact, Walton (2013) suggests that it is possible to hold a functional view towards corruption, especially when corruption occurs in countries that are considered “weak states” (refers to a country governed by inadequate law and order).

Walton (2013) points out that Papua New Guinea (PNG) is an example of a “weak state”, as its citizens predominantly view their country to have failed in providing law enforcement and protection for individuals. In this context, Walton (2013) found that respondents are likely to link petty corruption with functional consequences. One explanation is that respondents tend to perceive the corruptors to be “constrained by structural forces beyond their control”, and thus understand why the person became engaged in corrupt behaviour (p. 176). Therefore, seeking an alternative way to extract benefits in order to re-distribute the income of the state to those in need, via conducting corrupt activities, may be interpreted as a “necessary evil”, and thus be considered

“functional” (Nystrand 2014; Mao 2013; Tonoyan *et al.* 2010; Walton 2013). This suggests that by seeing corruption as a by-product of “power asymmetries, traditional obligation, illiteracy or lack of education”, leads one to accept that corruption inevitably intertwines in an unfortunate web of “cultural, social or economic necessity” (Walton 2013, p.2). For example, the perception of *yakuza* further illustrates the notion of “necessary evil”. One explanation is that the perceived social identity of *yakuza* fundamentally stems from the Tokugawa period (1600–1867), where *samurai* (warriors) served to battle injustices (Kaplan & Dubro 2012). When coupling this with their contributions to rebuild the war-torn land upon their country’s defeat in World War II, it may be difficult to perceive the *yakuza* as the “bad guys” (Kaplan & Dubro 2012; Whiting 1999).

In fact, the image of *yakuza* is comparable to a Robin Hood-like *samurai* figure, in that they help to sustain social order, and would act as the “night police” to ensure low street crime rates (Kaplan & Dubro 2012; *Young Yakuza* 2008; Whiting 1999). This is perhaps because *yakuza* promote the concept of *giri* (loosely translated as “debt of gratitude”) to a profound extent (Whiting 1999). Simply put, *giri* is a Japanese philosophy grounded in the idea that one should serve one’s superiors with self-sacrificing devotion (Hessler 2012). As such, Hessler (2012) argues that the informal institution of *giri* not only challenges the formal legal system, it often replaces the latter when conventional justice fails to reach those who need it. Hence, the existence of *yakuza* may be thought of as the indispensable “necessary evil” of Japanese society. Consequently, *yakuza* not only gain incredible public tolerance, they sometimes can even become the subject of admiration (Adelstein 2011; Whiting 1999).

Tonoyan *et al.* (2010) suggest that formal and informal institutions play an important role in contributing to an individual’s decision to engage in corruption. For example, as mentioned earlier, poor enforcement efforts to stop corruption and inefficient economic and/or legal institutions may encourage entrepreneurs to become involved in corrupt practices. Excessive time and effort need to be spent in interpreting regulations, which can increase uncertainty as well as the operational and transactions cost of firms, and so business owners often seek alternative “shortcuts” (Mao, 2013; Tonoyan *et al.* 2010). Indeed, businesses are often disadvantaged in an environment where bureaucracy and administrative burdens are high and financial institutions are less accessible. Thus,

engaging in corrupt transactions, not only helps businesses to “get things done”, but can also give them “get ahead”, so that they can stay competitive in their industry (Kaufmann *et al.* 2000).

“Getting things done” and “getting ahead” usually require some sort of bribery of officials who hold the power or position to return the favour by bending the rules (Mao 2013). For example, monetary and material incentives are common methods of payment in corruption, the rewards of which may include, but are not limited to, benefitting from one’s “social position, personal reputation, office, power, the favour of women, the gratification of revenge *etc.*” (Brooks 1909, p. 14). A rather rosy economic perspective suggests that if both parties receive maximum benefits, and on the basis that neither parties are unharmed, there exists *no* exploitation (Mao 2013).

However, trade-offs are difficult to measure in reality. By judging corruption solely on an economic basis could overlook the proliferation of psychological and trauma experienced by its victims. Corruption is particularly unjust when one considers the victims who may suffer for a lifetime as a result. Yet, corruption victims are often not considered, or only given cursory attention, in the existing studies on corruption, regardless of whether corruption was being explored as functional or dysfunctional. The current study intends to address this shortfall by focusing on the victims who suffer from the abuse of power. At this point, my research question was “*providing that the powerless and helpless ‘knowing’ victims of corruption are ‘visible’, what can we do to help them?*” In the next section, I will review our existing knowledge on how corruption may be subverted, which informs how I refined this initial research question.

2.5. Tackling Corruption

Several factors present a challenge when it comes to tackling corruption. Firstly, regardless of whether the corruption event takes place on an interpersonal or systemic level, it continues to be a pervasive issue. Corruption is multifaceted, which can be extremely complicated; this makes tackling it very difficult. For instance, to examine and tackle corruption based on whether it is lawful is fundamentally flawed. The lengthy process of the legal system adds to the ineffectiveness of prosecuting those who engage in the corrupt behavior, and thus serves little deterrence to those who are engaging in, or contemplating corrupt actions (Dong & Torgler 2012; Whiting 1999).

Secondly, as suggested by Mungiu-Pippidi (2013), employing the “principal-agent” approach to curb corruption is problematic. This is because an “agent” should be able to make decisions based on protecting their “principals”. However, because most “agents” are derived from a selected few individuals/institutions with discretionary power, they often do not act as righteous as they should in reality, and thus deviate from the best interests of their “principal”. In fact, some of these “agents” may even operate as gatekeepers in favour of corruption. This cultivates the “a thief cried ‘arrest the thief’” phenomenon (Mashali 2012, p. 782). For example, Williams (1999) suggests that corruption can “reach upward from the police to include judges, juries and even the bribing of government ministers” (p. 137). Therefore, tackling corruption via “the law” can be insufficient to effectively minimise or mitigate, as sometimes highly regulated laws can also sabotage the punishment of corrupt individuals, especially if they are in a powerful position, to begin with. Hence, other ways must be found.

As other people besides the victims of corruption may emerge as valuable players in providing help to address the situation, existing literature suggests that one of the ways these “others” can intervene in a corruption event is by exposing it (Brown 2009; Dozier & Miceli 1985). Whistle-blowing is recognised as a common way to curb corruption (Brown 2009, 2013; Lambsdorff 2002b; Latimer & Brown 2008). While an exposé may not always stop corruptors from further engaging in the negative behaviour, or even help victims of corruption in a tangible way, the whistle-blowing act itself highlights three important aspects. Firstly, by bringing corruption to light, it enables others to *notice* the situation. This not only makes the behaviour of corruption “visible”, it may also identify the perpetrators and victims involved and send a deterrence signal to others in the same space who may or may not be directly affected by the situation.

Secondly, the *whistle-blower* is essentially a role that an individual adopts to discourage corruption. While the intention and motivation of *whistle-blowers* remain debatable, in general, by becoming consciously involved in speaking out against unjust acts, the *whistle-blower* assumes the responsibility of addressing a situation or behaviour that is fundamentally deemed “unfair” (Brown 2013; Dozier & Miceli 1985). As such, whistle-blowing is often considered as a form of alternative political or prosocial behaviour (Dozier & Miceli 1985). Near and Miceli (1985) define whistle-blowing as “the disclosure by organization members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate

practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action” (p. 4). Although this definition implies that *whistle-blowers* are traditionally “members” and “insiders”, Brown (2013) further suggest that *whistle-blowers* could essentially be anyone (e.g., informants, complainants and citizens). This is because, in essence, anyone who has knowledge of the corrupt event may be able to become a *whistle-blower* to bring the situation to light (Brown 2013).

Thirdly, it may be possible to address corruption during and/or after it has taken place through whistle-blowing. Given that corruption is often a non-emergency and chronic problem, *whistle-blowers* may require time before taking action, as they need to interpret the situation to decide whether it is worth the effort in bringing it to light (Dozier & Miceli 1985). Essentially, individuals may attract a very high level of risk by becoming a “visible” *whistle-blower* to expose perpetrators’ wrongdoings, especially if the perpetrators are powerful, to begin with. For instance, in an organisational context, those who are considered whether to become a *whistle-blower* may decide against doing so, largely due to fear of bullying and victimisation, or even dismissal as a result of speaking out, and thus fail to report unethical practice at their workplace (Waters 2008, p. 20).

The potential risks *whistle-blowers* face may be even higher if the exposé is linked to an institutionalised power abuse. Edward Snowden, a United States citizen, is a prime example of a high-risk *whistle-blower* that made enemies with his own government (Scheuerman 2016). In his former job as a subcontractor for the CIA, Snowden engaged in spying activities on the citizens of the United States that were deemed by the CIA essentially good and beneficial for the country. However, Snowden perceived the spying as a breach of privacy towards people of the United States, and thus decided to expose it and become a “whistle-blower” (Rios & Ingraffia 2016). Consequently, Snowden had to escape to another country while living in the fear of being captured, prosecuted, tortured or even killed (Scheuerman 2016). Despite Snowden being labelled a traitor by his government for revealing classified information, he remains a modern day hero to many others (Rios & Ingraffia 2016; Scheuerman 2016). This is because his conscious decision to expose the government’s power abuse can be perceived as a courageous and heroic act (Scheuerman 2016).

Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks and recipient of the 2011 Martha Gelhorn Prize for Journalism, is another example of a high-profile *whistle-blower* who sits at the top of the United States' blacklist for breaching "national interest" (Kwek 2010). With other 1,200 registered volunteers worldwide, WikiLeaks provides a securely encrypted platform for whistle-blowing to take place on a large-scale. By allowing raw factual data that are traditionally available only to privileged insiders to be circulated among the wider public, the emergence of WikiLeaks became a powerhouse to a new form of journalism – "scientific journalism", where primary documents are open to interpretation by readers themselves (Flew & Liu 2011, p. 5). For instance, according to Flew and Liu (2011), 92,000 documents regarding the war in Afghanistan, 400,000 documents in relation to the Iraq war and over 250,000 diplomatic cables from 274 United States embassies were released in 2010 via the WikiLeaks website. By doing so, these were made available for major news outlets worldwide (e.g., *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*). If we were to uphold the democratic arguments of transparent government and the citizens' "right to know", WikiLeaks' duty to report as a news publisher should be sanctioned. However, Julian Assange continues to face uncertainties and possible criminal charges for adopting the role of a "visible *whistle-blower*" since he was the "leader and public face" of WikiLeaks (Flew & Liu 2011).

Indeed, one man's act could be perceived as "terrorism", could be alternatively envisaged as another man's act as a "freedom fighter" (Seymour 1975). Jeremy Hammond is another exemplar whistle-blower that highlights this debate. Hammond is famously known for his "crime", as hacking into the USA's intelligence agency Strategic Forecasting Incorporated and exposing its ties to many governments and business entities (Schwartz 2013). Hammond was purported to have leaked 5 million private emails taken from Strategic Forecasting from July 2004 to December 2011 to WikiLeaks, including emails from private corporations who shared sensitive information with local and federal law enforcement agencies (Anderson & King 2014). For instance, Hammond revealed that some of the clients of Strategic Forecasting were purported to have engaged in espionage activities on activists and competitors. These clients include government organisations from the United States (e.g., the Department of Homeland Security, the Marines and the Defence Intelligence Agency; defence contractors Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and Raytheon) and international corporations (e.g., Dow Chemical and Coca-Cola)

(Makuch 2013; The Courage Foundation 2017). As the leaked information could endanger the involved parties (*e.g.*, by revealing their contact details to the wider public), what Hammond did was therefore deemed unlawful from a legal perspective. The exposé has landed Jeremy Hammond ten years in jail – a punishment equivalent to some other serious crimes including murder and rape (Reitman 2012).

Whether or not Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and Jeremy Hammond’s actions truly conflicted with the “national interest” remains an interesting debate. However, I am more intrigued by what differentiates these *whistle-blowers* and what empowers them to engage in subsequent action to become involved. By proactively exposing wrongdoing to others, the *whistle-blower* emerges as one particular role, which an individual may adopt to intervene in cases of corruption. While there may exist other roles in a similar tangent to what a *whistle-blower* would do to address corruption, there has been very little research conducted to identify these specific roles and their corresponding action. For instance, besides exposing corruption, others may take other actions to help victims of corruption (*e.g.*, advocating support for victims, provide tangible help for victims physically/financially, and/or mobilise others to engage in helping behaviour). Since these other potential roles and their corresponding action to address corruption remain unidentified, this is a research gap that warrants further investigation. Therefore, the current research intends to identify various roles that individuals may adopt to intervene in situations that are deemed corrupt.

I should also point out that it is no coincidence that Edward Snowden, Julian Assange and Jeremy Hammond became high-profile *whistle-blowers*. By choosing to engage in the whistle-blowing act via an online sphere, they have made the institutionalised power abuse transparent to the wider public. In turn, they have also made themselves “visible” in the process. This highlights that the Internet is more than just a tool to disseminate knowledge and to counter power and control over how information traditionally flows. It could also emerge as a powerful platform for individuals like *whistle-blowers* to expose corruption. This will be discussed fully in Chapter Four.

2.6. Chapter Summary

Corruption remains a pervasive problem for many societies. This chapter illustrates different “shades” of corruption and why it remains difficult to eradicate. Although both

grand and petty corruption may lead to detrimental consequences in a variety of contexts and on a number of levels, anti-corruption measures often focus on the macro level and neglect victims of corruption. It is important to shift our focus back to the victims, particularly, victims who are aware of the situation but unable to resist, as well as those who visibly seek help from others. Furthermore, if *whistle-blower* is one distinctive role that individuals can adopt to address corruption, it is possible that there are other unidentified bystander roles in the corruption context. Therefore, the current study intends to explore how victims of corruption can be helped, and in particular, the roles people could adopt when doing so. I have initially conceptualised the overarching framework of the current study in Figure 3. Importantly, this figure introduces the concept of “bystander”, which reflects others who wish to help a victim of corruption and thereby curb the corrupt event and negative impact. Bystanders are thus discussed in the next chapter.

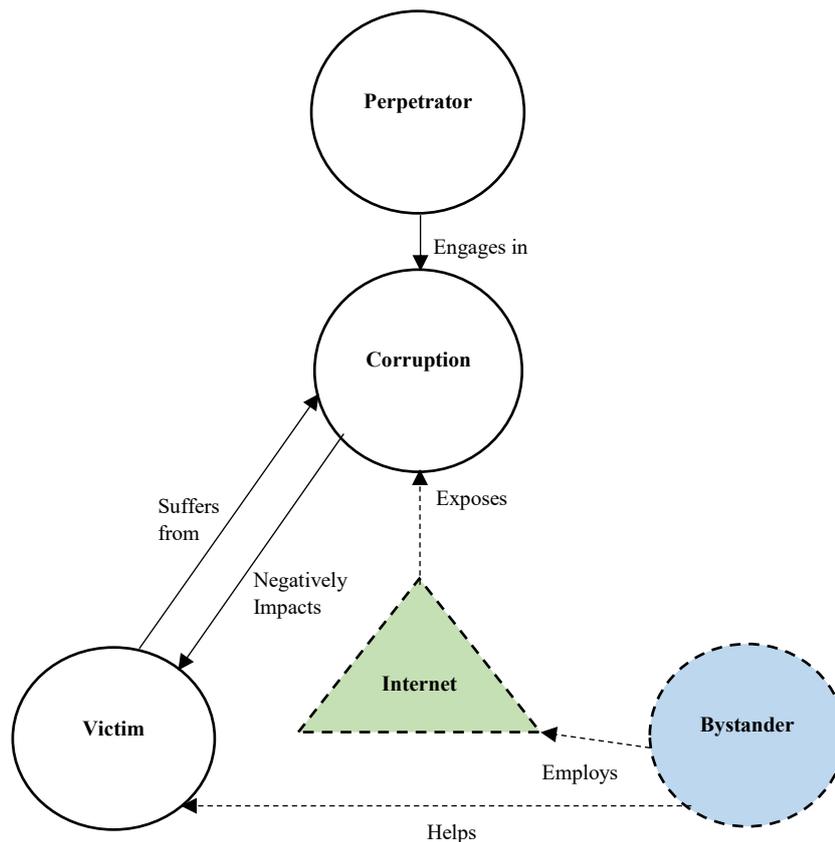


Figure 3: An Initial Overarching Framework of the Current Study

Chapter Three: A Walk through the Bystander Labyrinth

3.1. Chapter Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, besides the victims and the perpetrators, there might also be “others” caught in the same space. These “others” are commonly known as “bystanders”. Assuming that victims generally benefit when bystanders step in to help or rescue them in emergencies, the interference efforts of these bystanders may be similarly crucial to support victims of corruption. To explore how bystander intervention can be better mobilised and facilitated to assist victims of corruption, it is important to first understand the notion of “bystander”, and what may influence individuals to engage in bystander behaviour.

3.2. The Bystander Phenomenon

It is 3 am in the morning. You are woken up by a scream. A young woman in your neighbourhood is about to be raped and stabbed least 14 times by an unknown man right outside her doorstep for the next half an hour. What would you do? Nothing? Would you go back to sleep; or alternatively, watch the “show” from your apartment window? While such a proposition may sound disturbing, this is precisely what Gansberg (1964) proposed onlookers did when they “witnessed” Catherine (Kitty) Genovese’s brutal murder at an upper-middle-class neighbourhood in a central area of the New York City borough of Queens. They did *nothing*.

Titled “37 who saw murder didn’t call the police”, Gansberg’s (1964) feature article hit the spotlight in *The New York Times* two weeks after Kitty’s murder took place. Kitty’s “story” was not only “newsworthy” at the time, but also somewhat “entertaining”. For example, according to Hardie (2010), movies such as *High Plains Drifter* (1973), *Death Screams* (1975) and the *Watchmen* series (1986-1987) have all drawn references to Kitty’s horrific death. There was even an opera production named after her at one point – “The Screams of Kitty Genovese”, where the last minutes of Kitty’s life were intensely transformed into a twisted thriller-romance in the form of a spectacle theatrical performance (Hardie 2010).

Essentially, rather than what these “witnesses” did, it was their inaction that has drawn people’s attention over the next few decades. Even long after the initial public “hype” subsided, enthused psychologists, scholars, historians, journalists, and script-writers continue to retrospectively explore, analyse and to an extent, exploit this so-called “bystander phenomenon”, which was ignited by Kitty’s landmark case (Hardie 2010, Levine & Cassidy 2010; Manning, Levine & Collins 2007).

3.2.1. Defining Bystanders

Bystanders can be defined as “...witnesses to crimes, emergencies, or high-risk situations, who are not themselves directly involved as perpetrators or victims” (Banyard & Moynihan 2011, p. 287). In other words, bystanders are essentially individuals who happen to be entangled in the same space in these situations, they can choose to act and intervene to help, or do nothing. Darley and Latané (1968) were among the earliest scholars to embark on bystander research to shed light on the peculiar occurrence of “collective inaction”.

Darley and Latané’s (1968) “bystander effect” (also known as the Genovese Syndrome), suggests that there is a higher chance of people engaging in helping or intervening behaviour in emergencies when they are alone than in the presence of other bystanders. One widely accepted explanation is that when more people are involved, one’s perceived responsibility to intervene tends to diffuse (Darley & Latané 1968; Latané & Darley 1970; Bickman 1972). This is because the individual thinks that someone else will step in and so they do not. In essence, the “bystander effect” proposes that the presence of other “witnesses” actually inhibits an individual’s own decision to engage in helping behaviour.

While there remain many “dead spots” in Kitty’s case and existing literature may not have painted it entirely accurately (Hardie 2010), this “landmark case” nevertheless highlights that bystanders have a “choice” when confronted by the opportunity to intervene. To understand what action bystanders may subsequently engage to intervene, we must first understand the stances they may adopt. In general, bystanders may adopt three broad stances to address emergencies: to assist the perpetrator and/or cause further harm to the victim, to help/assist the victim, or to be seemingly indifferent (Banyard & Moynihan 2011).

While the 37 witnesses in Kitty's case may be viewed as "*bad Samaritan*" for their negligence of duty to offer help to another person in an emergency, this view is somewhat problematic. This is because if we presume the "duty" for bystanders is to intervene, it "tend[s] to blur the distinction between responsibility for the conduct that constitutes the failure and responsibility for the harm itself" (McIntyre 1994, p. 183). In other words, it tends to shift the "duty" from the perpetrator to *not* act in a certain way, to the "witness", who should stop the perpetrators' negative behaviour. For this reason, the 37 witnesses should not be held responsible for Kitty's death.

Moreover, it may be difficult for bystanders to intervene when the negative behaviour is "unseen". For instance, historically, there has been little public awareness about gendered violence in China (Ai 2013; Chew 2011). Indeed, concepts like "dating violence" was introduced only since the early 1990's, and such behaviour is still often regarded as a matter best kept "behind closed doors" (Chew 2011). With jealousy frequently used to justify physical harming between parties who are romantically involved, domestic violence remains, to an extent, a tolerable phenomenon in China (Shen, Chiu & Gao 2012; Wang *et al.* 2009). Consequently, the "domestic" nature of such interpersonal conflicts continues to deflect public attention, making the problem difficult to gain wider awareness, let alone imposing a "duty" for "outsiders" to intervene (Shen, Chiu & Gao 2012). Therefore, we should not confuse bystanders' inaction with the harm received by the victims in the first place. Rather than viewing bystanders who fail to intervene as "*bad Samaritan*", they are perhaps more suited to the description of "*in-betweeners*" – who neither facilitate nor ameliorate victimisation.

While Gansberg's (1964) story depicts bystanders in Kitty Genovese's case as being "unresponsive" and "inactive", Dubner and Levitt (2010) unveiled a very different picture. Bystander involvement was exactly what helped the police to capture Winston Moseley, the man who murdered Kitty Genovese. Ironically, it was different bystanders involved. He was captured, not for Kitty's brutal murder, but a petty crime that he was attempting to commit in a nearby neighbourhood close to where Kitty lived. When Winston Moseley was loading a television (which he had stolen from the Bannister's family) to his car, one of the concerned Bannister's neighbours approached him. Although Moseley reassured him that he was helping the Bannister's to move, the neighbour remained suspicious of

his explanation and consulted another neighbour on the phone. In the end, the second neighbour contacted the police while the first neighbour went back outside to loosen the distributor cap of Moseley's car. It was during the interrogation of his futile burglary that Moseley also revealed – he was the man that took Kitty Genovese's life a few nights earlier. Therefore, not all bystanders are “unresponsive” and “inactive” as were those in Kitty's case. As evident from the Bannister's incident, bystanders can also be pro-active, which is likely to benefit victims and could even discourage perpetrators from engaging in negative behaviour.

Levine and Thompson (2004) further suggest that bystanders may become involved and support others in situations like natural disasters. By providing support and adopting engaging in helping behaviour, these individuals often come across as “*good Samaritan*” and praised as “hero” of the day (Nelson & Norton 2005; Scordato 2008). This is because helping is often considered a “prosocial” behaviour in emergencies, and thus when people engage in action with the intention to benefit other people, it seems to be the morally “right” or “expected” thing to do within a social convention (Banyard 2008; Staub 1978). It can be considered a “duty of care”. Accordingly, gaining insights of individuals who are in the position of becoming a “*good Samaritan*” and understanding what motivates them to take such action, may facilitate providing support to victims of corruption. This will be discussed next.

3.2.2. The Bystander Intervention Process

Bystander intervention generally occurs with the intention to help victims or to prevent victims from experiencing further potential harm (Polder-Verkiel 2012). As such, bystander intervention is a significant form of countermeasure in many “emergency” contexts, and it has also become increasingly valuable in dealing with persistent and continuous situations such as child abuse (Hoefnagels & Zwikker 2001), bullying (Pozzoli & Gini 2013), organisational bullying (D'Cruz & Noronha 2011) and corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). The most well-known bystander intervention process was developed by Latané and Darley (1970), which suggests that bystanders go through five steps when intervening in emergencies (see Figure 4).

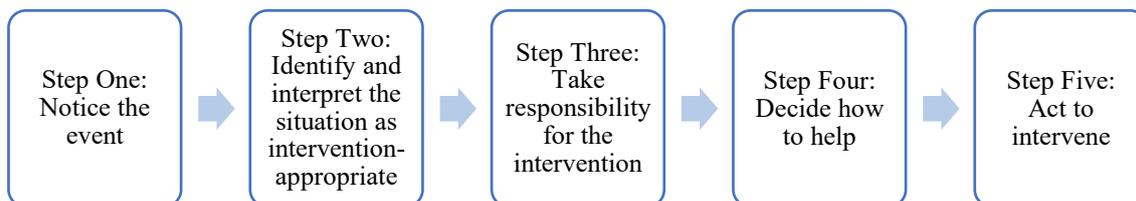


Figure 4: The Bystander Intervention Process

(Source: Latané & Darley 1970)

Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process appears to be the only widely accepted model used in existing bystander literature to explain different steps which bystanders may go through to intervene. I will now briefly explain each of these steps.

Step One: The individual must first notice or be aware of the event/situation; this is the most important first step in the bystander intervention process (Latané & Darley 1970; Anker & Feeley 2011). For instance, when a high-risk situation like sexual assault takes place at large public social settings (*e.g.*, bars and parties), the distracting external stimulation from noise and crowds of people in the surroundings may impede the bystander from noticing. Thus, failing to notice the event means bystanders are unable to facilitate subsequent helping behaviour to alleviate victims from potential harm (Burn 2009). In response to such a barrier, Bennett, Banyard and Garnhart (2014) suggest that precursors like greater knowledge about sexual assault may heighten bystanders' awareness, and so they become more alert and thus vigilant under such circumstances.

Step Two: Upon recognition of the event, bystanders then need to identify and interpret whether the situation is an emergency, or worthy of help, and if so, to what extent (Guy & Patton 1989; Latané & Darley 1970). However, interpretation of the situation can be highly subjective to an individual's experience. At this stage, internal and external factors may contribute to shaping the perception of the situation. For example, a teacher may identify a pattern in bullying behaviour based on his/her previous experience, and thus interpret the situation as being one that requires intervention. Moreover, when the situation remains ambiguous to decipher, one often turns to others and relies upon their

reaction to interpret the situation (Burn 2009). This is because by witnessing other bystanders in the same space ignoring the situation, such “pluralistic ignorance” may influence the bystander’s own perception of the situation, and thus lead them to re-interpret the situation as being less grave, and one that requires no action (Latané & Darley 1970).

Step Three: The third step is where bystanders determine their responsibility to intervene (Latané & Darley 1970). It appears that this step is a critical point that partially explains the inaction of bystanders in Kitty Genovese’s murder; hence the “bystander effect”. This is because individuals may only take action when they assume a level of personal responsibility to intervene (Latané & Darley 1970; Pozzoli & Gini 2013). Some scholars propose that one’s perception of responsibility is predominately linked with the moral relevance of what might be the “right” thing to do (Polder-Verkiel 2012; Pozzoli & Gini 2013). Whereas, other studies suggest factors such as the victim characteristics (*e.g.*, age, gender, helplessness), environment of where the event takes place, as well as the relationship between the bystander and the victim may also influence the bystanders’ decision to intervene (*e.g.*, Hoefnagels & Zwikker 2001; Markey 2000; Salmivalli, Huttunen & Lagerspetz 1997).

Step Four: The fourth step suggests that bystanders need to assess how and which alternative action to pursue when they decide to intervene (Latané & Darley 1970). For instance, bystanders may lack the confidence to intervene, and thus choose not to become involved. When bystanders have a low level of self-efficacy, it may hinder their perceived ability to produce the desired results and thus discourage them to take action (Rigby & Johnson 2006). Bennett, Banyard and Garnhart’s (2014) study also stresses that the failure of bystander intervention in the context of sexual assault is largely due to knowledge/skill deficiency. While other personal factors may also contribute to bystanders’ inaction in the intervention process, existing bystander literature often emphasises one’s knowledge or ability being an important element (Anker & Feeley 2011; Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014). This means that a skills deficit may leave bystanders feeling powerless to address the situation, and thus profoundly hinder the bystanders’ decision to intervene at this stage. For example, one may not be able to save a child from drowning if they cannot swim in the first place. Polder-Verkiel (2012) points out that one needs to realise that when there are more witnesses in the same space, it only increases the chance of

having someone possessing the skill required to assist (*e.g.*, more people who are able to swim) rather than them actually engaging in the helping behaviour. Thus, the presumption behind the “diffusion of responsibility” (which underpins the “bystander effect”), as the bystanders assume others could help, may not fully justify bystanders’ inaction. Nevertheless, this is the most common explanation as to why many bystanders do not step in to help.

Step Five: This last step is where bystanders implement action to intervene. There are different types of pro-victim bystander interventions. For instance, the action of aid from bystanders may be physical, financial or empathetic (*e.g.*, in terms of emotional support or simply generating greater awareness towards a common political vision) (Levine & Thompson 2004). While Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process may illustrate how bystanders may invariably intervene, there is no universal agreement as to what motivates bystanders to help (Banyard 2008; Gagné 2003). Some mitigating factors that may potentially influence bystanders’ decision to intervene will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.3. Bystanders’ Decision to Intervene

Since the objective of the current study is to understand how to rally support to help victims of corruption, it is important to understand the notion of “helping”, which is often positively emphasised in bystanders’ action to intervene in “emergency states” (Nelson & Norton 2005; Staub 1978). While the focus of existing literature that examined bystander behaviour predominately revolved around non-corruption situations, the mitigating factors, and barriers identified in previous studies may nevertheless inform what influences an individual’s decision to intervene in corruption. For instance, by probing the theory developed in the behavioural sciences, Guy and Patton (1989) conceptualised the factors that motivate the donors to help others, from a marketing perspective. Fundamentally, Guy and Patton (1989) suggest that people only help when they *think* they can. While Guy and Patton’s (1989) Helping Decision Process is almost identical to Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process, it further incorporated potential mitigating factors that influence the Helping Decision Process (see figure 4).

Table 4: The Helping Decision Process and Potential Mitigating Factors

Internal Mitigating Factors	Helping Decision Process	External Mitigating Factors
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demographics 2. Personality Variables 3. Social Status 4. Mood 5. Knowledge, Ability, Resources 6. Previous Experience 	<p style="text-align: center;"> Awareness of Another ↓ Person in Need ↓ Interpretation of the Situation ↓ Recognition of Personal Responsibility ↓ Perception of Ability/Competence to Help ↓ Implementation of Helping Action </p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nature of the Appeal for Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambiguity/Consequences • Urgency/Immediacy • Accountability/Uniqueness 2. Other People Involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person(s) in need of help • Person(s) requesting help • Other Helpers/Givers • “Bystanders” 3. Availability of Alternative Courses of Action 4. Environmental Factors

(Source: Guy & Patton 1989, p. 8)

The Helping Decision Process and potential mitigating factors previously identified by Guy and Patton (1989) provides a broad overview as to what may influence bystanders to intervene in general. However, Guy and Patton’s (1989) conceptual framework was not fully supported by empirical evidence, nor is it sufficient to explain what prompts people to engage in helping behaviour (beyond donating). For instance, it did not mention how demographics and personal characteristics (*e.g.*, age, gender, culture, social identity *etc.*) may be used as precursors in explaining bystanders’ action/inaction to intervene. In contrast, some of these factors were better explained in Levine and Crowther’s (2008, p. 1431) study, where they used four variations of the following hypothetical scenario to gather responses from participants:

Imagine you are walking through town. It is about 4 o’clock in the afternoon. You are walking along in the same direction as 1 other person / 5 other people, who is [are] a stranger [strangers] to you / a friend [friends] of yours / a student [students] you recognize from the university but have never spoken to before. Imagine this [these] stranger [strangers] / friend [friends] / student [students] next to you. As you are walking, you see a man and a woman who have clearly been arguing. As you get closer, they begin to scuffle. He slaps her with an open hand. Then he grabs her by the lapels of her jacket. It looks as if he is about to hit her again.

Levine and Crowther's (2008) study found that male participants are likely to engage in intervention, when the group size of bystanders (who are perceived to be "out-group members" as opposed to "friends") increases. One explanation they provided is that "when gender identity was salient, and bystanders were out-group members, the sex role stereotype of heroic and chivalrous male seemed to guide behaviour" (p. 1437). Levine and Crowther (2008) also found that the "bystander effect" might only be apparent when bystanders were perceived to be strangers rather than friends.

However, one shortcoming of Levine and Crowther's (2008) study is that responses from participants are based on their perception of helping intention rather than the actual helping behaviour, and thus may not accurately reflect their real-life action when confronted by emergencies. Nevertheless, the view that bystanders are more inclined to engage in helping behaviour when they perceive themselves as being in-group members in relation to the victim of the situation is supported by other studies (Bickman 1972; Burn 2009; Levine & Cassidy 2010; Manning, Levine & Collins 2007).

This "in-group" phenomenon can be explained by Social Influence Theory, which suggests that other people in a social environment can often influence individuals through processes of compliance, internalisation and identification at different levels (Kelman 1958; Cheung, Chiu & Lee 2011). In association with *identification*, an "individual accepts influence because he wants to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship... [with] another person or a group" (Kelman 1958, p. 53). For instance, the notion of "in-group" favouritism stems from one's social identity, where people perceive themselves as "functionally interchangeable with other members of their group" (Levine & Cassidy 2010, p. 212). Thus, social identity is an important influence on people's attitudes and behaviours, as bystanders may align their action with their perceived social identity to engage in helping behaviour. This would explain why a neighbour, friend or family member is more likely to intervene in the situation and provide help for the victim than a stranger, just as Bannister's neighbours stepped in to stop Winston Moseley's burglary as mentioned earlier.

Therefore, it appears that individuals are influenced by social norms and conformity if they are to take action independently (Gagné 2003; Janis 1972). Social norms can be

activated both physically (*e.g.*, in the presence of others) and mentally (*e.g.*, the perception of social identity) in a positive way when used to foster bystander intervention. However, when the bystanders perceive the victim as an out-group member, they may be more reluctant to help victims in order to avoid negative social consequences (Levine & Cassidy's 2010; Price *et al.* 2014; Salmivalli *et al.* 1996). For instance, bystanders may choose to be inactive in the case of bullying if they perceive the victim not belonging to their "in-group" (Salmivalli *et al.* 1996).

3.2.3.1. Barriers to Bystander Intervention

Existing literature points out that the apathetic responses could be the result of various internal and external barriers, which if removed, may compel the person to help (Bennet, Banyard & Garnhart 2014; Levine *et al.* 2002; Pozzoli & Gini 2013). For instance, personal and situational factors may influence bystanders' inaction. Personal factors may include the nature and interpretation of the situation (Levine *et al.* 2002; Pozzoli & Gini 2013), the nature of the intervention (Banyard 2011), ability/competency/resources (Burn 2009), interpretation of help (Hoefnagels & Zwikker 2001) and attitude (Banyard & Moynihan 2011) are purported to hinder bystanders' decision to intervene.

Similarly, besides the presence of others, situational factors such as time, space, weather, or physical obstruction may also form barriers that delay bystanders' decision to intervene (Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014; Burn 2009; Markey 2000; Nelson & Norton 2005). For instance, physical settings/geographic location (Markey 2000), the characteristics/dynamic of victims/predators/bystanders (Bennet, Banyard & Garnhart 2014) as well as group inclusion and cohesiveness (Banyard, Plante & Moynihan 2004) have been previously viewed to pose restrictive barriers to bystander intervention.

Alas, we should be aware that bystanders have one of the three choices: to do nothing, help the victim or help the perpetrator. For instance, in a bullying context, an alliance between the bully and the bystander may occur, so that the bystander "joins" in the bullying behaviour (Salmivalli *et al.* 1996). In this sense, bystanders who support a bully could be considered a "*bad Samaritan*", as their action may inflict further harm towards the victim. Some studies suggest that moral disengagement may be another factor that contributes to bystanders who adopt such an "anti-victim" stance (Almeida, Correia &

Marinho 2010; Hymel & Bonanno 2014; Price *et al.* 2014). In this sense, bystanders may “deflect moral responsibility for intervening towards being the responsibility or fault of the victim” (Price *et al.* 2014, pp. 10-11). This phenomenon is often evident in the case of whistle-blowing.

Whistle-blowers often risk being victimised upon exposing the perpetrators’ wrongdoings. This is because “ratting-out” on a colleague/organisation may be interpreted as an unfavourable behaviour that equates to unveiling others’ faults, and is thus deemed unpopular (Bjørkelo 2013). Consequently, *whistle-blowers* may attract unwanted attention and retaliation, and receive mental/physical harm not only from the perpetrator, but also others bystanders (Waters 2008; Bjørkelo 2013). For example, a survey undertaken in 2003 by Unison, one of the United Kingdom’s largest trade unions, found that one in three respondents out of 2,000 National Health Service staff (including nurses, midwives, paramedics and cleaners) faced reprisals, and were made to feel “disloyal” to their workplace upon their engagement in whistle-blowing (Waters 2008). In turn, such internalised fear may act as a deterrent not only for victims, but also bystanders so that they would “think twice” about speaking out to advocate or engage in subsequent helping behaviour to assist the victims.

As previously discussed in Chapter Two, the *whistle-blower* is a significant bystander role in the context of corruption as there is a higher chance of subverting negative behaviour imposed by the perpetrator when it is exposed (Brown 2013). Apart from the role of a *whistle-blower*, other specific bystander roles have not yet been explored in the context of corruption. Further examining what influences bystanders to adopt other roles may be useful to promote wider intervening behaviour to curb corruption. Since other bystander roles besides *whistle-blowers* remain underexplored in existing studies in the context of corruption, it may be useful to first review what we currently know about bystander roles in general.

3.2.4. Bystander Roles

In general, bystander roles have received scant scholarly attention in existing literature, though one exception is in the context of bullying. Salmivalli *et al.* (1996) define bullying as “one child being exposed repeatedly to harassment and attacks from one or several

other children...or any other behaviour meant to hurt the other one” (p. 4). Although bullying was a phenomenon traditionally detected in schoolyards, such negative behaviour is now widely recognised as a serious problem beyond the “sandpit” (Cowie *et al.* 2002). For instance, workplace bullying continues to be a problem for many countries, sectors and industries (Bjørkelo 2013; D’Cruz, Noronha & Beale 2014). Akin to corruption, bullying is also a behaviour led by power inequality. Therefore, looking at bystander roles to address bullying may inform the current study.

Salmivalli *et al.*’s (1996) study is seminal in this underexplored area of bystander roles in the context of bullying. They examined 573 children (aged between 12-13 years old) across 11 schools in Finland through a set of questionnaires. The children were asked to (1) evaluate behaviour in bullying situations; (2) identify the victims; and (3) nominate three female and three male classmates whom they like most and least respectively. Besides the victims and the bullies, Salmivalli *et al.* (1996) found empirical evidence that supports four other major “participant roles”, which various bystanders may adopt. These roles consist of the “assistant” (who assists the bully), the “reinforcer” (who provides the bully with positive feedback), the “defender” (who helps the victims) and the “outsider” (who remains uninvolved in the situation) (Salmivalli *et al.* 1996). By identifying these bystander roles, Salmivalli *et al.* (1996) point out that the individuals within this cohort do not necessarily adopt the same action when confronted by situations. However, these “participant roles” essentially illustrate an overarching stance, from which bystanders may position themselves when confronted with the decision of whether or not to intervene. The “participant roles” identified in Salmivalli *et al.*’s (1996) study are in line with the “good Samaritan”, the “bad Samaritan” and the “in-betweeners” stances discussed earlier.

While these different “participant roles” identified by Salmivalli *et al.* (1996) may inform the bystanders’ subsequent action in a general sense, the extent to which these individuals become involved remains unclear. It is possible that not all “defenders” are actively involved in their action to help the victims. Moreover, “outsiders” may not be necessarily passive. Perhaps some intervene a little, while others become a lot more involved. For example, bystanders may physically fight against the bullies, report the incident to raise awareness, or show support by listening to the victim’s concerns. Therefore, the action that bystanders adopt may be characteristically different depending on the extent to which they become involved. The extent of involvement is unspecified by Salmivalli *et al.* (1996)

and thus warrants further investigation. Moreover, the “participant roles” identified in their study are drawn from responses based on a pre-prescribed scaling system where 50 items and five subscales that were used to describe these “participant roles”. This approach may fundamentally overlook potential roles other than descriptions that fit the “assistant”, “reinforcer”, “defender” and “outsider”, and emphasise the “perceived” behaviour of the respondents, as opposed to their “actual” behaviour reflected by these roles.

Another study that examined different bystander roles in the bullying context is by Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004). From the perspective that bullying is a triadic (bully–victim–bystander) rather than a dyadic (bully–victim) relationship, they point out that rather than a passive witness, bystanders’ existing and ongoing interactions with the victim and perpetrators may propel the bystanders into a particularly helpful or harmful role. Specifically, Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) conceptualise seven bystander roles in their study, this is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5: Types of Bystander Roles Previously Identified

Role	Subjective State	Role in the System
<i>Bully (aggressive) Bystander</i>	Excitement, often sadomasochistic	Establishes a way to set up victimisation within the school community
<i>Puppet-master Variant of the Bystander</i>	Arrogant grandiose sense of powerfulness	Committed to violent outcomes, achieved by conscious manipulation
<i>Victim (passive) bystander</i>	Fearful, apathetic, helpless	Passively and fearfully drawn into the victimisation process
<i>Avoidant Bystander</i>	Defensive euphoria; an individual action	Facilitates victimisation by denial of personal responsibility
<i>Abdicating Bystander</i>	Outraged at the “poor” performance of others; an agency or group action	Abdicates responsibility by scapegoating
<i>Shame Bystander</i>	Uses verbal manipulation; deliberate and calm	Neither victim or victimiser role is authentic, but is adopted for personal political reasons
<i>Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander</i>	Compassionate, sometimes outraged at harm to others; not a “do-gooder”	Mature and effective use of individual and group psychology to promote self-awareness and develop skills to resist victimisation

(Source: Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco 2004, p. 218)

Interestingly, only one in the seven bystander roles identified in Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) is deemed helpful to the victims (Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander). In general, Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004, p. 220) suggest that a “Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander” may embody the following characteristics:

- (1) More altruistic than egoistic;
- (2) Aware of, and taking responsibility for, community problems;
- (3) Willing to take physical risks for peace and are not easily frightened;
- (4) Relationship-oriented and humanistic;
- (5) Self-motivated and a motivator of others;
- (6) Alert, strong, and positive;
- (7) Self-rewarding with low need for praise;
- (8) Personally well organised;
- (9) Advocating for and protecting the vulnerable and disempowered;
- (10) Able to see potential in all people; and
- (11) Low in sadism.

While Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco’s (2004) study attempts to delineate how bystanders may respond differently in the context of bullying, the various bystanders’ roles they identified do not reflect the bystanders’ subsequent action or the extent of their involvement. For instance, it remains unclear as to whether all individuals that fit the role of a “Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander” would adopt the same action or the same level of involvement to provide “help” to the victims. Moreover, Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) failed to mention how these characteristics may lead bystanders to adopt certain action to assist victims in the bullying context. In other words, we do not know what a “Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander” might actually do.

Another limitation of these various bystander roles conceptualised in Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco’s (2004) study is that they are primarily drawn from a school setting, and thus the bystander roles identified mainly relate to “teacher” roles from their two case studies examined. As teachers already have the “official duty” to intervene in bullying, their study could have further distinguished how such “official duty” may differ from their “social duty” to intervene. For example, their research suggests that the school principal in the first case study adopted the role of an “avoidant bystander” out of self-preservation, and

to some extent, denial, in order to retain a positive attitude to cope with the situation. This fundamentally neglects the person's "official duty" to intervene. Whereas, in their second case study, they highlight that some teachers are bullies that pick on students. This makes it difficult for other teachers to step in and intervene, as they may feel "forced" to keep silent as a way of displaying positive collegiality (Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco 2004). This suggests that the inability to intervene may be linked to a "social duty" which teachers are pressured to fulfil to avoid being scapegoated for being "disloyal". In this sense, one "social duty" (loyal to colleague), can over-rule another "social duty" (helping someone in need) and "official duty" (prevent schoolyard bullying).

Other studies suggest that bystanders' adoption of roles could be relative and/or flexible, depending on the bystanders' social (peer) network (Almeida, Correia & Marinho 2010; Salmivalli, Huttunen & Lagerspetz 1997). While the bystander roles identified in both Salmivalli *et al.* (1996) and Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco's (2004) studies provide some insights to illustrate different stances which bystanders may adopt in a school environment, whether these roles persist for bystanders in other contexts has not yet been explored. In response to this gap in knowledge, the current study intends to provide evidence by exploring additional bystander roles that may be similar or different. The current study also intends to illuminate specific bystander roles and to identify their subsequent action associated with these roles, which may in turn, reflect the extent to which they become involved in addressing corruption.

Given that existing literature on bystander roles remains largely underexplored, looking in other contexts where the concept of "roles" are more established may better inform how bystanders may adopt specific roles to address corruption. For instance, one such area that may provide insight are the consumer roles adopted in the context of purchasing. Consumer roles may inform bystander roles, and similarly, since consumers also go through a complex decision-making process prior to make conscious purchasing decisions to solve problems, this may inform our understanding of how bystanders go through various steps before taking action to intervene. Therefore, it may be beneficial to borrow a marketing lens to review our existing knowledge in the bystander context.

3.3. Bystander Intervention through a Marketing Lens

By reimagining bystanders as consumers, this section intends to borrow our existing understanding of consumer behaviour to inform how bystanders may intervene in corruption. Specifically, this section will discuss the following inter-related aspects: the decision-making process, level of involvement, roles and action.

3.3.1. Decision Making Process

Consumers' buying decision making process originates from John Dewey's (1910) model that directs information flow towards group problem solving. This process was later extended and applied to the works of Engel, Kollat and Blackwell (1978) and Engel, Blackwell and Miniard (1986) in the context of consumer behaviour and has since been adapted in numerous marketing textbooks (Darley, Blankson & Luethge 2010). As such, one of the most widely accepted versions of the consumer buying decision making process comprises the following stages: (1) problem recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase, and (5) post-purchase behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong 1991).

When consumers engage in the purchasing decision, they are essentially on a quest to seek viable solution(s) to satisfy their needs. Therefore, problem recognition remains the first step in the consumer buying decision making process. Upon recognising the problem, consumers go through an information search phase where they obtain relevant knowledge about the product/service. Consumers then proceed to the evaluation stage where they compare alternatives against various criteria that they have developed. After weighing all options, consumers then take action and make the purchase. Finally, consumers review and evaluate their purchasing decision. This post-purchase behaviour contributes to inform their future purchasing decisions.

The consumer buying decision making process can be understood as a conscious consumer choice, as purchasing decisions are essentially calibrated actions taken by consumer to purchase a product (Butler & Peppard 1998). For instance, consumers may make purchases by extrapolation, based on their aligned values with the product/service (Da Silva & Alwi 2006). An example of this is when consumers decide to purchase ecologically sustainable products (Roberts & Bacon 1997). Likewise, bystander literature often implies that bystanders have a "choice", in the sense that intervention is a "planned"

decision (Banyard 2011; Guy & Patton 1989; Hoefnagels & Zwikker 2001; Latané & Darley 1970). Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned how both internal and external mitigating factors can play a crucial role in determining bystanders' decision of whether to engage in helping behaviour (Guy & Patton 1989). This is also comparable to a consumer purchasing context, where various mitigating factors (*e.g.*, personal, psychological, economic, situational and socio-cultural) are purported to influence the consumer buying decision making process, particularly during the information search and evaluation stages (Darley, Blankson & Luethge 2010; Kotler & Armstrong 1991; Lamb *et al.* 2013). Therefore, both bystanders and consumers seemingly exposed to internal/external pressures and go through a similar process when making problem-solving decisions.

Indeed, Latané and Darley's (1970) five-step bystander intervention process is strikingly similar to the consumer buying decision making process in the marketing field. For instance, both bystanders and consumers need to first recognise the problem before they can move on to other stages of the decision making process. To further delineate the similarities and differences in how bystanders and consumers make decisions at different stages of their decision making processes, I drew a comparison of the consumer decision making process to the bystander intervention process developed by Latané and Darley's (1970) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Comparison of the Bystander Intervention Process and the Consumer Buying Decision Making Process

Steps	Bystander Context	Consumer Purchasing Context
	Bystander Intervention Process	Consumer Buying Decision Making Process
<i>Recognition/Awareness</i>	Event/Situation Aware of another person in need	Problem
<i>Information search</i>	-	Internal and external
<i>Interpretation of the situation</i>	Sense of urgency Appropriate/Worthiness of intervention Interpretation of the situation	-
<i>Evaluation of alternatives</i>	Recognition of personal responsibility	Level of involvement
<i>Decision/Action</i>	Engage/Not engaging in helping action Perception of ability/Competence to help	-
<i>Action behaviour</i>	Act to intervene Implementation of helping action	Purchasing decision logistics and payment methods <i>etc.</i>
<i>Post-purchase behaviour</i>	-	Review Repeat purchase

Three specific observations stood out, these are highlighted in Table 6. I will now discuss how each of the highlighted components may inform our existing understanding of how bystanders make decisions to intervene.

Firstly, in the marketing field, existing literature suggests that consumers go through a stage of Information Search and thus seek relevant information about the purchase (Kotler & Armstrong 1991; Scaraboto, Rossi & Costa 2012). For instance, they may obtain such information from engaging in internal (*e.g.*, memory) or external searches (*e.g.*, a brochure). During this stage, external influences often play a key role in the information search stage as they may enhance or damage the consumers' perception of a product/service, and thus influence their purchasing decision (Scaraboto, Rossi & Costa 2012). One explanation is that when there are multiple ways to obtain information, the source must provide trust and credibility in order to be persuasive (Kim, Ferrin & Rao 2008; Pang & Lee 2008; Scaraboto, Rossi & Costa 2012). Therefore, consumers may ask their family and friends for their opinion in order to evaluate a particular product/service. Consequently, an opinion from a reference group is one example that influences one's attitude and perception, which may subsequently determine their purchasing decisions. This Information Search-stage is missing in the bystander context. Though Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process suggests that one of the stages bystanders go through is to interpret the situation, it remains unclear as to how their interpretation may be formed.

Despite existing literature suggesting that there are also internal and external mitigating factors that may influence the bystander intervention process, there is no apparent information search stage when individuals are confronted by emergencies in the bystander context. Therefore, it remains ambiguous whether bystanders go through such a significant information search stage, and if so, how they may gather information to support their decision making process of whether or not to intervene. If we reimagine bystanders as consumers, perhaps bystanders too, undergo various ways of "seeking information". For instance, the presence of others as suggested by Darley and Latané (1968) indicates that bystanders may rely on other onlookers' behaviour to interpret the situation. This "external influence" may subsequently contribute to their action/inaction to intervene.

Secondly, the consumer buying decision making process further suggests that there is an explicit stage when consumers engage in post-purchase behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong 1991). For example, consumers may form a positive attitude towards the product/service upon consumption, and thus are likely to repeat their purchasing decision in the future. This Post-Purchase Behaviour-stage is also missing in the bystander context. Perhaps bystanders also go through a similar post-intervention stage to reflect and evaluate their action to inform their decision of whether to intervene (or not) when similar situations arise in the future. Moreover, in a consumer purchasing context, if consumers communicate their appraisals to others, this may potentially influence others' purchasing decisions. Likewise, bystanders may influence others to intervene if they are able to communicate effectively. However, the importance of post-intervention behaviour is overlooked in existing bystander literature.

Lastly, the level of involvement is considered an important aspect in a consumer behaviour context. Involvement Theory has been widely used in consumer behaviour to explain differentiated consumer' efforts when making a purchasing decision (Balabanis & Reynolds 2001; Lamb *et al.* 2013). However, in the bystander context, it is unclear how the extent which bystanders become involved may influence their subsequent action to intervene. I will now discuss the involvement aspect in detail.

3.3.2. Involvement

Involvement in the marketing field refers to three variables in general: (1) the length of time devoted in the decision making process; (2) the amount and types of information sources used; and (3) the amount of risk (*e.g.*, psychological, social or financial) (Fesenmaier & Johnson 1989). For example, involvement may refer to the extent to which consumers allocate their time and efforts into investigating certain products or services to make purchasing decisions (Gabbott & Hogg 1999; Zaichkowsky 1985). Typically, literature in the field of marketing uses low involvement versus high involvement to distinguish consumer's efforts in determining purchasing decisions.

The distinction between low and high levels of involvement is a compelling factor that contributes to the consumer buying decision making process (Day, Stafford & Camacho 1995). Depending on the type of purchase (*i.e.*, limited, routine or extensive), the level of involvement may vary to reflect the consumers' problem solving behaviour (Butler &

Peppard 1998). For example, a routine problem-solving behaviour would be when a consumer purchase a newspaper or chocolate bar. This is a relatively a straightforward task without too much involvement in the process. Conversely, extensive involvement may incur a lot more thinking, researching and evaluating (*e.g.*, planning an overseas holiday) (Fesenmaier & Johnson 1989). This is because consumers are more likely to process information about a certain product when it is deemed relevant to their inherent needs, which in turn motivates them to become more involved (Balabanis & Reynolds 2001; Kuvykaite, Dovaliene & Navickiene 2009).

According to Maslow (1943), individuals are driven and motivated by the desire to achieve or maintain particular needs at particular times. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs includes physiological, safety, social, esteem and self-actualization needs. For instance, the purchasing decision for a car is likely to induce more mental and physical efforts for the consumer, as opposed to routine purchases like food and other Fast Moving Consumer Goods (*e.g.*, breakfast cereals and washing powder). This is because a car may also be used to satisfy one's esteem need, as opposed to products that mostly fulfil consumers' basic physiological needs (*e.g.*, hunger and thirst). Thus, products or services that are perceived to satisfy higher level needs often impose greater risks, and so consumers may weigh their involvement against various perceived risks associated with the purchase (Keller & Lehmann 2006; Smith & Swinyard 1983). In turn, consumers are likely to spend more time and effort in evaluating alternative options before finalising their purchasing decision (Day, Stafford & Camacho 1995).

In a similar vein, bystanders may become more or less involved depending on their assessment of the barriers and risks (or benefits) they would potentially be facing if they decide to intervene (Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014). However, this concept has not yet been fully explored in bystander literature, as it remains unclear as to how the varied levels of involvement may lead to different intervening bystander behaviour. In response to this gap, the current study intends to explore how bystanders' involvement may inform their subsequent decisions and action to intervene.

3.3.3. Roles

Reviewing consumer roles, also within a consumer purchasing context, may be useful to inform bystander roles in two particular ways. Firstly, turning to the knowledge gained

about “roles” in other contexts may help to shed light on whether bystanders adopt various “roles” in accordance with their function in the intervention process. Secondly, existing knowledge on consumer roles and their influence on consumer involvement in the consumer buying decision making process may inform ways in which bystander roles are inherently linked with their level of involvement and subsequent action to intervene.

In a consumer purchasing context, consumers may adopt various roles. For instance, Webster and Wind (1972) proposed that consumers could be “users”, “buyers”, “influencers” and “deciders”. A “user” is someone who actually uses the purchased products and services, whereas “buyers” are those with the responsibility to engage in the actual purchasing, but do not necessarily consume the product/service. An “influencer” may persuade the decision process directly or indirectly by providing information and criteria for evaluating alternative buying actions, but it is the “decider” who has the authority to choose among alternative buying options. Building on Webster and Wind’s (1972) consumer roles, Bonoma (1982) added the role of “initiator” to depict consumers who first recognise the need/problem, which could be solved or avoided by acquiring a product/service.

Although these various consumer roles identified by Webster and Wind (1972) and Bonoma (1982) have been widely adopted in existing literature (*e.g.*, Chikweche, Stanton & Fletcher 2012; Engel, Blackwell & Miniard 1990; Thomson, Laing & McKee 2007; Lackman & Lanasa 1993; Livette 2007; Webster & Keller 2004), they have also received some criticisms. One criticism is that these consumer roles may be over-simplistic and prescriptive, as they lack consideration of various environmental and situational factors that may arise in the given context (Chikweche, Stanton & Fletcher 2012; Thomson, Laing & McKee 2007). For instance, children are often identified as the “influencer” within a family (Lackman & Lanasa 1993; Thomson, Laing & McKee 2007). However, the functionality of consumer roles may be mediated by environmental constraints (Chikweche, Stanton & Fletcher 2012). For instance, Zimbabwe, Chikweche, Stanton and Fletcher (2012) found that Zimbabwean families are often unable to accommodate children’s preferences in making purchases due to the tough economic environment and resources shortage. This suggests that children’s role as the “influencer” have a much less

influence over purchasing decisions made by families in the bottom of the pyramid market (BOP) as opposed to developed western markets.

Furthermore, Lackman and Lanasa (1993) suggest that there is a need to address the processes that lead to the allocation of these different consumer roles, as understanding the emergence of these roles may help marketers to better tailor their promotional efforts to specific target audiences. It may also be worthwhile exploring how the various roles interact with each other, and to explore the environment that surrounds them, as this could inform how these roles may contribute to the buying decision making process uniformly across different consumer groups (Lackman & Lanasa 1993). In spite of these suggestions, the notion of consumer roles remains valuable to marketers. This is because the knowledge associated with various consumer roles may improve the understanding as to how consumers may behave during the consumer buying decision making process. In turn, this may positively affect marketers' efforts in promoting certain products/services to influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

Using the marketing lens to examine the context of bystander intervention highlights that understanding different roles which bystanders may adopt in the intervention process could enhance the facilitation of helping behaviour. For instance, the "initiator" is an important role in a consumer purchasing context, as it prompts the beginning of the consumer buying decision making process and activates other activities that follow (Bonoma 1982). In a similar vein, bystanders could also adopt an "initiator" role. Although the "Initiator" may not be the one that helps the victims directly, they may nevertheless be the first to recognise the situation, and thus proceed to alert others. This makes them valuable "*good Samaritan*", as they may positively promote helping behaviour. It is also possible that bystanders' action and level of involvement may vary depending on the specific role they assume, even though they may generally adopt a pro-victim stance. However, the inter-relationship between bystanders' roles, the extent of involvement and their subsequent action to intervene has received little scholarly attention. Against this backdrop, the current study intends to identify specific roles, which bystanders may adopt, and to explore how these roles may differentiate their subsequent involvement and action to intervene to help victims of corruption.

3.3.4. Behavioural Change

In the bystander intervention process, Latané and Darley (1970) suggest the previous steps leading up to the bystanders taking action are completed sequentially *before* the intervention occurs. As discussed earlier, various barriers and facilitators that may influence the bystander intervention process at various stages of the intervention process (*e.g.*, the presence of others). However, it remains unclear as to how bystanders may become involved progressively and what prompts them to specifically “move” from one step to the next. To address this research gap, the current study aims to identify the triggers that stimulate bystanders to shift forward in the bystander intervention process, which ultimately leads them to take action. As bystanders may not have the intention to intervene at the beginning, their gradual involvement can be interpreted as a form of behavioural change. Thus, the Stages of Change Theory may be useful to explain how bystanders may become involved.

The Stages of Change theory is predominately used in the field of social marketing to explain and/or facilitate behavioural change (*e.g.*, to modify or cease addictive health behaviour, to persuade sustainable energy consumption, water usage and recycling behaviours and so on) (McKenzie-Mohr 2013; Norcross, Krebs & Prochaska 2011). In the Stages of Change Theory, there are five spiral stages: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and confirmation (or maintenance) (Prochaska & DiClemente 1983; Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross 1992). I will now briefly walk through these stages using the example of an individual trying to quit smoking. In the precontemplation stage, the individual has no intention to quit smoking. In the contemplation stage, the individual is considering the pros and cons of quitting smoking, but has not yet made any commitments to take action (McKenzie-Mohr 2013). In the preparation stage, the individual makes the decision to quit smoking by combining their intention with some new behaviour, for instance, starting to smoke less frequently. In the action stage, the individual attempts to modify the smoking behaviour with persistency. Finally, when the individual reaches the maintenance stage, they may quit smoking for a period of time (*e.g.*, 6 months then relapse), or maintain the new behaviour infinitely (see Figure 5).

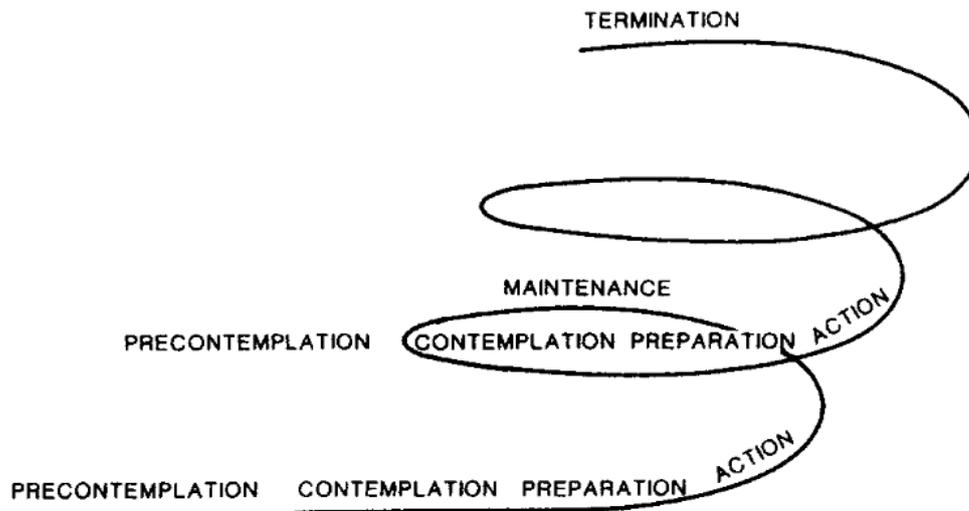


Figure 5: A Spiral Model of the Stages of Change

(Source: Prochaska, DiClemente & Norcross 1992)

The spiral pattern of change in Figure 5 suggests that the individual in the process of change may encounter resistance, and so the new behaviour may not be successfully reached and maintained in their first attempt. This suggests that adopting new behaviours is complex and reflects both cognitive and emotional adjustments. Nevertheless, the individuals' ongoing efforts may gradually shift his/her behaviour forward from one stage to the next to reach what he/she intends to achieve. Thus, the end-state goal is an important concept for social marketers to promote behavioural change; this is because it identifies the desired state for address the “problem” which they wish to solve in the first place (McKenzie-Mohr 2013). For instance, to “stop smoking” and to “not smoke in front of children” are two very different end-state goals that may influence individuals to adopt different action.

While to “not smoke in front of children” may be interpreted as a smaller commitment than to “stop smoking” altogether, McKenzie-Mohr (2013) suggests that small commitments can often lead to bigger commitments. This is because by first agreeing to a trivial request, the chance of accepting a subsequent larger request may increase. McKenzie-Mohr (2013) explains that people are ultimately inclined to be consistent so that they can be perceived by others as being honest, trustworthy, reliable and as having integrity. Consequently, this internal pressure may alter the way people perceive

themselves, and thus increases the likelihood of them behaving consistently to enhance their self-perception of becoming a desirable character.

As discussed in this chapter, both consumers and bystanders go through a similar process to determine viable solutions to address problems/needs. Hence, behavioural change theory could be the key to explaining how one adopts a new behaviour in both contexts. Interestingly, prior literature suggests that not only is it possible to persuade both consumers and bystanders to engage in actions that they did not previously endorse, but that it is also possible to intensify the conversion rate. For instance, the application of social norms may also influence individuals to adopt new behaviour (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz 2014; Shang, Basil & Wymer 2010). This is because “norms are common and accepted behaviours within a group. In essence, norms are what other people do and what they approve of doing” (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz 2014, p.39).

Therefore, by highlighting that a large number of people who have *already* adopted/approved a certain behaviour, it further influences one’s intention to adopt a similar behaviour. For instance, a study conducted by Goldstein, Cialdini and Griskevicius (2008) found that hotel rooms that use prompts that provide normative information on towel reuse have led to a substantial increase in hotel guests adopting the behaviour of reusing their towels. This was achieved by the hotels providing specific and descriptive information as prompts to inform guests about others’ towel usage, for example, “...75% of guests who are asked to participate in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once...” (Goldstein, Cialdini & Griskevicius 2008, p. 474). The behaviour of reusing the towels provided by the hotel is thus deemed “appropriate”, as others already “approve” of it. Similarly, bystanders may adopt intervening actions when such behaviours are positively validated by others. Therefore, it would be insightful to explore how the behavioural change processes could be influenced and “fast-tracked”, and thus inform both consumers and bystanders’ behavioural changes.

3.3.4.1. Using Social Media to “Fast-track” Behavioural Change

Recently, we have also witnessed how behavioural change influenced by social norm can be “fast-tracked” with the use of social media (Wang, Bedggood & Le 2015). The “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” is an example that illustrates how individuals can be swiftly

mobilised to participate in charitable causes. The “Ice Bucket Challenge” was initially launched after a golfer in Sarasota named Chris Kennedy posted footage of himself getting drenched onto YouTube on 15 July 2014 (Sifferlin 2014). However, the challenge was not linked with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) (a form of Motor Neurone Disease (MND)), until former Boston College baseball captain Pete Frates nominated six of his friends via Facebook, a popular social networking site (SNS) to take on the challenge. With the intention of increasing the awareness of the ALS disease, which Pete Frates suffers from, those “tagged” by him on Facebook were given the options of either tipping a bucket of ice water over their heads within 24 hours or to donate to an ALS affiliation (Sifferlin 2014). The nominees were also encouraged to upload footage of their self-directed drenching performance onto social media platforms and nominate three friends to do the same. Interestingly, rather than ignoring the challenge, many people complied, and so the “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” became viral. Consequently, it was purported that approximately 1.2 million videos of the “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” were shared on Facebook globally (including public figures like musician Chris Martin), just two weeks after its launch (Cloutier 2014). The ALS Association raised over USD\$115 million dollars as a result (Canal 2016).

The high conversion rate of participation in the “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” exemplifies a phenomenally fast behavioural change process, where nominees went through a process to conform and adopt a new behaviour (Wang, Bedggood & Le 2015). In this sense, in order to embrace the challenge, the behaviour of nominees needs to shift from either the precontemplation, contemplation or preparation stage to the action and/or maintenance stage, within a short amount of time (within 24 hours). It is evident in the “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” that social media is more than just a communications tool to share information; it is also a significant vehicle to mobilise behavioural changes. When individuals (especially famous people) employ social media to exemplify their behaviour to others, their explicit “performance” may have a demonstrative effect, which may emerge as an external influence to persuade others to adopt similar action. It also helps to create a “social norm” advocating the behaviour.

As discussed earlier, Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process predominately informs our current understanding as to how bystanders may intervene.

However, it is unclear whether bystanders go through a similar process in an online environment, for instance, how bystanders may adopt a set of actions to address corruption using social media. This is because being exposed to corruption or confronted by a situation in an online environment may be different to witnessing a perpetrated harm in a physical setting. In turn, this could lead them to adopt different behaviours. For instance, the bystander effect may be weakened in an online environment and thus incentivize social media users to adopt helping behaviour more so than in real-life. Therefore, the current study will explore how these pseudo-bystanders (social media users in an online environment who are confronted by “cover-up” corruption cases) respond to corruption cases via social media.

Based on the presumption that bystanders’ involvement to intervene may intensify over time, the Stages of Change theory may shed light on how others’ behaviour may form as prompts, whereby witnessing others execute certain behaviour is a trigger for individuals to also adopt the same behaviour. In other words, it may be possible to convert bystanders to “*good Samaritan*” by encouraging them to become involved in the bystander intervention process. This implies that if bystanders can shift from not contemplating helping, to adopting action to help, then mobilising such behaviour change may enhance the chance of better facilitating and promoting helping behaviour to assist victims of corruption.

The “ALS Ice Bucket Challenge” example highlights that social media can be a powerful vehicle in this space to influence behavioural change on a large scale. Similarly, some scholars suggest that social media may play an equally significant role in the context of bystander intervention, when effectively used to persuade others to adopt helping behaviour to subvert corruption (*e.g.*, Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes 2010; Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Stepanova 2011). I will discuss how social media may be potentially useful to mobilise bystanders to help victims of corruption in the next chapter.

3.4. Chapter Summary

Despite the fact that our existing understanding of bystanders is mostly drawn from non-corruption contexts, it nevertheless illustrates that bystander intervention may be one effective way to address power inequalities. While existing studies suggest that bystanders may subsequently “take sides” (*e.g.*, to help the victims, the perpetrators, or

remain indifferent), bystander roles have received little scholarly attention. Therefore, this study intends to identify specific bystander roles in the context of corruption.

Moreover, although Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process is well-regarded in the bystander context, it is unclear whether bystanders go through a similar process in an online context to intervene. As consumers also go through similar steps in the buying decision making process to make purchase decisions, looking at the bystander phenomenon from a marketing angle further highlights what is missing in existing bystander literature. For instance, by comparing the buying decision making process and the bystander intervention process, it appears that the Information Search-stage and the Post-Purchase-stage are missing in the bystander context. However, this does not mean that bystanders do not go through a stage to search for information or evaluate various alternatives and actions after their intervention. Another observation is that while Involvement Theory has been used to explain consumers' efforts in making purchasing decisions, bystanders' level of involvement has not been fully explored in the existing literature. Therefore, the current study also aims to address this research gap by exploring the involvement aspect in the bystander intervention process, as the extent to which they become involved may significantly influence their subsequent action.

This chapter suggests that the Stages of Change theory may be useful in explaining how bystanders are influenced to adopt action to intervene. Like consumers, bystanders also go through various stages before they finally take action. However, it remains unclear whether there are specific triggers along the way that contribute to shifting bystanders forward from one stage to another. Lastly, I have briefly discussed how social media may be useful when employed to persuade individuals to adopt new behaviours, as it may play a significant role to promote and influence bystanders to adopt helping behaviour. Figure 6 shows the progressive conceptual development of this study thus far.

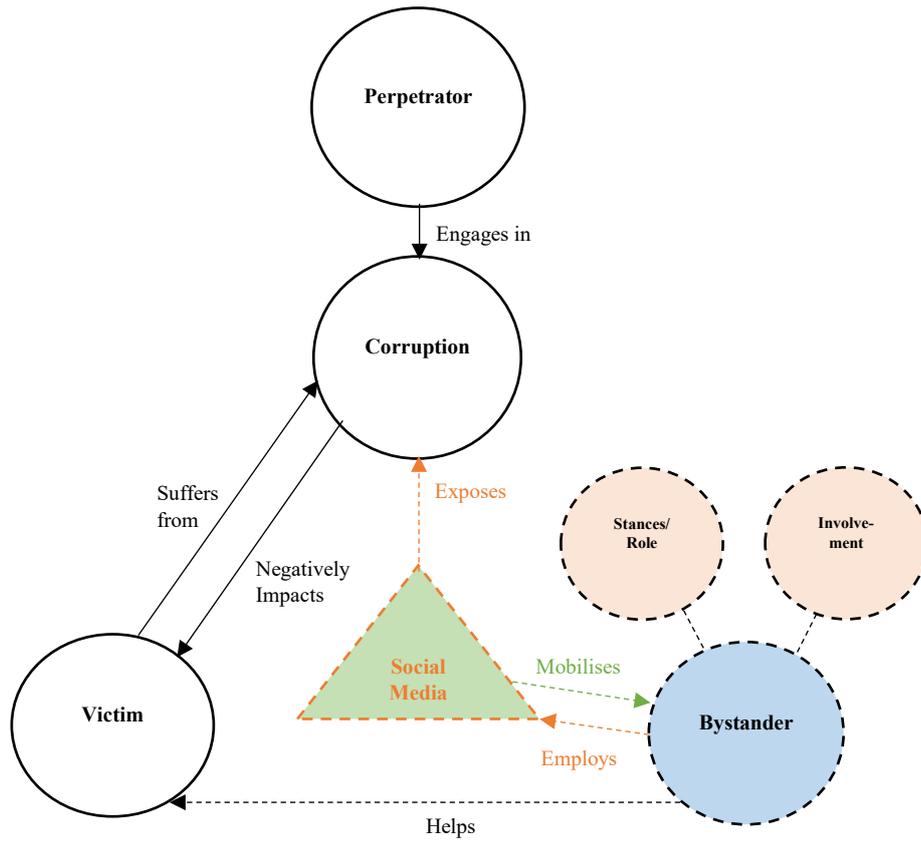


Figure 6: A Modified Overarching Framework of the Current Study

(Note: Social media mobilises bystanders to help victims and bystander stances/roles and involvement added to the overarching framework)

Chapter Four: Social Media and the Rise of Borderless Warriors

4.1. Chapter Introduction

To understand how social media may contribute to mobilising bystanders to intervene to help victims of corruption, this chapter reviews social media, explores why it has become so powerful, and lastly, how it may play a significant role in bystander intervention.

Social media was originally developed as a consumer-to-consumer (C2C) platform. It has emerged as a powerful tool to strengthen communication between consumers, and to allow individuals, business, governments and other organisations to promote contentious messages (Chauhan & Pillai 2013; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005). In recent times, social media is also seen as a powerful vehicle to bring situations that are deemed “unfair” to light (Lim 2012; Romanos 2013; Stepanova 2011; Yang 2009). Given that social media can be a valuable platform to raise public awareness and generate collective action, it may be equally effective when used to foster bystander intervention to address corruption.

Broadly speaking, only a small handful of bystanders are confronted by corruption traditionally. Thus, these bystanders’ decision to step in and help the victims may immediately occur upon “witnessing” the situation in real-life. In this sense, bystanders must be physically “present” in a corruption event in order to help. However, the use of social media has changed the “timing” and “location” of bystanders’ intervention. For instance, by capturing, archiving and sharing confronting situations, social media allows the “crime scene” to be “preserved” to an extent. By employing social media, victims are able to reach out for help from bystanders from a different place, and over a longer period.

4.2. The Power of Social Media

On the morning of 28 May 2013, around 50 concerned environmentalists gathered at the Taksim Gezi Park (commonly referred to as Gezi Park), one of the last green public areas next to Taksim Square in Istanbul, Turkey’s most populous city. They decided to hold a small-scale “sit-in” to prevent bulldozers moving in on Gezi Park, a much-loved urban space, which was due to be transformed into Istanbul’s 109th shopping mall (Farro & Demirhisar 2014). However, the Turkish government, who had a vested interest in the

development, together with the police, violently crushed their peaceful protest by employing tear gas and water cannons, beating up protestors and burning their tents (Amnesty International 2013; Diken 2014; Hacıyakupoglu & Zhang 2015).

Although mainstream Turkish media remained silent in the wake of the Gezi Park attack, the incident virally travelled via various social media platforms (Civaner 2013; Hacıyakupoglu & Zhang 2015; Kuymulu 2013). With the aid of social media, the initial protest in Gezi Park quickly gained solidarity (Effeney 2013). By the second day of the protest, an estimated 5,000 protesters had gathered at Gezi Park (Effeney 2013). A series of protests quickly spread to Taksim Square, then to the capital Ankara and subsequently to other Turkish cities. Many people decided to participate in the movement or support victims. For example, locals, students, professional people (*e.g.*, lawyers and volunteers with a medical background) were involved. Some joined the protests physically, while others provided medical aid to injured protesters, or simply placed lemon and milk at their windows, which was a known sign to show that households would provide temporary relief for those who were injured from water cannons and tear gas fired by the police. Some businesses also engaged in helping behaviour. For instance, some pharmacies provided free facemasks to protesters to protect them from inhaling toxic tear gas, and hotels opened up doors to shelter wounded protesters from the attacks (Akaya 2014; Mutter 2013).

Social media emerged as a powerful vehicle to raise public awareness and to mobilise collective action in the Gezi Park movement (Kuymulu 2013; Özel 2014). Countless citizens physically stepped in to join the protests while many more participated in the online sphere to support and globalise the Gezi Park movement. For instance, people in Turkey and beyond flooded the Internet with photos, blogs, posts and hash-tagging labels like *#direngezipark*, *#gezipark* and *#occupygezi* to promote awareness. Stories of these local protests were captured in real-time mode and shared virally worldwide (Vice 2013). Research conducted by the Social Media and Political Participation Lab at New York University noted that the sheer volume of responses on social media during the Gezi movement as being phenomenal. Their study reveal that “at least 2 million tweets mentioning hashtags related to the protest: such as *#direngezipark* (950,000 tweets), *#occupygezi* (170,000 tweets) or *#geziparki* (50,000 tweets) have been sent...

[and] ...more than 3,000 tweets about the protest were published every minute” during the Gezi Park movement (Social Media and Political Participation Lab 2013, p. 2).

Due to the spread via social media, the Gezi Park movement quickly escalated to an international scale and the exposure caught the attention of people across the globe. Many powerful images published from the protests demonstrated the unwarranted brute force exerted by police towards protesters, which continued to outrage people. For instance, among them are images of Ceyda Sungur, a lady in the red dress in Figures 7-9.

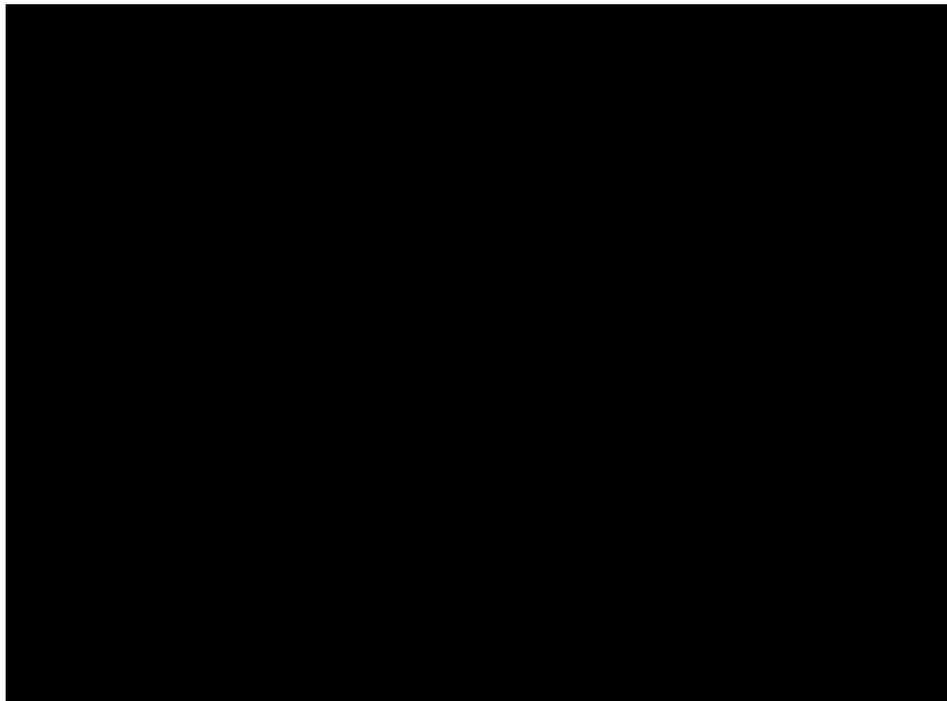


Figure 7: Ceyda Sungur – The Woman in Red (1)

(Source: Osman Osal, Reuters, <<https://widerimage.reuters.com/story/the-woman-in-red>>. Published 28 May 2013)

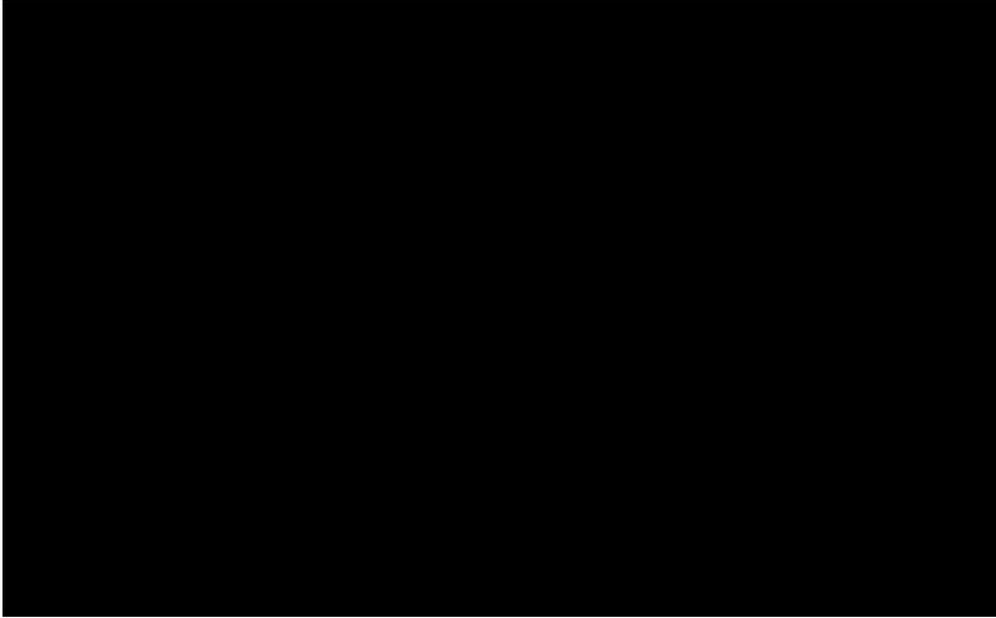


Figure 8: Ceyda Sungur – The Woman in Red (2)

(Source: photo by Osman Osal Reuters via The Telegraph, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/10108014/Lady-in-the-Red-Dress-and-her-dream-of-a-Turkish-rebirth.html>>, published on 8 Jun 2013)

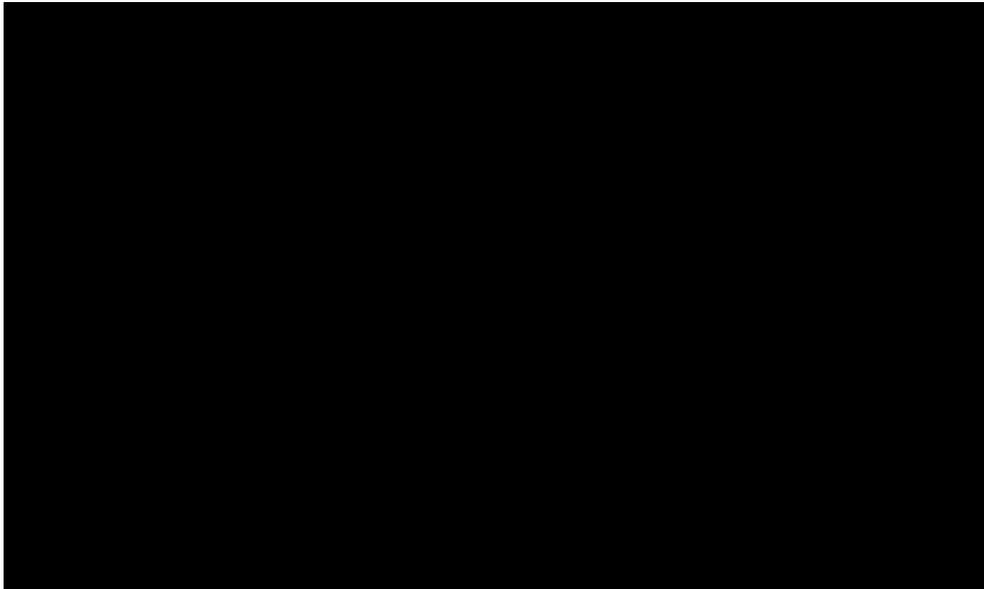


Figure 9: Ceyda Sungur – The Woman in Red (3)

(Source: photo by Osman Osal Reuters via The Guardian, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/05/turkey-lady-red-dress-ceyda-sungur>>, published on 5 Jun 2013)

Reuters' photographer, Osman Orsal, theatrically captured a vivid moment when a Turkish police officer sprayed tear gas at Ceyda Sungur within close range. She was a

Research Assistant at Istanbul Technical University's School of Urban Planning. Images of Ceyda Sungur were so prevalently shared that she has since become a symbol of the 2013 Gezi Park movement, known as "*Kırmızılı Kadın*" ("the woman in red") (Diken 2014, p. 318). Ceyda's friend Meriç Demir later told the Sunday Telegraph (2013) in an interview: "we were so surprised. Some of us began yelling, 'we are academics, stop this!' Some tried to help Ceyda. We were shocked because you don't even spray insects in your home in such a direct way" (Sherlock 2013). The Gezi Park uprising continued to expand despite police's violent efforts to suppress protesters. The extreme brutality exerted by the Turkish police also received criticisms from international organisations such as the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International (Farro & Demirhisar 2014).

Consequently, it was purported that 3,545,000 citizens (and double this number unofficially) became "involved bystanders" and participated across Turkey's 81 provinces during the Gezi Park movement. Five deaths were reported as a result of the police attacks; more than 1,730 people were arrested and more than 10,000 were injured (Farro & Demirhisar 2014; Özel 2014). While the Turkish media reported some acts of violence among protesters throughout the protests, the nature of the occupancies sparked from the Gezi Park protests was largely non-violent (Amnesty International 2013; Weaver & Quinn 2013). For instance, citizens of Turkey would collectively read, paint, dance, cook, get married, stand, pray, do yoga, or perform musical instruments publicly in open spaces (Farro & Demirhisar 2014).

These non-violent "protests" are significant because they illustrated the peaceful nature of their collective resistance, as well as the "contagious" aspect of the widespread movement, where individuals were effectively mobilised to adopt similar action on a large scale. The transformation plan of Gezi Park was put to a halt as a result of the broad protests (BBC 2016). In fact, at the time of writing, Gezi Park remains one of the least changed places in the beating heart of Istanbul since 1943 (see Figure 10) (Kutlay 2017).

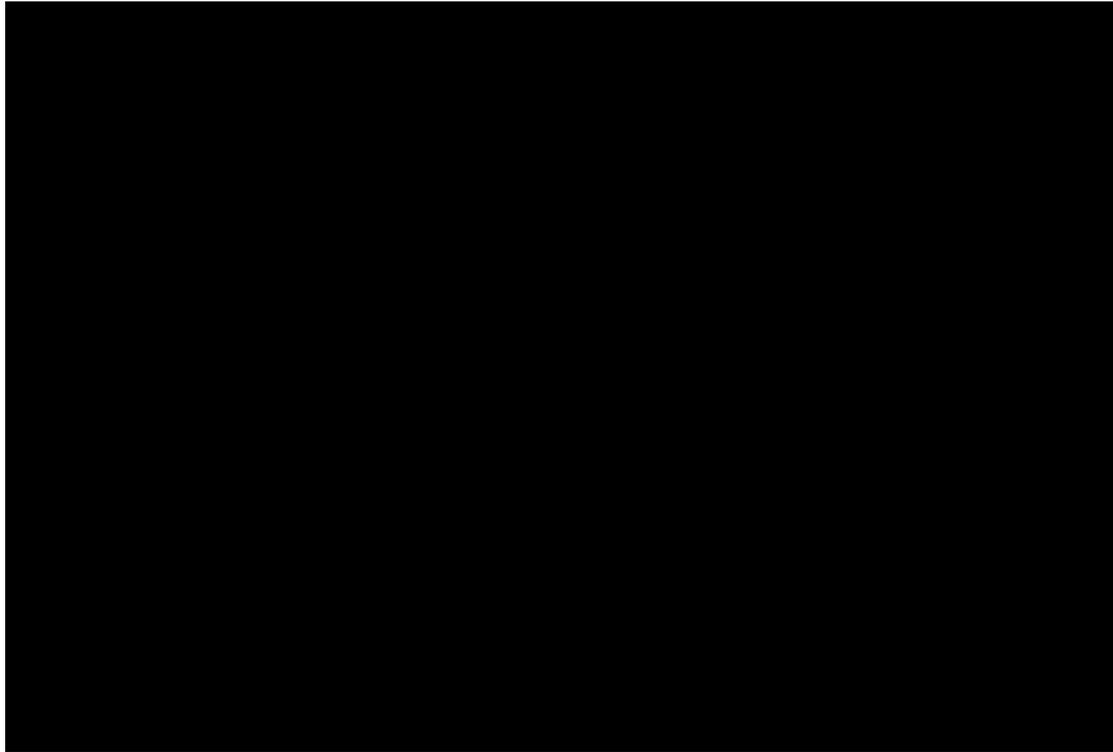


Figure 10: Google Earth Image of Gezi Park in 2017

(Source:

<https://www.google.com.au/maps/place/Taksim+Gezi+Park%C4%B1/@41.0389533,28.9848492,811m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x14cab76ff797ca69:0x1d95d08d474d6487!8m2!3d41.0389493!4d28.9870379>)

Essentially, the Gezi Park movement was more than a fight for a park. To many people, the Gezi Park movement represented a significant grassroots action against political oppression and power imbalance (Özel 2014). Moreover, the Gezi Park movement highlights the speed and spread of participant mobilisation that is possible by using social media. In light of this, social media may also be effective when used to mobilise bystander intervention to address corruption. Therefore, it is important to first understand the parameters of social media, and how it can be used to facilitate collective action.

4.2.1. Defining Social Media

In general, social media is defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010, p. 61). Extending from the era of Web 1.0 content publishing (e.g., personal web pages, Encyclopaedia Britannica Online); social media was initially developed as a consumer-to-consumer

(C2C) platform to communicate and exchange information (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). As discussed previously in Chapter Three, the information obtained by the consumers, particularly during the information search stage in the consumer buying decision making process, is likely to influence their subsequent purchasing decisions (Kotler & Armstrong 1991; Moutinho 1987). Thus, marketers often use social media to further promote a brand or product, and encourage consumers to purchase.

Indeed, social media not only changed the landscape of the content and information available to consumers, but also how such information is communicated (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden 2011). Building on the word-of-mouth model, social media is fundamentally a message vessel that allows the exchange of information with others with intensified speed and spread. Aware of how persuasive this electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) tool can be, it is not surprising that businesses, governments, non-government organisations and individuals embrace social media to capitalise on the opportunity to promote contention and manipulate information to influence others (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

The sheer speed and capacity of information travelling via an online format not only opens up many opportunities, but also threats. Negative publicity spread via social media is one example that may cause a detrimental impact on businesses (Eisend & Küster 2011). For instance, via social media, you are now able to tell not only your family and friends about your unpleasant experience at a local restaurant, but also share this information with many more people, who you would not have been able to tell otherwise. Consequently, the ability of social media to spread negative information widely and quickly can damage a company's image, and thus cause profitability to decline (Eisend & Küster 2011; Kerr *et al.* 2012). Thus, social media has the power to “make” or “break”, depending on who is employing this tool to harness its power.

4.2.2. Consumer and User Power

The concept of power can be interpreted as the potential ability an individual has, which may influence another person to act in a certain way contrary to his/her wishes in a social context (Hoffman 1960, 1975). To understand how social media may empower consumers, it is important to recognise the source of such “power”. For instance, in a family situation, parents often have control of their children's material and emotional

supplies, and thus become inherently more powerful. This suggests that power is a form of persuasion. Simply put, when A imposes that B should act in a way that B otherwise would not, the *level* of power possessed by A can thus be informed by B's behaviour. In this sense, it is mostly that marketers/producers also have the power over consumers, as traditionally, consumers would probably not engage in the buying behaviour if they were not persuaded to do so in the first place. Therefore, advertising is often perceived as a powerful and persuasive tool to "lure" consumers into making various purchasing decisions (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006). Consumers have an array of options of how they could respond (*e.g.*, ignore, resist, adapt and control) to advertising depending on the degree of power the consumers possessed (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006; Kerr *et al.* 2012).

Consumer power can be difficult to understand as one can examine the construct based on various perspectives (*e.g.*, historical, social and economic). Denegri-Knott, Zwick and Schroeder (2006) suggest that there are generally three types of consumer power: sovereign, cultural and discursive. The consumer sovereign model suggests that the degree of power can be "measured". In this light, the power possessed by consumers may vary when exercised with a combination of skills (*e.g.*, persuasive, technical, organisational and social) and resources (*e.g.*, financial, informational and legal). For example, consumers have the power to demand a refund for an unsatisfying purchase. Moreover, the concept of "consumer sovereignty" behind this model stresses that individuals are empowered to act based on their own rationality and self-interest (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006, p. 963). For instance, consumers may ignore and resist a particular advertisement or consciously avoid "bundled" deals (*e.g.*, buy one, get one free) in accordance with their self-interests. This type of power suggests that consumers can be rational when they choose, purchase and negotiate what may satisfy their self-interest the most, despite the constant temptations exercised by marketers/producers (Denegri-Knott, Zwick and Schroeder's 2006).

On the other hand, the cultural model refers to the power to negotiate and resist cognitive logic imposed by marketers/producers (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006). This means consumers are able to identify particular marketer-designed space and practices (*e.g.*, through experience), and subsequently, avoid them. For example, a customer may choose products that are placed on the lower shelves in supermarkets, which are usually

cheaper than products that are located on the eye-level shelves. Thus, cultural power allows consumers to develop creative navigations, adaptations and manipulations. This enables them to counter an organisation's original intended messages that are otherwise designed and controlled by the marketer/producer to influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006).

Lastly, discursive power suggests that consumers co-create and co-produce meanings and values within a market (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006). This form of consumer empowerment is predominately knowledge-based. Traditionally, only marketers/producers had control over how information flows, in the sense that they would only use the desirable information to inform consumers about their offerings (Denegri-Knott 2006). In other words, marketers have traditionally had power over consumers because they had more control over the access and dissemination of knowledge. So when consumers attain more knowledge, they may become more powerful accordingly, and thus able to challenge the power imbalance. A forerunner in this space is French philosopher and social theorist, Michel Foucault, who explored the dynamics between power and knowledge. His ideas will now be discussed.

Foucault's (1982) idea of power, "*Régime du savoir*" ("the regime of knowledge"), is associated with knowledge, competence and qualification, where the system of knowledge is independent. Foucault (1982) asserts that the concept of power is essentially "a technique" rather than ownership by a certain privileged individual, organisation, community or class. Power, in this sense, is fundamentally neutral and detached from anyone and anything. Rather than a capacity question of how an individual or institution exercises power, it is the knowledge (or competence/qualifications) employed by the individual or institution that creates the existence of power and therefore empowers the subject (Foucault 1982). Accordingly, one can theoretically gain power by simply employing the right "technique". In this instance, when such a "technique" is employed and exercised in the right way, power can shift between marketers/producers and consumers, governments and citizens, and essentially, the influential and the vulnerable or powerless.

4.2.3. Countering Power Imbalance

Although both sovereign and cultural consumer power have their own merits, the discursive model may be the most appropriate to explain the increasing consumer power fuelled by social media. This is because it is essentially the sharing of knowledge that empowers consumers to resist and break free from intended messages imposed by marketers/producers (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006; Kozinets *et al.* 2010). As such, consumers' lack of "power" can be also interpreted as a deficit of knowledge in relation to the Foucauldian train of thought. For example, when not knowing better, consumers are likely to accept and adapt to the "only" truth they can obtain, and thus be less inclined to challenge the intended messages (Denegri-Knott 2006; Kerr *et al.* 2012).

One explanation as to why social media appears to be so powerful is that it often projects a higher level of credibility, trust and loyalty, and strengthens the relationships and values between people (Attia *et al.* 2011). Kozinets *et al.* (2010) point out that "credibility" often stems from the intention *behind* informing, and so when consumers distribute information not based on profit or incentive, but instead with the genuine intention of informing others to help or warn them, the information shared is likely to be perceived as "credible". For example, consumers may become powerful when they decide to convert their negative purchasing experiences into informative knowledge to influence others. In this instance, by voicing their dissatisfaction and transforming it into a valuable piece of advice, their "deterrence signals" may, in turn, influence how others view a particular product/service and thus may alter the recipients' purchasing decisions (Denegri-Knott 2006; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005).

McNair (2006) further explains that the relationship between media and power essentially stemmed from a "control" over the access of information in the sense that those who are "information-rich" are relatively more powerful than those who are "information-poor" (p. 199). Therefore, social media is essentially a powerful electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) platform when employed by consumers to spread knowledge about a product/service in the sense that it transforms individuals "from passive content readers into content publishers" (Chauhan & Pillai 2013, p. 239). Therefore, by providing access for consumers to obtain information that was previously unavailable, social media empowers consumers to become "information-rich", and thus enables them to subsequently make informed purchasing decisions (McNair 2006; Seraj 2012).

Furthermore, social media allows consumers from anywhere in the world to freely interact, distribute information, share knowledge and voice their opinions/experience in public domains, and it also empowers them to collectively partake in movements (Kerr *et al.* 2012). For instance, consumers may engage in collective action like boycotting, to resist and challenge the conventional power imposed by producers/marketers (Denegri-Knott 2006; Gebel 2012; Kerr *et al.* 2012; Koku 2012; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005). Interestingly, boycotting itself is a resistance strategy, which conventionally empowers workers to stand up against management to improve working conditions (Koku 2012). While not all boycotting brings about changes historically, economically, politically and socially, there seems to be a higher chance of achieving a common goal when individuals join forces and collectively fight against “the powerful” (Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005).

In recent times, it is also evident that social media facilitates collective action beyond a consumer purchasing context, for instance, hacking, online petitions and viral posting via social network sites (Scaraboto & Pereira 2013). The action that individuals adopt in an online environment may reinforce or influence consumers’ offline action. For example, when Edward Snowden (a high-profile whistle-blower previously mentioned in Chapter Two) first fled to Hong Kong, hundreds of protesters gathered to express their support towards him by collectively urging the region's government not to deport him (see Figure 11).

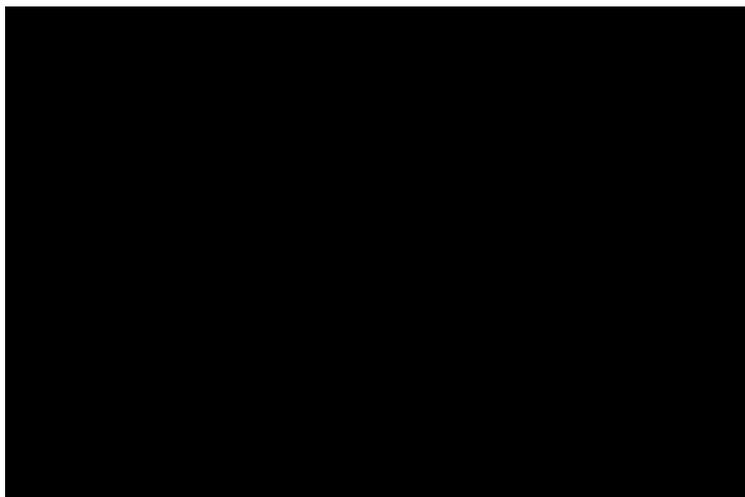


Figure 11: Protesters at the US Consulate at Hong Kong's Central District on 15 June 2013

(Source: Bobby Yip, *ABC News*, < <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-06-15/hong-kong-protest-in-support-of-snowden/4756572>>, published on 16 Jun 2013)

Supporters of Edward Snowden can sign an online petition launched by Amnesty International and join a physical protest to rally support in a consistent way. Therefore, collective action generated via social media should not be dismissed as less powerful than real-life action. We should not view individuals' activities in an online sphere as substitutions for real-life activism (such as protest marches and boycotting). Rather, online action could be interpreted as an extension to complement their activism, and vice versa (Denegri-Knott, Zwick & Schroeder 2006; Hilton 2007).

4.2.4. Activism through Collective Action

Collective action can be loosely understood as “the pursuit of a single goal or multiple goals by more than one individual” (Obar, Zube & Lampe 2012, p. 3). When collective action exercised by consumers are widespread, they could lead to not only a catastrophic impact for businesses, but may also have wider implications for individuals, communities and societies (Kerr *et al.* 2012). For instance, this was evident in the series of consumer movements that followed the devastating collapse of the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has become a popular production destination for foreign companies due to its cheap labour market with readily available skills and mature ready-made-garment sector (Khan 2016). For example, Bangladesh has attracted many well-known brands, including H & M, Zara, Macy's and Wal-Mart.

However, the collapse of a poorly built eight-story garment factory in Rana Plaza on 24 April 2013 resulted in public rage and an outbreak worldwide to resist the “fast-fashion” culture. In response, protests were held around the world with the objective to improve the semi-slavery labour conditions that are often evident in foreign-owned companies in Bangladesh (Ackerly 2015). Global and local governments, NGOs and trade unions have also joined forces to pressure foreign companies with factories in Bangladesh to raise their safety standards. Consequently, since the Rana Plaza incident, the number of export-oriented factories in Bangladesh that are reviewed and inspected has risen from 668 to 2,500 in just two years (Khan 2016). It is likely that the heightened international public pressure fuelled by social media, forced the producers, marketers, governments, garment associations, trade unions and factory management to re-evaluate and improve policies and safety standards, which helped to ensure a more sustainable Ready Made Garment industry.

A more recent incident that took place on a United Airlines aircraft on 11 April 2017 also demonstrates the high levels of public pressure propelled by social media. David Dao, a 69-year-old man who boarded a flight in Chicago, was violently dragged out of the aircraft by police officers due to the flight being overbooked (Rushe & Smith 2017). This was digitally captured by fellow passengers and the video footage was virally shared and gained international attention on both mainstream and social media platforms (Rushe & Smith 2017). For instance, one of Australia's largest media companies, News Corp Australia Network (2017), reported that the footage of David Dao's incident was viewed 210 million times on the popular Chinese microblogging platform, Weibo, just a day after the incident took place.

The fact that this man was forcefully removed from the flight which he had paid for was so utterly unfair, that his mistreatment outraged many who saw the footage. Although the United Airlines' CEO provided a public apology to reverse the negative publicity sparked from the incident, many netizens (a term derived from "Internet" and "citizen", which Internet users are commonly referred) continued to express their outrage and disappointment about the incident, some even indicated that they would boycott the airline (News Corp Australia Network 2017). Among them were also high profile celebrities. For instance, in response to this particular incident, Hong Kong action star Donnie Yen (who has 2,654,622 Facebook followers, as of 11 April 2017) shared a CNN article with a video that featured David Dao on his official Facebook page and commented in English:

My nine-year-old son saw this news on TV and was horrified... How do you teach your children [about] such uncivilized, injustice, discriminated, publicly and proudly assaulted a 69-year-old man, treating him like trash. No one should be treated this way. This is unacceptable and need[s] to be condemn[ed]. United was never my choice of airline, now they are blacklisted.

Donnie Yen's post alone attracted 21,000 responses and 1,290 comments on Facebook within 24 hours. This illustrates that social media platforms, such as Facebook, allow netizens to become a "journalist" by simply posting news that is worthy of reporting solely on their own judgement of significance (Murthy 2011). The popularity of this kind of citizen journalism attracts both ordinary and famous individuals, as well as businesses

and organisations, as a way to create awareness and communicate to their “followers” as well as the general public (Liang 2011). As citizen journalism is often evoked by “an event, an issue, a community or a movement” (Flew 2009, p. 106), David Dao’s incident was a perfect “starting point”. Anecdotal evidence also demonstrates that numerous online responses (*e.g.*, sharing news articles/footage and commentating) with regards to David Dao’s “story” appeared on various social media platforms at the time, including my own Facebook “news feeds”. This further validates the sheer speed and spread of how a particular incident can reach out to others via social media, regardless of the geographical distance of respondents. Moreover, the heightened social media presence was often documented in mainstream media to highlight the magnitude of the impact of such “hyper global content”. As a result, United Airlines’ shares dropped 2.8 percent overnight, which equates to US\$600million in value (Rushe & Smith 2017). This illustrates that by harnessing the voices of the public, social media can empower citizens to influence change.

As discussed in the previous chapter, social media can be seen as a communication channel that allows major diffusion which influences online audience members’ behaviour by fast-tracking their responses. The United Airlines example illustrates that learning about others’ negative lived-experiences enables consumers to relate to the situation while social media allows their responses to be expressed quickly, thus perceived as “fast-tracking”. This, in turn, influences their subsequent attitude and/or behaviour towards a certain brand/company. The immediate effect could cause a brand to be damaged “overnight”, making social media an effective tool to bring power back to consumers.

In fact, social media has emerged to be an effective vehicle to mobilise both consumer movements and social movements. With the aid of social media, netizens are empowered to form organised resistance by disseminating content through digital interactivity and knowledge exchange on a many-to-many basis (Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005). As discussed in the previous chapter, in physical spaces, intervening behaviour from a bystander may be hindered due to their perceived risks of personal safety, and thus justify passivity in their response to emergency situations when they are physically present. In general, people may feel “safer” to express themselves in an online environment because there is no physical contact with others and the actions are carried out through a computer

screen. However, this does not necessarily mean it is completely “safe” for pseudo-bystanders to become involved when intervening in an online space (for instance, online activism has led to physical activism in the Gezi Park movement as discussed earlier in this chapter). It is important to consider the environmental and social factors associated with bystanders’ behaviour in the online sphere as this is different context than a physical space, but at the same time, we also need to recognise that bystanders’ online actions could similarly attract negative consequences. Hence, the risk to personal safety may be also present in online forums.

It is worth noting that the fear of personal safety remains a large drawback for many citizen journalists to employ social media, especially in countries where freedom of speech is not approved or is heavily censored by their governments, such as China (Callick 2013). For example, the Chinese “net police” purportedly mediates Weibo (a popular microblog platform in China), so that posts that exceed the Chinese government’s significance threshold of over 100,000 comments generally alert the state’s attention (Callick 2013). Since November 2015, a criminal law amendment was introduced so that netizens can face up to seven years in prison for posting misinformation on social media (Freedom House 2017).

While such regulation may constrain netizens to openly rally public support and make spreading contention more difficult, Chinese netizens have been propelled to come up with creative ways to “dodge” the censorship imposed by their government. For example, Chinese netizens resisted the censorship from the Chinese government to commemorate university students who were killed during the infamous Tiananmen Square protest in 1989 by virally circulating “Photoshopped” images of the “Tank Man” picture (see Figure 12), where the big yellow ducks replaced the tanks (see Figure 13).

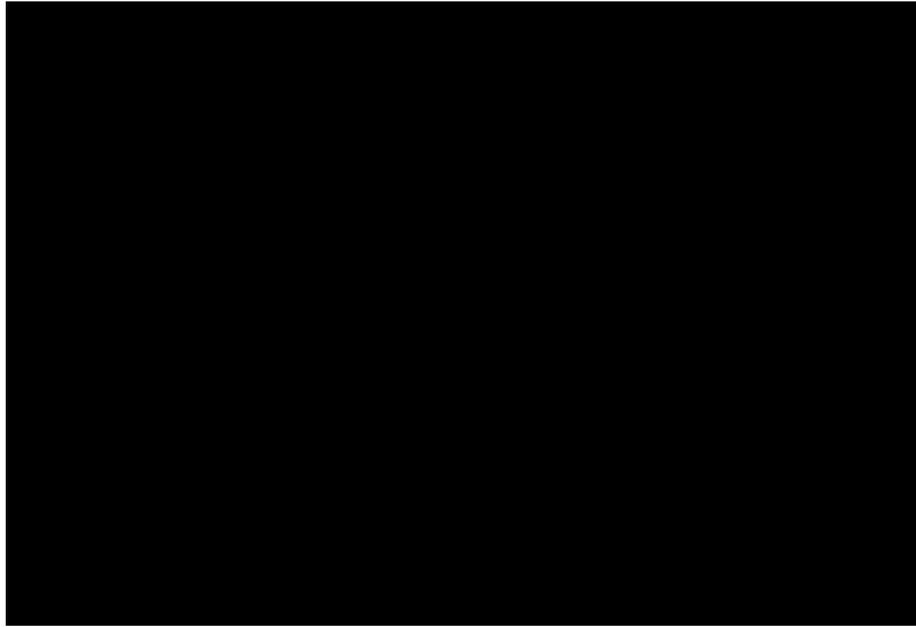


Figure 12: “Tank Man” by American Photographer Jeff Widener

(Source: The Guardian, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/04/tiananmen-square-online-search-censored>>)

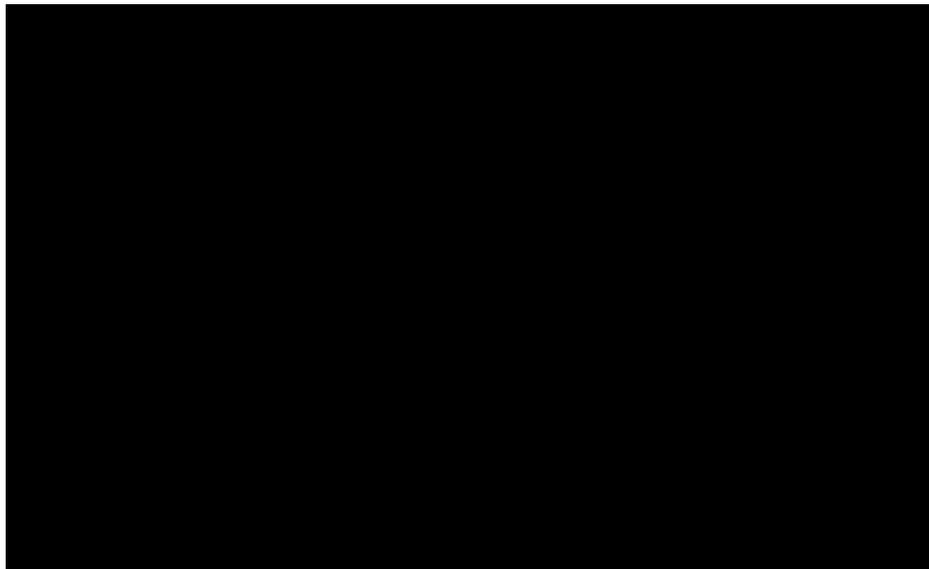


Figure 13: When “Tank Man” meets the “Big Yellow Ducks”

(Source: The Guardian, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/04/tiananmen-square-online-search-censored>>)

The “big yellow duck” reference went viral on social media platforms very quickly. Consequently, the compound “大黃鴨” (“big yellow duck”) was banned from various major search engines in China (Kaiman 2013). The “big yellow duck” example can be

interpreted as a form of resistance generated from a grassroots level to counter state power. The fact that it concerned the Chinese government to the point that they put a ban on the word via online search engines is noteworthy. This is because it highlights that collective action carried out online (particularly ones with implied political sentiment) could have a wider impact on national and international levels when it becomes widespread. It also illustrates that social media may assist individuals to collectively challenge and resist power imbalance and to counter social injustice, even under a suppressive government (Özel 2014). Similarly, bystander intervention could also be one form of resistance. Thus, online activism can be viewed as a powerful intersection where social media and bystander intervention join forces to address corruption and deliver tangible benefits for victims of corruption.

4.3. Using Social Media to Mobilise Bystander Intervention

Social media provides networked citizen journalists an amplifier to spread news fast. It also allows individuals with similar contentions to exchange information, unite and take action collectively to influence change (Yang 2009; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005). Evidence suggests that social media may be equally powerful when employed by bystanders to promote helping behaviour (Civaner 2013; Lim 2012; Romanos 2013; Valenzuela 2013). Existing literature suggests that social media may be useful in addressing corruption in at least two ways. Firstly, social media can provide a platform to expose corruption. In this sense, marginalised individuals who would otherwise be voiceless may employ social media as an “amplifier” to expose the perpetrator’s wrongdoing and raise public awareness (Hassid 2012; Lim 2012; Zeng 2011). Secondly, social media may be used to mobilise bystanders to intervene through collective action (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Stepanova 2011; Yang 2009). I will now discuss these aspects in more detail.

4.3.1. Exposing Corruption via Social Media

As previously noted in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, given that victims are often powerless, and thus unable to counter the abuse of power imposed by “predatory elites”, the involvement of bystanders may help them to address the situation. Against this backdrop, social media can be an effective way that allows victims of corruption to have a “voice”. By utilising social media, victims are able to inform others of power abuse. As

seen in the Gezi Park example discussed earlier, despite the Turkish media's silence, "online citizen journalists" continued to use social media to virally report countless "stories" about how the police brutally attacked protesters. By providing a platform for victims of corruption to share their lived experiences, social media essentially empowers them to have a "voice", and bring the corrupt behaviour into the knowledge realm of others.

This enablement aligns with the first stage of the bystander intervention process: "notice the event" (Latané & Darley 1970). In order for bystanders to carry out subsequent action to intervene, they must first be aware of the situation and reverse or mitigate the power imbalance. Thus, by providing a platform to expose corruption and placing it under a spotlight on a wider scale, social media empowers victims and alerts others to notice the negative behaviour imposed by the perpetrators. Indeed, with the rapid development of the Internet and inexpensive accessibility (Stepanova 2011), individuals can easily transform into "online citizen journalists" to expose corruption. Bertot, Jaeger and Grimes (2010) suggest that by exposing and raising awareness, negative publicity generated by the joint efforts of victims, reaching out for support and/or providing solidarity to bystanders and the wider public may be an effective way to curb prevalent problems like corruption. Consistent with this view, Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) found that there is a significant, positive relationship between the number of Internet connections/users in a country and the control of corruption. It also suggests that countries with low levels of Internet connection and little media capacity to confront corrupt practices are more inclined to experience the prevalence of corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013).

4.3.2. Mobilising Bystander Intervention

Given the accessibility of Internet connections, citizens are readily able to generate collective action at a grassroots level (Mou *et al.* 2013; Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Lim 2012). By taking action to address corruption, involved bystanders may improve the quality of life of victims of corruption and contribute in changing, co-constructing and re-shaping what they wish to see in their society. In this way, the collective action generated at a grassroots level may create different social protocols (and social cohesions) to subvert power inequalities. Although social media may be effective in mobilising online users to become pseudo-bystanders to generate collective action, what they can do to help victims

of corruption remains an underexplored area in existing literature. Therefore, it may be useful to look at how pseudo-bystander can be mobilised in another context.

Polder-Verkiel's (2012) study examined the case of a young man named Abraham Briggs in Florida, who live-streamed his suicide on an Internet forum using his webcam, with some purported 1,500 "witnesses". Polder-Verkiel's (2012) study suggests that bystanders' reality via an Internet-mediated environment can sometimes be skewed, and thus perceive the situation they witness to be different to a "first hand" experience (p. 131). Coupled with various distractions and barriers, it was difficult for bystanders to engage in intervention, especially in Abraham Briggs' case. The "bystander effect" may also be present in an online sphere, which explains why few individuals decided to intervene in Abraham Briggs' incident in spite of the high level of exposure. Moreover, Markey (2000) suggests that the "bystander effect" not only applies to a computer-mediated environment, but it may be even more prominent when the situation appears emotional or threatening.

However, Abraham Briggs' suicide was eventually reported by a 17-year-old forum member from India (with a time difference of 10.5 hours to Florida), who decided to contact the Miami police immediately upon noticing the alarming situation. Although the involvement of the 17-year-old pseudo-bystander from India was not able to save Abraham Briggs' life, it nevertheless illustrates that it is possible for bystanders to become involved in a real-life situation upon "witnessing" the event online. From this example, we can see that social media enables victims to reach other bystanders through online communications, while also enabling bystander intervention to take place in spite of the physical distance between the victim and the bystander. Therefore, bystander intervention literature that deals with emergency situations may still offer some valuable insights even though the nature of the cases that pseudo-bystanders are exposed to may differ and may not require real-time intervention. For instance, this could be the case when the corrupt behaviour has already taken place and already caused harm to the victims. However, this does not mean that one cannot intervene in the online space to discourage the corruptor from causing further harm, and thus deter them from continuing to assert their power to cover up their criminal behaviour. Furthermore, some continue

to be the victims of power abuse and thus social media users could play a more active role in becoming pseudo-bystanders.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, such “borderless” intervention is also exemplified in the Gezi Park movement, as many supporters participated via an online environment both locally and internationally. Therefore, various bystanders in other parts of the world can become “borderless warriors” when they decide to “join the fight” and adopt action to intervene.

4.3.3. Triggers for Bystanders Involvement through a Marketing Lens

While the contexts and levels of involvement of bystander intervention varied from the examples discussed thus far in this chapter (*e.g.*, intervening suicide/police brutality by sharing a story or joining a protest march), it was evident that social media was effectively used to mobilise participation. However, it remains unclear as to how the bystander intervention process may differ in an online environment. For instance, social media may contribute to shortening pseudo-bystanders’ decision making process of whether to become involved by swiftly encouraging them to shift forward in the intervention process. Perhaps bystanders’ increasing involvement and action to intervene correspond to various triggers communicated via social media. Yet, research to date has not explored these specific triggers in the intervention process for pseudo-bystanders. To address this gap, the current study aims to identify the specific triggers that prompt pseudo-bystanders to shift forward in their intervention process, to take action to intervene in corruption cases. Given that marketers proactively use various “triggers” to prompt consumers to respond, I will again borrow a marketing lens to inform how various triggers may stimulate bystanders to become involved and help corruption victims.

4.3.3.1. Internal and External Stimuli

Marketing efforts are partly drawn from an Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) perspective. IMC can be understood as the strategic coordination of all messages and media used to communicate the organisations’ brand values to influence consumers’ behavioural responses (Keegan, Moriarty & Duncan 1992). Since stimuli is an important part of IMC, and the consumers’ purchasing decisions are often stimulus-driven, it is crucial for marketers to understand how internal and external stimuli may “lure” consumers into purchasing behaviour. The stimulus-response model is purported to

encompass four interactive components: the stimulus input, the communication channels, the buyer characteristics associated with the decision process and the purchase outputs (Keegan, Moriarty & Duncan 1992).

Internal stimuli include affective (*e.g.*, emotional state, mood and feelings) and cognitive (*e.g.*, understanding and interpretation) components (Dawson & Kim 2009; Muruganatham & Bhakat 2013; Park, Stoel & Lennon 2008). Whereas, external stimuli emanates from environmental factors (*e.g.*, opinions from others, the marketplace and government policies), or is induced by marketers (*e.g.*, promotional efforts (Dawson & Kim 2009; Moutinho 1987)). Marketing stimuli, like advertising, product display location and store atmosphere may be used to prompt consumers to engage in buying behaviour as these aspects may affect the consumers' psychological (*e.g.*, memory, attention, perception and thought) and physiological responses (*e.g.*, auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory and taste senses) (Achar *et al.* 2016).

Therefore, stimuli serve as important prompts to persuade consumers' purchasing decisions, especially in the case of impulsive buying, which Jones *et al.* (2003) describe as the "degree to which an individual is likely to make unintended, immediate, and unreflective purchases" (p. 506). For instance, product presentation, as well as the design, layout and atmosphere of the store, may enhance the appeal of the product/services or create a certain mood to influence the consumers' purchasing decision (Park, Stoel & Lennon 2008). Since marketing stimuli often evoke mood or feelings to generate positive affective responses (*e.g.*, attitude) from consumers, their purchasing decisions could, to an extent, be interpreted as "emotional responses" to an extent (Achar *et al.* 2016).

In a similar vein, certain stimuli may encourage bystanders to engage in helping behaviour. For instance, internal stimuli (*e.g.*, empathy) may provide an emotional experience for bystanders, and thus activate their emotional responses and "induce" them to adopt action to intervene (Stürmer & Snyder 2009; Stürmer, Snyder & Omoto 2005; Yang 2000). In line with this view, Thomas, McGarty and Mavor (2009; 2016) identify three primary prosocial emotions: guilt, sympathy/empathy and anger/outrage that may trigger bystanders to react to address injustice. When bystanders are evoked by empathy and outrage (*e.g.*, as seen in the Gezi Park movement), the fury they feel, ignited by power inequalities, may subsequently prompt them to become involved and adopt intervening

behaviour. Bystanders may be triggered to express solidarity when they are evoked by the “attack one, attack all, injure one, injure all” mentality (Levine & Cassidy 2010, Lim 2013). Thus, their decision to intervene can also be viewed as “emotional responses”.

As demonstrated in the Gezi Park movement, social media may emerge as a powerful vehicle to further allow stimuli to reach potential bystanders. This, in turn, may encourage them to step in and become involved. For instance, in order to physically participate in a protest, bystanders must be aware of when the protest takes place and the physical location, if they intend to attend. Attaining such information may mobilise bystanders to participate in upcoming protests (Agarwal, Lim & Wigand 2012). Regardless of whether a bystander’s response to join a protest requires extensive planning or is an “emotional response” that is impulsively provoked, the information about the protest itself may be viewed as an external stimulus that positively prompts bystanders’ subsequent action to intervene.

Moreover, the way that bystanders swiftly decide to become involved is similar to how online users’ become involved in charitable events, such as the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, as mentioned in the previous chapter. In this sense, their behaviour change is “fast-tracked”. Accordingly, by making external stimuli readily available and accessible, social media may also effectively mobilise and “fast-track” the bystanders’ behavioural responses, and thus become involved and engage in actions to address corruption cases.

Existing literature recognises that social media platforms may be useful to facilitate helping behaviour as it connects bystanders with similar concerns and contentions (*e.g.*, Lim 2012; Obar, Zube & Lampe 2012; Polder-Verkiel 2012; Yang 2009). However, the way that social media may contribute to “fast-tracking” the bystander intervention process has not been fully explored. Rather than viewing social media itself as being “powerful”, it may be useful to shift our emphasis on the stimuli that travel through such platform, as these triggers may incrementally compel bystanders to adopt collective action. To understand how the power of social media can be harnessed to benefit victims of corruption, the current study intends to identify specific triggers that may contribute to “fast-tracking” bystanders’ behavioural responses in their intervention process.

4.3.3.2. Opinion Leaders and Reference Groups

It is common for consumers to search for information and advice from others when making a purchase decision. Opinion leaders are an “external influence”, who can play a significant role in influencing others (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996; Sun *et al.* 2006). An opinion leader is usually a highly regarded person who possesses special skills, knowledge, personality or other outstanding characteristics, and is thus a position to exert social influence on others within a reference group (Chu & Kim 2011; Lyon & Henderson 2005). For example, prominent bloggers who are viewed as opinion leaders can influence their followers’ purchasing decisions through evaluation, explanation and embrace the endorsement (or not) of a certain product or service in a consumer purchasing context (Kozinets *et al.* 2010).

Information shared by opinion leaders should not be overlooked as they may have a profound impact on public opinion should their views become widespread (Theocharis *et al.* 2015; Zeng 2011). This is because opinion leaders’ intention to inform is often perceived as being genuine, and thus comes across as trustworthy and credible (Haciyakupoglu & Zhang 2015). As seen in the Gezi Park uprising and other similar grassroots action, public opinions on social media are often more than just an expression of thoughts. Contentions that are collectively shared by individuals may become globalised movements that mobilise countless individuals to resist, challenge and pressure existing laws and social norms, and thus cause reform and wider social change (Juris 2012; Hassid 2012; Agarwal, Lim & Wigand 2012; Lim 2013; Theocharis *et al.* 2015).

Valenzuela (2013) suggests social media largely contributes to the high levels of engagement in protest behaviour. This is because the “two-way street” nature of social media allows individual participants to deliver/receive news, to express/obtain opinions, and to effectively ignite/join mobilisation, based on shared information. Therefore, social movements may also be viewed a collective learning process, as bystanders in the same space can learn from each other by exchanging information, co-constructing meaning and defining and redefining purposes together when confronted with various ongoing changes, to achieve a common goal (Romanos 2013). Interestingly, Shneiderman, Preece and Pirolli (2011) suggest that all online users have the potential to become a leader by

participating in social media communities and gaining and re-distributing knowledge at four particular phases (see Figure 14).

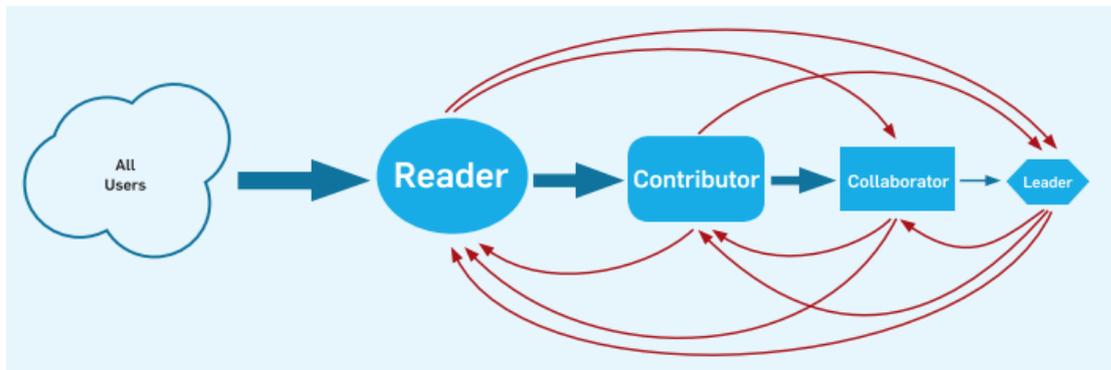


Figure 14: The Reader-to-Leader Framework

(Source: Shneiderman, Preece & Pirolli 2011, p35)

The idea that anyone could become a leader via social media is exhilarating as it challenges how we traditionally view leadership. As such, it would be even more powerful when this “anyone” actually belongs to our own reference group. This may be one explanation as to why protesters like Ceyda Sungur, or “the woman in red” from the Gezi Park movement, connected with so many others, symbolically and virtually via an extensive social network. Essentially, Ceyda Sungur is not just “anyone”; fellow bystanders may identify her as their classmate, colleague, family member, or a friend. In this sense, social media allows protesters like Ceyda Sungur to exemplify their involvement so that other bystanders can learn by adopting similar action (Agarwal, Lim & Wigand 2012). Therefore, a powerful individual could serve as a trigger to prompt engagement from fellow bystanders to become more involved to intervene, and thus effectively promote helping behaviour to improve the well-being of victims in corruption cases.

This may be one reason why social media has emerged as a powerful tool that can be harnessed to generate collective action, as it essentially allows reference groups of bystanders to exemplify or role model, the desired intervening behaviour. In a consumer purchasing context, consumers are likely to adopt favourable attitudes and connections towards brands used by members within their reference groups, which in turn, influences their purchasing decisions (Bearden & Etzel 1982; Huertas *et al.* 2017). Akin to this,

bystanders may also decide to intervene when their reference group adopts and facilitates helping behaviour. Ghazali and Cai (2014, p. 81) suggest that:

...since the users of social media sites often communicate with their existing network regularly, they can be regarded as a reference group by their network. The reference group on the social media sites is an organic source of information that affects the image formation of a destination.

Interestingly, I also learned about the Gezi Park movement via Facebook on 27 May 2013. The fact that a high school friend of mine shared the story not only made me notice the event, but I was also intrigued to find out more. This illustrates that reference groups may effectively influence an individual's awareness of certain issues and propel them to take action. Now imagine how powerful social media can be when it is employed purposefully to spread contention. This may cause a higher level of mobilisation of collective action.

Additionally, bystanders' collective action via social media platforms may also lead to group recognition and formation of common identities (Levine & Manning 2013). This is because a bystander may feel a strong sense of solidarity when he/she is able to reflect and contribute to an aligned identity. Thus, when social identity is salient, it is likely to generate social solidarity and support, and influence individual's decision to intervene (Levine & Manning 2013; Lim 2013; Yang 2000). Therefore, the action adopted by opinion leaders and reference groups may be viewed as crucial triggers that mobilise bystanders to engage in helping behaviour through a networked online environment. Likewise, powerful individuals who are in the position to influence change may also be reached via various social media platforms (such as Donnie Yen, in David Dao's case, discussed earlier). This may increase the chance of victims being helped. In light of this, by providing a window for pseudo-bystanders to "witness" others who share an aligned goal or emotive reaction, social media may become an effective platform to unite bystanders to counter power imbalances.

4.4. Chapter Summary

Social media has emerged as a powerful eWOM medium for consumers to develop and share information on a "many-to-many" basis in a very short amount of time (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010; Kozinets *et al.* 2010). Given that social media can be advantageous when used to facilitate collective action and mobilise various consumer and social movements,

it may be equally effective when social media is employed to mobilise bystander intervention to help victims of corruption. Existing literature suggests that social media may be a valuable platform to expose corruption and to facilitate collective action (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013).

However, it remains unclear as to the triggers that prompt pseudo-bystanders’ to intervene, and how social media may “fast-track” the bystander intervention process. Hence, the current study intends to identify specific triggers that encourage bystanders to become “borderless warriors” and adopt collective action to help victims of corruption. Incrementally developed from reviewing our existing knowledge in corruption (Chapter Two), bystander intervention (Chapter Three) and social media (Chapter Four), Figure 15 illustrates a refined conceptual framework that drives the current study.

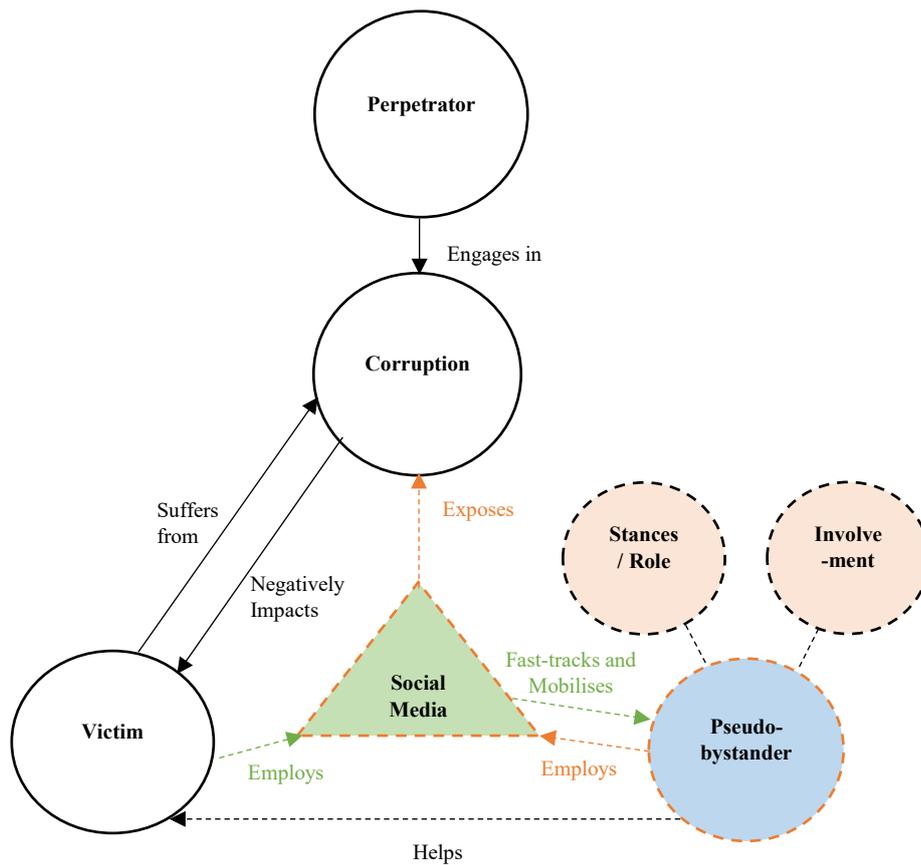


Figure 15: An Overarching Framework of the Current Study

In summary, my study intends to provide insights to address the following research gaps identified in existing literature thus far:

- (1) specific pseudo-bystander stances/roles are unidentified and underexplored;
- (2) little is known about how pseudo-bystanders may intervene, for instances, how mitigating factors, pseudo-bystander' roles and pseudo-bystanders' levels of involvement may influence their subsequent action to intervene in corruption cases;
- (3) it remains unclear what triggers pseudo-bystanders to become involved in taking action to victims of corruption throughout their intervention process.

Chapter Five: Methodology

5.1. Chapter Introduction

Upon reviewing existing literature on corruption, bystander intervention and social media, I have identified three research gaps that formed the overarching proposition of the current study. Firstly, specific pseudo-bystander roles remain underexplored in a systematic way. Secondly, it is unclear how pseudo-bystanders intervene in an online context, specifically, via social media. Lastly, the stimuli that trigger pseudo-bystanders to take action remain unidentified. Over two chapters, I will shed light on the methodological steps in detail. In turn, I hope the documentation of the process I went through will offer valuable insights and become useful guidelines for future researchers that aim to use data extracted from social media. In this chapter, I will explain all the methodological decisions I have made in order to address the research gaps identified in the current study. I will first discuss components of the research design and provide details of the qualitative research methods used for this project. I will then explain how the corruption cases are selected. Lastly, I will address various ethics considerations associated with using data drawn from an online environment.

5.2. Research Design

Inspired by Green (2002), the tripartite model in Table 7 summarises both the theoretical and practical methodological decisions adopted for this particular research.

Table 7: Research Design Overview

Theoretical Perspective	Interpretivist
Methodologies	Netnography Investigative Research on the Internet (IRI)
Methods and Approaches	Thematic Analysis Case Study

Qualitative methodologies that primarily deal with online data are used in the current study. I will now discuss each component.

5.2.1. Theoretical Perspective

Interpretations can change depending on time, space and the circumstances of the interpreter. Hence, a social phenomenon can be viewed as a product of transactions

created through preunderstandings, perceptions and interpretations between the researcher and the community examined (Green 2002; Saunders *et al.* 2009; Stake 2005). Given that I regard the social phenomenon examined in the current research as multiple realities that are constantly evolving, I believe I could not, and should not, deliberately separate myself as a social participant in the process of this research through an interpretivist view.

Since social constructs are attachments to the subject's minds (Mknon 2012), it was important for me to be aware of, and accept that, to an extent, my interpretations remained subjective. This is because how I observed, collected and analysed online data, as well as my progressive understanding, likely impacted on my findings. My experience throughout the research process also continued to shape my interpretations of the findings drawn from the current study. Therefore, to avoid bias, I systematically selected which cases to include in my examination and analysed them with vigour. For instance, I used a set of selection criteria to determine the most suitable cases and then trialled several coding methods before I selected the most appropriate method that absorbed key elements of the online data. Furthermore, to ensure intercoder reliability during the data analysis stage of my research, I provided samples of coded excerpts from each case study to another colleague to verify validity (more details on coding will be discussed in the next chapter).

5.2.2. Methodologies

Instead of ignoring the presence of the “self”, ethnographic studies suggest that researchers should recognise, acknowledge and accommodate their own differences, subjectivity and emotionality, by incorporating this “self” as part of their inquiries (Ellis 1991; Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011). By not shying away from the “self”, the researcher's identity would remain conscious, present and visible (Ellis 1991). Not only is this “self” a significant part of ethnographic studies, ethnographers essentially become “co-performers” of the community in which they “observe” (Turner 1986, cited in Ellis & Bochner 2006, p. 434).

However, I realised that my motives, actions, and intentions could potentially influence how I managed my data, especially if I started to interact with the online communities that I examined. The objective of the current study is to explore how social media can be used to mobilise pseudo-bystanders to help victims of corruption. Therefore, instead of

becoming a “visible co-performer” by engaging with other informants (*e.g.*, pseudo-bystanders and corruption victims), I believed that my role as a passive observer-participant would be better suited for the scope of the current project. Though I must stress this does not mean that I was “disengaged” with the concept of “self”; I simply chose not to explicitly express my stances, to ensure I did not influence the social phenomenon examined in the online space. For instance, to gather data to answer my research questions, I primarily used several social media platforms (including Facebook, Twitter, Weibo and weblog) to follow and observe the unfolding of the selected cases for the purpose of this research. While I did not actively participate by leaving comments or contacting other informants, I noted down my own observations. This way, I was able to keep track of my own experiences while gaining a plethora of rich and insightful information unobtrusively via various social media platforms.

Social media can be a valuable “gateway” to explore pseudo-bystanders’ intervention in computer-mediated environments (Markey 2000). Previously, studying bystanders’ behaviour in real-life situations can be extremely difficult, if not impossible, as researchers are unlikely to predict when, where and how such situations occur, and thus are unable to observe, record and analyse bystanders’ behaviour in a timely manner. For this reason, previous bystander studies often used experimental and “staged” real-life situations (*e.g.*, sexual assault (Harari *et al.* 1985), fire (Darley & Latané 1968), sporting injuries (Levine & Cassidy 2010), or accidents (Bickman 1972)) to capture respondents’ natural reactions spontaneously as bystanders. Rather than “staging” corruption, social media has provided me an organic way to shed light on how pseudo-bystanders may be motivated to become involved to address corruption cases. To understand how social media can provide rich and insightful data to address the research questions in the current study, I turned to netnography and Investigative Research on the Internet (IRI) for methodological guidance. I will discuss how they can be employed effectively.

5.2.2.1. Netnography

Netnography is a methodological term coined by Kozinets (1998), originally used for marketing related studies to understand people’s experience via computer-mediated environments. Netnography is not a single methodology, and it is “based primarily on the observation of textual discourse” (Kozinets 2002, p. 64). It follows the veins of

ethnographic studies in that it involves observing a lived experience, and adopting a range of investigative strategies to unobtrusively collect data in an online environment (Kozinets 1998; Lugosi, Janta & Watson 2012). This paradigm has gained increasing popularity and has been used for a diverse range of behavioural-related studies. For example, customer knowledge management (Chua & Banerjee, 2013); brand communities (Brodies *et al.* 2013; Chauhan & Pillai 2013); consumer online decisions, behaviour and patterns (Brodie *et al.* 2013); how the online community of gambling addicts support one another (Mudry & Strong. 2012); the “togetherness” of Brazilian migrants (Schooten 2012); and how wedding planning can be performed in an online environment (Nelson & Otnes 2005).

Besides Kozinets’ (1998) term “netnography”, other terms, such as “virtual ethnography” (Hine 2000, 2005, 2008) and “webnography” (Prior & Miller 2012) have been coined to describe ethnographic methodologies via computer-mediated mediums. Although the structural differences between these methodologies remain ambiguous, variations in these paradigms have nevertheless attracted a growing number of followers and gained scholarly attention over time (Bowler 2010; Daj 2012). Regardless of the different labellings, these online-based ethnographic methodologies share a common characteristic: the central role of the researcher is emphasised when establishing connections between data and context.

Instead of measuring a phenomenon, researchers intend to gain insight and understanding through communication, experience and participation in the “field” (Hine 2000, 2005, 2008; Kozinets 1998; Lugosi, Janta & Watson 2012). Like ethnography, netnography also fundamentally carries out the inquiry or “social investigation” to observe phenomena strategically without imposing any undesirable influence of the researcher onto the group that is being examined. Rather than a physical setting, the research “field” in netnography is via an online environment (Elliott & Jankel-Elliott 2003). One prominent advantage of using netnography is that it enables the unravelling of interesting hidden dialogues that take place virtually between informants.

However, Kozinets (1998, 2002, 2010) stresses that researchers should be particularly mindful about how this online research “field” can play out and subsequently influence both the data and the researchers’ own interpretations. For instance, I was aware that my

own lived experience and participation in the “field” as a pseudo-bystander contributed to the inferences I made with the data throughout the course of this research project. Like an ethnographer, my intention was also to “tell a credible, rigorous and authentic story” (Fetterman 2010, p. 1). This is also the reason why I have chosen to present my findings using the first person peripheral. To manage my biases in determining which cases to include, and in analysing the online data to avoid misinterpretation while keeping myself objective in the process, I proceeded to first develop a systematic way to select the cases (see section 5.3 of this thesis for details).

Kozinets (1998, 2002, 2010) recommends six stages when conducting netnographic studies: (1) research planning, (2) making cultural entrée, (3) gathering and analysing data, (4) ensuring trustworthy interpretation, (5) conducting ethical research and (6) providing opportunities for informants to generate feedback to the researcher. Kozinets (2010) proposes that “research planning” is the most important stage in the execution of netnographic studies as it enables the researchers to understand their research objectives prior to formulating the main research question(s) and identifying appropriate online communities. After that, researchers need to familiarise themselves with the characteristics of the online communities observed before carrying out analysis. Since the observation of textual discourse primarily forms the basis of netnography, researchers must avoid misinterpretation when mining these publicly available communications and at the same time, determine the importance of the data in relation to the research questions. Kozinets (2002) also points out that the notion of research ethics is an important aspect in netnographic studies as researchers may do harm to informants depending on how the results are reported.

As a general guide, I found Kozinets’ (1998, 2002, 2010) recommendations for conducting netnographic studies useful and relevant. I will now describe what I have done in accordance with Kozinets’ guide. In the “research planning” stage, I developed my research questions by reviewing existing literature on corruption, bystander and social media to identify several research gaps. I have also developed a systematic way of selecting appropriate corruption cases via social media to be included in my study. In the second stage that Kozinets (1998) describes as “making cultural entrée”, I familiarised myself with various functions of relevant social media platforms and how pseudo-

bystanders communicate via these platforms before carrying out data collection. In the third “stage gathering and analysing data”, I used the first case study as a “pilot” case to develop a systematic way of analysing online data. This data analysis process was repeated and refined upon the examination of subsequent case studies in my research. To ensure trustworthy interpretation in the fourth stage, I employed two external native translators to crosscheck all online data presented in languages other than English. To warrant that this research is conducted ethically, I reviewed how existing studies managed online data. I will address various ethical issues later in this chapter.

Kozinets’ recommendations are useful to an extent, as it provides a fundamental “checklist” for the current study. However, given that my research is focusing on a different context than marketing, I was aware that I might not need to follow each step religiously. This is pertinent, especially for the last step, where Kozinets suggests that feedback from informants may be valuable to the researchers in the marketing field (1998). As building long-term rapport with my informants is not the objective of this research, obtaining feedback from them would be illogical. Moreover, any interactions (*e.g.*, revealing my identity as a researcher to the informants) may potentially alter the pseudo-bystanders’ behaviour, and thus influence the direction of my findings. Therefore, there is a need to develop my own specific netnographic “recipe” to answer my research questions in the current study. Complementing Kozinets’ (1998, 2002, 2010) netnography, I have also drawn references from the Investigative Research on the Internet (IRI) methodology, proposed by Lugosi, Janta and Watson (2012) for guidance.

5.2.2.2. Investigative Research on the Internet (IRI)

Building upon Kozinets’ recommendations to conduct netnographic studies, Investigative Research on the Internet (IRI) prescribes an alternative way to explore phenomena in an online environment. One concept of IRI that differentiates it from conventional netnography is that it allows researchers to collect data from different points of virtual locations – what Lugosi, Janta and Watson (2012) refer to as “streaming”. As activities on the Internet do not stay fixed in one particular spot, the “streams” of information can often take people who have different experiences various places, depending on the “current” of one online source from another (Lugosi, Janta & Watson 2012). In the current study, I have primarily used social networking sites (SNSs) like Facebook, Twitter and

Weibo to gather data. These SNSs are essentially online platforms that allow users to create a public profile and interact with other users within and beyond their pre-existing social networks that shared common interests and/or affiliations.

Therefore, by following these “streams”, it allowed me to dig deeper by synthesising information from different source points. In other words, instead of limiting myself to a particular “virtual place” to gather data, the research process should be more fluid with virtual mobility in a sense that I should be able to “travel” by exploring various online sources. According to Lugosi, Janta and Watson (2012), “streaming” may start from any specific virtual space regarding an individual or an emerging trend or phenomenon and where to go from there is essentially the researcher’s decision. For example, a string of clues may branch out to other “sub-streams” (*e.g.*, websites, forums, blogs or posts) for the researcher to discover new insights, dimensions and dynamics.

With IRI, I took control by deciding which directions to follow, whether to jump from one source to another, to trace, track and follow other clues that may eventually lead to a bigger picture, or to stay put. It is fundamentally the researcher’s responsibility to identify the relevance of different “streams” and “sub-streams” of information, in order to “connect the dots” and make sense of all information collected from these different points of interests (Lugosi, Janta & Watson 2012). This notion of judgement, where the researcher deciding which “streams” to follow, is also in line with the lens of an interpretivist.

Lugosi, Janta and Watson (2012) suggest that IRI has four prominent features: (1) it requires researchers to be analytical and explorative to discover and construct, (2) the “investigation” itself is a dynamic process that is responsive to changes in the “field”, (3) the data must be contextualised and (4) the researcher is central to this process as he/she steers the direction of the research by making various decisions. For instance, I found out about one of the corruption cases (Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case) through a particular author (Jake Adelstein, whom I follow on Twitter), who happened to be the translator at the press conference held by the victim of that case. This prompted me to find out more about the case, which then led me to other online sources (*e.g.*, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s blog and Facebook page). Therefore, I consider IRI to be a valuable and useful methodology for my study, especially for the purpose of data collection and triangulation.

Next, I will discuss various methods and approaches used in the current research.

5.2.3. Methods and Approaches

The current research employs thematic analysis to examine relevant data obtained from the selected cases studies.

5.2.3.1. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a highly flexible and adaptable qualitative analytic method that can be used independently across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis predominately analyses textual data, but also goes beyond the semantic content of such data, as it allows researchers to examine underlying ideas and analytically categorise concepts to interpret stories, experiences and meanings (Bernard & Ryan 1998; Braun & Clarke 2006; Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012).

Thematic analysis shares many of the principles and procedures of content analysis. For instance, thematic analysis also follows a systematic coding approach to determine patterns, frequencies, relationships, structures and discourses of communication (Guest, MacQueen & Namey 2012). However, thematic analysis allows researchers to delve deeper by combining both frequencies of outcomes from the data and with inferences that determine underlying contextual meanings. By using this method, researchers are able to explore the symbolic relationships within rich and complex data by identifying, analysing and reporting explicit and implicit themes (Braun & Clarke 2006; Joffe & Yardley 2004).

A “theme” should capture something important across the data in relation to addressing my research question(s) (Braun & Clarke 2006). In general, a “theme” can be identified in two ways – using an inductive approach (*e.g.*, Frith & Gleeson 2004, 2008), or a deductive approach (*e.g.*, Hayes 1997, 2000; Jaspal & Sitaridou 2013). Taking the inductive approach means that the themes are strongly linked to the data (Patton 1990). Reflecting this approach, theories tend to be informed by the coding and analysis process (Yin 2009). Whereas, the deductive approach is more “explicitly analyst driven” (Braun & Clarke 2006, p. 84), and thus the coding and analysing processes are specifically directed by a devised framework to pursue a particular theoretical proposition.

Although both approaches have their own merit, the inductive approach is more relevant for my research as it is not driven by any pre-existing coding frames or analytic preconceptions. Rather than making the data “fit”, the data should “tell the story” through inductive analyses (Prior & Miller, p. 513). Therefore, when the themes became progressively obvious throughout the data exploration process, my research questions also evolved accordingly. This way, I was able to create a better contour around these emerging patterns of meanings and become more refined and specific over time. In other words, my research is content-driven.

5.2.3.2. Case Studies

Given that the corruption “stories” I intended to explore are essentially lived experiences, the online activities about them can be understood as “cases” of corruption. These subsequently form what will be observed and analysed in the current study. The selected cases in this study typically consist of a substantial volume of artefacts (including posts/reposts, pictures, videos *etc.*) across various social media platforms. To explore and to make sense of these secondary data that are primarily collected online from “streaming” various social media platforms, I analysed rich, visual and textual online material generated from contextually-based, computer-mediated, communities. Moreover, against the backdrop that netnographic studies essentially speak from the field experience and interpretation of the researcher (Kozinets 1998), I also combined my observations of the identified community in an online environment to interpret data derived from the selected cases with a more holistic understanding.

Existing case studies that are informed by data extracted from social media platforms suggest that what constitute as a “case” could vary. For instance, a “case” could stem from an institution. For example, Kelling, Kelling & Lennon (2013) examined how traditional and social media influenced the closure of a state university (the University of South Florida). Also, Chua & Banerjee (2013) investigated the customer knowledge management via social media for Starbucks. Alternatively, a “case” could be based on an event. For example, White & Fu (2012) compared how the content and delivery systems of media in two countries covered two disasters: the Sichuan earthquake in China in 2008 and Hurricane Katrina in the United States in 2005. Similarly, Murthy (2011) examined

citizen journalism via Twitter retrospectively based on two incidents: the Mumbai bomb blasts in 2008 and the downed US Airways flight in 2009.

Before I critically conceptualised and interpreted data extracted from social media platforms, it was imperative for me to determine the number of cases to be included in the current research. Since there is no universally optimal number of cases to include in netnographic studies, I needed to ensure that I chose a number that would shed light on the research questions sufficiently, and be guided by previous scholars. For instance, it is not atypical for existing studies to include only one case. One example is Chua and Banerjee's (2013) study, they only examined one company: Starbucks, where artefacts drawn from various newspapers, newswires, magazines, scholarly publications, books and social media outlets were textually analysed. In particular, 200 posts were drawn from four online platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare and MyStarbucksIdeas) over an 11-month period. Therefore, including just one corruption case was a viable option.

However, I found the studies that examined three case studies to be more relevant to my research because I wanted broader validation of newly identified knowledge which was more likely to be robust when considering different contexts. For example, Lim (2013) looked at the dynamics of social media activism in Indonesia based on three empirical cases. Tang (2013) examined the expression of public opinion online during the unfolding of three incidents. Besides being informative, the use of three cases allowed these researchers to compare and triangulate their findings to provide a more robust and rounded understanding to address their research gaps. Given that the objective of the current study is to find out how social media may mobilise bystanders to help victims of corruption (whom may originate from different countries and contexts), by comparing and analysing three case studies, I was able to further delineate the similarities and differences across different cases.

5.3. Selection Criteria of Cases

Besides selecting the number of cases, I also needed to decide on the selection criteria for these cases and consider the type of data to include in my analysis. As each case is unique, I was required to design and develop a list of systematic and pragmatic criteria to evaluate the most suitable cases before I could begin the data collection and analysis processes. This enabled me to obtain and analyse relevant artefacts that are suitable for this particular

research, and thus make better-informed choices to select specific corruption cases. I have first reviewed Kozinets' (2002, 2010) selection criteria with regards to how researchers commonly select online data from the communities observed in netnographic studies. Kozinets (2002, p. 63; 2010, p. 89) suggests that the following six general selection criteria may be useful to guide researchers to pinpoint appropriate online data:

- (1) Relevant – is relevant to the research questions;
- (2) Active – has a high “traffic” of postings;
- (3) Interactive – incorporates interactions between members;
- (4) Substantial – has a large number of informants (quantity);
- (5) Data-rich – provides rich and insightful data (quality);
- (6) Heterogeneous – includes heterogeneous participants.

I will now go through each selection criterion recommended by Kozinets (2002, 2010) and explain how I applied them in this particular research.

5.3.1. Relevant

Ensuring the case is relevant to the research questions is very important because the cases should illuminate potential answers to the research questions. For instance, to explore the roles and behaviour of bystanders when intervening in corruption cases in a social media context, the cases would have to satisfy the various contextualised description as to what “corruption” might be. For the current research, the event itself must strongly reflect the covered-up practice of power abuse reflecting corruption. Since the objective of the current study is also to find out about pseudo-bystanders’ action and triggers, this required the cases to have generated collective action at some point to offer insights with regards to the widespread participation and mobilisation of pseudo-bystanders.

5.3.2. Active

Traffic volume is another vital criterion. As the virtual footprints through the lived experience of pseudo-bystanders essentially inform my research questions, I would need there to be a substantial number of informants who are involved with the corruption cases via social media, in order to extract valuable insights from their online activities. Their usage and communications should also be active, recent and regular (Agichtein *et al.* 2008). While having more potential informants to observe will not necessarily equate to

a richer dataset, higher online traffic nevertheless tends to provide opportunities to unravel underlying contentions in pseudo-bystanders' intervening action captured on social media platforms.

5.3.3. Interactive

In a consumer purchasing context, interactivity between consumers, the intensity of involvement and the frequency of their visits/comments via social media are purported to facilitate constructive and ongoing dialogues between organisations and their customers (Chua & Banerjee 2013). Given that social media platforms allow anonymous or pseudonymous consumers to effectively access, gather, interpret computer-mediated textual discourses and exchanges ideas, their interactive user relationships may provide valuable insights for marketers (Lugosi, Janta & Watson 2012).

In a similar vein, pseudo-bystanders who choose to respond to corruption cases may also wish to communicate via social media from time to time with others in the same space. For example, they may seek, share or provide knowledge of a particular corruption event to raise awareness. Therefore, cases with a higher level of visible interactions between pseudo-bystanders are likely to provide more meaningful and valuable insights to shed light on my research questions.

5.3.4. Substantial

In general, cases with a narrower scope might attract a relatively low frequency of online activities. However, this does not mean that all "big" cases have the tendency to provide a high frequency of responses throughout the entire case timeline. Furthermore, when the case is "too big", the dataset may be overloaded with information, and thus become impractical to manage. Therefore, I also considered the data volume as well as the depth of the content scope when selecting the cases as the magnitude of relevant data could directly influence the way I obtain, observe, track, record, translate (when the data appears in other languages besides English), code, analyse and triangulate it.

5.3.5. Data-rich

Given that netnography is a qualitative research technique that predominately deals with data generated from computer-mediated communication platforms, the research itself is heavily reliant on the quality of the data (Kozinets 1997). However, while it is desirable

to obtain error-free data, it might be difficult to determine whether the data derived from a particular case offers a high level of validity and reliability without close examination of the actual data. This is because my interpretation of “quality” may be subjective. A general way to judge is by looking at the how the “type and volume of content that users can make available to other online community members” are presented (Prior & Miller, p. 514). To ensure data richness, the selected cases need to provide data with intrinsic content quality, which is mostly free from punctuation errors and typos, consistent in syntactic and semantic complexity and grammar (Agichtein *et al.* 2008).

5.3.6. Heterogeneous

According to Kozinets (2002; 2010), heterogeneous involvement from a range of participants is regarded as a desirable criterion. As such, cases that reflect a level of heterogeneity may offer more opportunities for me to explore, contrast and compare how pseudo-bystanders may involve themselves to address the corruption cases in the same space, and to further explore how similar or different their responses might be.

5.3.7. Additional Criteria

The six selection criteria noted thus far arguably offer a good foundation for me to evaluate various corruption cases that took place during the case study selection phase to include in this study. However, I found them to be insufficient and lacking pragmatism. For example, while large size of the dataset may be desirable, the corruption case itself could span over a few weeks, a few months or a few years. Thus, for me to be able to observe, record and analyse relevant data within my study period, I also needed to consider the duration of the cases as a key criterion. After some careful consideration, I have developed five extra criteria to assist me in the case selection process for this particular research. These additional criteria are:

- (7) Accessibility
- (8) Duration Suitability and Intensity
- (9) Measurability
- (10) Significance
- (11) Comprehensibility for the researcher/Language used in data

5.3.7.1. Accessibility

Accessibility was particularly crucial during the data collection phase, as the main “streams” in this research started from various well-known social networking sites (SNS) that require membership (*i.e.*, Twitter, Facebook and Weibo (China’s largest and most dynamic Microblog platform, which is often referred to as the Chinese version of Twitter)). While I have been a member of Facebook since 2007, Twitter and Weibo were new social media platforms to me, as I only signed up to become a member on both platforms at the beginning of my doctoral candidature in 2012, solely for the purpose of this study. Subsequently, these “streams” online became my “fields” and provided a gateway for me to carry out the “fieldwork” in obtaining relevant data generated within the selected case studies.

Also worth noting is that having had access to the data does not necessarily mean that the data is always recordable, as potential obstacles may present themselves with regards to retrieving, navigating and browsing data on the internet (Bauer & Scharl 2000). For instance, when potentially useful archived online data becomes unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances, it could hinder the data analysis process. This further illustrates the importance of having accessibility to social media platforms and the associated archived online data for conducting netnographic studies. Therefore, having access to social media platforms not only allowed me to observe pseudo-bystanders in the same space, but I was also able to analyse their behaviour through the records of their online activities.

5.3.7.2. Duration Suitability/Intensity

Thomson and Holland (2003) point out that researchers should be aware of how *biographical time* (events in real-life that took place), *research time* (the timetable of the research process) and *analytic time* (where researchers analyse the data) may share different rhythms of speed, pace and duration of the digital content. Keeping these different timelines in mind, the duration of the cases became an important criterion, as data drawn from social media platforms can become too difficult to manage over time, in terms of sheer quantity and diversity. Furthermore, while the selected cases may have all taken place during the course of my candidature, there is no reason to consider this period atypical of any other period to observe corruption.

However, it was not ideal for me to analyse cases that went on for years, but the duration of the selected cases should not be too short either, as I was constrained by a research timeframe. The real-time nature of social media means that pseudo-bystanders are likely to engage in online activities during the proximity of the corruption event (or the disclosure of the event) if they wish to become involved, whereas my research process could only take place *after* the actual events.

Although Kozinets (2010) suggests the data collection period should stretch as long as new insights are emerging, I argue that, ideally, the corruption cases selected in the current study should be readily available during the beginning to the middle of my doctoral candidature. This is to ensure sufficient time to comprehend, develop and carry out various stages of the research process. Therefore, the corruption events should have taken place prior to my candidature, with a certain level of exposure in an online environment during the data collection stage of this research. This way, the “freshness” of the examined cases meant that I was less likely to overlook/miss important information and to avoid alteration and/or deletion of relevant online data due to unforeseen circumstances.

Furthermore, I should also explain that the meaning of longevity for the cases in this context is interpreted by the intensity of their associated online activities. Data drawn from different social media platforms may have different intensities despite the sustainability of duration. For example, while Twitter may only allow 140 characters per “Tweet”, responses could take place at the rate of a heartbeat. McGeeney’s (2015) study points that “live tweet” at an event via Tweeter may take place so rapidly that the volume of data accumulated over one day could be equivalent to, say, a year’s worth of data generated in other longitudinal qualitative studies. Therefore, it was logical for me to consider each case’s duration together with the level of intensity of online activities generated in order to determine the most suitable cases to be selected.

5.3.7.3. Measurability

Ideally, the obtained data would need to be physically (in this case, virtually) measurable. In other words, data extracted from social media platforms in this research needs to be clearly representative and analysable. Because multiple “streams” are used to collect relevant data (such as text, pictures, video and audio), each case study may consist of a

large collection of data pieced together, and thus it is important that the data can be systematically sorted (*i.e.*, in folders and by date) in order to assist the coding process.

However, when there are too many “streams” to manage, there remains a possibility to overlook relevant artefacts, and thus I would risk missing vital links between the data at hand and the patterns within which I was trying to identify. For instance, when cases receive “too much” attention, the information associated with it can be overwhelming and is likely to encapsulate more irrelevant messages (Rageh, Melewar & Woodside 2013). For example, Edward Snowden’s case was constantly scrutinised by a worldwide audience. Thus, public interest occupied many “streams” and “sub-streams” – social media and mainstream media across the globe. This made Edward Snowden’s case so big that the accumulated amount of accessible information becomes too broad to decipher. Thus, I needed to ensure that the measurability stemmed from the case itself fit the scope of this research.

5.3.7.4. Significance

Despite the media and public’s interest and constant spotlight on high profile corruption cases, (which invariably features predominant and influential government officials and/or business tycoons), the impact of corruption does not necessarily correspond to the scale imposed by such behaviour (Ko & Weng 2012; Mashali 2012; Meng & Friday; Walton 2013). As discussed in Chapter Two, while petty corruption may be viewed as “mild”, it can also generate a detrimental and long-term impact if not addressed properly. Therefore, I also needed to take into consideration that both “petty” and “grand” corruption cases could be significant when selecting corruption cases for of the current research.

One way to judge the significance of a particular case is to assess its social impact and to observe/note whether it gains attention from traditional media outlets. Although this approach does not always reflect the importance of a case, it is nevertheless a useful way to determine the “size” of the case. For instance, the Gezi Park movement emerges as a significant case for many people both in Turkey and internationally. Thus, the selected cases must specifically reflect valuable insights of a community to be considered significant, and not only to that particular community, but also to a wider audience (Prior & Miller 2012).

5.3.7.5. Comprehensibility/Language

Lastly, I had to consider the main language used in the dataset for the selected cases. This could be a dealmaker (or breaker) in determining the ultimate suitability for further exploration and analysis. While it was always possible to get an external party in their native tongues to translate the data, there remains an expectation that the researcher should ideally be an insider of the community observed, preferably with cultural knowledge, to ensure accuracy in coding and interpretation of their data (Kozinets 2010).

Further, though partially fluent, I am capable of communicating in Japanese (listening, reading and writing). However, my preferred languages would be English and Chinese, as I am fluent and culturally proficient in both. For this reason, languages in cases using English and Chinese are the most desirable, and those in Japanese are desirable, but to a lesser extent. Cases in other languages are not preferred, as language barriers may contribute to me overlooking nuances when collecting and interpreting case data. In addition, it would be impractical to “stream” these cases if I had to rely on a translator to decipher information provided from various online sources. While the online discussion could take place anywhere in the world, my preference in languages may have already influenced the geographic locations as to the occurrences of these corruption events. For instance, when I was reading about corruption cases in Chinese (via SNS like Weibo), these events are likely to have taken place in China. Therefore, the language criterion potentially pre-determines the geographic location of the corruption events. However, with the selection criteria discussed thus far, I believe I have determined the selection of the final cases in a fair and systematic way.

Throughout the early stage of my candidature (2012~2013), I came across approximately 20 corruption cases via social media platforms that I have access to. As mentioned earlier, these include Facebook, Twitter and Weibo. However, only 10 cases caught my attention initially. By incorporating the 11 selection criteria discussed thus far, I developed a systematic way to determine which cases were most suitable for the purpose of this study. I will explain the application of these selection criteria in the next section.

5.4. Application of Selection Criteria

To select the most appropriate cases for the current research, I developed a systematic approach. Firstly, I assigned a particular “value” for each of the eleven criteria to

represent their hierarchy of importance in relation to what I valued the most in the potential data. Since I regard the language(s) used in the cases as a deal-breaker (or maker), I have decided to treat this particular criterion as a standalone requisite. I then ranked the remaining ten criteria across three different levels: the criteria that I interpreted as a “must have” would attract 10 points (*i.e.*, Relevance, Quality, Measurability); criteria that are preferential but not essential would attract five points (*i.e.*, Traffic Volume, Quantity, Accessibility); and lastly, ones that are “bonuses” or “good to have” attract two points (*i.e.*, Interactions, Heterogeneity, Duration, Significance).

Upon allocating different points to match the criteria, I used a simple five-point scale to weight them (1= very low, 5 = very high). To obtain the overall score of the cases, I multiplied the value of the criterion and their perceived weight, then added the points generated from each criterion. Finally, I used the language criterion to “reward” cases with an extra 50 points if the data was available in either English or Chinese and 20 points in Japanese. In summary, I used the following equation to determine the most suitable cases based on the total score emerging from these selection criteria:

$$\text{“Case Suitability”} = \text{Criteria Value} \times \text{Weighting} + \text{Deal-breaker}$$

Note that for the criterion *Duration Suitability and Intensity*, rather than basing the duration on the entire length of the corruption case, I have placed the weight mainly on the timeframe where these cases emerged as “hot topics” in a social media context as this could better reflect the clusters of online activities. The precise calculation of weighting for this particular criterion is as follows:

Less than 7 days or more than one year: Very low = 1

1 to 2 weeks or 9 to 12 months: Low = 2

6 to 8 months: Medium = 3

3 to 4 weeks or 4 to 5 months: High = 4

1 to 3 months: Very high = 5

As previously mentioned in this chapter, rather than adopting a certain regional focus and/or deliberately trying to include/exclude some cases in this initial selection process, the presented cases were confined to the languages I speak and write, as well as the social media platforms I use (three languages, five social media platforms). As a result, ten

potential cases emerged throughout the second year of my candidature. It is worth noting that many corruption cases were evident, but only a few had the complexity and length that I required for my investigation to be robust. The evaluation scores of these final 10 cases are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Selection Criteria Application for Corruption Cases

Criteria	Weight (Value of Perceived Importance)	ICAC NSW Mining Case (Australia)	The Weston Case (Australia)	Ikumi Yoshimatsu Case (Japan)	281 Anti Nuke Case (Japan)	Edward Snowden Case (US)	Dog killed uncle Case (China)	Ma Yue Case (China)	Ye Haiyan Case (China)	Local election bribery Case (China)	Gezi Park case (Turkey)
1. Relevance	10	1	1	5	2	3	5	5	5	5	5
2. Traffic Volume	5	1	1	5	2	5	1	3	2	2	5
3. Interactions	2	1	1	4	1	4	1	5	5	2	5
4. Quantity	5	1	1	5	2	5	1	3	2	2	3
5. Quality	10	1	1	5	1	3	1	4	5	3	5
6. Heterogeneity	2	1	1	4	1	5	1	5	2	2	5
7. Accessibility	5	1	1	5	2	4	3	4	5	5	5
8. Duration	2	From Jun 2007 ~ Jul 2013 = 1	From Jan 2012 ~ Mar 2013 = 5	From Nov 11 2013 ~ Mar 31, 2014 ongoing = 4	From June, 2011 ~ July 2013 = 1	From early 2013 ~ ongoing = 1	From May 29 2013 ~ Jun 26, 2013 = 5	From Aug, 2013 ~ Nov 2013 = 5	From May ~ Sept 2013 = 4	From end of March 2013 – end of April 2013 = 5	From May 26, 2013 ~ Jul 2013 ~ = 5
9. Measurability	10	1	1	5	1	1	3	5	5	5	3
10. Significance	2	3	2	5	5	5	1	3	3	1	5
<i>Subtotal</i>		57	63	267	86	170	131	226	233	195	235
11. Language/ Comprehensibility	English/ Chinese = 50 or Japanese = 20	+ 50	+ 50	+20	+20	+ 50	+ 50	+ 50	+ 50	+ 50	0
Total		107	113	287	114	220	181	276	283	249	235

The overall rating evaluation revealed three cases that scored the highest points (see highlighted scores in Table 8): Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case (Japan) = 287 points, Ma Yue's case (China) = 276 points and Ye Haiyan's case (China) = 283 points. Although Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case is in Japanese, I nevertheless decided to pursue further investigation, as its total score generated from my evaluation was the highest out of the ten initial cases. Therefore, I believe this particular case is not only suitable for the scope of my research, but also a highly significant case. Next, I will discuss the some of the rationales behind the order of my analysis in examining these selected cases.

5.4.1. Triangulation of Cases

In order to determine the sequence of case analyses, I decided to follow an order arrangement based on Lim's (2013) study. Lim (2013) initially examined two empirical "successful" cases (hence, they were similar) and one "unsuccessful" case (which was different) that took place in Indonesia to illuminate the relationship between participation in social media and populist political activism. While the countries involved in the selected cases may appear to be from a similar (Asian) background, I realised that the Japanese case is very different from the Chinese cases. For instance, social media platforms used in the Japanese case are very different (blog, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube as opposed to Weibo in the Chinese cases). To maximise the robustness of my findings, I first analysed the two Chinese cases, and then the Japanese case to address my research questions. For the two Chinese cases, I analysed the shorter case first. In addition, each individual case also has a dual purpose to assist my overall data analysis process strategically (see Figure 16).

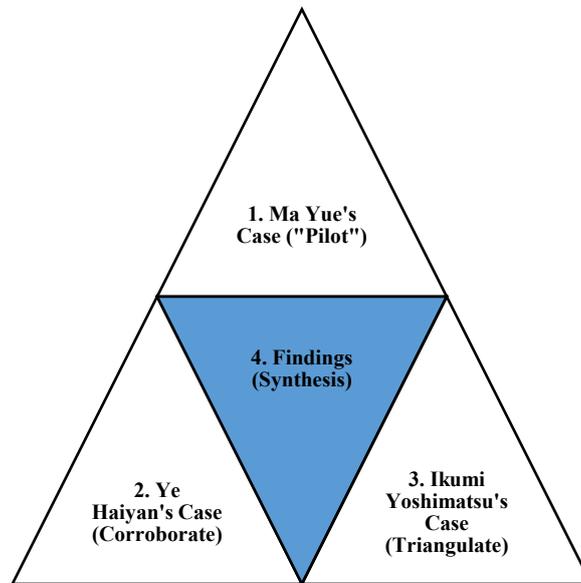


Figure 16: Dual Purposes of the Three Case Studies in My Research

Accordingly, Ma Yue’s case (Case One) was used to develop the data analysis process. Ye Haiyan’s case (Case Two) was used to corroborate or extend those findings, and to improve the research design. Finally, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case (Case Three) was used to triangulate and refine findings by validating commonalities and delineating differences across all the cases. In this way, I was able to extract findings from all three cases to answer my research questions whilst also triangulating the findings that stemmed from each individual case. This meant going back and forth in the analysis process to determine which similar themes were evident throughout my research. By doing so, I developed a more rounded and deeper understanding of all three cases.

Next, I will address various issues revolving ethics in conducting research using online data.

5.5. Ethics Consideration

Ethics in research is commonly understood as the morality of human conduct (Dawson 2014). While there are no universal principles as to how to perform research ethically, in every situation, throughout the course of a project, studies involving social media, in particular, seem to be either prevalently ambiguous or near-silent about any emerging ethical issues (Dawson 2014). In particular, the idea of ethics can be problematic, as what is deemed “ethical” remains not only a highly debatable and sensitive topic, but also is a nuanced understanding of how it can be applied within the environments of emerging

technology-mediated forums (Dawson 2014; Henderson *et al.* 2013). Since I used pre-existing secondary data that was made available in the public domain, in this section, I will shed light onto some of the ethical issues that emerge in the forefront of qualitative studies that are primarily dealing with online data.

5.5.1. The Meaning of Ethical Research

While ethics considerations are crucial to any research, this could become even more challenging and ambiguous with studies that are predominately using data drawn from the online sphere (Dawson 2014; Henderson *et al.* 2013). The word “ethics” partly derives from the Greek word “ethos”, which means “character” and “dwelling” (Dale 2012, p. 19). As a qualitative researcher, I believe that I needed to be ethical, responsible and accountable for my interpretation of the data, especially when the researcher involves other human beings. However, ethics in research should not be about applying a set of rigid moral values and action that fit a particular purpose at any given time and circumstance, which may involve compliance to satisfy institutional requirements, for instance, by simply “ticking the box”. To have a genuine understanding of what it means to be an ethical researcher, Ellis (2007) suggests researchers “constantly have to consider which questions to ask, which secrets to keep, and which truths are worth telling” (p. 26).

Hence, I interpret ethics as a *way* of research, and thus, I acknowledge that the “stories” I collected from social media platforms are more than just “data” that I obtain for the purpose of this current study – they actually represent significant lived experiences of real people, including victims who are disadvantaged by corruption, directly or indirectly. Therefore, the foundations of ethics remains a “relational” construct that is essentially bound by historical and social evolutions (Levinas 1998). In light of this, ethical research requires me to treat the informants, including both victims and other pseudo-bystanders, with all due respect.

5.5.2. Ensuring Ethical Standards

Kozinets (2002) suggests that researchers should nevertheless consider how to protect informants from any potential harm, risks and disruption within and beyond the community observed consequent to disclosing certain information. As mentioned earlier, the fifth stage when conducting netnography as suggested by Kozinets (1998, 2002, 2010)

is “conducting ethical research”. As a guideline, Kozinets (2002) recommends the following measures to ensure the netnographic study is “ethical”: (1). to fully disclose the presence of the researcher; (2). ensure confidentiality and anonymity to informants; (3). allow feedback from members of the online community and incorporate this information as part of research; and (4). keep in mind and be cautious about the intellectual property issue, especially when direct quoting. Kozinets’ (2002) guideline for netnographers to address ethics may not be wholly applicable, in that I have had limited, to no, physical contact with the informants throughout the course of the current research. Still, I would like to discuss these issues openly as to how they may be relevant for this particular study.

5.5.2.1. Disclosure of Researcher’s Identity and Feedback

As an ethnographer and poker-player, Hayano (1982) examined the dynamics of poker cardrooms in California and Nevada (of which he is a member). Hayano (1982, p. 157) argues that the “field” of his observation was a public social domain, and thus not required to make his identity as a research explicit:

Scientist[s] may routinely make observations about people without informing them. No disguises are involved; it is just that social scientists constantly observe others’ behaviour. The everyday observations of our family, friends, and self frequently become parts of the theories or data of the researcher. Certainly, the social scientist cannot wear a warning sign: ‘you may be the subject of scientific observation’. We can see, therefore, that many of our observations are not ‘open’ and known to those we are observing.

Similarly, if the poker cardroom is a virtual one, it would not only be futile and inconvenient, but also impractical to make Hayano’s “researcher’s identity” salient to others in the same space every single time he logs on to play. In my study, observed participants around the globe were also free to come and go at any point in time. Thus, the disclosure of the researcher’s presence when observing an online community may alter the observed participants’ attitude/behaviour, and thus ultimately influence the findings (Hayano 1982; Prior & Miller 2012). Hence, by adopting “an almost purely objective approach to data gathering and analysis” (Prior & Miller 2012, pp. 507-508) and choosing not to disclose my identity as a researcher, nor to participate in any way in

the online cases explicitly, the pre-existing data I subsequently obtained would remain natural and spontaneous, and thus rich.

As mentioned earlier, I did not wish to obtain feedback from various respondents observed in my study. The fundamental purpose of generating feedback from members of the online community observed in netnographic studies as recommended by Kozinets (2002) is to provide a way for organisations to strengthen and/or better manage their customer relationships as it is largely used for marketing purposes. However, as my intention was not to create ongoing dialogues with those observed participants, it was unnecessary for me to engage and obtain feedback from the pseudo-bystanders captured in this study.

5.5.2.2. Consent/Privacy and Confidentiality

Consent/Privacy and confidentiality remain a challenge for researchers using online data as there have been conflicting views in what is considered “private” or “public” in the virtual sphere (Thomson 2013, 2014). One stream of scholarly view is that consent remains unnecessary as the material (regardless of real-time or archival) is openly available and accessible to the public (Beaven & Laws 2007; Langer & Beckman 2005). However, others have reservations about such accessibility of data. Stake (2005) suggests that ethics consideration is needed because although scholars may look into issues that are out of public interest, they also lack the “right to know” (p. 459). Because informants are generally associated with a certain level of vulnerability, the expectation is that researchers are morally obliged to protect them against any risks arising from their studies (Stake 2005).

Whiteman (2010) took a more neutral stance by asserting that researchers should make a “contextualised” judgement and that underpinning the specific nature of their research is more important than the so-called “informed consent”. Sharing this notion, I believe it was important for me to critically assess ethics on a case-by-case basis. One commonality amongst the three selected corruption cases is that the victims and/or victim’s associates have explicitly expressed their intent to publicise their experiences to raise awareness on what they perceived as “unfair”. As such, I regarded their disclosure of these corruption cases via social media as a form of *voluntary consent* by wanting their voices to be heard.

In a similar vein, I believe pseudo-bystanders share the same contentions when they chose to respond openly instead of messaging others privately via social media platforms. Therefore, I saw my role as a researcher, similar to that described by Thomson (2013) as the “honest and privileged broker” for making these marginalised voices publically and scholarly available by bringing these corruption cases to light.

5.5.2.3. *Anonymity and Traceability*

Anonymity in the online context can be understood as “the ability of individuals to communicate without identity, using pseudonyms and taking on different personas” (Chatzidakis & Mitussis 2007, p. 311). Halilovich (2013) suggests that there might be compelling reasons to remain anonymous in an online environment, as there is always the potential that the backlash of “who-said-what” could cause harm or inconvenience to the individual who made their voice explicit. For this reason, traceability emerges as a great threat to breaching confidentiality even with the Internet users’ pseudonyms. In some cases, even if the researcher has deliberately de-identified the informants, individuals’ identity may still be unveiled. For instance, direct quoting of an informant can lead to unmasking anonymity and subsequently bring risks to the observed participants (Dawson 2014; Eysenbach & Till 2011). As such, the idea of anonymity fundamentally raises an interesting question: if people who are already de-identified need to be further protected and go through a more sophisticated de-identification process, then what about people who use their real names on social media platforms?

Perhaps it is up to the individuals themselves who, in publishing in a public forum, determine whether they wish to be “known” and “recognised” in the first place. The individuals ultimately decide what information they wish to communicate with others explicitly, and thus fundamentally informs the way they go about disclosing and/or using their own personal data (Berendt 2012). While not all content that appears in the online sphere is intended to inform a public audience, it can sometimes be difficult for researchers to distinguish between public and private data. They can only “assume”. In some cases, membership could matter as it may deter “outsiders” to access information circulated within a particular community. However, the social media platforms used in this research essentially allow anyone in the public domain with a valid email address to sign up to become a member. The comments and posts *etc.*, in the discussion of each case,

are then available to everyone. Therefore, I argue that when people publish contents on social media platforms, they already implicitly acknowledged that there are audiences attached to these platforms. Thus, it is essentially the individuals' responsibility to determine the "publicness" of their content.

5.5.2.4. Intellectual Property

While the online data used in the case studies examined in my study are unlikely to be subject to copyright, I decided to look up the *Copyright Act 1968* which allows users of copyright to use materials without obtaining the copyright owner's permission under "fair dealing" for certain purposes in Australia (Australian Copyright Council 2014). The *Copyright Act 1968* stipulates that it allows "fair dealing" with copyright material for certain specified purposes, including research or study; criticism or review; parody or satire; reporting news; or professional advice by a lawyer, patent attorney or trademarks attorney (Australian Copyright Council 2014). As to whether I was able to include/regenerate published text, pictures, video footages and so on as part of my doctoral thesis, I believe the nature of the current study (*e.g.*, acquiring and potentially publishing relevant online data) falls under the category of "research or study". Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to point out that I have genuinely used all data collected only for the stated purposes, as set out in the Act in a "fair" way. For this reason, it was unnecessary for me to seek further permission from the informants to download this posted data and publish the findings.

Moreover, I am highly aware that the "stories" observed from social media platforms are part of people's lives beyond the online context. Therefore, I proceeded to carry out data collection with the intention to promote trust, accountability, mutual respect and fairness by not fabricating, falsifying, misrepresenting research data out of its original context to advance my own academic agenda. This mentality continued to drive me in how I interpret the cases examined in this current study and how I report the findings.

5.6. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have discussed the relevant theoretical perspective, methodologies and approaches used in my research process. Besides Kozinets' six general selection criteria that guide netnographers to determine appropriate online data (2002; 2010), I added five additional elements for the selection of my cases in the current study. Together, using the

11 selection criteria and a unique weighting system developed specifically for the purpose of this study, I systematically delineated three most suitable corruption cases to be included in this research. These cases were also used to shed light on the research questions, while also providing the dual role, of assisting the data analysis process carried out in the current study:

- Ma Yue's case (Case One) is used to primarily develop the data analysis process;
- Ye Haiyan's case (Case Two) is used in a corroborative fashion to support and build on the findings I gathered from Case one;
- Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case (Case Three) is used for triangulation to validate the findings drawn from this research.

Lastly, I have also addressed relevant ethics consideration by discussing some of the common challenges that researchers may face when with dealing with online data to ensure that I have carried out my research ethically.

Chapter Six: Data Analysis Design

6.1. Chapter Introduction

As explained in the previous chapter, I have systematically selected three corruption cases for the purpose of this study. However, existing literature on netnographic studies only provides general guidelines without specific instructions on how I can extract and examine a large volume of online data from various social media platforms. As every research is unique, there is no such thing as the “best” way to analyse qualitative data (in terms of the lens, filters and angles of interpretation). Therefore, I have turned to Saldaña’s (2015) coding manual for more specific guidance.

Rather than seeing coding as a part of the data analysis, Saldaña (2015) suggests that coding is *the* analysis. In this light, a code is a “researcher-generated construct that symbolises or translates data” (Vogt *et al.* 2014, p. 13, cited in Saldaña 2015). Simply put, coding is the analytic lens I *choose* to see through and to interpret the data, or what Saldaña (2015) refers to, as the “interpretive act” (p. 4). This is also in line with my epistemology stemming from an interpretivist lens.

Prior to coding all the data, samples were extracted, coded and then tested with: Supervisors (2), Colleagues (3) and Translators (2). Adjustments were made to the coding framework and coding data based on their feedback. In this way, some level of inter-coder reliability was established. Following Saldana’s (2015) guidance, I used the first case study, Ma Yue’s case, to develop a systematic way to analyse qualitative data collected from specific social media platforms. The same process is then repeated and refined to extract results for subsequent case examined in the current research. This chapter explains the development of this data analysis process.

6.2. Terminologies Used

To avoid confusion in expressions used from other studies that are also dealing with online data, I would like to first go through some basic definitions of terminologies that may appear in this chapter to describe the data analysis process for the current study.

- An *online user/netizen* – an individual who uses online platforms to communicate with others in the online community.
- A *pseudo-bystander* – an *online user/netizen* who is involved in addressing corruption cases in a social media context and/or beyond.
- A *seed* – an *online user/netizen* that owns the social media account observed in the current study who regularly publishes information.
- A *post* – information published by the *seed* or *pseudo-bystander*.
- A *comment* – a corresponding message to a *post* or subsequent discussions generated in the social media account observed in this study.
- A *commenter* – an individual that published a *comment*. This could be an *online user/netizen*, a *pseudo-bystander* or the *seed*.
- A *thread* – a collection of *comments* revolving around a particular topic directly or indirectly in response to a *post* or a *comment*.
- A *spike* – the peak period where *comments* are populated during the observed timeframe of the case studies.
- To *share/ repost* – to re-publish existing *posts/comments* or other content so that the same information appears on the online user’s own social media account.
- To *like* – by acknowledging the published content, the online user explicitly informs the *seed* that he/she has seen the content.
- To *read* – (applicable to Weibo only) an automatic count of online users who click into a particular *post*, used mainly to track online traffic volume.
- To *tag* (another online user) – by mentioning the online users’ names using the “tagging” function, it alerts the particular online users named by directing them to the intended content (even though he/she may not be aware of and/or directly involved, on the topic).

- To *reply* (directly) – an explicit response to a particular *online user*. This is often seen by using the *reply@username* function, which typically notifies the recipient of the message.
- To *reply* (indirectly) – a general *comment* in response to a *post* or in a *thread* without explicitly mentioning a specific audience.
- A *stream* – an online platform that offers insightful information to shed light on the research questions.
- A *main stream* – where the researcher predominately collects information. For example, in Ma Yue’s study, I considered the Chinese microblog social media platform, Weibo, as the *main stream*, where I primarily collected relevant information about this particular case study.
- A *sub-stream* – other online platforms that the researcher used to collect online data apart from the *main stream*. For example, this could be a newspaper website featuring the corruption story that I used to triangulate the case data. The *main stream* usually informs the location of associated *sub-streams*.
- To *stream* – the series of activities within the research process, in which the researcher identifies, observes and gathers relevant information from various online platforms – both *mainstreams* and *sub-streams*.
- To *crawl* – where the researcher logs on to a specific social media platform used in the research process to observe and to obtain relevant information.
- A *crawler* – an individual (usually the researcher) that logs onto the social media platform observed to gather relevant information.
- *Online data* – archival content (*e.g.*, a *post* or a *comment*) from various social media platforms and other online sources that may provide rich insights for this research.
- *Coding process* – a systematic way to analyse qualitative online data. In this study, I have decided to manually code all relevant online data. The coding procedures

typically consist of formulating/adopting a *codebook*, *coder* training, *coder* practice and establishing intercoder reliability.

- A *coder* – the individual (usually the researcher) that uses the *coding process* to examine the qualitative online data systematically.
- *Coding stages* – various steps within the *coding process* that the *coder* is required to undertake in order to make sense of the data.
- *Codebook* – a systematic way to look at the data using a particular lens to delineate and interpret information The *Codebook* developed for the current study can be found in Appendix 2.

6.3. Data Analysis Process Development

Apart from shedding light on the research questions, Case One Ma Yue’s case is used to develop the data analysis process in the current research. Accordingly, this chapter will discuss Ma Yue’s case only in light of developing the analysis process. The following chapter will discuss it in detail and present the findings of this case. The victim in Case One, Ma Yue, died under mysterious circumstances inside a Beijing subway station on 23 August 2010. Since then, his mother, Meng Zhaohong, has been trying to find out the cause of his death. Since his death, there seems to have been a concerted “cover-up” by the state-owned subway company (*e.g.*, the missing video, the autopsy report *etc.*), which can be interpreted as a form of power abuse, or what is commonly known as corruption. To call for public awareness, Ma Yue’s mother started to publish posts on Weibo, a Chinese microblog platform, to inform others about various ongoing external events in relation to her son’s death. Thus, Weibo is used as a *main stream* communication channel for data collection for this case. Given that the victim’s mother refused to be silenced and went on to expose the corruption (cover-up, supported by the leading forensic scientist Wang Xuemei), Ma Yue’s case is expected to provide valuable insights as to how pseudo-bystanders respond to “cover-up” corruption cases.

Lomborg (2012) suggests that when analysing social media data, it is not so much of an argument between analysing the text or the person that produces the text, but rather, “the text rests on continued user engagement; it is emergent, editable and undergoing a

continuous process of development – often taking the form of interpersonal conversation among users” (p. 221). Therefore, I used the *main stream* to collect the case data and other Internet-based *sub-streams* (e.g., news websites and YouTube) to triangulate and understand the cases.

Based on the *event* strategy as proposed by Brügger (2011), which harvests online data in relation to the context of a relevant incident, I proceeded to observe, record and examine web archival data extracted primarily from the *seed* in the “pilot” case – Ma Yue’s mother’s Weibo account. While the actual event took place (Ma Yue’s death) some time ago, I am aware that my understanding of the case is primarily based on a different timeline. The *research time* (when I obtained data) and *analytic time* (when I analysed the data) are different to the *biological time* (when actual event took place) (Thomson & Holland 2003). For example, Ma Yue’s case stretches over three years from August 2010 to December 2013, but the data collection process for this case took place between August 2013 to December 2013, where I copied and pasted relevant online data into several Microsoft Word documents after several *crawling* efforts. Therefore, to make sense of the data, I must also consider how my interpretation of the online data may differ at various stages of the data analysis process.

6.3.1. Research Question Alignments: Developing Data-Oriented Questions

The first step in my data analysis is to develop specific questions for my data in the direction that may provide answers for my research questions for this study. Saldaña (2002) suggests that it is important to consider specific data-oriented questions in the data analysis process to delineate the “pools” and “ponds” emerging from qualitative data, so that I can establish “what rises to the surface” in a systematic way (p. 18). In this light, the questions I ask of my data would directly influence the way I code my data. In turn, the data-oriented questions should fundamentally guide my data analysis process. For instance, “*what is different from one ‘pond’ or ‘pool’ of data through the next?*” (Saldaña 2002, p. 2). Therefore, I must first segregate my data by visualising my data as the ocean and there existed many different “pools” and “ponds”. The following visual representation helped to guide my thinking process:

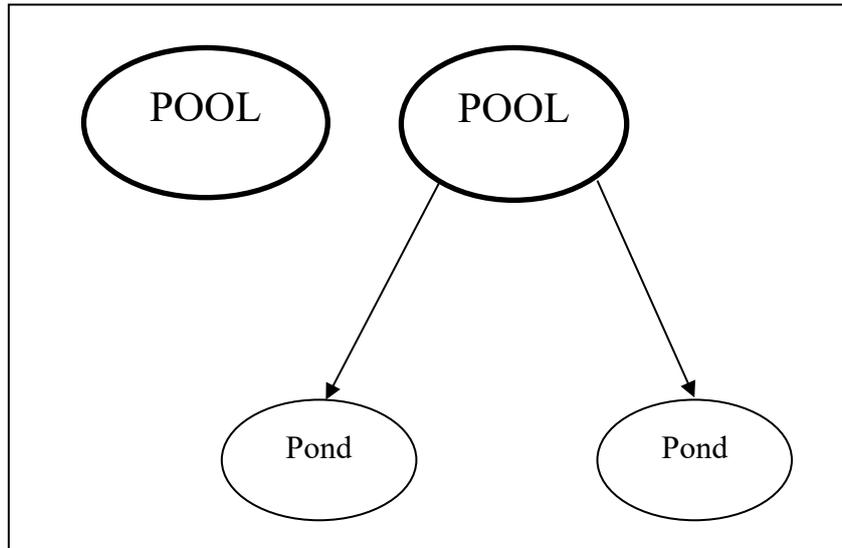


Figure 17: Visual Representation of the “Pools” and “Ponds” in the Dataset

Since there is no universal agreement as to what needs to be coded, one can either code everything or stick to salient portions (Saldaña 2015). Given that my main objective is to provide insights into my research questions in this study, I chose the latter. Following the views of Guest, MacQueen and Namey (2012), Morse (2007) and Seidman (2013), I proceeded to code only what is deemed relevant. While some posts from Ma Yue’s mother’s Weibo account generated subsequent online discussion, others do not hold the same weight. Therefore, I considered posts that attract various levels of online traffic as different “pools”. Similarly, not all comments would contribute to subsequent online discussions, and thus comments with different levels of relevance can be seen as different “ponds” (see Figure 18).

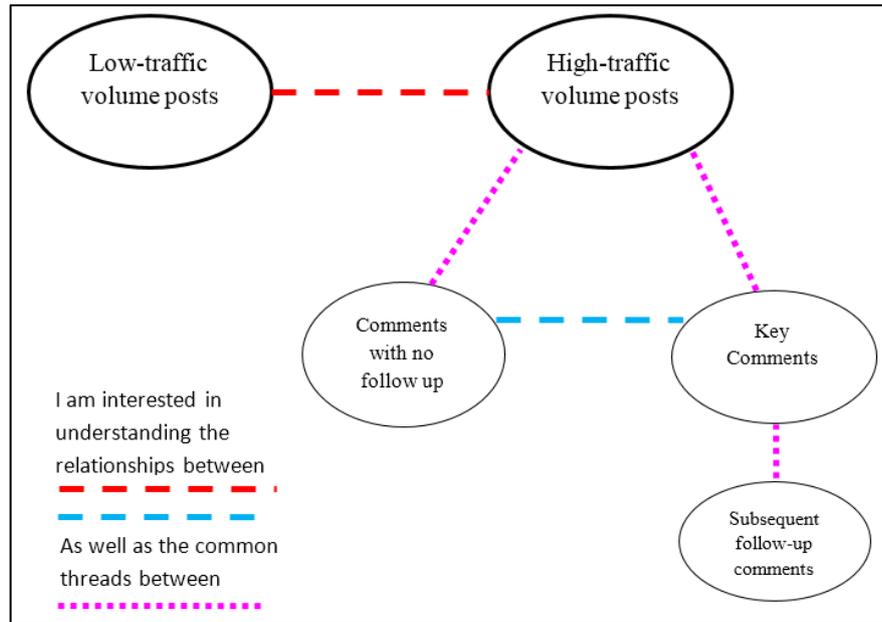


Figure 18: Data Examination of the Current Study

To understand how bystanders subsequently engage in intervention, observing their initial responses could provide clues as to what prompted them to become involved to intervene in corruption cases via social media in the first place. Therefore, instead of looking at every single post and comment made over the entire cases, I only need to focus on relevant and insightful information that is most likely to shed light on my research questions. Accordingly, I mainly focused on high-traffic volume posts and key comments. This is because high-traffic volume posts and associated key comments are likely to reflect a higher chance of bystander involvement that may benefit victims of corruption.

6.3.2. Identifying the “Spikes”: Differentiating the “Pools” and “Ponds”

To differentiate the commonalities and differences between the “pools” and “ponds” in the dataset, I must first locate them systematically. To better understand how this can be done, I turned to existing studies that examined data extracted from social media platforms for guidance. For example, the study of Pedersen *et al.* (2014) suggests that microblog platforms can be used to shed light on peaks of public discussion alongside concurrent televised political debates. In their study that examined Twitter usage during three televised Scottish Referendum debates in autumn 2014, “key moments” were defined as “points in time where Twitter activity was at its highest during the debate” (Pedersen *et al.* 2014, p.12). In a similar vein, I refer to these peaks of public discussion as “spikes”

to better reflect outstanding periods of time where particular posts published by the *seed* sparked an unusually high number of comments on the social media platforms during the observed timeframe in this study.

6.3.2.1. Identifying Key Posts: the “Pools”

Not all posts captured in the current research generated the same number of responses. For instance, some of the posts published by Ma Yue’s mother attracted high numbers of comments while many other posts received little to no attention. This suggests that it may be logical to explore the “pool” of posts that received relatively high numbers of comments than those that sparked minimal public interest. Looking at these “pools” with high response rate may help me to understand what motivates others to become involved bystanders to address corruption cases in an online environment, as these “pools” may offer some insights as to what generates public interest, as opposed to those that do not.

Therefore, to map out and better identify specific “pool” within a certain “spike”, it is important to consider the duration of the cases. For instance, the peaks of discussions in Hansen and Kosiara-Pedersen’s (2014) study are recorded in the span of “minutes” as the observed events (televised political debates) were relatively short-lived (measured by hours). However, given that in Ma Yue’s case, discussions continued over approximately three years and four months, using “months” instead of “hours” or “minutes” would be more suitable to navigate where the “spikes” are located. Moreover, Weibo, the social media platform used to extract data in Ma Yue’s case, also organises its web archival in a monthly order. Therefore, it was not only logical, but also convenient for me to track and record the number of posts and the corresponding comments received by “months”. An overview of the case timeline could be useful to illustrate where the major “spikes” are located. However, it was difficult to decide on exactly how many comments a post attracts before it represents a “spike”.

To date, qualitative studies that purposefully examined “spikes” or data based on traffic volume in a social media context remain scarce. Existing studies that explored social media data often select potentially useful *threads/posts/comments* based on other approaches. For example, industry/organisational-approach (see Chauhan & Pillai 2013), demographic/participant-approach (see Fu & Lee 2014), or semantic/subject-approach (see Jiang *et al.* 2015). One exception is Seraj’s (2012) study, where selected responses

are examined in online forums based on the traffic volume of responses. Seraj (2012) suggests that *threads* with at least 50 responses are sufficient to provide enough scope to observe interactions amongst members. However, it did not further elaborate on why such a deliberate number was chosen.

Since there is no universal rule to determine how this “magic” number could emerge systematically and scientifically, it should remain flexible and subject to a case-by-case basis. Therefore, instead of adopting a number used by another study to legitimise what makes a post quantifiable to project the “spikes” in Ma Yue’s case, I used the online traffic generated from the Weibo account of Ma Yue’s mother as a benchmark. Table 9 shows the number of comments Ma Yue’s mother received in the first month where she began posting about this case.

Table 9: Traffic Volume of Ma Yue’s Mother’s Posts in September 2010

Date of Posts	Number of Comments
2/09/2010 14:33	10
2/09/2010 17:18	1
3/09/2010 0:15	8
7/09/2010 11:53	23
30/09/2010 21:25	22

Ma Yue’s mother published five posts in total in September 2010 and the highest number of comments received are from two posts published on 7 September 2010 and 30 September 2010. While 23 and 22 may not seem like significantly high numbers, no posts published by Ma Yue’s mother in the subsequent year attracted comments that exceeded this initial level. Thus, to identify the peaks of online discussion throughout this case, I decided to only record posts published by Ma Yue’s mother on Weibo that received 20 or more comments.

6.3.2.2. Identifying Key Comments: The “Ponds”

To understand what may have contributed to influence the high volume of online traffic, I must first identify the *nature* of various corresponding comments associated with these Key posts. Overall, I have identified three common types of comments in Table 10:

Table 10: Types of Comments

Comment Type	Explanation	Potential Insights to the Research Questions
<i>C0 Comment</i>	This type of comment is the first comment to raise a particular topic, it may or may not be corresponding to the post, but the comment itself does not generate subsequent discussions.	Least
<i>C1 Comment</i>	This type of comment is also the first to raise a particular topic, it may or may not be corresponding to the post. <i>However</i> , the comment itself generates subsequent discussions directly/indirectly.	Best
<i>C2 Comment</i>	This type of comment is a direct/indirect response to existing topics or another online user.	Limited

Ideally, *C1 comments* should be the focus of this study, as it may offer more insight to answer the data-oriented questions, and ultimately my research questions. The following diagram highlights the focus of the current study.

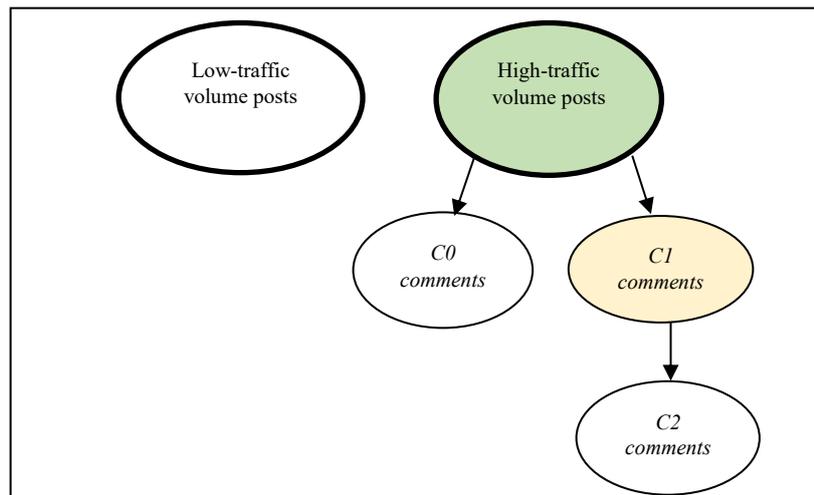


Figure 19: Focus of the Current Study

However, I am aware that *C0 comments* and *C2 comments* may also be useful in terms of triangulation. Thus, it may be useful to examine some of these comments in order to complement my findings from various *C1 comments*.

6.3.3. Formatting Layout: Changing Data Presentation

Most of the online data was a direct “copy and paste” from various social media platforms to Microsoft Word documents in date order, which then needed to be translated. For

instance, Ma Yue's data needed to be translated from Chinese to English. However, it was difficult to code the posts/comments in their current format:

 **王毕强**：今天马跃案再次开庭，众多赶来报道的记者被挡在了法院门外，不准旁听。此前，中国首席法医官王雪梅，因抗议马跃尸检报告存在严重问题愤而宣布退出法医学会。明明是一个简单的安全生产事故，真相也很容易厘清，为何拖了这么多年，依旧不能实事求是的依法办理？下一个跌入地铁轨道的也许就是你啊！🙄

Therefore, once I have extracted all the relevant comments (*C0*, *C1* and *C2* comments) associated with the Key posts from the dataset, reformatting the data became a crucial part of the groundwork. While it took a considerable amount of time and effort to reorganise and translate a large volume of qualitative data in a cohesive way, it enabled me to navigate the data more efficiently when carrying out subsequent steps in the data analysis process. Given that I have verified all the translated documents with an external party (as explained in the previous chapter), I am confident that the English translation truly represents the original content. Therefore, I will only include the translated excerpts in my findings from this point forward. After formatting, the same comment would now look like this:

王毕强: Today, Ma Yue's case is at court again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren't allowed in. Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has already quit. For such a simple work safety accident, the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with under the law practically? The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 🙄
[2013-8-19 14:40]

6.3.4. Pilot Coding: Testing Coding Methods

To draw themes from the data and subsequently theorise them, I followed Saldaña (2015) guidelines to identify various subcodes, codes and code categories (see Figure 20).

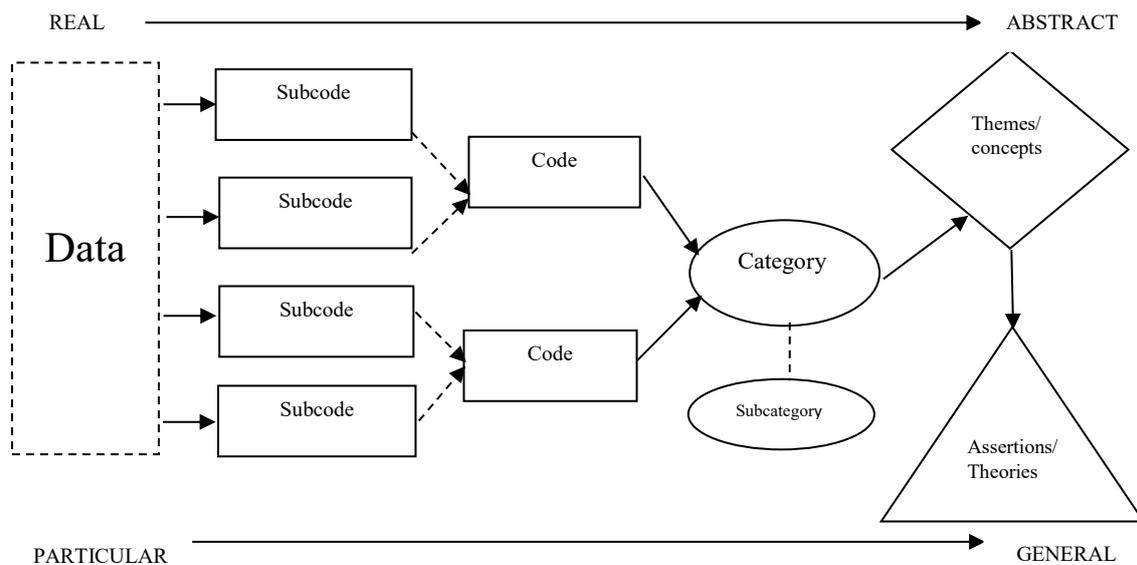


Figure 20: Codes-to-Theory Model

(Source: Reproduced from Saldaña 2015)

While Saldaña (2015) suggests that there are as many as 32 coding methods, not all of them are applicable for the purpose of my study. Thus, it was important to test different coding methods to determine which coding methods are the most suitable to answer my research questions. The current research used the Process Coding method to code the online data for all three case studies. However, I have tried several other coding methods before I came to this decision. I will now explain how this happened.

Initially, I tried coding the online data using the Descriptive Coding method based on the *three persuasive appeals* – Ethos, Logos and Pathos, as these appeals are often used in interpersonal communications (Xun & Reynolds 2010). The Ethos appeal focuses on the (personal) character where often credibility, trustworthiness, morals, honesty and knowledge illustrate/represent a respectful character (Barrett 2006; Metzger and Flanagan 2013; Pollach 2006). Logos on the other hand, focuses on the reasoning behind the message where quality, logic and clarity of the argument are presented in order to hold weight and help the audience to make sense of the situation in a rational way (Little 1999; Tregidga, Milne & Lehman 2012). Finally, Pathos is grounded on emotions where feeling states are used to project a relatable and realistic human experience in order for others to empathise and understand (Clark 1971; Eisenberg 1988; Escalas & Stern 2003; Ma 1994; Wispé 1986). To trial this approach, I carried out some broad-brushed Descriptive Coding as follows:

王毕强: Today, Ma Yue's case is at the ¹court hearing again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren't allowed in. ²Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has already quit. ³For such a simple work safety accident, the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with under the law practically? ⁴The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 🤨 [2013-8-19 14:40]

<u>Descriptive Coding</u>
¹ Case progression [Logos]
² Victim's associate [Ethos]
³ Social justice [Logos]
⁴ Fear of personal safety [Pathos]

However, after “shop-talking” to my supervisors and colleagues, they pointed out that the topics identified from Descriptive Coding were insufficient to provide further insight of the content. Moreover, it gave them the impression that I was trying to impose ideas of the three persuasive appeals on my data rather than capturing the essence of what the passage was trying to say. Therefore, to really let the data “speak”, I looked into other coding methods that are more meaning-driven. So I tried coding the same passage using Vivo Coding. This is an inductive coding method based on the actual language communicated by online users. The same passage was thus coded as follows:

王毕强: Today Ma Yue's case is at the ⁵court hearing again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren't allowed in. Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has ⁶already quit. For such a simple ⁷work safety accident, ⁸the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with ⁹under the law practically? ¹⁰The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 🤨 [2013-8-19 14:40]

<u>Vivo Coding</u>
⁵ “Court hearing”
⁶ “already quit”
⁷ “work safety accident”
⁸ “the truth”
⁹ “under the law”
¹⁰ “The next one falls in the subway tracks might be you!”

While Vivo coding was interesting, it also lacked depth as I was restricted to quote existing textual data provided by the correspondents. Therefore, this coding method may not offer sufficient insight to help lead to themes, as it required a more comprehensive analysis. Given that my research questions are essentially attempting to understand pseudo-bystanders' roles and behaviours, I turned to Process Coding, as this action-based

coding method is often used to observe activities and behaviours that take place sequentially (Saldaña 2015).

王毕强: Today Ma Yue's case is at the ¹¹court hearing again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren't allowed in. ¹²Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has already quit. For such a simple ¹³work safety accident, ¹⁴the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with ¹⁵under the law practically? ¹⁶The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 🤨 [2013-8-19 14:40]

Process Coding

- ¹¹ Updating case progression
- ¹² Acknowledging power struggles
- ¹³ Expressing concerns about work safety issues
- ¹⁴ Demanding social justice"
- ¹⁵ Questioning existing legal system
- ¹⁶ Expressing concerns about personal safety

The Process Coding methods seems to have absorbed all key elements of the passage, as the action identified using this particular coding method appeared to be specific and detailed. To ensure this was the most appropriate way to code my data, I continued to experiment with different coding methods, including Emotions Coding, Versus Coding, and Values Coding, as these methods might also be useful for my analysis. I will now briefly discussed how each of these methods was used. For the Emotions Coding method, I turned to the eight primary categories of emotions identified in Plutchik's (2001) emotions colour wheel chart (see Figure 21) to better identify various emotions.

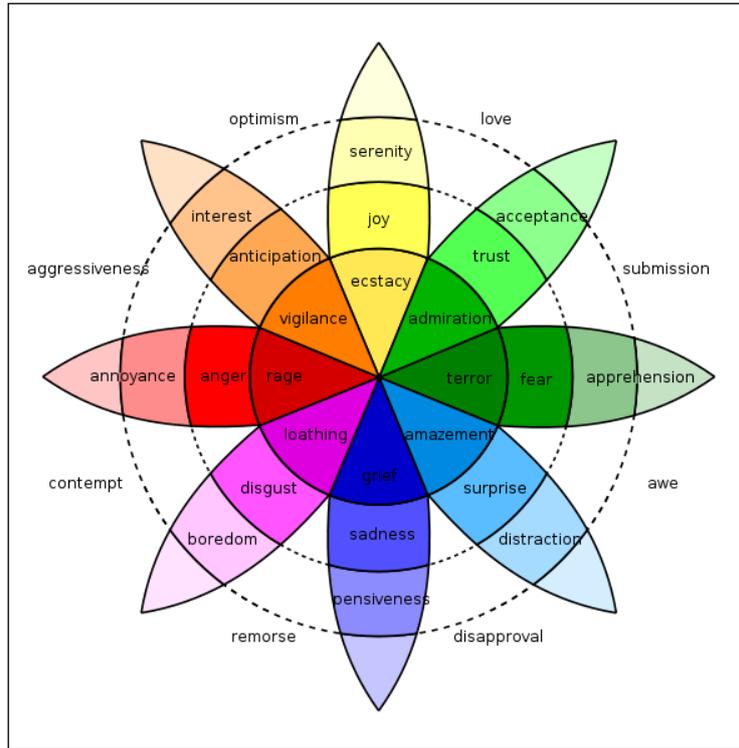


Figure 21: Plutchik's (2001) Emotions Colour Wheel

The Geneva Emotion Wheel (GEW) (Figure 22) may also be useful as it highlights a few different emotions (*e.g.*, disappointment, relief, contentment, compassion) (GEW; see Scherer 2005; Scherer *et al.* 2013).

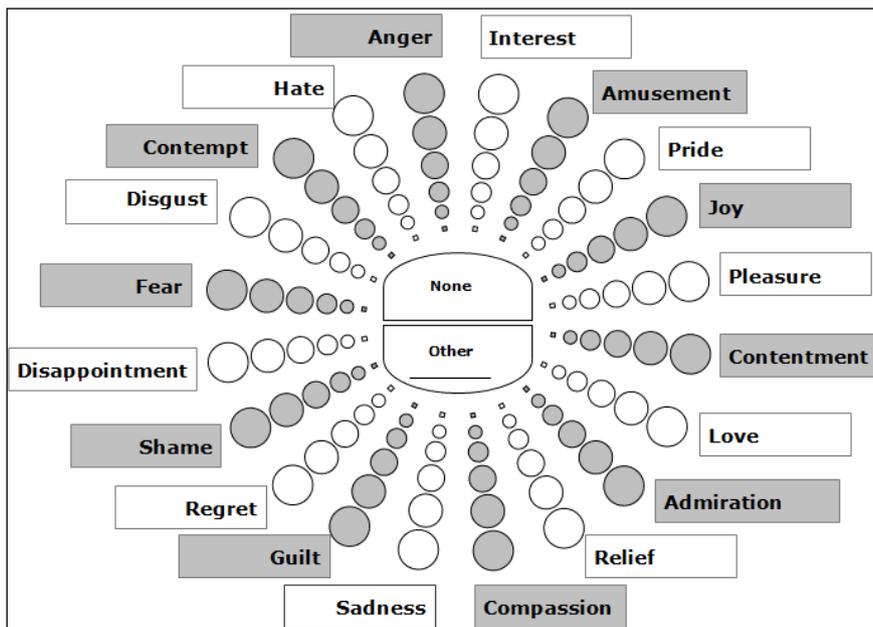


Figure 22: Geneva Emotion Wheel Version 3.0

As mentioned previously in Chapter Three, bystanders’ emotional responses may influence them to adopt action to intervene, for example, guilt and anger may trigger bystanders to react to address injustice. Based on these suggestions, I was able to detect several emotions expressed in the comment, coded as follows:

王毕强: ¹⁷Today Ma Yue’s case is at the court hearing again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren’t allowed in. ¹⁸Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has already quit. ¹⁹ For such a simple work safety accident, the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with under the law practically? ²⁰The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 😡 [2013-8-19 14:40]

<u>Emotions Coding</u>
¹⁷ Annoyance
¹⁸ Surprise
¹⁹ Disappointment
²⁰ Anger [emphasised by emoticon]

The Emotions Coding method highlighted the emoticon used in the passage that sets the tone of the content as being “angry”, and thus indicates an element of “scare tactic” in alerting the readers. However, using emotions alone was inadequate to capture other key elements of the passage. Therefore, I have proceeded to trial the Versus Coding method, which intends to detect codes to identify competing constructs (Saldaña 2015). The same passage would thus be coded like this:

王毕强: ²¹Today Ma Yue’s case is at the court hearing again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren’t allowed in. ²²Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has already quit. ²³ For such a simple work safety accident, the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with under the law practically? ²⁴The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 😡 [2013-8-19 14:40]

<u>Versus Coding</u>
²¹ Transparency vs. Censorship
²² Credibility vs. Status
²³ Ethics vs. Legality
²⁴ Ignorance vs. Possible Action

While the Versus Coding method enabled me to identify specific topics incorporated in the passage, it did not capture to what extent pseudo-bystanders may view certain issues. Therefore, I have also tried using the Values Coding method, which allows researchers to

identify values (V), attitudes (A) and beliefs (B) in the data to explore underlying meanings (Saldaña 2015).

王毕强: ^{25(V)}Today Ma Yue's case is at the court hearing again, a lot of journalists got blocked outside the courthouse, they weren't allowed in. ^{26(V)}Previously, Wang Xuemei, the vice president of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association who voiced the problematic autopsy report, has already quit. ^{27(A)}For such a simple work safety accident, the truth should be easy to deal with. Why did it drag on for so many years, and was still not dealt with under the law practically? ^{28(B)}The next one who falls in the subway tracks might be you! 🤔 [2013-8-19 14:40]

Values Coding
²⁵ Value: public awareness
²⁶ Value: Respect
²⁷ Attitude: Responsibility and accountability
²⁸ Belief: Something needs to be done

When I put all the coding methods side by side, this gave me a more detailed insight than the initial descriptive coding results (see Table 11).

Table 11: A Compilation of Coding Methods Trialed

Vivo Coding	Process Coding	Emotions Coding	Versus Coding	Values Coding
⁵ “Court hearing”	¹¹ Updating case progression	¹⁷ Annoyance	²¹ Transparency vs. censorship	²⁵ V: public awareness
⁶ “already quit”	¹² Acknowledging power struggles	¹⁸ Surprise	²² Credibility vs. status	²⁶ V: Respect
⁷ “work safety accident”	¹³ Concerning about work safety issues	¹⁹ Disappointment	²³ Ethics vs. legality	²⁷ A: Responsibility and accountability
⁸ “the truth”	¹⁴ Demanding for the social justice”			
⁹ “under the law”	¹⁵ Questioning existing legal system			
¹⁰ “The next one falls in the subway tracks might be you!”	¹⁶ Concerning about personal safety	²⁰ Anger	²⁴ Ignorance vs. possible action	²⁸ B: Something needs to be done

To decide on the most appropriate coding method for this study, I ran a small sample through a comment thread. This means I had to code both the post and its associated comments. The results of this trial are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Small Sample First Cycle Coding

Original Message		Vivo Coding	Process Coding	Emotions Coding	Versus Coding	Values Coding
Threads between Post and Key comments, Threads between key comments and subsequent comments	[Post by Ma Yue's mother] <i>She has been persistently righteous for 30 years in her career, but because of a ridiculous and irresponsible report delivered by the China Forensic Medical Association, she decided to resign from her position as the vice president, decided to leave this association, and decided to quit this affiliation of the forensic community. Repost again! Management, this content will benefit the development of fellow forensic medical practitioners, it promotes justice spirit, why censor it? [17/08/2013_23:02]</i>	"she decided to resign" "Repost again!" "promotes justice" "why censor it?"	Discrediting official affiliation Resisting censorship	Disgust Vigilance	Credibility vs. Status proactive vs. passive Justice vs. censorship	Attitude: Responsibility and accountability Value: Public awareness
	[Comment] 鬼影看水表 : Justice cannot be censored [2013-8-18 01:42]	"Justice cannot be censored"	Disapproving of censorship	Vigilance	Justice vs. censorship	Belief: Social justice
	[Comment] 爱的小鱼丸 : Keep uploading the video, we will keep sharing [2013-8-18 10:33]	"Keep uploading" "keep sharing"	Ignoring censorship	Vigilance	Proactive vs. passive	Value: Collective action
	[Comment] 马跃妈妈: [reply] all the popular websites are restricted, can't think of what else to do [2013-8-18 10:35]	"all the popular websites are restricted" "what else to do"	Seeking loopholes in censorship	Annoyance/Helplessness	Alternative communication vs. media censorship	Attitude: Media censorship
	[Comment] 闪亮的嘎啦皮: YouTube has no restrictions, but you need to first provide a place to download [2013-8-18 15:46]	"YouTube has no restrictions" "need to first provide a place to download"	Identifying loopholes in censorship	Anticipation	Alternative communication vs. media censorship	Attitude: Overseas social media platforms

While all five coding methods shown in Table 12 may be relevant and applicable for this study, the highlighted sections further illustrated that Process Coding seems to be the best way of interpreting the data. This is because it was the only coding method that captured key elements of the post and associated comments with a consistent theme (see highlighted texts). Therefore, I have decided to use Process Coding in the First Cycle Coding in the current study to inform various online action that may be carried out by pseudo-bystanders to intervene in corruption cases via social media. To ensure that my coding analysis was on the right track, I sought verification from an external academic outside of my supervisory team. Additionally, I ran the Process Coding method on 10 random excerpts from the second case for the purpose of validation; this was also cross-checked by another colleague who specialises in qualitative research.

6.3.5. First Cycle Coding: Process Coding (First Round)

I proceeded to code relevant comments associated with the Key posts in Ma Yue's case using the Process Coding method. In this step, subcodes, codes, subcategories and categories shed light on the "flow" or "rhythm" of how bystanders engage to address corruption cases in a social media context. As each research is unique, there is no ideal prescribed number of codes in a one-size-fits-all way. For instance, Friese (2014) recommends using between 50 and 300 codes in total. On the other hand, Lichtman (2013) suggests that 80 to 100 codes is optimal. For the current research, the code list (or codebook) continued to grow. For Ma Yue's case, I developed an accumulative 78 codes. Subsequently, later, eight additional codes emerged from Ye Haiyan's case; while a further seven additional codes emerged from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. To make sense of these codes, I then returned to the first two cases and recoded all content based on the collective 93 codes to identify emerging themes.

6.3.6. Extracting Themes from the Data

The difference between codes and themes is that "a theme is an outcome of coding, categorisation, and analytic reflection" (Saldaña 2015, p.198). As previously discussed in Chapter Five, themes can be identified in two ways – using an inductive approach (*e.g.*, Frith & Gleeson 2004, 2008) or a deductive approach (*e.g.*, Hayes 1997, 2000; Jaspal & Sitaridou 2013). In this research, I am using the inductive approach. This means that the themes are strongly linked to the data (Patton 1990). Based on the initial findings drawn

from Ma Yue's case (discussed in the next chapter), I was able to identify several themes that reflect pseudo-bystanders' response to corruption cases via social media. However, further evidence is needed in order to theorise these emerging themes. To do so, I had to reconfigure these preliminary coding results.

6.3.7. From First to Second Cycle Coding Methods (Second Round)

After identifying several themes in the preliminary findings, I went through a transitional activity by reorganising and reconfiguring the dataset. In this step, a technique called code mapping is used to enhance robustness to support my assertions.

6.3.7.1. Code Mapping: Re-examining Codes and Data

To adopt different levels of **Longitudinal Summary**, I proceeded to re-examine my data and the codes developed. To provide new insights that complement my initial findings, I proceeded to re-examine the data derived in Ma Yue's case and regrouped the codes previously identified. This helped to rethink how my data can be re-interpreted under a different light. It was after I categorised, re-categorised and conceptualised my data with both initial and new findings that I was ready to move on the Second Cycle Coding analysis.

6.3.8. Second Cycle Coding: Longitudinal Coding

Second Cycle Coding was used for the current research to ensure further exploration of the dataset. This is because rich insight and themes may be difficult to recognise during the initial coding analysis. For instance, I was able to analyse data that appeared in the First Cycle Coding analysis, but it was during the Second Cycle Coding analysis that I could interpret what they really implied. It also prompted me to consider what was *not said* and what was *missing*. Therefore, the Second Cycle Coding was useful in reorganising and reanalysing data coded from the First Cycle Coding methods under a different light in order to develop a more coherent metasynthesis of the data corpus (Saldaña 2015). Yates (2003) suggests that the scale of each qualitative study varies enormously by its subject of the inquiry, methodology, duration and the size of the content, and thus some small samples may encompass very large data sets even at monthly intervals. Longitudinal Coding is one method to compare these intervals of data through

time, to identify to analyse and reflect the similarities and difference “for comparative analysis and interpretation to generation inferences of change” (Saldaña 2015, p. 262).

Longitudinal Coding enables researchers to “explore change and development in individuals, groups and organisations through extended periods of time” (Saldaña 2015, p. 263). Therefore, Longitudinal Coding may be useful for my research, as I wanted to explore comments that were generated on social media platforms throughout various peaks of the selected case studies. Given the fast-paced nature of social media, responses can generate in minutes and seconds, so a lot of change can occur within the space of two months. Existing longitudinal studies that offered insights as to how it could be done in a fast moving paced environment like social media platforms remain scarce. McGeeney’s (2015) study is one exception, as it offers valuable insights based on the first-hand experience when dealing with fragments of data from Twitter, where changes can occur rapidly in seconds. It suggests that longitudinal studies can be an effective way to make sense of shared web archival data in an online sphere.

There are several ways to depict these “snapshots” in Longitudinal Coding to explore different intervals (which sometimes overlap) through time. For instance, various “snapshots” can be drawn from key events (timeline), key posts (“pools”) or people (specific pseudo-bystanders who generate the comments). As only Weibo was used to extract data in Cases One and Two, each Key post is treated as one particular “snapshot”. On the other hand, since I have used multiple social media platforms in Case Three, it was more logical to consider each social media platform as a different “snapshot” to unravel various movements and changes in the observed cases. To do so, I used the longitudinal qualitative data summary matrix template provided by Saldaña (2002) to document my observations of the case studies in this research (see Table 13).

Table 13: A Longitudinal Qualitative Data Summary Template

Longitudinal Coding	1.Increase/Emerge	2.Cumulative	3.Surge/Epiphany/ Turning Point	4.Decrease/Cease	5.Constant/ Consistent	6.Idiosyncratic	7.Missing
Code Description	What increases or emerges through time? <i>E.g.</i> , quantitative: income, qualitative: job responsibilities	What is cumulative through time? Cumulative effects result from successive experiences across a span of time. <i>E.g.</i> , improvement of techniques after a year of practice and lessons, acquired knowledge about the interpersonal relationship after a few years of dating.	What kind of surges, epiphanies or turning points occurs through time? <i>E.g.</i> , result from experiences of sufficient magnitude that they significantly alter the perceptions and/or life course of the participants. <i>E.g.</i> , graduating from school, terrorist attacks and unexpected termination from unemployment.	What decreases or ceases through time? Both quantitative and qualitative. <i>E.g.</i> , a decline in workplace morale after a new incompetent administrator is hired, decrease of illegal drug use.	What remains constant or consistent through time? Often regularised features of everyday life. <i>E.g.</i> , daily operations in a fast-food restaurant, long-term marriage to the same spouse.	What is idiosyncratic through time? Events that are not of magnitude but rather inconsistent, ever-shifting and multi-directional and/or during field-work that is unpredictable. <i>E.g.</i> , a teenager's experiments with an alternative wardrobe, occasional non-life-threatening illnesses (a cold).	What is missing through time? What is possibly and plausibly absent or missing to influence and affect participants. <i>E.g.</i> , a teacher's lack of knowledge on working with children with disabilities, incomplete standard operating procedures for an organisation.
Summary of Observations							
Differences from Previous Data Summaries							
Contextual/ Intervening Conditions Influencing Changes							
Interrelationships		Changes that Oppose/Harmonise with Human Development/Social Processes			Participant/Concept Rhythms (Phases, Stages, Cycles etc., in Progress)		
Preliminary Assertions as Data Analysis Progresses (Refer to Previous Matrices)							Through-line (in Progress)

(Source: Saldaña 2002)

Once all my “snapshots” were summarised, I could see what might have influenced changes throughout the progression of the case. Upon triangulating various evidence drawn from my observations, I was able to synthesise my findings in a robust way.

6.3.9. Synthesising Results

It was only through the synthesis of the overall results from the coding processes that I was able to make sense of various findings.

6.3.9.1. Code-weaving: Sense-Making

To better understand the data in a coherent corpus, I needed to “delimit, combine and contextualise the data at hand in local situations and with theoretical frameworks” (Lomborg 2012, p. 219-220). As this was not a straightforward process, I spent considerable time going back and forth to re-examine and triangulate my data before I could gradually see patterns emerging.

6.3.9.2. From Coding to Theorising: Theorising Findings

To theorise my findings, I must shift the results generated specifically from the individual case study towards a direction where ideas are deemed more abstract and generalised (Saldaña 2015). To do so, I incorporated findings from both First Cycle Coding and Second Cycle Coding analyses to form an overarching understanding of how each case study may contribute to addressing the research questions developed in the current study.

6.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the data analysis process used in the current research in detail. Upon trialling various coding methods, Processing Coding seemed to be the most suitable way to code the data I have gathered for the current research. Following Saldaña’s (2015) recommendations, I used the first case study, Ma Yue’s case, to develop a data analysis process. It has nine specific steps spanning across three coding stages (pre-coding, coding and recoding, post-coding) systematically (see Figure 23). These sequential steps were subsequently tested and refined in Cases Two and Three in the current research. This comprehensive data analysis process may be useful in providing methodological guidance for future netnographic studies to explore large volumes of online data extracted from social media platforms.

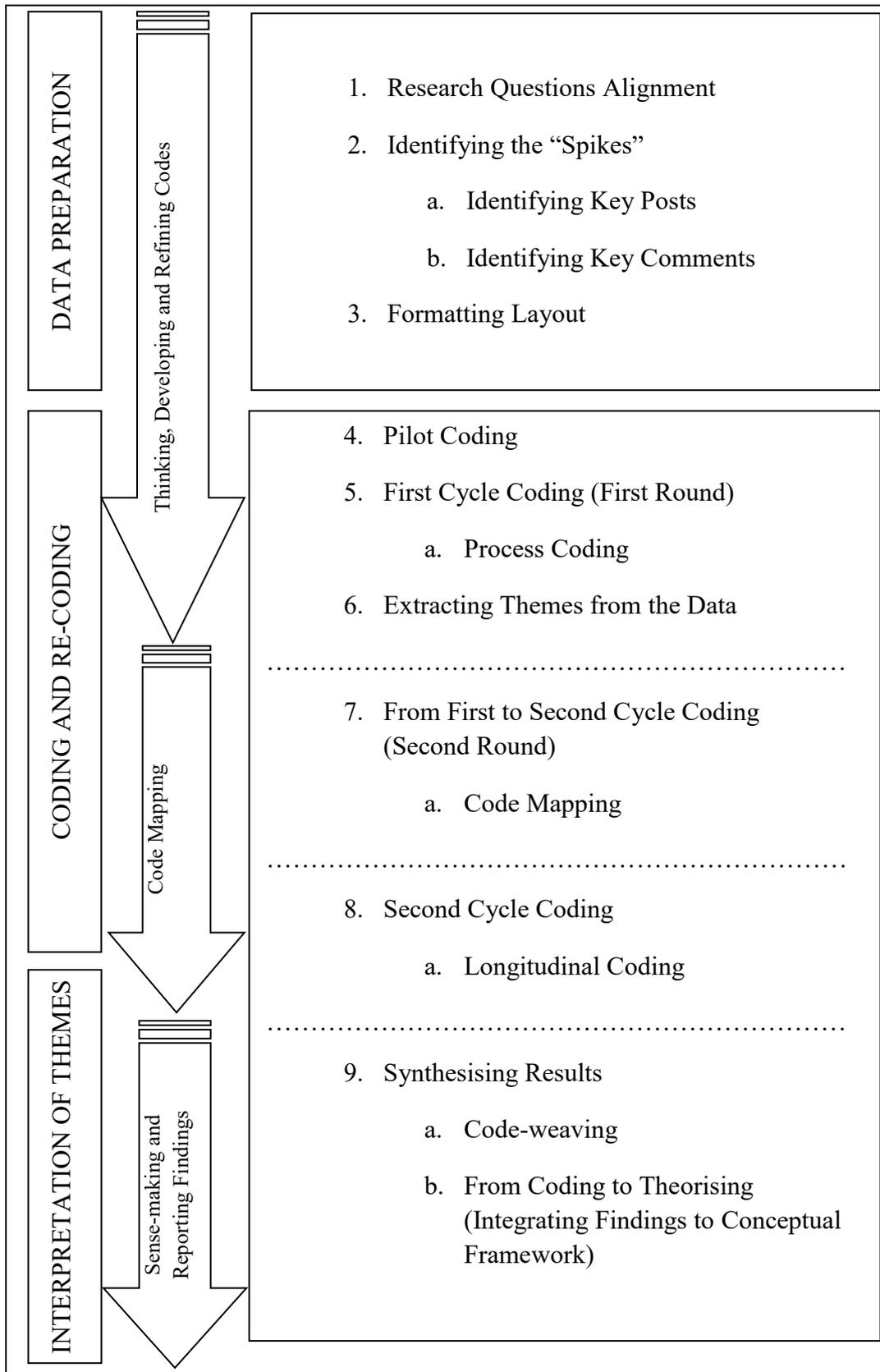


Figure 23: An Overview of the Data Analysis Process to Systematically Examine Qualitative Data Drawn from Social Media Platforms like Weibo

**Chapter Seven: Results from Ma Yue's Case – A Message
from the Grave**



Figure 24: Chapter One Cover Illustrated by Author Pei Yi Wang

7.1. Chapter Introduction

As previously discussed in Chapter Six, the first case study, Ma Yue's case was used to develop the nine specific steps in the data analysis process for the current research. Following this data analysis process, I explored Ma Yue's case data through two separate coding cycles. The First Cycle Coding analysis consists of two rounds (or iterations of coding) where I identified emerging themes. I then used Longitudinal Coding method in the Second Cycle Coding analysis to delineate further patterns to strengthen my interpretation of the results.

This chapter presents the findings drawn from Ma Yue's case in three parts. First, I will provide an overview of the series of events in Ma Yue's case that took place in a sequential timeline. I have intentionally included a series of pictures throughout this part to illustrate what it was like when I first encountered with Ma Yue's case. Then, I will discuss the case data in depth. Lastly, I will discuss the emergence of various findings in this case.

7.2. Case Background

Guloudajie Station is one the busiest subway stations that make up the second oldest inner loop in Beijing, the capital city of China. It is also where the victim of this first case study, Ma Yue, breathed his last breath. Ma Yue could have graduated from the Southwest Jiaotong University with top scores (Figure 25). He could have even married his high school sweetheart. However, Ma Yue's life abruptly ended, at the age of 21, when *Guloudajie Station* became his final destination on 23 August 2010.

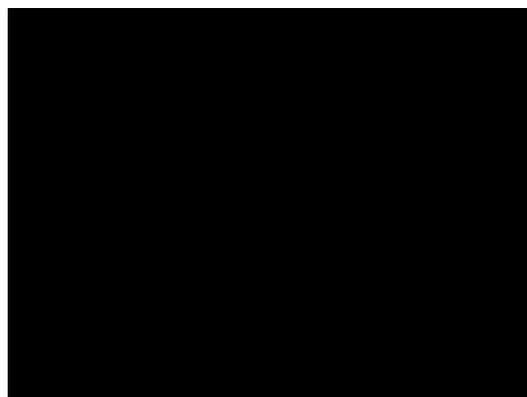


Figure 25: The Last Photo of Ma Yue, Taken Outside of His University

(Source: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/yongyuandemayue>, published on 3 September 2010)

“I’ll be home soon,” these were Ma Yue’s last words to his mother. The state-owned subway company told Ma Yue’s mother that her son had fallen onto the tracks and died from electrocution. *He fell.* End of story. However, they could not provide further explanation as to how Ma Yue was electrocuted; nor could they confirm if rescue was attempted after he fell from the subway platform. Inconveniently, the two minutes of footage caught on surveillance camera during the proximity of Ma Yue’s fatal plunge were mysteriously erased due to an unexpected “system error” (see Figure 26). This crucial piece of missing evidence would have captured and provided some insights on Ma Yue’s last moments.

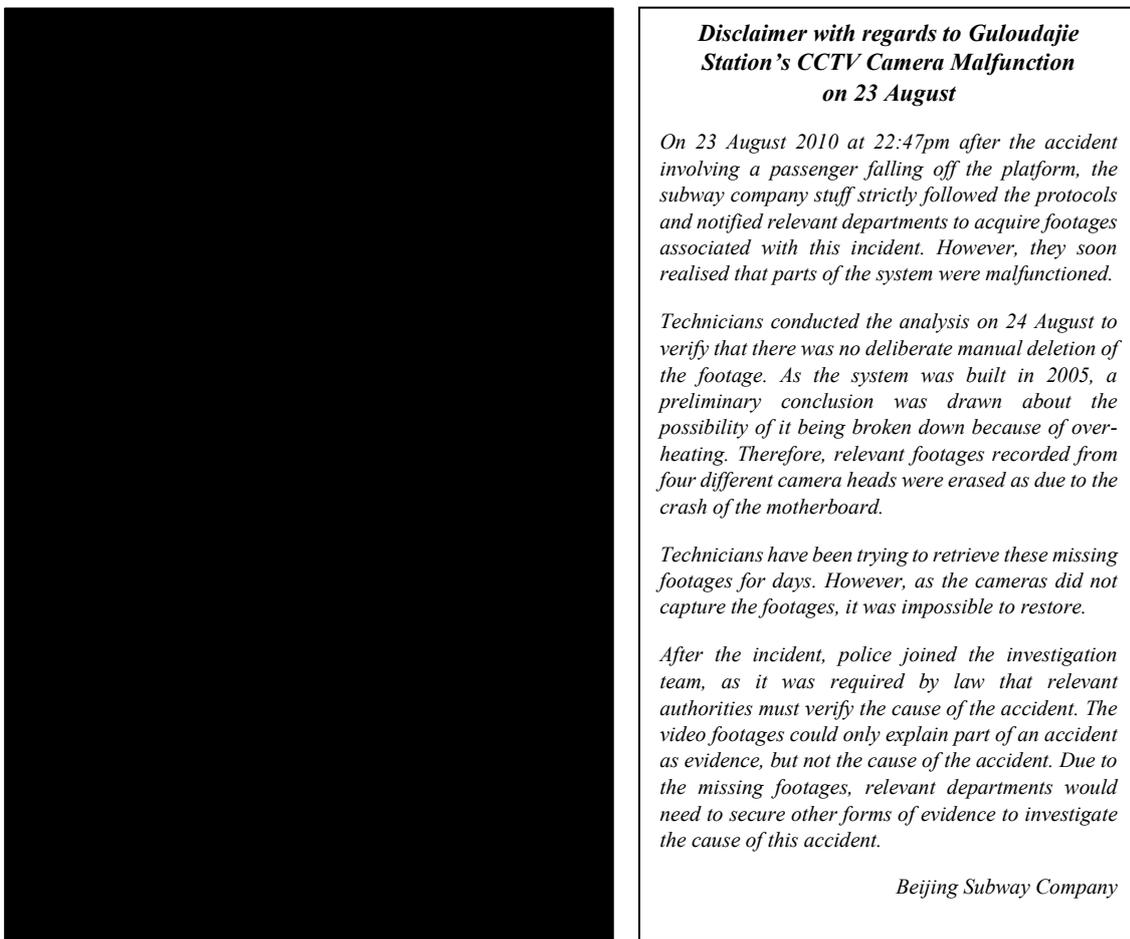


Figure 26; Disclaimer from the Beijing Subway Company Explaining the CCTV Malfunction (with Translation)

(Source: <http://weibo.com/p/1005051806644111>, published 30 August 2010)

Moreover, what startled his mother most was that Ma Yue’s glasses were missing. Ma Yue had never gone anywhere without his glasses. Despite having demanded to have her

son's body re-examined, she received the same autopsy results from the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association (CFMA), indicating that Ma Yue's death was an accident. Determined to seek closure from the state-owned subway company, Ma Yue's mother began to share the incident on Weibo. Ma Yue's mother's first microblog post was published on 2 September 2010 (Figure 27). It consists of a link to a letter, which she wrote to her beloved son the previous day, accompanied by a photo and a poem:

*Forever Ma Yue
There will be someone behind you
Thinking of you throughout dark nights
Repeatedly trying to comprehend
Sleepless
Looking at your face
No matter how much I am beaten by driving rain
I demand the truth.*

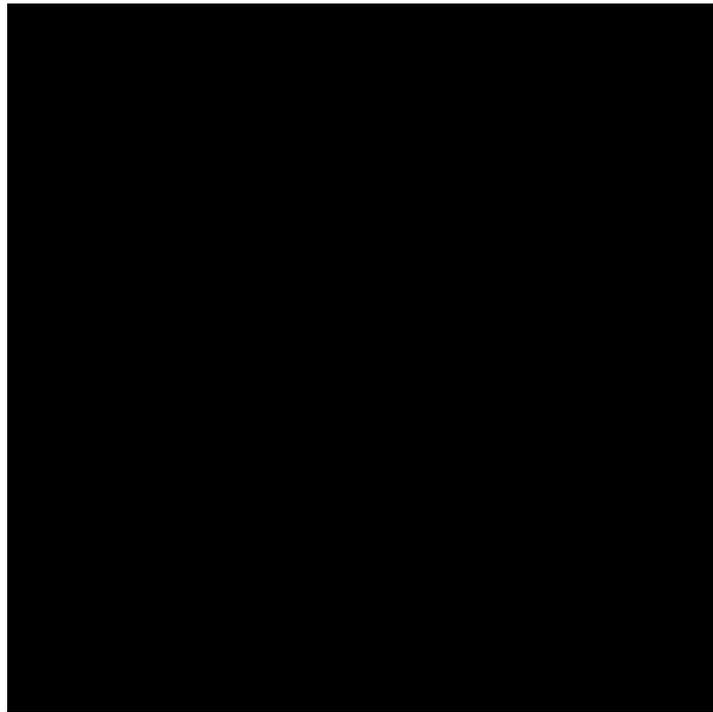


Figure 27: Photo with Poem Written by Ma Yue's Mother

(Source: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/yongyuandemayue>, published on 1 September 2010)

Subsequently, Ma Yue's mother refused to give up and formally launched a lawsuit against the state-owned subway company. Although Ma Yue's case remained unresolved, it did raise some public attention. For instance, several media outlets reported Ma Yue's

story. On Ma Yue's supposed 22nd birthday, Ma Yue's mother returned to *Guloudajie Station* to commemorate him (Figure 28) and this gesture purportedly attracted a small crowd (Figure 29).



Figure 28: Ma Yue's Mother Inside *Guloudajie Station*

(Source: <http://weibo.com/p/1005051806644111>, published 16 September 2012)

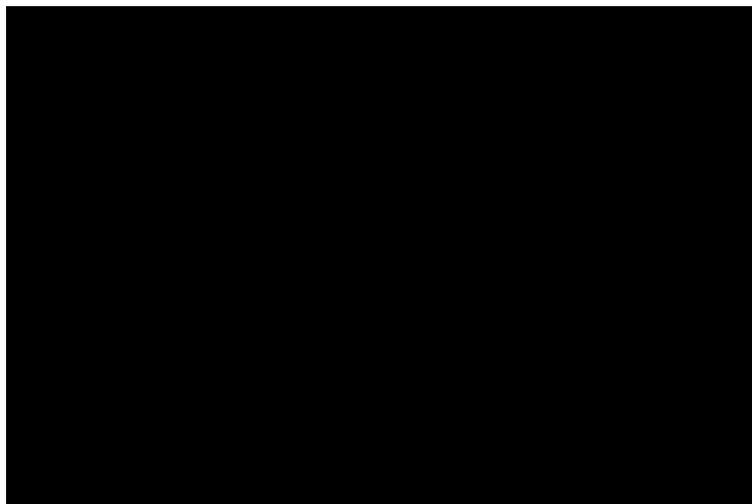


Figure 29: Commemorating Ma Yue's Birthday on 23 November 2011

(Source: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/yongyuandemayue>, published 25 November 2011)

Given that Beijing has an extensive subway infrastructure (see figure 30), Ma Yue's incident could have happened to anyone. Emerging from Ma Yue's subway accident, Ma Yue's mother initiated a petition to seek 10,000 signatures from members of the public to demand the state-owned subway company to install safety doors inside subway stations to prevent similar fatal accidents of commuters falling onto the tracks (Figure 31).

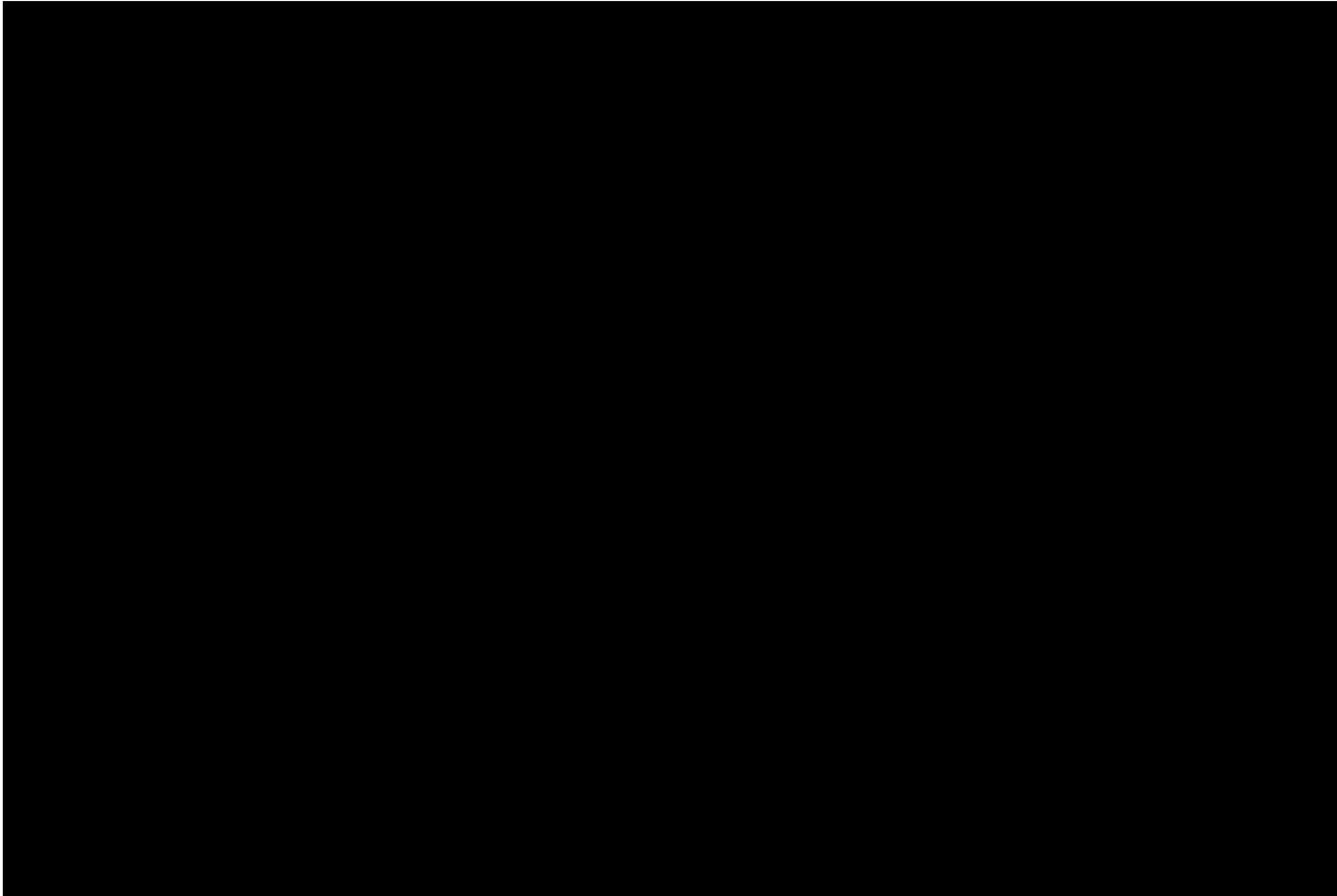


Figure 30: Beijing Subway Map

(Source: Beijing Subway, www.weibo.com/bjsubway0528)

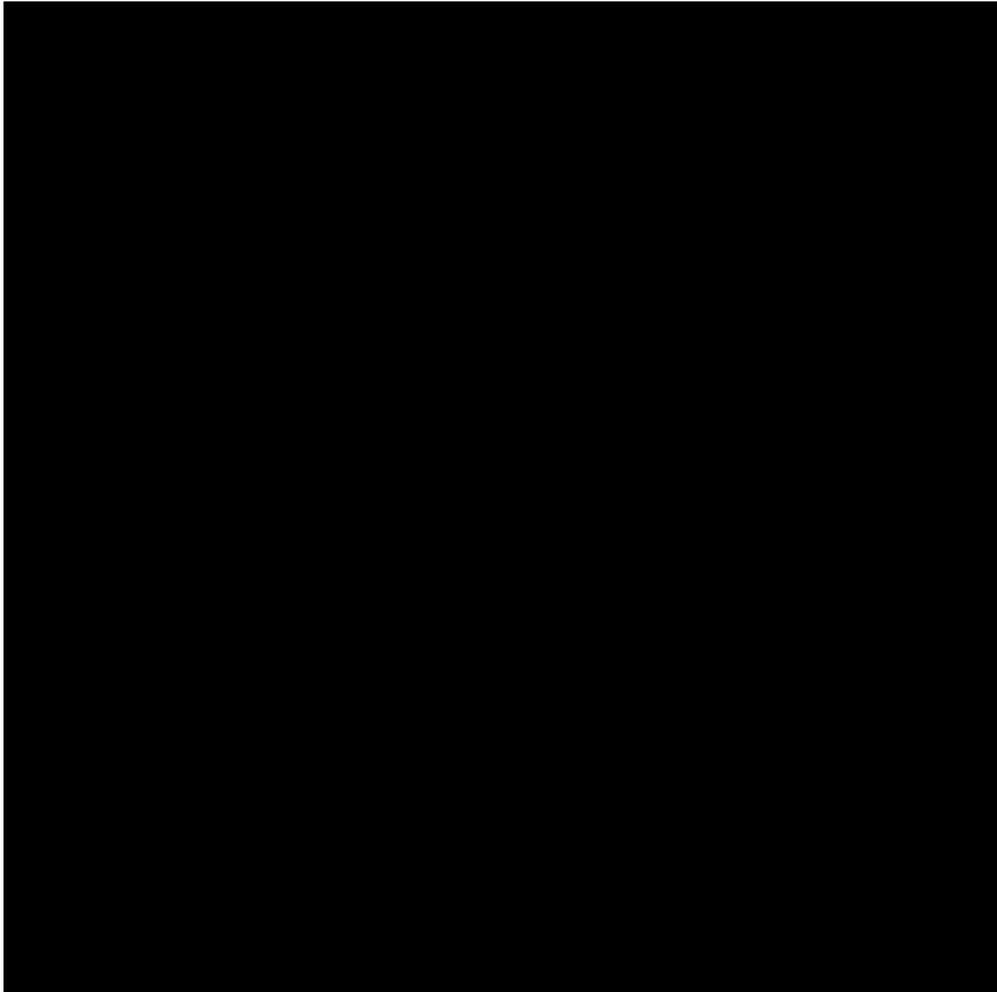


Figure 31: Ma Yue's Mother with Public Petition inside the Subway Station

(Source: <http://weibo.com/p/1005051806644111>, Published 23 November 2012)

While Ma Yue's mother continued to seek public awareness and support, it was almost three years after Ma Yue's death before the case finally became a high profile one. On 9 August 2013, Wang Xuemei, an outspoken and influential female forensic scientist became the advocate for this case and brought Ma Yue's incident to the public's attention.

Wang Xuemei, who held a prominent position as the Vice President of the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association (CFMA) at the time, had a different opinion to what the official autopsy report said about Ma Yue's death. In two separate online videos (filmed on 9 August 2013 and 26 August 2013, Wang Xuemei explained in detail that Ma Yue's corpse showed that he was electrocuted twice – the first time was *before* he had fallen into the tracks, and the second time took place *after* he fell. Wang Xuemei asserts that the

severe injury on Ma Yue's jaw was deliberate, possibly inflicted by a sharp object – which was nowhere to be found at the scene of the accident (see Figure 32).

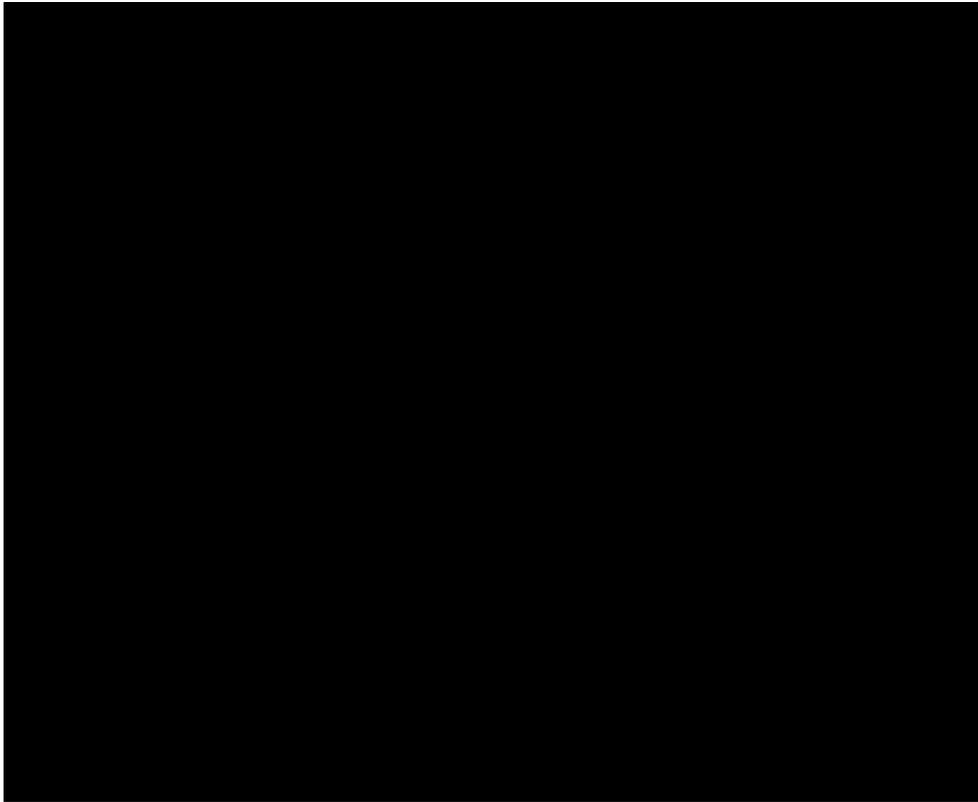


Figure 32: Photo Evidence of Ma Yue after the Accident

(Source: <http://weibo.com/p/1005051806644111>, published 10 September 2012)

Furthermore, Wang Xuemei proposed that Ma Yue's body was moved before he was electrocuted for the second time, implying that the state-owned subway company was ultimately liable for Ma Yue's death. In addition, Wang Xuemei announced her resignation as the Vice President of the CFMA in both videos, as she "did not wish to be associated with such irresponsible affiliation" (Wang 2013). While Wang Xuemei's extraordinarily outspoken videos were immediately censored and were not able to be broadcast within the Chinese online sphere, the video footages remain available on YouTube (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZqxaTUifCA>, uploaded on 19 September 2013, Figure 33).

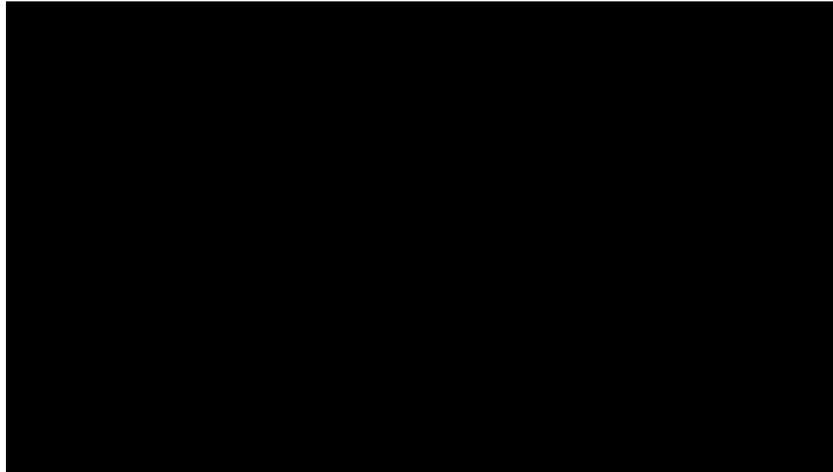


Figure 33: Video of Wang Xuemei Explaining Ma Yue’s Death in a Video on 9 August 2013

(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNkwrWZP6R4>, published 19 September 2013)

If Wang Xuemei’s speculations were true, then Ma Yue’s death would have been a serious cover-up sanctioned by the Beijing Subway Company, the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association (CFMA) and the local government – a severe case of corruption. Wang Xuemei’s extensive involvement sparked great public interest both within and outside China. For instance, Wang Xuemei was featured in a Hong Kong newspaper after her outspoken video (Figure 34). Wang Xuemei’s resignation was also reported in *The Telegraph*, which is based in the United Kingdom (Wu 2013).

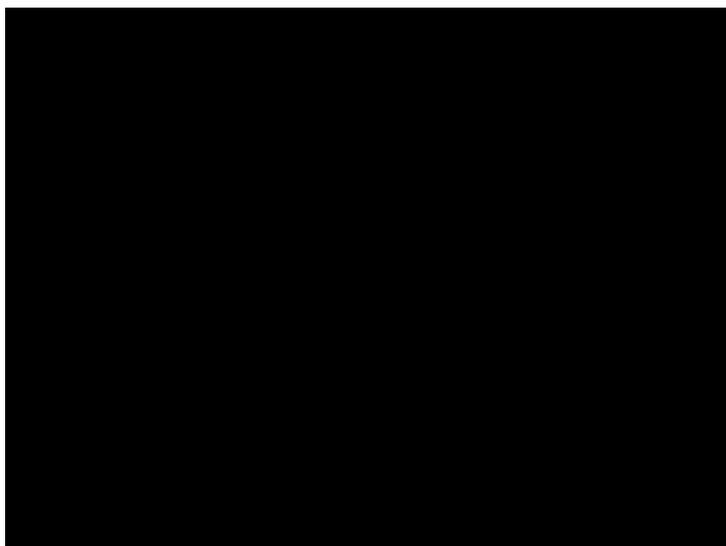


Figure 34: Wang Xuemei Featuring in a Hong Kong Newspaper

*(Source: <http://blog.sina.com.cn/yongyuandemayue>, Translated titled: *The Most Vocal Forensic Scientist: Thirty Percent of China’s Corpse Verifications are Incorrect*, published 30 September 2013)*

Perhaps the truth behind Ma Yue's fatal accident inside one of Beijing's busiest subway stations will be unravelled one day. Perhaps things occurred just as the way Wang Xuemei had speculated. Perhaps that was Ma Yue's final message to his mother. Perhaps Ma Yue's mother (Figure 35) will never gain closure, and the truth behind Ma Yue's death inside one of Beijing's busiest subway stations will be forever buried, six feet under.

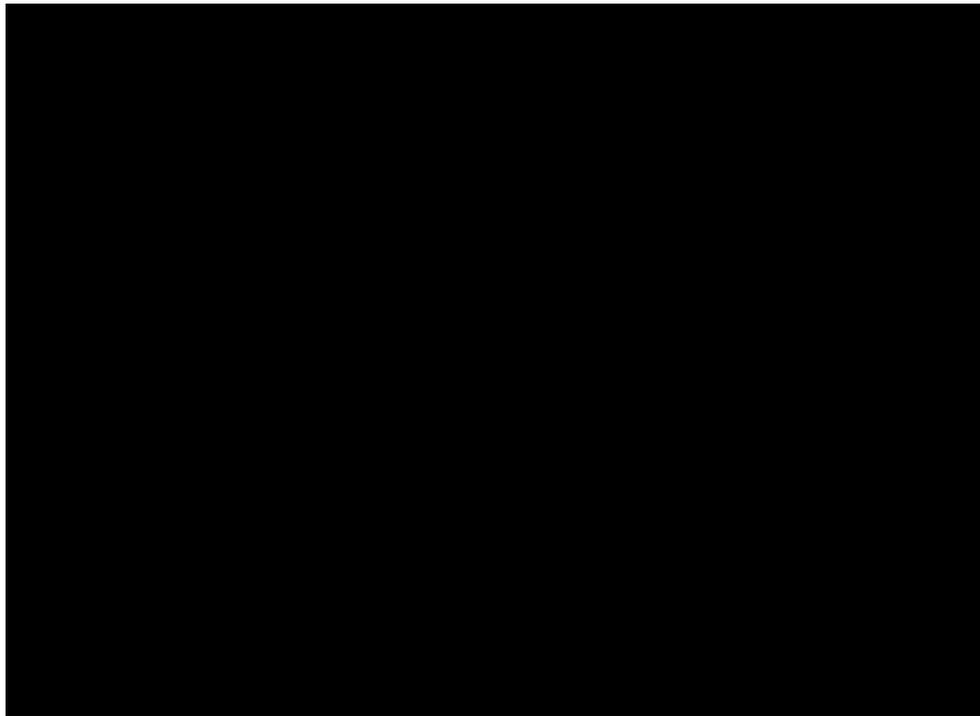


Figure 35: Ma Yue and His Mother

(Source: Ma Yue's Mother's Blog, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/yongyuandemayue>, published on 10 May 2013)

7.3. Case Data Overview

From September 2010 to Oct 2013, Ma Yue's mother had published 2,317 posts on her Weibo account. Together, these posts attracted a total of 16,014 comments. To locate where the "spikes" are, I proceeded to record high traffic volume posts and found that only 74 posts published by Ma Yue's mother, which attracted 20 or more comments during this time. Table 14 presents an overview of the social media activities surrounding Ma Yue's case based on this observation.

Table 14: Ma Yue’s Case Timeline

Case Timeline	Number of Posts which Received 20+ Comments	Total Number of Corresponding Comments	Remarks of External Events
Aug-2010	-	-	Ma Yue’s accident took place on 23/08/2010
Sept-2010	2	55	Ma Yue’s mother created an account on social media platform Weibo and started to blog about Ma Yue’s ordeal
Aug-2011	11	1397	Ma Yue’s one year death anniversary on 23/08/2011
Sept-2011	4	141	Summary of incident provided by Ma Yue’s mother on Weibo 23/11/2011
Oct-2011	1	28	
Nov-2011	2	2231	
Dec-2011	5	337	
Jan-2012	4	248	
Mar-2012	1	92	Ma Yue’s second year death anniversary on 23/08/2012
Apr-2012	4	157	
Jun-2012	1	28	
Jul-2012	1	45	
Aug-2012	5	1086	
Sep-2012	1	34	Ma Yue’s mother launched a subway safety petition on 23/11/2012
Oct-2012	3	125	
Nov-2012	3	1045	
Dec-2012	4	523	Wang Xuemei featured in two online videos in August 2013 to explain her analysis on Ma Yue’s death based on evidence provided by Ma Yue’s corpse. Wang Xuemei resigned from being the president of China’s Forensic Medical Association 17/08/2013 Third year anniversary since Ma Yue’s death 28/08/2013
Feb-2013	1	34	
Aug-2013	11	936	
Sep-2013	10	726	Ma Yue’s case was featured on a mainstream media television program on 14/09/2013
Total	74	9,268	

From Table 14, we can see that some of the posts received a lot more responses than others (see highlighted values). I have also noted down some relevant external events to shed light on these “spikes”. For instance, the first “spike” seems to coincide with Ma Yue’s

one year death anniversary on 23 August 2011. Together, the 74 high traffic volume posts published by Ma Yue’s mother have attracted approximately 9,268 comments (see Figure 36).

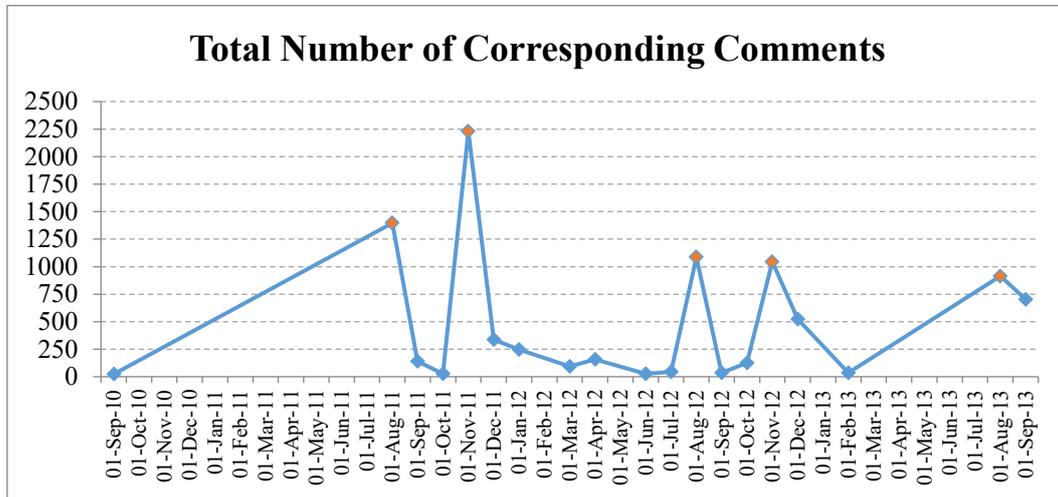


Figure 36: Ma Yue’s Case Time Series Data, Corresponding Comments for Posts with High Traffic Volume

Based on the corresponding responses of these high traffic volume posts as shown in Figure 36, I have identified five obvious “spikes” throughout the Ma Yue’s case timeline. Interestingly, while two particular posts published in November 2011 generated the highest number of comments, most of the frequent highest traffic volume posts took place around August 2011 ($n = 11$), August 2013 ($n = 11$) and September 2013 ($n = 10$) (see Figure 37).

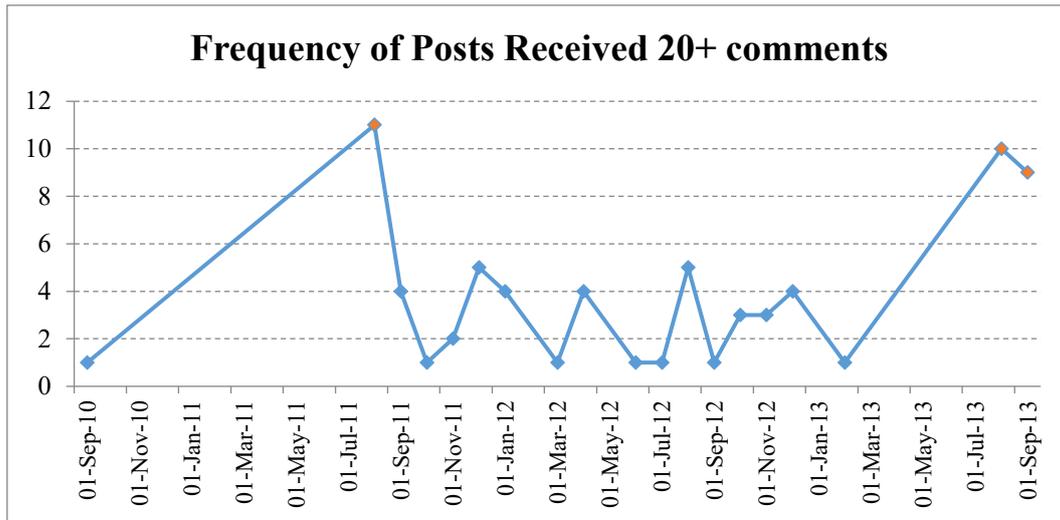


Figure 37: Ma Yue’s Case Time Series Data, Frequency of Posts with High Traffic Volume

Figure 37 illustrates that while Ma Yue’s case suddenly attracted public interest a year after Ma Yue’s death, then again in 2013. I was particularly intrigued to find out about the latest waves of “spikes” in August and September 2013, two years after the initial “spike” and three years after Ma Yue’s death. Did Wang Xuemei – the prominent forensic scientist’s involvement influence other Weibo users to engage in online discussions or was it something else? It would be insightful to delve into the posts and comments that are associated with all the “spikes” of this case. However, it would be impractical (in terms of time and effort in relation to the scope of the current study) to analyse all 9,268 corresponding comments.

Therefore, instead of examining every “spike” over the entire course of Ma Yue’s case, I mainly focused on the proximity of the latest “spike” in order to capture the most current, reliable and accessible online data. While the findings emerged from this observed period may not speak for all the other peaks in this case, they nevertheless provide valuable insights to what may have possibly contributed to ignite, maintain and extinguish various “spikes” in Ma Yue’s case. With this objective in mind, posts and comments generated from the proximity of the latest “spikes” (between August to October 2013) via Ma Yue’s Mother’s Weibo account were copied and stored in Microsoft Word documents (about 532 pages in total) for further analysis. Figure 38 captures the number of “likes”, “shares” and “comments” generated during the observed period.

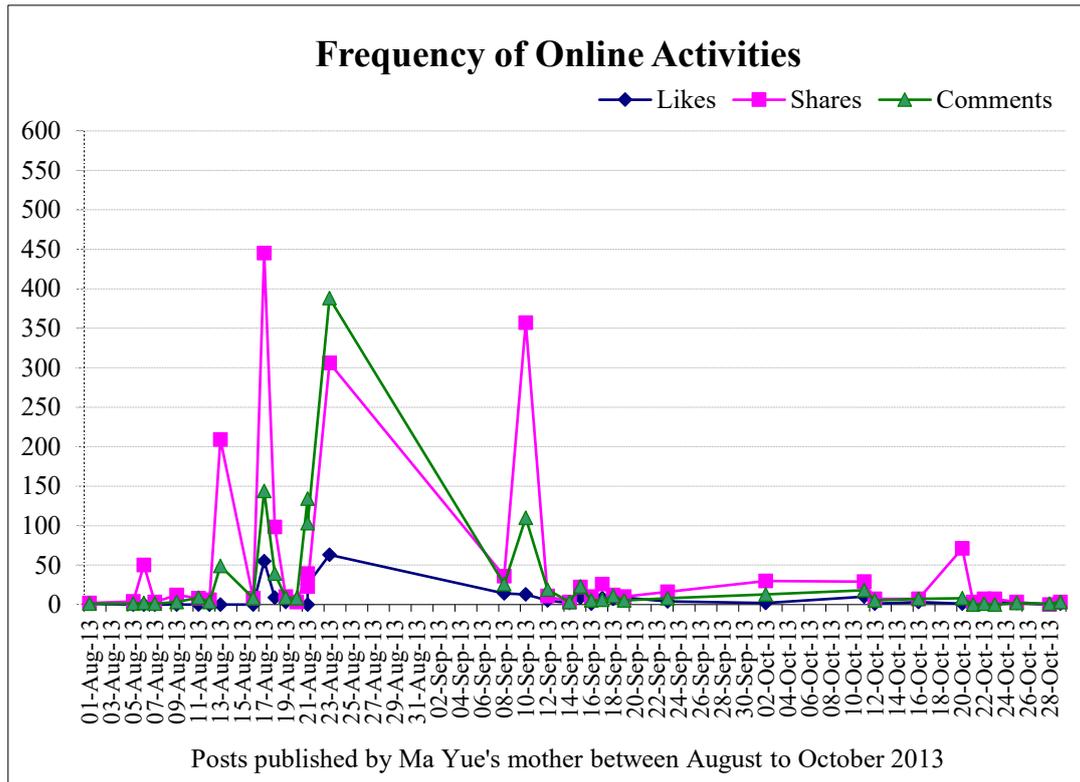


Figure 38: An Overview of Online Responses to Ma Yue’s Mother’s Weibo Posts from Aug-Oct 2013

Figure 38 shows that four noticeable peaks of online activities are scattered around 13 August, 17 August, 23 August and 10 September in 2013. From these, I delineated seven Key posts published by Ma Yue’s mother between August and October in 2013 that are associated with the identified “spikes”. For instance, a post published on 17 August 2013 had the most “shares”, as it was circulated 445 times on Weibo. Another post that was published on 23 August 2013 attracted both the highest number of “likes” ($n = 63$) and comments ($n = 388$). However, these numbers alone are insufficient to offer further insightful information to answer my research questions. Hence, I will only focus on the corresponding comments received from the Key posts for the purpose of my data analysis (see Table 15).

Table 15: Key Posts between August-October, 2013 via Ma Yue's mother's Weibo account

Key Post	Date and time published	Description of the Key post	Total corresponding comments
Key Post 1	13/08/2013_11:59	Provided details of the upcoming court hearing with a picture of the court hearing form that stated the date and time of the hearing.	49
Key Post 2	17/08/2013_23:02	Shared screenshots of an earlier post that got censored and deleted by Weibo. (This deleted post was originally published on 17/08/2013 at 9:55 am with a link to a video with Wang Xuemei explaining Ma Yue's case and her resignation announcement from the CFMA)	144
Key Post 3	21/08/2013_00:15	Reply to another Weibo user and a link to an article that is criticising Wang Xuemei	134
Key Post 4	23/08/2013_20:24	Real-time update of an offline event, commemorating Ma Yue near the Guloudajie subway station with a photo of the scene	388
Key Post 5	08/09/2013_16:19	Shared a video link of Wang Xuemei's video script in a video she made on 26/08/2013 that explained Ma Yue's case	82
Key Post 6	10/09/2013_13:32	Shared a text-only link of Wang Xuemei's video script that explained Ma Yue's case	97
Key Post 7	14/09/2013_12:41	Reminder of a mainstream TV program that is currently airing that talked about Ma Yue's case	329
Total			1,223

Remarkably, Table 15 shows that four out of the seven Key posts identified in Ma Yue's case revolves around Wang Xuemei's involvement (highlighted in bold text). In particular, I found the Key post published on 17 August 2013 thought-provoking. The content of this post captures a screenshot of a deleted post that was originally published earlier on the same day at 9:55 am. However, the original post, which supposedly consists of a link to a video featuring Wang Xuemei's analysis that explains Ma Yue's case and the announcement of her resignation from the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association (CFMA), was removed from Weibo approximately 13 hours after it appeared. Consequently, when Ma Yue's mother realised this, she attempted to share the same video again at 22:51 pm but failed to do so. Hence, she resorted to posting a screenshot of her original post at 23:02 pm to illustrate that the original content was intentionally censored:

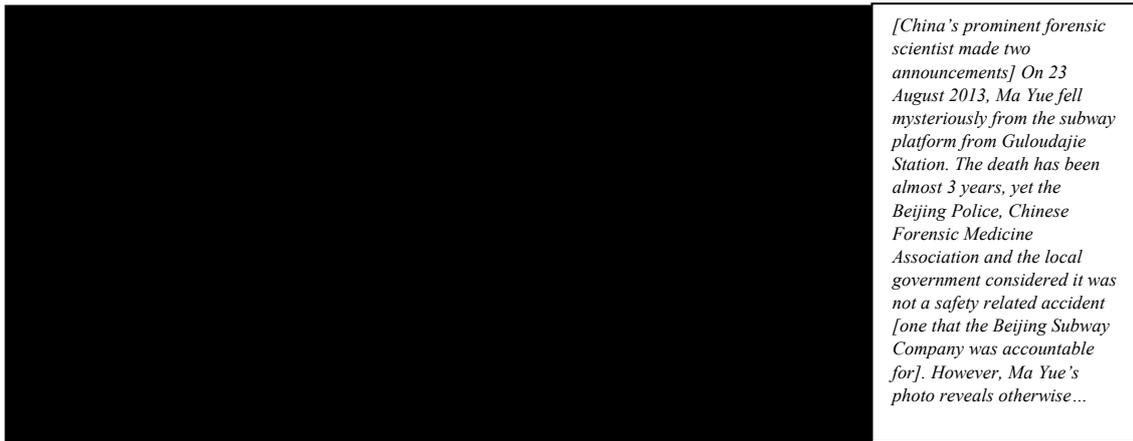


Figure 39: Screenshot of Deleted Post that was Published on 17 August 2013, with Translation

(Source: Ma Yue's Mother's Weibo)

Figure 39 shows that the deleted post could have been the real epitome of a “spike” in Ma Yue’s case as it had generated 435 “likes”, “read” 19,670,000 times and “shared” 9,378 times. It had also attracted 2,018 comments within 13 hours, before its deletion. If all the corresponding comments were still accessible for this deleted post, it would have been incredibly insightful for this case. Yet, working with web archive data can be seen as a major setback for netnographic studies, especially when online data is drawn from a country like China, where internet censorship is unavoidable. Yet this piece of information is important, as it highlights that the high level of public attention received by Ma Yue’s case meant that it also attracted vigilant censorship, possibly by the Chinese government.

While I have successfully captured 1,223 comments that are associated with the Key posts identified, not all comments are useful. To delineate potentially useful comments, I have filtered out several types of comments that consist of (1) emoticons only; (2) those using information from another comment (repost); (3) those that tagged others Weibo users only; (4) those that appeared as an effortless message that consisted of five words or less (*e.g.*, fighting/take care/respect/support). This is because these types of comments are not adequately reflective of pseudo-bystanders’ “involvement” in corruption cases in a social media context. Table 16 shows that this process narrowed down the responses to 872 comments that are potentially useful for my data analysis.

Table 16: Breakdown of Comments in Response to High-Traffic Volume Posts Associated with the “Spikes”

High-traffic Volume Posts	Total Corresponding Comments	Potentially Useful Comments
13/08/2013_11:59	49	25
17/08/2013_23:02	144	107
21/08/2013_00:15	134	126
23/08/2013_20:24	388	244
08/09/2013_16:19	82	38
10/09/2013_13:32	97	57
14/09/2013_12:41	329	275
Total	1,213	872

It is worthwhile to note that although the post published on the 3rd anniversary of Ma Yue’s death, on 23 August 2013 at 20:24 pm received the highest number of comments (=388), 144 of these comments are deemed “effortless”, as they came across more like a social obligation. For instance, many individuals simply posted straightforward messages that were written along the lines of “rest in peace”, or have used the emoticon of a candle “🕯️” to express their condolences. These effortless but nice greetings/gestures reminded me of online “friends” who would wish others’ “happy birthday” on social media platforms such as Facebook. This is especially so when people are *reminded* of such occasions (e.g., a “notification” on Facebook”). Therefore, their responses resembled some sort of reflexes to engage in pro-social behaviour that is primarily triggered by prompts, but may not become subsequently involved.

However, some stand-alone comments appeared to be somewhat thoughtful and caring. For example:

XHISXH : Aunty Meng, I am aware of your experiences for a very long time, I am powerless to assist you, I only hope that you take care of your health, hope that you will obtain the truth soon. [2013-8-17 20:14]”

赵晓秋 flysh : After I saw the news of Wang Xuemei’s resignation, I crazily searched for related

information, and searched a program where Wang Xuemei appeared in a news program based in Jiangxi, on that show, she analysed the problems apparent in Ma Yue's case. It made me cry, Mother Meng, fighting. [2013-8-19 15:42]

As noted in the above examples, although Weibo user *XHISXH* only made one comment on 17 August 2013, his/her message implied that he/she had been following this case for a long time. Similarly, the only comment made by *赵晓秋 flysh* on 19 August 2013 revealed that he/she not only went on to search for more related information with regards to Ma Yue's case, he/she also went through an emotional experience in real-life. Therefore, I have taken into consideration that it is possible for pseudo-bystanders who made a once-off comment to reflect a high level of involvement.

While the majority of individuals only commented once, I have also noticed some repeat engagement. Therefore, I decided to record the number of comments made by each to get a general idea about their online engagement in response to Ma Yue's case (see Table 17).

Table 17: Pseudo-bystanders Who Responded to Ma Yue's Case from August to October 2013

Number of Comments Made	Number of People
1	1,116
2	202
3	71
4	28
5	23
6	16
7	7
8	4
9	5
10	4
10<20	7
>20	3

Between August and October 2013, Ma Yue's mother has published 150 posts that revolve around Ma Yue's case. Together, these posts attracted approximately 1,486 online participants to respond, who collectively published 2,494 comments. Interestingly,

the cohort that only commented once is about three times higher than those who made more than one comment. Together, only 14 respondents have commented 10 times or more throughout the observed period. To my surprise, it was Ma Yue's mother who actually responded the most to her own posts during this time ($n = 112$ comments). This observation suggests that the ongoing interaction by the victim may spark further online engagement from others via social media.

In general, the number of participants and comments they generate may indicate where the "spikes" of online activities are located in Ma Yue's case. However, it is their actual comments that reflect the extent of their involvement in response to the case. Therefore, I proceeded to explore relevant comments in depth.

7.4. Preliminary Findings – Bystanders' Online Action

Preliminary findings from Ma Yue's case are drawn from the two rounds of coding in the First Cycle Coding analysis. I then re-examined the clusters of key comments in the Second Cycle Coding to detect changes that may inform bystanders' online intervention over time. From these analyses, several themes emerged. The preliminary results from Ma Yue's case indicated that pseudo-bystanders tend to adopt actions that can be grouped under six major categories to address corruption cases via social media. These categories are "*accepting*", "*acknowledging*", "*questioning*", "*expressing support*", "*exemplifying collective action*" and "*stating random comments*". Ma Yue's case also illustrates that the stances that pseudo-bystanders adopt and their levels of involvement seemed to influence their online action. Furthermore, results in Ma Yue's case highlights that mainstream media's involvement seems to dilute and diffuse pseudo-bystanders' responsibility in becoming involved.

7.4.1. Findings from the First Cycle Coding Analysis

In the First Cycle Coding analysis, I examined comments published by pseudo-bystanders via Weibo in response to Ma Yue's case. Subcodes, codes, subcategories and categories were developed during this step so that I was able to group information in a cohesive way to understand how pseudo-bystanders become involved to address corruption cases. I will now discuss the findings that emerged from the First Cycle Coding analysis.

7.4.1.1. Differentiating Online Action

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Six, there are three different types of comments (*i.e.*, *C0 comments* (comments that did not generate subsequent responses), *C1 comments* (comments that sparked subsequent responses) and *C2 comments* (comments that are triggered by another comment)). Ma Yue’s case shows that the frequency categories that capture *C0* and *C1 comments* are very different. For instance, the majority of *C0 comments* fall under the categories of either “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*” or “*questioning*” (see Figures 40).

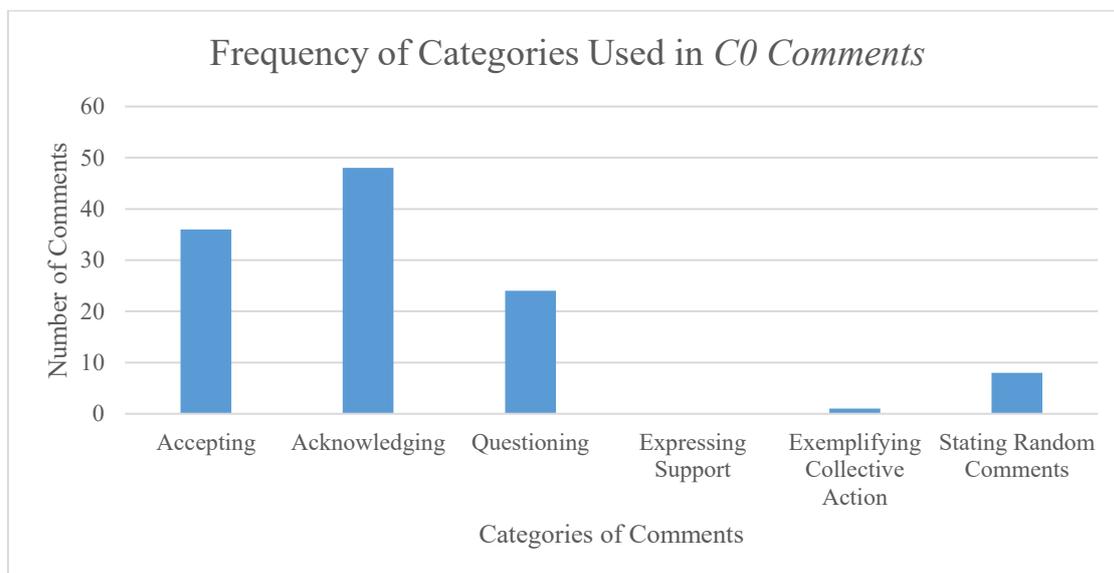


Figure 40: Frequency of Categories Used in *C0* Comments

As *C0 comments* did not generate subsequent online discussions, it suggests that bystanders’ were less involved. The following example illustrates this:

painterf: Aunty, fighting! I have read about your interview in the <Nanfang Weekend>, my mum is similar age to you, if I was to encounter such accident, my mum would be devastated for sure, even just thinking about it makes me want to cry... hope you can hold on, I will keep following you! [2013-9-11 00:35]

zheng 双 \ : When Ma Yue sees that his mother is so sad every day, and so tired, but couldn’t comfort her by giving her a hug, Ma Yue sees how exhausted his mum gets in searching for the truth, but being bullied by those conscience got eaten by dogs on the journey or searching for the truth. Ma Yue wants to stay with

mum, Ma Yue didn't want to die, Ma Yue wants to be with his mum until she gets old, Ma Yue is crying, Ma Yue's heart is bleeding. [2013-8-24 00:28]

小董爷儿儿儿儿: oh I remembered, you were there at Line 2's Guloudajie Station's platform two during the last train and asked if I have witnessed the incident! Even now this matter is still unsolved? [2013-8-20 12:34]

宋鹿儿: Hello Ma Yue's mother, yesterday for the first time I have been reading about the incident of your son in detail, I want to express some personal opinion. I believe that your son did not commit suicide also, that was obviously suspicious. I have the following suggestions: I think your son's death is very complicated, you should perhaps visit his friends and colleagues, if it's not suicide I believe it is related to the people around him, maybe you have been looking in the wrong direction... [2013-8-27 09:21]

半夜爱吃大快活: Not sure if other countries would have similar cases to draw as reference, I want to know if Auntie Meng has hired electricians to test whether the subway station platform is subjected to power leakage, whether this leakage would be occasional, or exist in a weak voltage, when the incident occurred whatever circumstances that would cause the voltage to increase and hurt people... Indeed, everybody understood the facts, but the subway company is lying with their eyes wide opened. This is the end of this government. [2013-9-22 06:24]

The above examples show that pseudo-bystanders may sympathise with the victim and/or victim's associate(s) and feel sorry for them to an extent, but limit their involvement in further addressing the issue. In other words, these pseudo-bystanders tend to accept that Ma Yue's case is unjust. Other pseudo-bystanders may acknowledge Ma Yue's case and even express solidarity, but still, they show no intention to subvert the situation. While those who question the case and relevant stakeholders may seem a bit more engaged, their scepticism remains somewhat passive. Thus, they are also unlikely to propel further engagement from other online users to address corruption cases in the same space. Figure 41 shows the breakdown of the most frequently used categories in *C0 comments*, which I have identified so far.

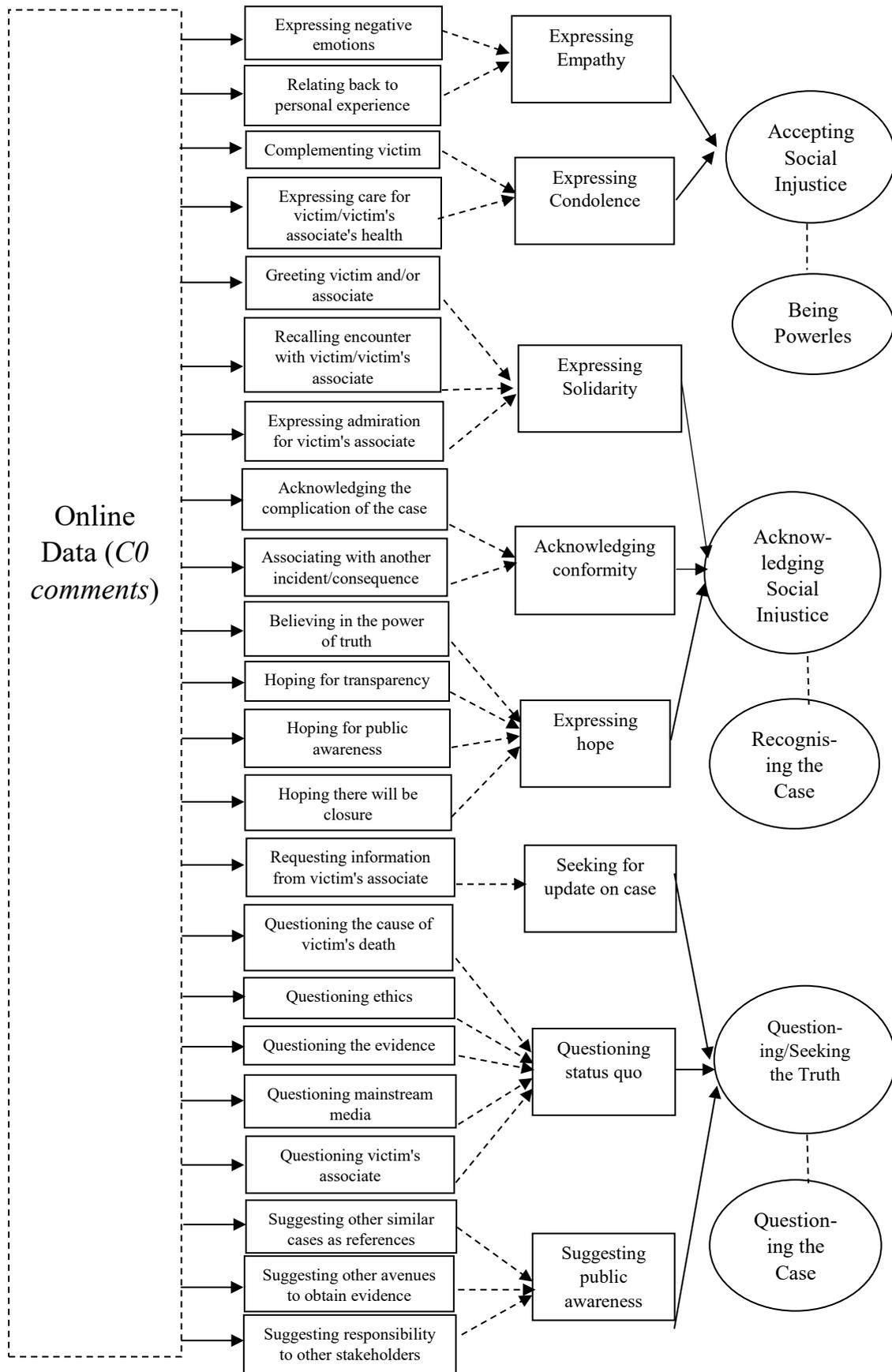


Figure 41: Breakdown of Categories that Reflect Bystanders' Online Action in C0 comments

However, some *C0* comments do not fall neatly into the online action as categorised in Figure 40. The following examples are some comments that are considered “random”.

thug15: Ma Yue’s mother, I express my respect to you, a mother so great and brave and fighting against power that is shameless, in China I don’t believe in people, but I believe in karma, I don’t believe that they can sleep well when covering their conscience, Ma Yue is lucky to have you, but please take care of your body, you are Ma Yue’s last hope, eat breakfast lunch and dinner steadily, live well, then you can see how karma strike back at these people. [2013-9-8 21:20]

徐小力: Ma Yue’s mother, you should convert to Buddhism! There is karma in everything! Amitabha! [2013-8-24 20:08]

chenchen19: Recently I’m concerned about Ma Yue, I’m a Buddhist, many Buddhists have collectively and voluntarily pray for Ma Yue, also hope that you can treat yourself well so that no more dark incidents like this would occur again in mankind. Amitabha. Amitabha. [2013-8-28 16:50]

喜悦小羊: Very chilling... I can only pray for Wang Xuemei and Ma Yue’s mother, hope you are safe. Only God can help you guys. Amen! [2013-9-10 14:05]

These comments are deemed “random” as pseudo-bystanders tried to introduce irrelevant topics in their online discussion. Thus, I have coded these comments as follows:

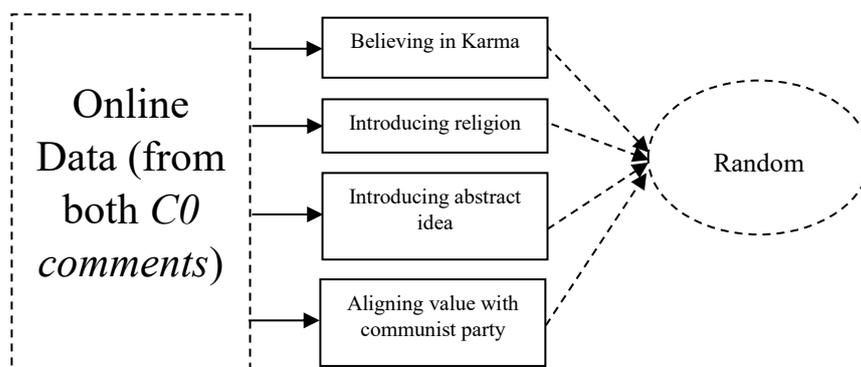


Figure 42: Breakdown of the Random Category in Ma Yue’s Case

While these codes illustrated in Figure 42 may look odd at first glance, Saldaña (2015) suggests that not all patterns are nicely shaped and orchestrated. Perhaps randomness itself *is* a pattern for some of these *C0* comments, as these messages are unlikely to attract further discussions because it was difficult for others to decipher or relate to in the first place. To find out how this may be different to *C1* comments (comments that generated subsequent online discussions), I followed the same systematic approach to examine these responses.

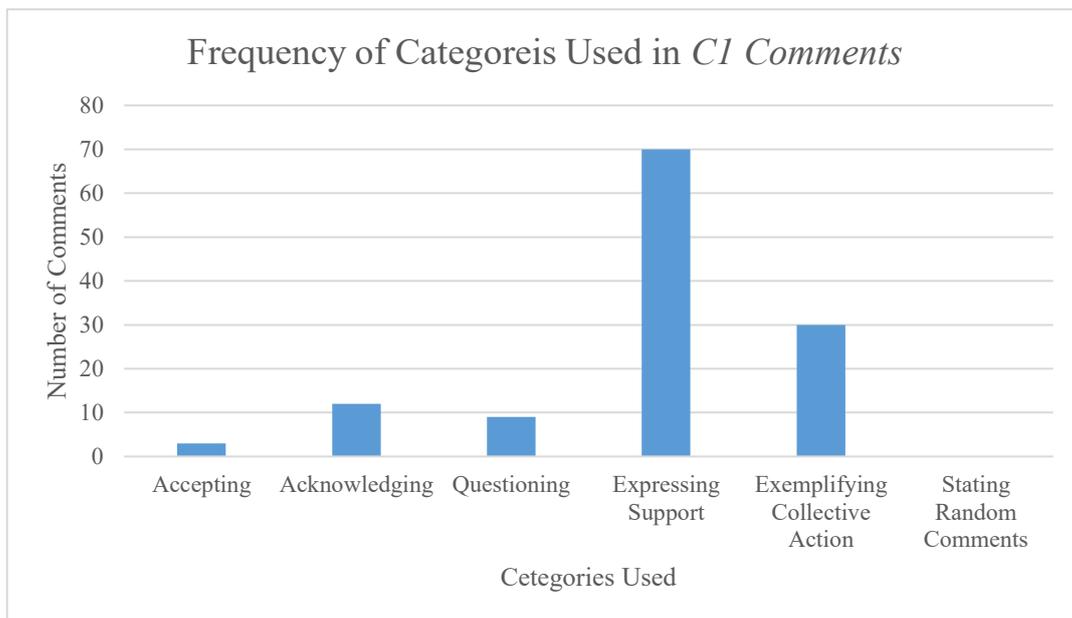


Figure 43: Frequency of Codes Used in *C1* Comments by Category

Apart from a few categories that were similar to those noted in the *C0* comments, most categories derived from the *C1* comments fell under “*expressing support*” and “*exemplifying collective action*”. For instance, the following examples illustrate a pro-victim sentiment by expressing support:

赵析很低调: What a heroine! China needs this kind of Ms. Wang Xuemei positive energy!! If China’s public security law, and government is similar to Wang Xuemei, then China will not have all these miscarriages of justices and unfairness [2013-8-18 09:10]

三两牛肉干海带米粉: Aunty Wang Xuemei has been working as a forensic scientist for the past few decades and can feel the natural order, of course, it

also influences her beliefs. No matter what they say outside, aunty Wang Xuemei is always a forensic scientist that are persistent in the truth and searching for the truth. I believe in Aunty Wang Xuemei. [2013-8-21 00:31]

hong9431 : When the accident happened in at a subway station the subway company escapes the responsibility, the police's investigation is not as good as a mother, must investigate properly. [2013-9-14 13:06]

These comments show that when pseudo-bystanders sided with the victim and/or victim's associate(s) in Ma Yue's case, their response often explicitly advocate solidarity. They may do so by approving the action taken by the victim's mother or victims' associate (in the case, Wang Xuemei), disapproving their opposition, or vice versa. Two main categories emerged from *C1 comments* drawn from Ma Yue's case. The first group is "Expressing Support" and the second group is "Exemplifying Collective Action"; Figures 44 and Figure 45 shows the breakdown of these categories respectively.

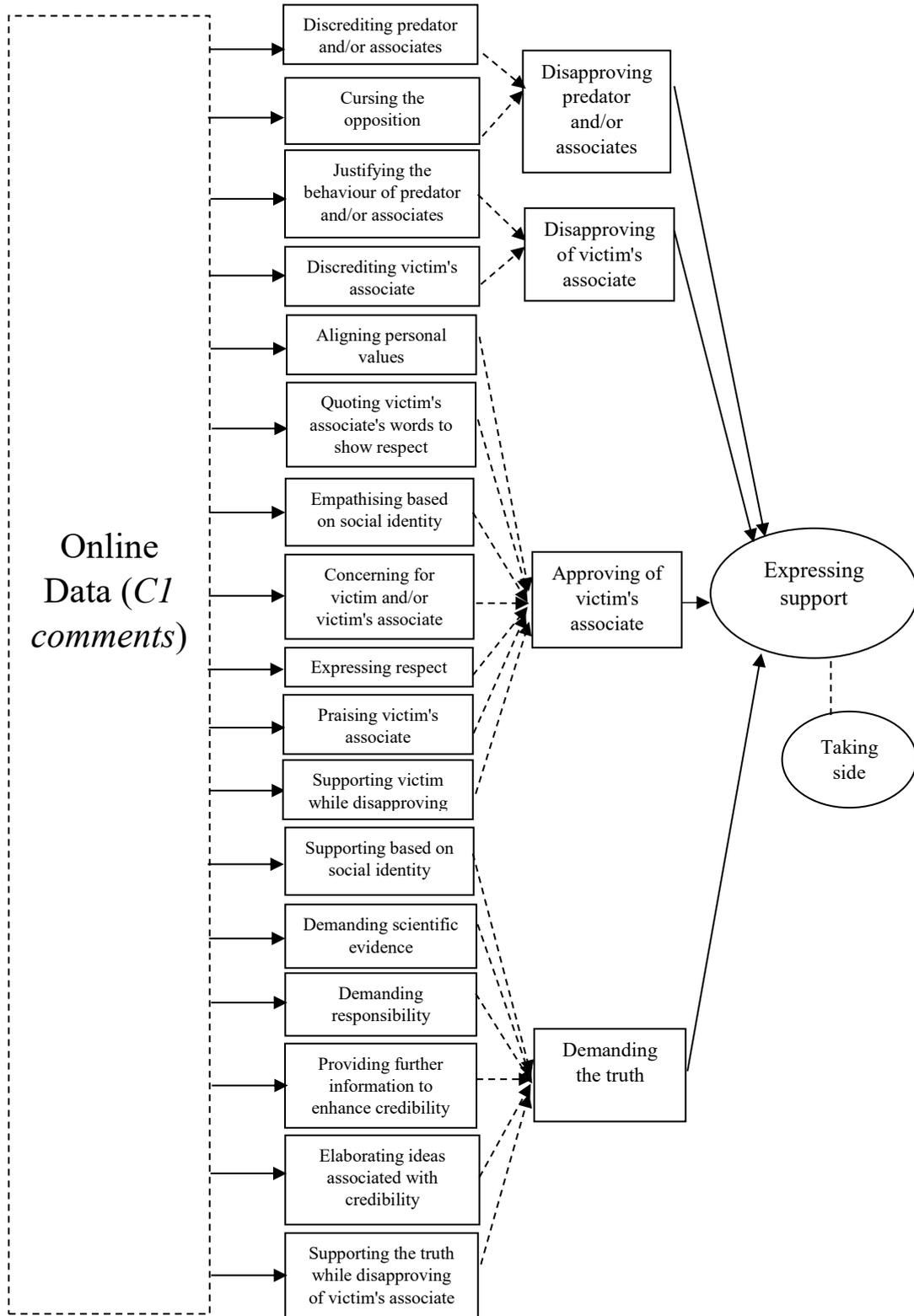


Figure 44: Online Action Identified in CI comments (a)

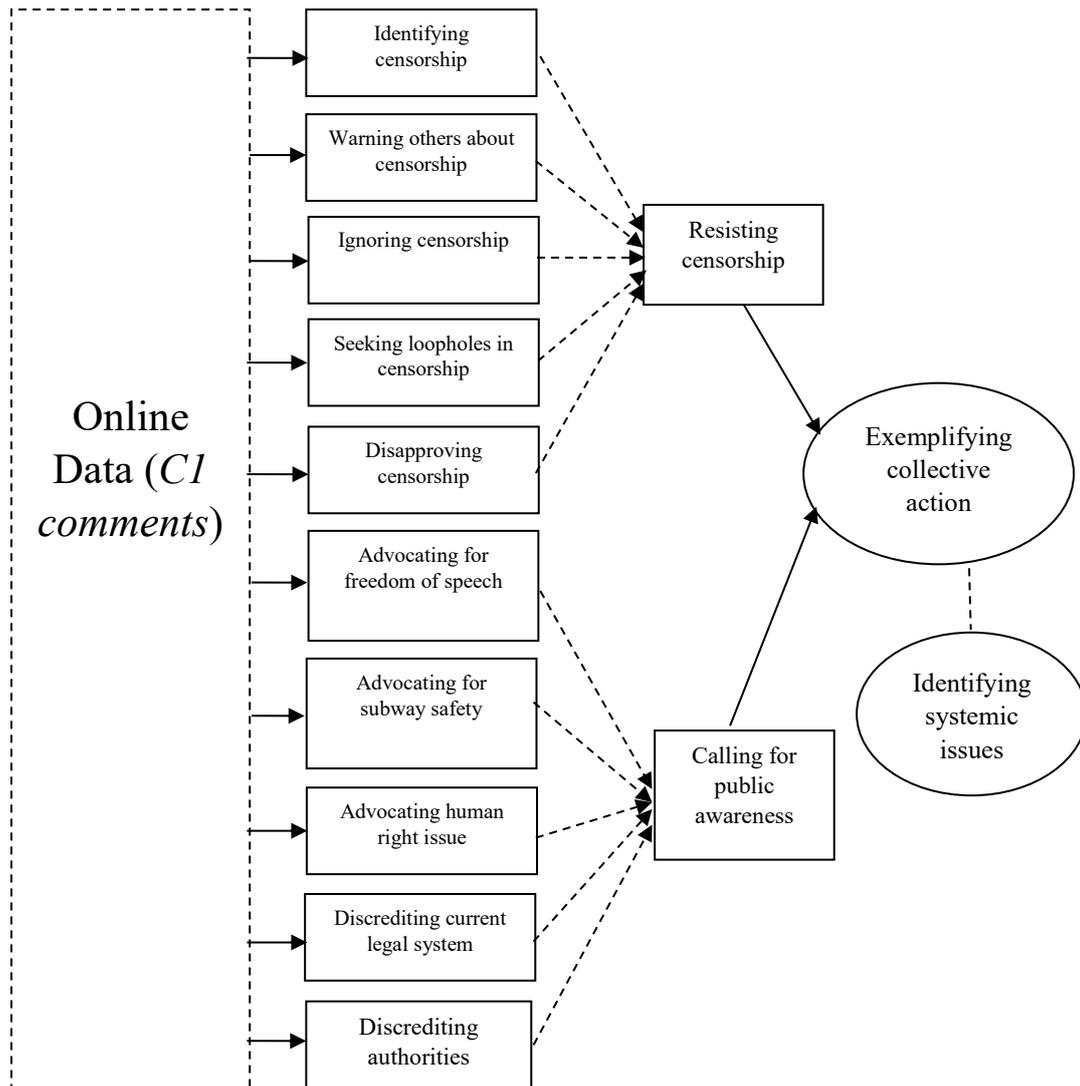


Figure 45: Online Action Identified in *CI* comments (b)

Interestingly, *CI* comments that stemmed from the “*exemplifying collective action*” category often point out how Ma Yue’s case is highly censored by an external party. This reflects how pseudo-bystanders identified Ma Yue’s case as a systemic issue. For example, the following comments illustrate this:

水美为海：The terrible behaviour of silencing/censoring someone is perhaps a part of the China dream that President Xi suggested for every single Chinese person? Or is a style that all communist party members must learn from the public? [2013-9-8 14:32]

北京小伙儿小亮: [Reply@Ma Yue's mother] whatever it is I will support you, my reply has been deleted! I pointed out the spokesperson from the subway company was cold, it's a matter of life and death! Let alone the responsibilities, how hard is it to say sorry to the victims? The behaviour of deleting other people's comments I cannot understand, I did not scold people, didn't go against the party, why delete my post? [2013-9-15 13:19]

luckyso321: 15:50 just saw the video from the link, from the combined analysis of Ma Yue's autopsy pictures, very professional, though I couldn't understand some parts, have to synthesise and watch again, 16:05 I went to the link again but it disappeared, why delete it? Why? The media including relevant departments only this point is not convincing the people, how can they delete it? Isn't there a law that says freedom of speech? [2013-8-27 16:17]

小 Q 美国代购联盟: Been following Ma Yue's incident for a few days, Wang Xuemei's video has been deleted on various websites inside the country, you can only see it from overseas websites, this is really sad! Wang Xuemei in Weibo has also been transformed into a sensitive word. As a public media outlet Sina is also controlled by a cooperate of power. How can they even be publicly listed in a country like America where freedom of speech is allowed? <American dreams in China> was supposed to be a motivational movie, or is it supposed to motivate people to become a puppet entrepreneur that are manipulated by others? Ma Yue's mum fighting! [2013-8-29 05:51]

However, it is worth noting that not all pseudo-bystanders are pro-victim. For instance, the following comment justifies the behaviour of the authority/government's decision to censor information that is deemed sensitive:

老鼠来吃猫: In relation to the insightful stories of China's forensic scientists... it can influence the image of the ruling party, so the original post being deleted is understandable. [2013-8-18 00:11]

This illustrates that rather than supporting the perpetrators in censoring key information in the public domain, he/she simply accepts why it had to be done, and thus further

normalises the “silencing” of activity under China’s relentlessly scrutinised political environment, even in an online sphere.

Moreover, there are also pseudo-bystanders with mixed feelings. For instance, they may be empathetic towards Ma Yue’s mother, but nevertheless disagree with Wang Xuemei’s analysis on the cause of Ma Yue’s death, and thus question her credibility:

LDFT: It is heart-breaking when such accidents happened, but this forensic scientist Wang’s speculation is full of crap right? “After the doctor left they put Ma Yue on the platform again to electrocute him again”? [Is she] Writing a horror novel? For anyone that fell down the platform, they would treat the accident as an emergency, and thus cut off the power, when the power is reconnected there will be a strict safety confirmation procedure! Bring him back to electrocute for the third time? Nonsense! [2013-9-12 22:46]

Finally, it is also evident in Ma Yue’s case that pseudo-bystanders can be somewhat “neutral”. For instance:

北海大头: Murder? The case video has no such speculation, what’s going on? [2013-8-18 01:00]

try414: Was there anyone at the time that saw how the jaw wound is formed? If someone used a hook to rescue Ma Yue, someone should have seen, how come nobody stands out? [2013-9-10 13:51]

These examples show that some pseudo-bystanders appear to have not taken sides, and so their comments tend to fall under the “questioning” category.

Initially, I only explored *C0* and *C1* comments in Ma Yue’s case. As *C2* comments were not the primary focus of this study, it did not occur to me that it was worthwhile to explore *C2* comments when I was analysing Ma Yue’s case. However, this proposition changed after I analysed the next case study, as *C2* comments that provided some insights as to what provoked the bystanders to engage explicitly in an online environment. For instance, in Case Two, Ye Haiyan’s case, I found that *C2* comments also fall under the categories previously identified: “accepting”, “acknowledging”, “questioning”, “expressing support”, “exemplifying collective action” and “stating random comments”. However, Ye

Haiyan's case showed that most *C2 comments* appeared to be counter arguments in the form of direct replies to another online user (in the “*stating random comments*” category). Thus, I went back to Ma Yue's case accordingly to look for whether these findings were corroborated. This reflects a process I adopted where I invariably went back to my analysis of a previous case once a new case re-informed my thinking and perception. Also, it further validated the importance of using multiple cases to build a richer understanding.

While *C2 comments* in Ma Yue's case also validated these same categories, the trolling comments were less obvious in this case, as they appeared elsewhere from where the “spikes” were located. For instance, Ma Yue's mother published a post on 19 August 2013 at 09:50 am stating that the court did not allocate any observation seats for her legal team at the trial. This post attracted 58 comments, 14 of which were generated by a particular online user named 冰河战士一, he/she seemed to be sarcastically mocking the situation, which received 14 subsequent direct replies. Below are some examples:

冰河战士一: I suggest you go to the Great Hall of the People [a state building located at the western edge of Tiananmen Square in Beijing] to have the trial, this way all your relatives would fit. [2013-8-19 09:53]

闪亮的嘎啦皮: [reply to 冰河战士一] The court from the start didn't allow any observations, now the lawyers are fighting for 7 seats, are you selectively blind? What is your point? [2013-8-19 18:09]

冰河战士一: [reply to @闪亮的嘎啦皮] go home and ask your dad why your son doesn't have an ass. [2013-8-19 18:09]

闪亮的嘎啦皮: [reply to @冰河战士一] Since you are blind and evil, I just wanted to warn you. [2013-8-19 18:07]

The example of 冰河战士一 corroborates the idea that when pseudo-bystanders are deliberately provocative, they tend to spark online discussion and redirect bystanders' attention elsewhere (e.g., from posting personal attacks). The presence of these so-called “*trolls*” (which will be discussed in the next chapter in *section 8.4.1*) may drain pseudo-bystanders' energy from focusing on the corruption case, especially if they appear in large numbers. In turn, this may hinder the mobilisation of pseudo-bystanders' efforts in

helping victims of corruption. Additionally, there were relatively fewer pseudo-bystanders who were “*trolls*” in Ma Yue’s case, which helps to explain why the volume of Ma Yue’s case data (532 pages) is significantly less than Ye Haiyan’s case (4,000 pages) were data was extracted from the same social media platform (Weibo).

7.4.1.2. Pseudo-bystander Stances and Their Involvement

The online data around Ma Yue’s case suggests that pseudo-bystanders’ subsequent action via social media are differentiated by several factors. In general, their online action illustrates different levels of involvement in response to the case. In other words, the online action that pseudo-bystanders adopt may be linked to how intensely they choose to become involved. In this light, pseudo-bystanders may invest their time and effort to intervene in corruption events differently. For instance, low involvement could mean that pseudo-bystanders choose to accept the situation and remain passive, and thus imply that their subsequent action to intervene may be routine or limited. The analysis of *C0 comments* in Ma Yue’s case suggests that when pseudo-bystanders’ online action fall under the categories of “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*” or “*questioning*”, their involvement tends to remain low.

On the other hand, when pseudo-bystanders become involved, they tend to do so by “*expressing support*” and/or “*exemplifying collective action*” via social media. For instance, Wang Xuemei sacrificed her career to become a highly involved advocate in Ma Yue’s case when she decided to speak up against social injustice and resign as the Vice President of the CFMA. Consequently, her action raised high levels of public awareness and she gained an outpouring support from others. In turn, this may have also mobilised others to adopt the same pro-victim stance to address the situation, or what I refer to as the “*good Samaritan*” stance in Chapter Three.

Besides the “*good Samaritan*” stance, Ma Yue’s case also shows that it is possible for pseudo-bystanders to adopt other stances. For instance, the “*in-between*” stance (in which they are likely to step back and observe as the case unfolds), or the “*bad Samaritan*” stance (in which they may use the opportunity to promote corrupt behaviour by siding with the perpetrators and/or causing further harm to the victims of corruption).

Additionally, Ma Yue's case suggests a common linkage in the themes that may have contributed to bystanders' decision to engage in subsequent online action in addressing corruption cases – the level of power which they perceive they hold. For instance, when pseudo-bystanders feel “powerless”, they are less inclined to involve themselves, perhaps because they cannot see that their action would bring any changes to subvert the situation. The following examples show that pseudo-bystanders made their lack of power explicit, and thus feel powerless to influence the outcome of the situation:

juechuYUKi: Although I'm powerless, I will pray for you. [2013-8-24 14:54]

寄梦南柯: Without the truth, even the law is powerless. [2013-9-14 13:34]

黄蕴章: Be brave enough to fight against state power is a wakeup call to protect the people's rights; to be able to fight for their rights legally is a sign of a civilised society. Fighting for their rights against the state power is very difficult, but, even if one persists until the end of one's life, reaching the highest point of the food chain or directly at war, can this really solve the problems fundamentally? Where is the cage of this state power? Is there a place for the voices of the people? Where could such power be exercised? [2013-9-10 13:58]

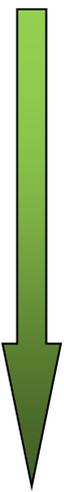
In comparison, pseudo-bystanders who perceive themselves as having the power to bring about changes are prepared to engage in subsequent action that may require a higher level of involvement. This can be seen in the following examples:

春语国学: What kind of support is needed? Whatever you ask for, if it can be done, everybody is willing to help you. [2013-9-8 16:48]

中国长安新闻网: In the Ma Yue incident aunty is not the only one that got hurt, but us and our society, fighting for the truth for Ma Yue's case is fighting for the truth for us, fighting for Ma Yue's case is a moral that is fair and just, equates to fighting for us and the society, aunty you are actually not alone, hope everyone can show more support to aunty, let us and aunty fight together...[2013-8-24 11:12]

These pseudo-bystanders in the above examples come across as highly involved. They also actively encourage others to join the fight. A summary of the preliminary findings from Ma Yue’s case discussed thus far is represented in Table 18.

Table 18: Themes of the Data – Bystanders’ Intervening Behaviour

Online Action	Level of Involvement	Stance	Level of Power	Themes
“Accepting”	Very low  Very high	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> (Pro-victim) or <i>“In-betweener”</i> (Neutral) or <i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> (Pro-perpetrator)	Powerless  Powerful	Being powerless to redress corruption cases, and thus continued to normalise the situation.
“Acknowledging”				Acknowledging corruption cases but perceive oneself being powerless to influence the situation.
“Questioning”				Challenging corruption cases by asking questions and demanding the truth.
“Expressing Support”				Resisting/assisting corruption and advocate support.
“Exemplifying Collective Action”				Engaging in collective action to address corruption cases and mobilise others to do the same.

Through the first round of the First Cycle Coding analysis, I identified several primary themes that explain how the pseudo-bystanders’ stance, the level of involvement and their perception of power may influence their subsequent online action. However, this may have only demonstrated a superficial interpretation as to how pseudo-bystanders intervene in an online environment. Therefore, I proceeded to carry out a second round to develop a better understanding with regards to how these elements are interrelated. In the second round, I re-examined Ma Yue’s case data with an approach called code-mapping. By de-identifying the themes I drew from the case data in the first round of the First Cycle Coding analysis, I was able to group the data again differently (see Table 19).

Table 19: Second Round of Code-Mapping

Level	Subcategories
<i>Personal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional-based • Attitude/belief/value-based
<i>Case</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based • Credibility-based
<i>Institutional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liability-based • Ethics-based
<i>Societal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness-based • Action-based

The new categorisation suggests that pseudo-bystanders' subsequent action may be mediated by the way they perceive the level of impact of the corruption case (personal, case, institutional or societal). It seems that their perceived responsibility towards addressing the situation varies accordingly. For example, when pseudo-bystanders perceive the corruption at a **personal level**, their responses tend to be emotionally driven, and thus empathise with the situation. Whereas, when pseudo-bystanders perceive the level of corruption and their responsibility towards addressing Ma Yue's case, is based on **case level**, their comments are dominated by questions and/or assertions that revolve around evidence provided by the case or the credibility of a certain stakeholder. In other words, they redirect the responsibility of addressing the corruption case to those who are *directly* involved in this case. Pseudo-bystanders may demand accountability from the institutions when they perceive the corruption to be at an **institutional level**. Lastly, pseudo-bystanders are likely to assume personal responsibility to address the situation if they perceive the corruption case to have taken place at a **societal level**.

By combining the first and second rounds of the First Cycle Coding analysis, the following findings emerged from Ma Yue's case data:

Preliminary Finding 1: Pseudo-bystanders who perceive themselves as being powerless tend to accept and acknowledge social injustice, redirect social responsibility and thus are unlikely to take action to address the problem themselves.

Pseudo-bystanders' attitudes, beliefs and values they hold towards the context may influence them to be empathetic to the victim. However, when pseudo-bystanders feel

powerless to subvert the situation, they tend to remain inactive. Furthermore, they seem to absorb negative emotions from the case. The following excerpts are examples of how pseudo-bystanders may internalise such frustration:

游泳百度贴吧微博: When I see it I feel the pain, a lot of pain, but we are powerless. [2013-8-24 12:51]

埝壘悻蓄: Watching this hurts a lot, I can understand the pain of losing loved ones, I also just lost my father not long ago, hope to see the truth. [2013-9-14 13:19]

锐叉儿的: Wang Xuemei chose to resign in response to Ma Yue's case, during the cultural revolution a lot of people chose to commit suicide, nowadays many people because they are worried about politics, economy, pollution etc., they choose to migrate, many others choose to be silent when facing unfairness.... Leaving and escaping should not be our only choice, but, really, what other options do we have? [2013-8-24 10:33]

Pseudo-bystanders may accept and acknowledge the social injustice but reluctant to assume personal responsibility to address the situation. For instance, they may interpret Wang Xuemei's resignation as a sign of defeat instead of a form of resistance, and thus feel even less motivated to advocate for the victim. In turn, their collective inaction to intervene may further normalise the prevalence of social injustice.

Preliminary Finding 2: When pseudo-bystanders consider that other stakeholders should be solely responsible for addressing social injustice, their focus on the case tends to subsequently fixate on key evidence and credibility.

When pseudo-bystanders perceive that the responsibility to address corruption is at the case level, they are likely to question relevant evidence and/or challenge the credibility held by key stakeholders. It is also possible that some pseudo-bystanders may empathise with the victim, but at the same time, question the credibility of the victim's associate:

光影彼岸是他乡: I have seen the photo of you holding a banner many years ago, I felt sorry for what you have gone through, and hope that Beijing subway can publicise the video and let the truth out. However, please remember, the truth does not need lies and

rumours to modify. This female forensic scientist has derailed fundamental scientific knowledge to defend you, this is nonsense. Hope you can fight with the Beijing subway via conventional procedures; I support you for doing this, but I cannot tolerate false modification of the truth. [2013-8-21 00:21]

This example shows that the pseudo-bystander's focus remains fixated on a particular part of the case/stakeholder, and thus unable to relate or recognise corruption as a wider social problem.

Preliminary Finding 3: When pseudo-bystanders perceive the institution is directly liable for the occurrence of social injustice, and they recognise that the case resulted from a power abuse, they tend to demand transparency and accountability.

When pseudo-bystanders are aware that social injustice is exercised at an institutional level (in Ma Yue's case, the state-owned subway company and the Chinese Forensic Medicine Association), they often expect relevant entities to be held accountable for imposing the social injustice. For example:

乐天派 1950: Hope all those who participate in examining Ma Yue's corpse can stand up and answer some questions raised by Wang Xuemei: that is what caused the wound on Ma Yue's neck and how. Because you are all powerful people. [2013-9-10 14:13]

By recognising the underpinning power inequalities, pseudo-bystanders demand that relevant organisation(s) involved provide closure, publicly, to rectify the situation.

Preliminary Finding 4: When pseudo-bystanders recognise social injustice being a prevalent and systemic issue, the perceived responsibility falls on themselves; this may also lead them to mobilise others in the same space to collectively address the problem.

When pseudo-bystanders recognise that the abuse of power is prevalent at a systemic level, they perceive themselves to hold the responsibility to take action to subvert a societal problem. In turn, they may also encourage others to foster change by engaging in similar behaviour in a collective manner. Wang Xuemei's resignation from the CFMA as Vice President is an example in by assuming personal responsibility to address Ma Yue's case as a social problem. Consequently, Wang Xuemei's action may have also mobilised

other pseudo-bystanders to become involved in addressing the issue (e.g., sharing her videos via various social media platforms to raise public awareness). For example:

*小 Q 美国代购联盟 : [reply@竹林女侠爱 MARI]
“You only need to search for Wang Xuemei, you will
see it.. there are also other videos...” [2013-8-29
23:03]*

By assuming personal responsibility, 小 Q 美国代购联盟 became involved by actively informing other pseudo-bystanders how to access Wang Xuemei’s deleted video. This action helped to raise public awareness.

7.4.2. Findings from the Second Cycle Coding Analysis – Mainstream Media’s Contribution to the Diffusion of Responsibility

After two rounds in the First Cycle Coding analysis, I developed some preliminary understandings in the pseudo-bystander phenomenon captured in Ma Yue’s case. I then proceeded to carry out the Second Cycle Coding analysis. The objective of the Second Cycle Coding analysis was to find out the changes that occurred that seemed to influence Ma Yue’s case to assist my interpretation of the findings. Using the Longitudinal Coding method, I explored clutters of data over time. Specifically, I focused on seven Key posts and their corresponding comments as “snapshots” (see Figure 46). Instead of focusing on individual responses, I wanted to know what shaped these “spikes” collectively. A summary of my observations is presented in Table 20.

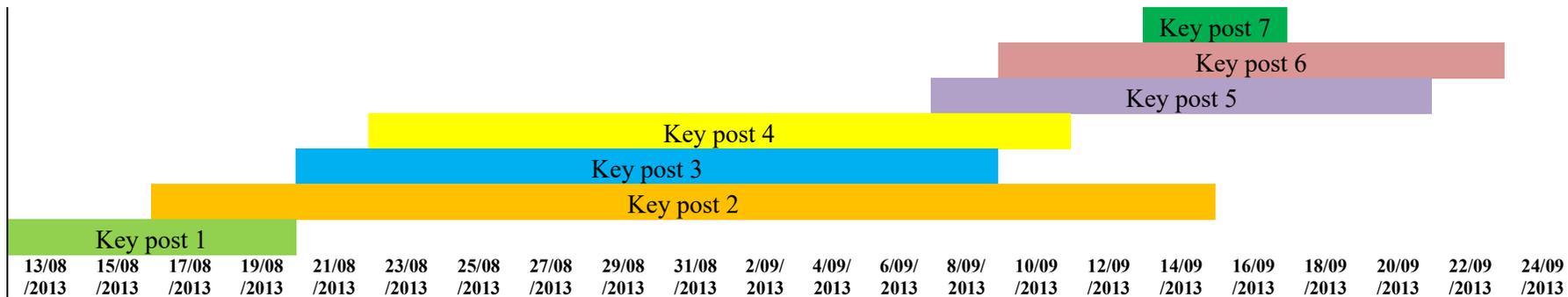


Figure 46: Timeline of Various “Snapshots” Observed in Ma Yue’s Case

Table 20: Longitudinal Summaries of Observations

Longitudinal Coding	1.Increase/ Emerge	2.Cumulative	3.Surge/ Epiphany/ Turning Point	4.Decrease/ Cease	5.Constant/ Consistent	6.Idiosyncratic	7.Missing
Summary of Differences Over Time	Shifting from personal level and societal level then back to case and institutional level	Public awareness	1. Wang Xuemei's resignation 2. Silencing Ma Yue's mother on social media platform Weibo 3. Mainstream media reporting	Mixed opinions	Solidarity for victim and/or associate	Control and resistance	Key information to the case
Summary of Possible Contextual/Intervening Conditions Influencing Changes	External events	Information availability	Availability of knowledge	Breakthrough/new evidence and/or case progression	Appeals (emotional, logical, credibility)	Other stakeholders involvement	Systemic control over information flow
<p>Interrelationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online discussions are led by either external events or information (topic maker) proposed by post published from Ma Yue's mother Regardless of bystanders' stances, ongoing discussions in an online sphere promotes public awareness The more the opposition tried to discredit victim's associate, the more credible she deemed to be Mainstream media tends to shift attention from personal level/societal level back to case/institutional level, and thus diffuses responsibility 		<p>Changes that Oppose/Harmonise with Human Development/Social Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy from a powerful public figure Censorship and resistance Shifting focus by agenda-setting 			<p>Participant/Conceptual Rhythms (Phases, Stages, Cycles etc., in Progress)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of involvement intensifies when pseudo-bystanders take personal responsibility to address corruption and engage in collective action 		
<p>Preliminary Assertions as Data Analysis Progresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media based agenda – more subjective, empathetic, enables shared contentions to address systemic issues Mainstream media based agenda – more objective, focus on case and institutional levels Collective action is likely to be more effective when employing social media to communicate contentions 							

My observations from the Second Cycle Coding analysis suggest that although social media has emerged to be a powerful platform to mobilise collective action to address corruption cases, as seen in Ma Yue’s case, it seems that this “power” is substantially weakened upon the interference of mainstream media. In other words, exposing the corruption cases via mainstream media tends to diffuse responsibility to other bystanders, and thus dilutes public attention and discourages pseudo-bystanders to continue their engagement to address the corruption cases themselves. To validate this “hunch”, I revisited the “spikes” in Ma Yue’s case which I have previously identified.

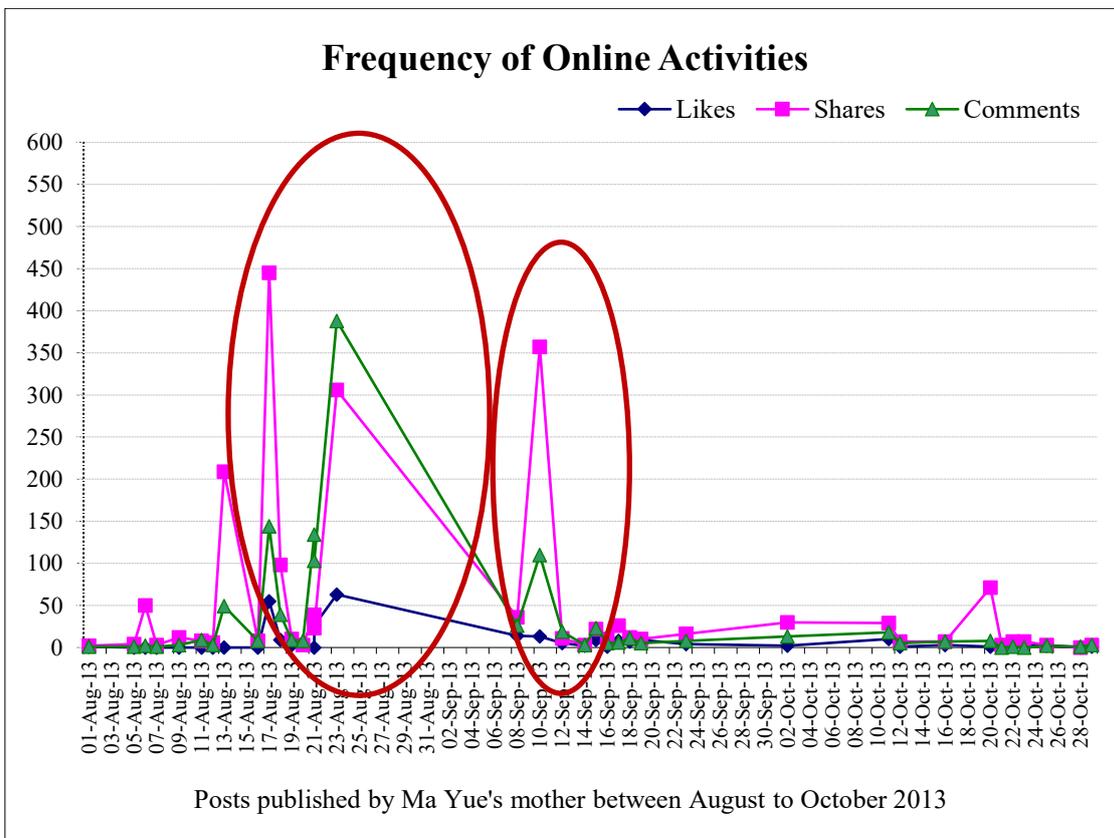


Figure 47: Revisiting Figure 38: Ma Yue’s Mother’s Weibo Posts from Aug-Oct 2013

Figure 47 is essentially an extension of Figure 38, it depicts two most interesting “humps” in this case. The initial/bigger “hump” of online engagement illustrates that at one point on social media, there was an extraordinarily high level of public interest and engagement reflected. Ma Yue’s data suggests that the peak of bystanders’ online engagements was largely influenced by Wang Xuemei’s high level of involvement until her video was removed from the Internet.

Interestingly, Wang Xuemei was already involved in this case when Ma Yue’s mother launched a petition against the state-owned subway company to install safety doors on their subways back in November 2012 (see Figure 48).

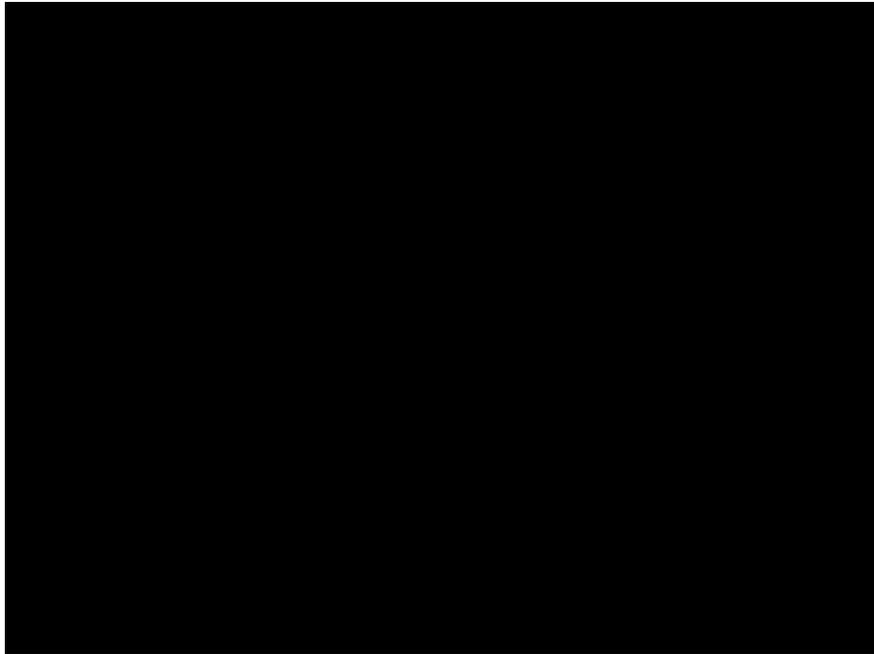


Figure 48: Wang Xuemei with Ma Yue’s Mother

(Source: Ma Yue’s mother’s Weibo, published in November 2012)

However, supporting Ma Yue’s mother in person at the subway station did not attract the same level of public attention in comparison with Wang Xuemei’s involvement in an online environment. In fact, it was a year later when Wang Xuemei publicised her advocacy to support Ma Yue’s mother by speaking against her affiliation on social media. This suggests that social media was a more effective medium to communicate her contention to others. It also shows that Wang Xuemei’s involvement intensified as Ma Yue’s case progressed (this also validates the possibility of pseudo-bystanders shifting roles over time, which will be discussed later on in Case Three, Chapter Nine).

Moreover, after the peak of public attention caused by Wang Xuemei’s resignation gradually subsided, there appeared to be a short-lived “hump” with a very sharp decline (refer to relevant part of the graph). Online activities in Ma Yue’s case remained relatively flat thereafter. This latter “hump” seems to have been sparked by an external event as suggested by data drawn from Ma Yue’s case. During this period, Ma Yue’s incident was

featured on a mainstream media program. However, after it was aired, bystanders' online engagement drastically declined. This indicates that while both social media and mainstream media could be used to bring corruption cases to light and boost public engagement, when mainstream media steps in, it instantaneously jeopardises the "hype" on social media.

Intrigued by the content of this mainstream media program from CCTV.com, I retrieved the video (<http://news.cntv.cn/2013/09/14/VIDE1379139480406527.shtml>). The television program that featured Ma Yue's case was a current affair type of show produced by CCTV (owned by CNTV network) called <今日说法(Legal Report)>. This particular episode was aired on 14 September 2013, titled <大学生地铁坠亡疑云 (The mystery of a university student's subway fatal fall)>.

While many questions associated with Ma Yue's case were proposed in this television program, the main focus was fixated on the case and institutional level. For instance, the missing evidence, workplace safety and liability dominated the spotlight. I also found the editing of this mainstream media program and the monotone used by the male narrator throughout the entire show highly unstimulating. Additionally, whenever Ma Yue's mother appeared in interviews during the show, sad music would fill the background, which made the situation seem even more distant – it was like watching a fictional movie. The biggest revelation from watching this television program is probably not what was shown, but perhaps what was *not*. Surprisingly, not only was there no mention of Wang Xuemei's name in the entire 48:36 minutes of this show, but her scientific analysis of how Ma Yue may have been wounded (which she explained in the deleted videos which I also watched via YouTube) somehow became Ma Yue's mother's opinion. Understandably, the same analysis would appear to have less credibility when an ordinary person (Ma Yue's mother) delivers it, in comparison with a public figure who is an expert in this field (Wang Xuemei).

These observations further suggest that when mainstream media intercepts a corruption case, it not only has the power to steer certain agendas, but also diffuses responsibility. For instance, the focus is primarily on the dispute between Ma Yue's mother and the subway company, whereas higher authorities and individuals who are otherwise deeply interwoven in the corruption case are deliberately excluded. Thus, by emphasising that

Ma Yue's case was a dispute at an interpersonal level, it overlooked the systemic abuse of power.

7.5. Case Summary

Ma Yue's case suggests that pseudo-bystanders respond differently to corruption cases via social media. Specifically, pseudo-bystanders adopt one of the following actions to address corruption in an online environment: "*accepting*", "*acknowledging*", "*questioning*", "*expressing support*", "*exemplifying collective action*" and "*stating random comments*". I also found that when pseudo-bystanders' responses resonate in the categories of "*accepting*", "*acknowledging*" and "*questioning*", they are unlikely to attract others' attention to respond to the corruption case. Whereas, when pseudo-bystanders are seen to be "*expressing support*" or "*exemplifying collective action*", they are likely to mobilise others to become engaged. It is also possible for trolling comments to provoke further online discussion, and in turn, the rising popularity of the case then attracts more "*trolls*". Since few "*trolls*" were present in Ma Yue's case, most *C2 comments* (direct replies or comments triggered by another comment) recorded are non-argumentative in nature.

While the majority of responses from Ma Yue's case seem supportive, analyses from the First and Second Cycle Coding revealed that not every pseudo-bystander comes across as pro-victim. There appeared to be three main different pseudo-bystander stances. On the one hand, when pseudo-bystanders adopt the "*good Samaritan*" stance, they show support towards the victim and or victim's associate(s). However, there were also pseudo-bystanders who chose to adopt a "*bad Samaritan*" stance, revealed as they posted perpetrator sentiments, and thus they side with the perpetrators, and/or have less compassion for the victims. Additionally, some pseudo-bystanders also tend to "sit on the fence" and adopt an "*in-between*" stance. This could mean that they continue to quietly observe how the case unfolds and progresses, but limit their involvement in taking action. They may also actively seek more evidence to make further decisions before taking sides. Either way, they generally appear to be somewhat neutral.

Ma Yue's case further suggests the pseudo-bystanders' action to intervene is interconnected with the pseudo-bystanders' perceived extent of corruption that occurred

and responsibility. For instance, *Category 4: Societal level* may be seen as a progression of *Category 1: Personal level*. This is because when individuals establish a personal connection to the victims and perceive themselves as holding the power to influence the outcome of the situation, they may then look at the corruption case under a different light. Consequently, they may engage in online action at a grassroots level to bring about change and/or mobilise others to follow. In a similar vein, *Category 3: Institutional level* could be an extension to *Category 2: Case level*. When pseudo-bystanders perceive that the subway company avoid liability or the CFMA covering up the details of Ma Yue's autopsy results being the *modus operandi* of the institutions, they tend to consider this to be a case of corruption. Thus, pseudo-bystanders are likely to direct responsibilities towards involved institutions by demanding transparency and closure as they recognise Ma Yue's incident as being a systemic issue of power abuse to cover up the truth.

Additionally, findings from Ma Yue's case illustrate that when mainstream media decides to shed light on corruption cases, it could potentially discourage pseudo-bystanders to become engaged in online action to address corruption cases in an online sphere. There are a number of reasons to explain this phenomenon. Firstly, by having mainstream media acknowledging and reporting the incident, it perhaps dilutes bystanders' responsibility to address the situation personally, as more people became aware of the case. Hence, their involvement may be mediated as they realise that other witnesses are also present, and thus lead to the "bystander effect". Secondly, when mainstream media steers the spotlight back to the "case" or "institutional" level, it could influence how bystanders' perceive the case. Consequently, they may not recognise the case as a systemic issue, and thus drastically cease their involvement to engage in subsequent online action to address the situation on social media. Lastly, it was evident that when mainstream media picks up the corruption case, it creates a sense of distance for pseudo-bystanders to relate to the issue.

Based on these findings, I have constructed a diagram (see Figure 49) to help me to understand how pseudo-bystanders may use social media to intervene in corruption cases. In additional, a summary of key findings derived from Ma Yue's case is presented in Table 21 at to capture my understanding, which in turn, may shed light on the research questions I endeavour to address in the current study.

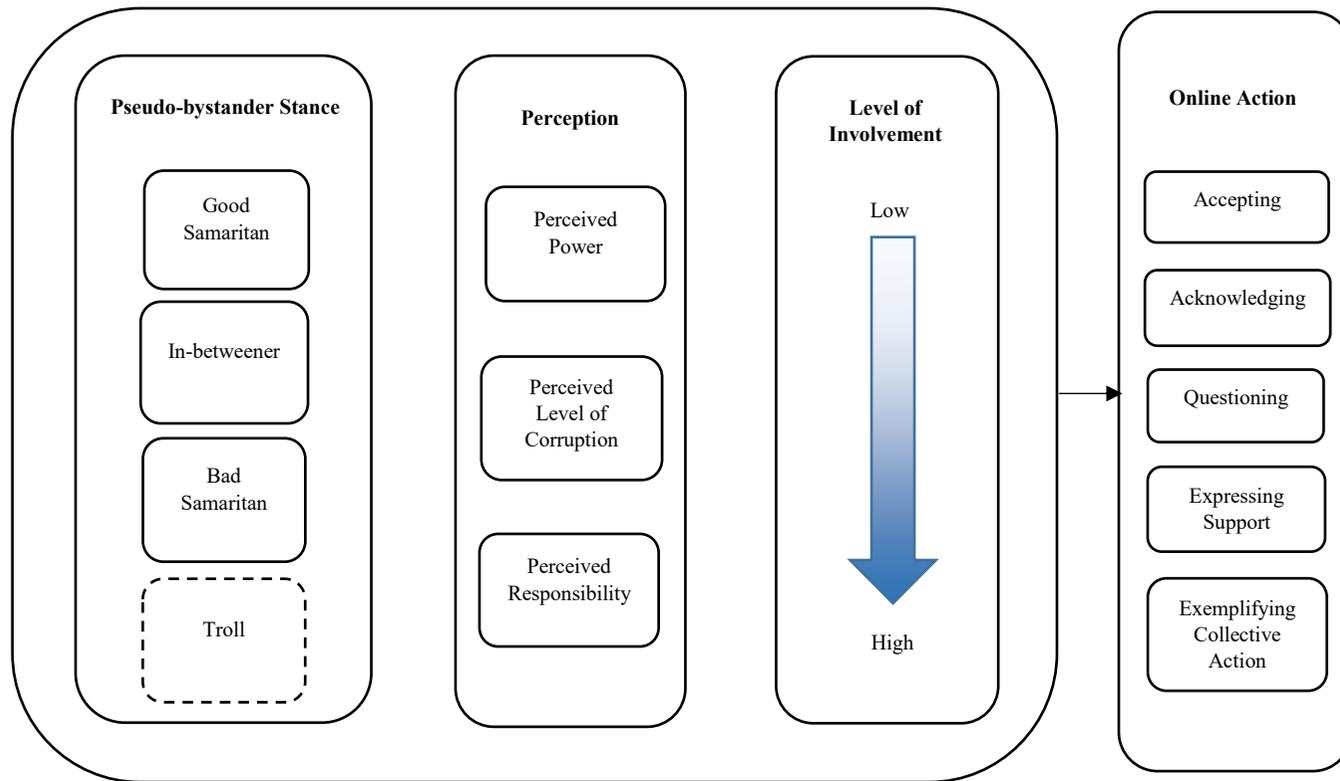


Figure 49: Preliminary Findings – How Pseudo-bystanders Intervene in Corruption Cases via Social Media

Table 21: Summary of Preliminary Findings from Case One: Ma Yue’s Case

Research Questions	Preliminary Findings
<p><i>RQ1: What stances and/or roles might pseudo-bystanders adopt when they address corruption cases via social media?</i></p>	<p>This case study identifies three broad pseudo-bystander stances: “good Samaritan” (pro-victim), “bad Samaritan” (pro-perpetrator) and “in-between” (neutral). The “troll” stance was added later on. Together, these stances reflect bystanders’ positionality in addressing corruption cases.</p>
<p><i>RQ2: Do pseudo-bystanders go through a similar bystander intervention process to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p><i>a) What influences pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p><i>c) How do pseudo-bystander roles and their level of involvement influence their subsequent online action to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>Pseudo-bystanders may carry out an array of online action: “stating random comments”, “accepting”, “acknowledging”, “questioning”, “expressing support” and “exemplifying collective action”.</p> <p>High levels of involvement tend to influence pseudo-bystanders to adopt online action such as “expressing support” and “exemplifying collective action” in response to corruption cases via social media.</p> <p>The perceptions of power, level of corruption and responsibility of pseudo-bystanders may influence their level of involvement in addressing corruption cases.</p>
<p><i>RQ3: What stimuli triggers individuals to become involved from one stage to another in the online intervention process to take action to address corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>It was apparent that a prominent and credible figure’s involvement heightened public interest and subsequently influenced pseudo-bystanders to engage in addressing corruption cases via social media.</p> <p>Social media can be a powerful tool to establish a personal connection and to generate empathetic responses. In contrast, mainstream media attention tends to drive public attention away from the case.</p>

Chapter Eight: Results from Ye Haiyan's Case –
A Note to the Principal



Figure 50: Chapter Two Cover Illustrated by Author Pei Yi Wang

8.1. Chapter Introduction

Using the same data analysis process as used in examining online data for Ma Yue's case, I examined the second case study – Ye Haiyan's story. Similar to Ma Yue's case, Ye Haiyan's case revolves around the abuse of power beyond an initial crime, to the subsequent cover up of that crime and the ongoing efforts to silence those in opposition (this is the “corruption” component). This chapter will first offer some details of the case background. By merging, translating and reconstructing key excerpts from Ye Haiyan's Weibo (microblog), as well as triangulating findings from key events that took place during the observed period, I present both “raw” and “cooked” data (Sandelowski 1994) to illustrate Ye Haiyan's lived-experience. I will then discuss the case data and various findings that emerged from this case. Findings from Ye Haiyan's case are then used to extend and corroborate what was previously discovered in Ma Yue's case.

8.2. Case Background

A primary school principal allegedly took six young female children from his school to a hotel room and sexually abused them. However, the police tried to cover it up and silence the victims and their family. Consequently, a group of activists backed by the Guangzhou New Media Female Network launched a petition to call for public attention. In response to this petition, a female social worker named Ye Haiyan participated in a small-scale protest to advocate for the victims. Unfortunately, because of her explicit advocacy, Ye Haiyan also became victimised. To provide an overview of the case, I have included an excerpt extracted from the online petition. This petition can be seen as the starting point of this case because not only did it provide crucial background information that set the scene, it also encouraged Ye Haiyan to take grassroots action in response.

Thursday, 16 May 2013

Dear Friends,

Please share, please support, and please sign the petition! Email Gmjd2013@gmail.com with your name, your occupation, and identity. On May 8th, in Hainan Province WanNing City, there occurred a serious criminal act involving primary school principal Chen Zaipeng and government official Fung Xiaosong, who took six female primary school-aged students to a hotel room. Yet on May 13th, WanNing City Police Department's Chief Officer Li Youhen publicly addressed the issue and claimed that “as the victims' hymen were still intact, it was

not considered a case of rape”. However, this is inconsistent with the initial medical reports that the victims’ families have provided, which indicated otherwise.

During a press conference held on the 14th [May], the WanNing police blamed the victims to have “proactively contacted the primary school principals and the government officials, implying that the victims “deserved the ordeal”. Not only did the police dismiss the evidence, they also jumped to a conclusion without examining results of the DNA tests and the witnesses’ statements. Such action is not only careless, but also extremely irresponsible, lacking legal knowledge and professionalism. We believe that the WanNing City Police Department has abused their power in the process of this investigation.

We suggest that the WanNing Police should reconsider the following key points in their investigations:

- 1. The female victims’ families indicated that the victims were “drowsy” as if they were drugged; the female students did consume food and drinks provided by the suspects.*
- 2. The victims had consumption evidence from the Karaoke lounges.*
- 3. The victims and their families indicated that the suspects have requested to provide compensation for the sexual encounter.*
- 4. The victims claimed that Principal Chen verbally threatened them.*
- 5. The victims’ families have kept evidence such as the children’s underwear.*

We also demand the following action to be taken by relevant official departments in Hainan and WanNing:

- 1. Apologise to the young female victims and their families with regards to tainting their reputation publicly at the press conference.*
- 2. Take back the “non-rape” conclusion, which was generated without evidence and comprehensive analysis.*
- 3. Explain to the public as to why the two forensic medical results remain contradictory.*
- 4. Stop manipulating the victims’ families and guarantee that the police force will not be influenced by any internal governmental orders when investigating the case, and promise that they will not exercise under-the-table deals to twist or sugar-coat the truth.*
- 5. Most importantly, the WanNing City government should report the case in an accurate and timely manner via their official websites, and provide open access for public inquiries with credibility.*
- 6. Supervision by a team of senior management to improve transparency.*

Hainan, WanNing, as Chinese citizens, we will continue to monitor this case, until the arrival of justice.

Petition launched by:

Corporate: Guangzhou New Media Female Network

*Individuals: Li Sipan, (Guangzhou, women's right worker)
Song Zhibiao, (Guangzhou, media observer)
Yu Dandan, (Guangzhou women's right worker)
Ai Xiaoming, (Guangzhou, scholar, feminist activist)*

(Source:

http://aixiaomingstudio.blogspot.com.au/2013_05_01_archive.html)

Ye Haiyan's story began twelve days after the launch of this joint petition. As a social worker, activist and blogger, Ye Haiyan voluntarily disclosed bits and pieces of her life to the public via a social media platform – Weibo (Figure 51).

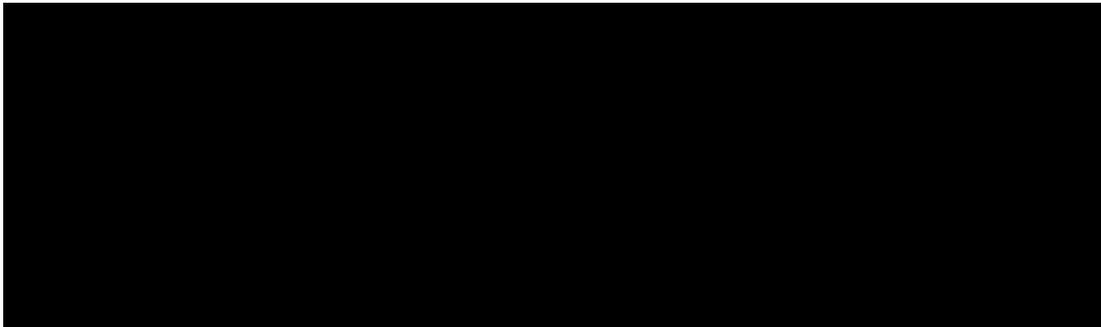


Figure 51: Ye Haiyan's Weibo Profile

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo, <http://weibo.com/yehaiyan1975>)

Ye Haiyan and some of her colleagues travelled about 8 hours by car to participate in a small-scale protest outside the WanNing No. 2 Primary school, where Principal Chen was employed. There, Ye Haiyan held a pink poster with a slogan that later became an overnight Internet sensation.

Dear Internet friend,

Have you signed the petition yet? The children need our voices! Those who abused their power deserve severe punishment! Although I am only a high school graduate, I know that it is important for our children to live and study in a safe environment. As a social worker, a citizen and feminist, I need to stand up and fight for their rights!

Yesterday, a few colleagues and I travelled all the way to WanNing (see Figure 52).

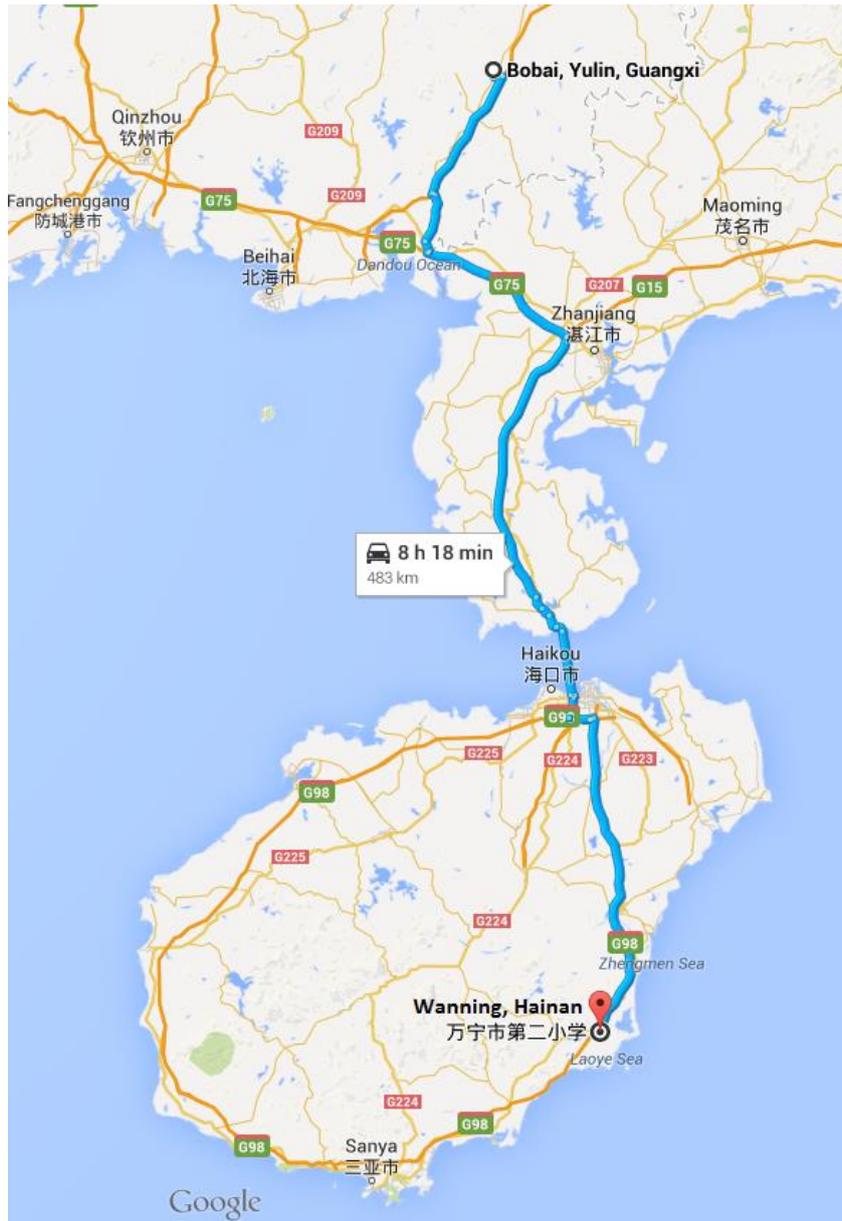


Figure 52: Google Map Illustrating the Distance Ye Haiyan has Travelled for the Protest

We stood outside the WanNing No. 2 Primary School for almost three hours under the boiling sun. The aim of this grassroots demonstration is to raise awareness of such unethical crime! Some colleagues printed out banners (Figure 53), I held a handwritten poster (Figure 54).

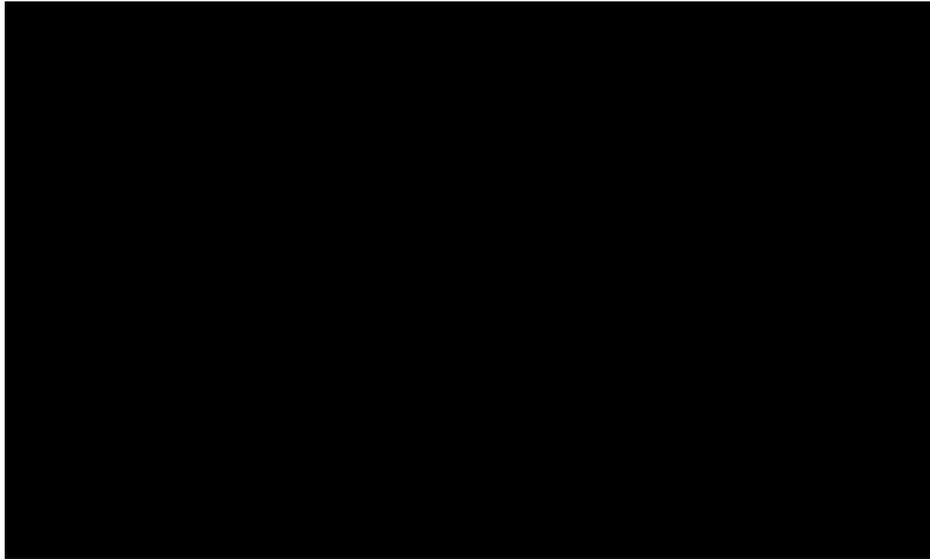


Figure 53: Photo of Ye Haiyan's Colleagues
(Banners Translated: Purify School Environments, Legally Prosecute Principal Chen)

(Source: *Ye Haiyan's Weibo on 28 May 2013*)

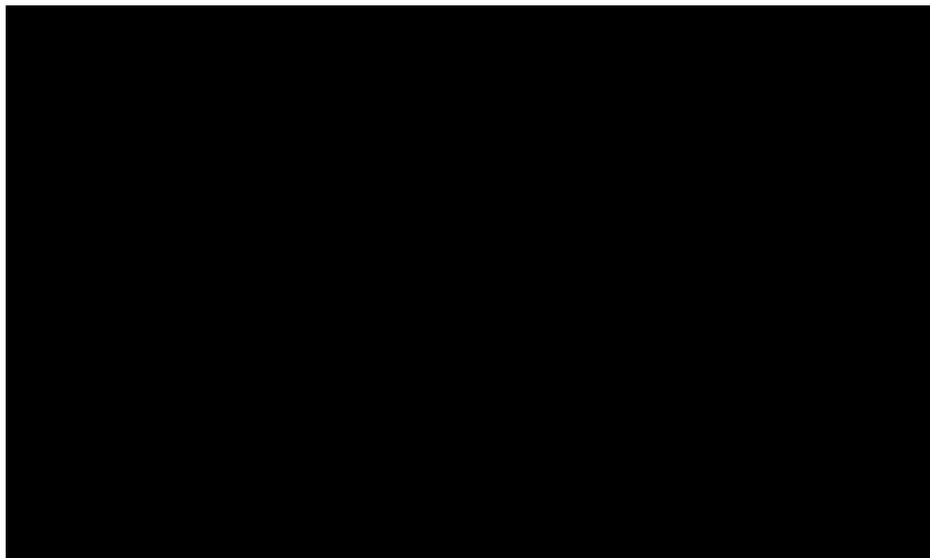


Figure 54: Photo of Ye Haiyan Holding a Pink Poster
(Poster Translated: Principal, come get a room with me, leave the primary school students alone!)

(Source: *Ye Haiyan's Weibo on 28 May 2013*)

Without thinking too much, I scribbled down these words on a pink-coloured poster: "Principal, come get a room with me, leave the primary school students alone! Contact number 12338". I have decided to include the number of the Woman's Association; I hope they don't mind.

But when I rang home that evening, my family told me that I am currently under investigation by the local police. Why are they

investigating me? Is it because of my protest? Was my handwriting too ugly on the poster? I have no idea. Anyhow, I should get home ASAP; my child is alone at home. If anything happens to my child, I would seriously relate this matter to the local government. I only did what I thought was the right thing to do.

Anyways, talk soon.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 28-30 May 2013)

Ye Haiyan's "to get a room" slogan became viral on the Internet shortly after. Netizens started to post photos of themselves on social media platforms such as Weibo, holding their own versions of hand-drawn posters that contained similar messages to the "principal" to express solidarity and to raise public awareness against child sexual abuse (see Figure 55). The high level of public attention consequent to her small-scale protest even took Ye Haiyan by surprise.

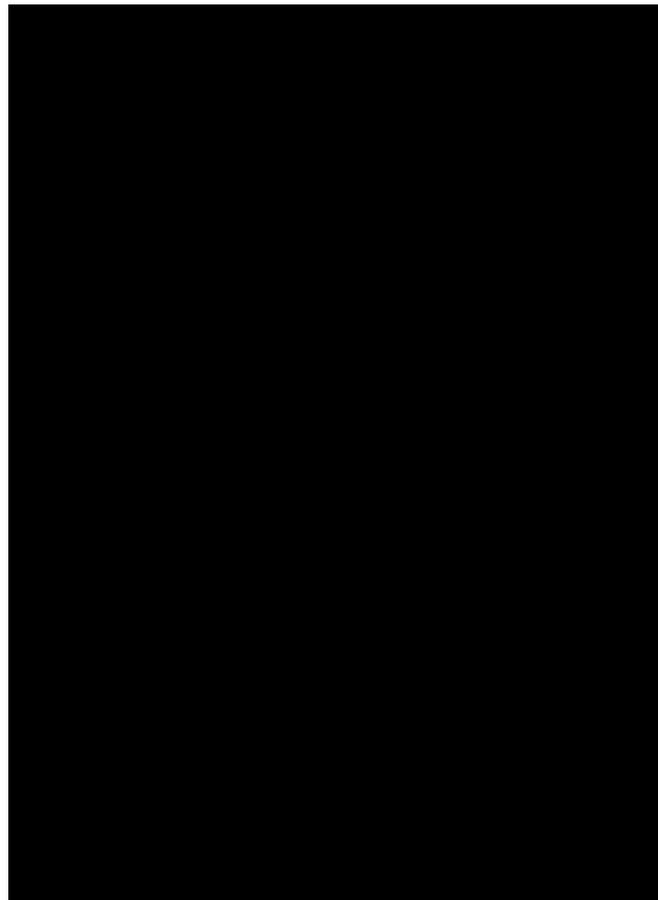


Figure 55: Variations of "A Note to the Principal" by Netizens

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo on 30 May 2013)

However, Ye Haiyan's overnight fame came with a price. For instance, Ye Haiyan's "invitation to the hotel room" was constantly misinterpreted and ridiculed by some online users, who appeared to have taken her words out of its original context. Subsequently, rumours about Ye Haiyan being a prostitute started to circulate on the Internet. She also faced eviction from her landlord. One explanation of Ye Haiyan's mistreatment is perhaps that her public advocacy also brought shame to the region.

Dear Internet friend,

Did you hear? My poster became a big hit on the Internet! To be honest, I did not expect to gain so much attention. After I uploaded those protest pictures on Weibo, many individuals followed my gesture to create their own versions of the "note to the principal"! I hope this sends a message to all predators out there and makes them retreat their claws!

However, not everybody is supportive of my action. Unfortunately, there are a few trolls trying to smirk me on the Internet saying things like I sexually abused young boys and took my interviews with sex-workers from a couple of years ago out of its original context as some sort of ridiculous evidence to support their assertions.

I hope you do not take their rumours to heart. Yes, I have been a social worker for eight years and I have worked with many disadvantaged communities, including HIV patients and sex-workers. But I have never been a sex worker myself. I mean, even if I was a sex worker, what difference does that make? Should sex workers not deserve your respect? They are human as well, and they should not be a focal point of ridicule and mockery.

Just now the landlady came by and said that a few people have asked her to stop leasing the house to me. I understand that she is in a difficult position, and she is under a lot of pressure. I don't blame her. So I agreed to move out.

My town Bobai is a really weird place, it seems to be off the legal grid when it comes to things like this. Not that I love this place or anything, just that my daughter attends a nearby primary school, having to relocate would mean a lot of disruption for her. But why suddenly all the attention is fixated on me? Shouldn't the topic be "how can we curb sexual violence against young victims"?

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 30 May, 2013)

Unfortunately, the retaliation towards Ye Haiyan did not stop there, it escalated. On 30 May 2013 at 11:41 am, Ye Haiyan posted a series of real-time messages on Weibo in

distress to call for help prior to her house being trespassed by intruders. While this alerted many online users, some responded and acknowledged the fact that she was in potential danger, others remained sceptical as to why Ye Haiyan did not call the police herself. Very few understood her intention, which I interpreted as being to use social media to document her situation as the public domain seems to be a more reliable platform to seek help during such critical time.

Dear Internet friend,

I can see a group of people coming towards my house right now. They look very hostile.

There are about 10 women and one man. I am home alone with my daughter and I have no idea what they will do to us. I don't care if I get bashed, just don't hurt my child!

I am so scared! Should I grab a knife from the kitchen? What should I do?

Can you contact the police?

I have to go now. Talk later.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 30 May 2013)

Consequently, Ye Haiyan was taken by the local police for allegedly “injuring” and “attacking” her intruders – Ye Haiyan was purported to be armed with a knife. While Ye Haiyan disappeared “virtually” during her detention by the local police, Ai Xiaoming, a famous feminist activist documentary filmmaker (who was also involved in launching the joint petition mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) became an advocate for Ye Haiyan. She rebranded Ye Haiyan’s original slogan to the principal across her bare chest to demand her release out of detention (see Figure 56).



Figure 56: Ai Xiaoming
(Text on Her Chest Translated: “Get a Room with Me, Leave Ye Haiyan Alone”)

(Source: Ai Xiaoming’s Blog, http://aixiaomingstudio.blogspot.com.au/2013/05/blog-post_30.html, published 30 May 2013)

Figure 55 is the picture which Ai Xiaoming had posted on her blog to explicitly show advocacy for Ye Haiyan. This action sparked tremendous public attention (Lau 2013). For instance, a repost of Ai Xiaoming’s picture shared on Kaidi (a Chinese Internet forum) attracted an overwhelming 50,000 views and 550 comments alone, in the space of only eight hours (Zeng 2014). Her photo was also transformed into a painting by Chinese painter Zhang Rui (see Figure 57).

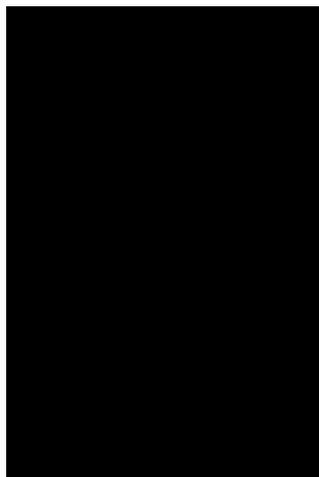


Figure 57: Painter Zhang Rui’s Impression of Ai Xiaoming

(Source: Ai Xiaoming’s Blog, http://aixiaomingstudio.blogspot.com.au/2013/06/blog-post_10.html)

Although Ye Haiyan was unable to provide further updates for the next twelve days, I found it incredibly interesting to see that people continued to comment on Ye Haiyan’s last post on Weibo, which she published before she was captured by police. Consequently, this particular post alone attracted more than 6,000 comments. It was the epitome of traffic volume generated for this entire case. When Ye Haiyan was detained, Ai Xiaoming’s advocacy continued to travel and reached many more people. Some of them even took action beyond the virtual sphere. For instance, supporters would send postcards to the local police station, where Ye Haiyan was detained, to demand her release (Figure 58).

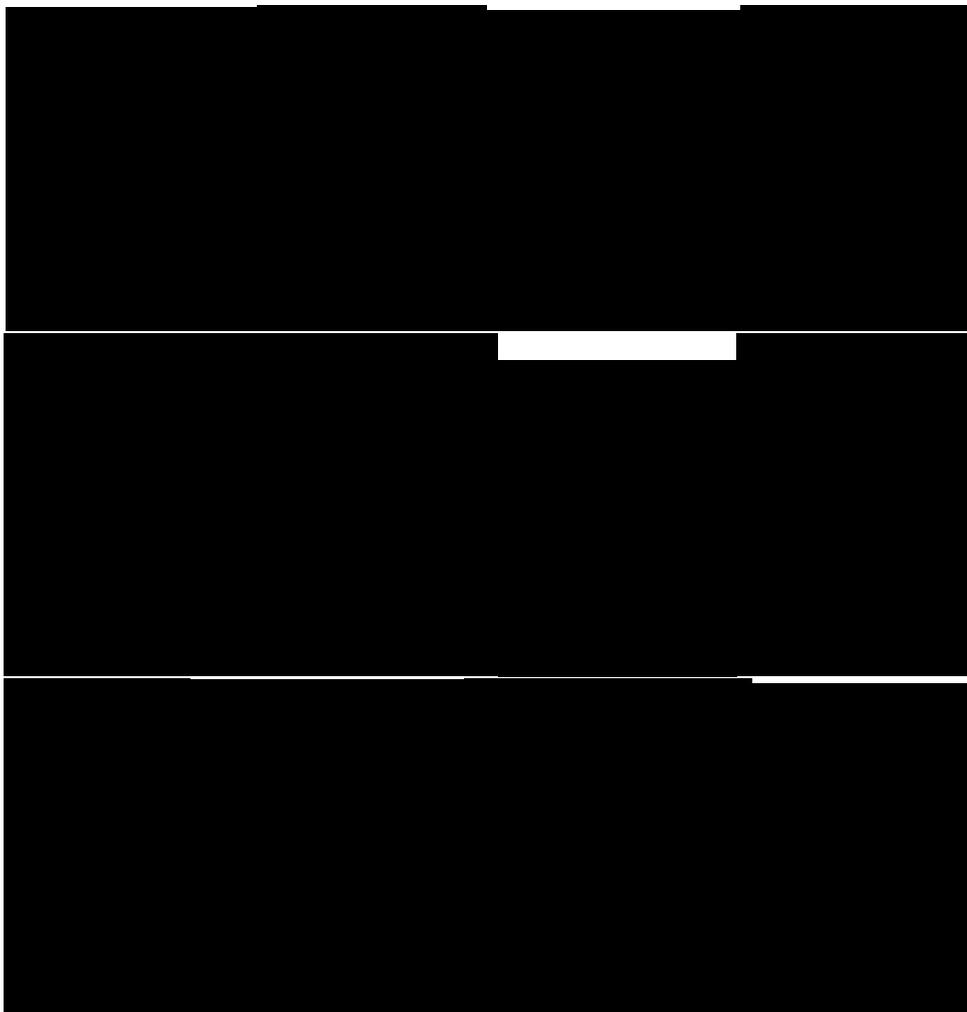


Figure 58: Netizens’ Plead for Ye Haiyan’s Release

(Source: Ye Haiyan’s Weibo between 30 May 2013 to 12 June 2013)

Ye Haiyan was eventually discharged. However, it remained unclear whether it was the heightened public pressure that contributed to the local police’s decision to discharge her,

or a lack of evidence to press charges against her. Nevertheless, Ye Haiyan continued to be bullied after regaining her freedom. It made me sad to read Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts to find out that she was constantly living in fear and feeling "unsafe" in her own home. It was even more frustrating to see that she continued to be the target of bullying online and in real-life.

Dear Internet friend,

I was not able to access the Internet for almost two weeks. The police came and took me back to the police station. I was detained. I did not mean to hurt anyone. All I did was self-defence!

This morning they told me that I was free to go, the police chief escorted me back home by car around 7 am. Did you know how the locals welcomed me? With big red banners hanging across the middle of the road in massive letters, one read, "Big whore Ye Haiyan, get out of Bobai, we do not welcome you!" (see Figure 59) and another one said, "Big whore Ye Haiyan, the utmost unethical, [you] injured us, [you] must compensate!" (see Figure 60).

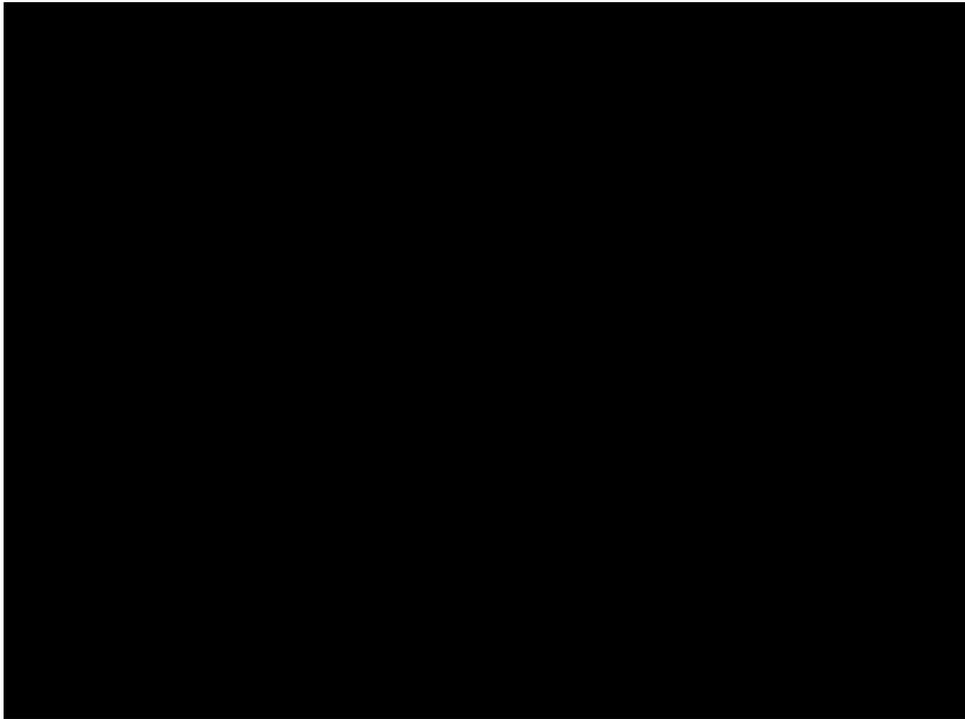


Figure 59: Unwelcoming Banner in Ye Haiyan's Neighbourhood (1)

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo, published 12 June 2013)

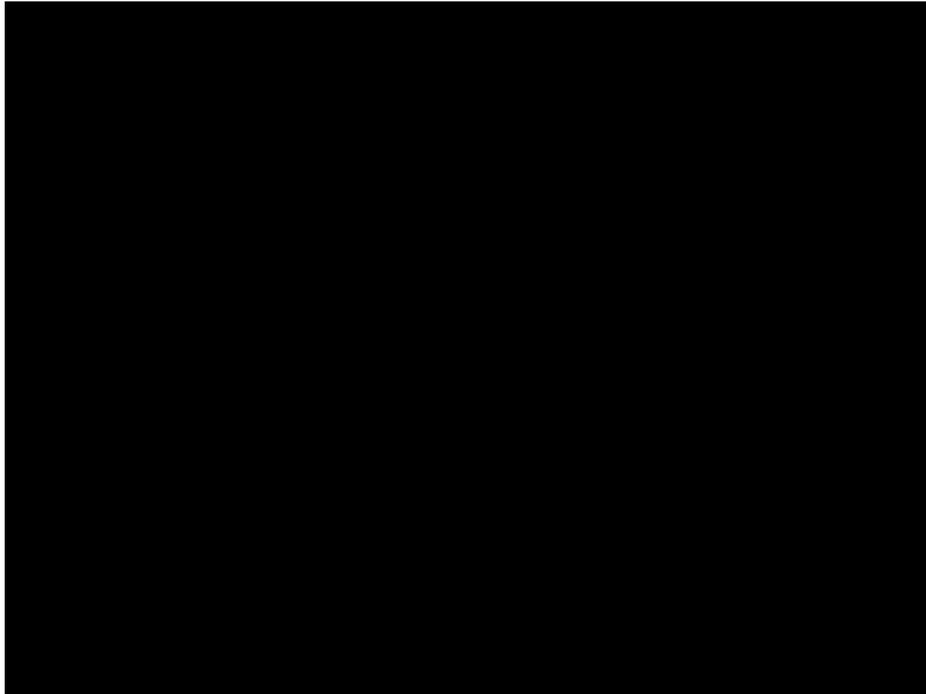


Figure 60: Unwelcoming Banner in Ye Haiyan's Neighbourhood (2)

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo, published 12 June 2013)

Although the police eventually took down the banners, it hurts. Is this how I am treated for all the good things that I have done? It has ruined my day. I initially had plans to go to the beach with my friend Ximei for the Duanwu festival, but right now we are not in the mood.

Anyways, I should not let this bother me and I should think positive thoughts. Let me tell you something nice that happened today too. A few HIV patients came all the way here to visit me, they are very kind. Huazi is feeling really sick and she couldn't make it, but she passed 200 yuan to Ximei to give to me, along with other supportive messages from the Internet.

A few others also called to say hello. These people are already living hard lives; a return trip to and from my place would cost them almost 800 yuan, yet they wanted to see me in person to make sure that I was okay. I wish I could have more energy to show them how grateful I am, and to celebrate the Duanwu festival with them, but I cannot help but fear for my own safety.

Those thugs are still standing outside (Figure 61); I can constantly hear the sound of them yelling "fat Ye Haiyan, come down!" and then glass bottles smashing.

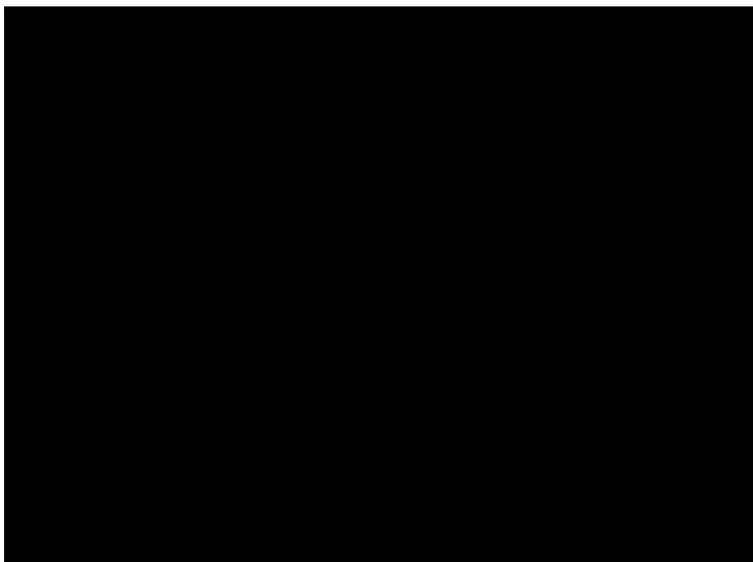


Figure 61: Suspicious People Gathering around Ye Haiyan’s Residency

(Source: Ye Haiyan’s Weibo on 12 June 2013)

At the moment I am a little stressed because I also have to think about relocation and related expenses. Maybe I can auction my pink protest poster? What do you think? I saw on TV a lot of charities overseas do auctions to raise money.

A businessman also paid me some money to use my protest slogan to print on 300 T-shirts (Figure 62). I hope they become a great hit.

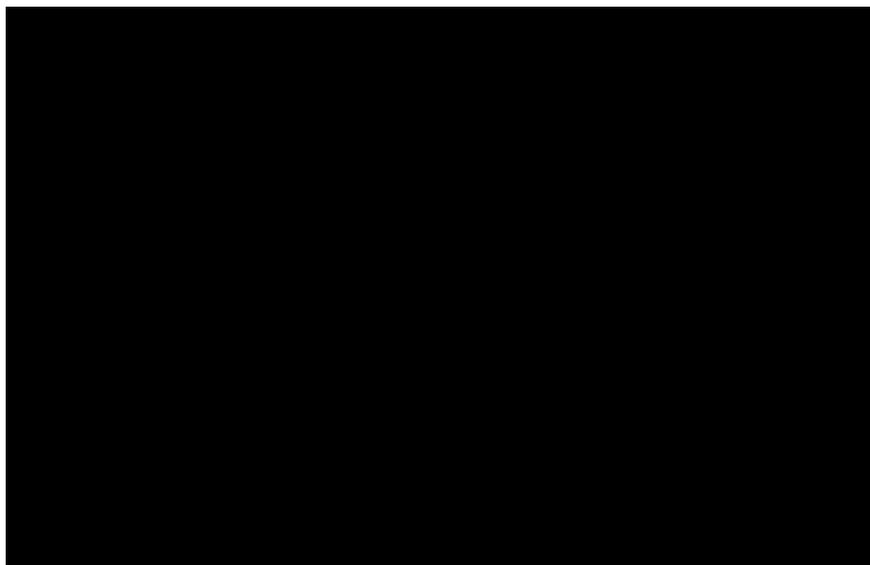


Figure 62: Netizen’s Promotion of Ye Haiyan’s Slogan on T-shirt “Get a Room with Me, Leave the Primary School Students Alone!”

(Source: Ye Haiyan’s Weibo on 12 June 2013)

Anyways, I should only care about those who care about me. When I saw what Professor Ai Xiaoming did for me [in reference to Ai Xiaoming's photo campaign], I couldn't control my tears. I am deeply touched. I am only an ordinary person, for someone like Professor Ai and many others to care for me made me anxious. From now on, I should be brave too.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 12-14 June 2013)

While Ye Haiyan offered no further details from the intruder incident, she did mention that she was accused of injuring those who force-entered her home. However, there remained no apparent physical evidence of her purported crime, nor charges (or outrage) against the intruders.

Dear Internet friend,

Today I went to find those whom I have allegedly injured, I told them that I would pay for their medical expenses if there were really hurt by me. But they all avoided me. The following picture is apparently one of the "photo evidence" depicting my crime (see Figure 63).

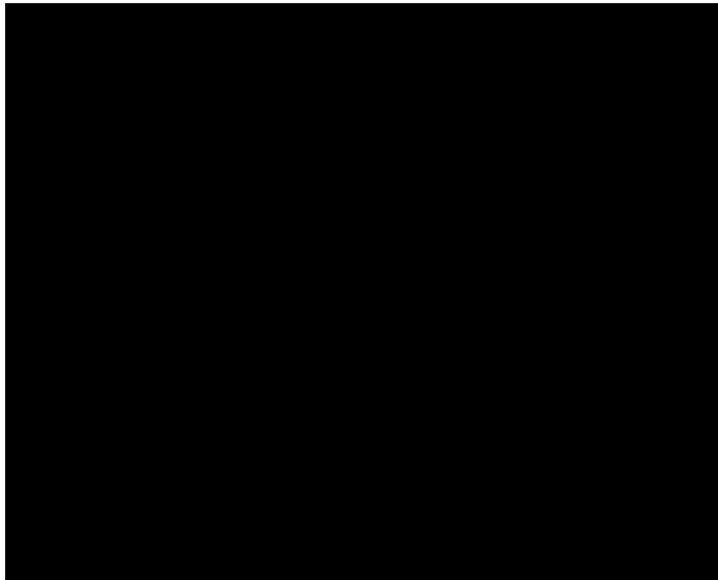


Figure 63: Photo Evidence of Wounds Allegedly Caused by Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo on 21 June 2013)

However, a journalist also told me that she saw it with her own eyes when she went and spoke to those people, there were no wounds on their bodies. Didn't they say they got stitches? So why did it heal so quickly? They must be God! Moreover, they all said to the journalist, "we don't know anything; you should go and ask the police."

Anyways, my lawyer should take care of this matter.

Talk soon,

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 21 June 2013)

Going through Ye Haiyan's data, it was easy to forget about the original case of the child sexual abuse and lose track as to why Ye Haiyan became involved in the first place. Essentially, she became the "new victim". Although the perpetrators of the original case did eventually receive legal prosecution for the sex crimes they had committed, it was unclear as to whether or not the rising public attention had any influence over the outcome of their trial.

Dear Internet friend,

Did you know? Both the principal and the government official involved in the sex crime against these primary school children have received legal punishment! They are sentenced to 13.5 years and 11.5 years respectively! I hope no more crimes like this will happen again to other school children!

While this nightmare has finally ended for the victims involved, the bad news continues for me and my family. Those thugs are still hanging around outside my rental property, and I constantly fear for my family's safety. If you are wondering where I am now, we still haven't found a new place to live yet, my partner, my child and I are temporarily staying at a friend's place. But we cannot stay there forever. I have already brought enough trouble for my friends.

By the way, did I mention that one of the people who was trying to give me a bad name on the Internet told me that he had no choice? I guess I can understand him, making a living is hard. Maybe he has a family to feed too. So if everybody who is giving me a bad name bared similar motives, then I shall accept their criticism. Don't worry about my feelings, I have thick skin!

However, what made me angry was the magazine called <Nanfungqiang>. I only agreed to be interviewed by them as I thought they were a reputable magazine. But they have twisted my trust! To sum it up, Ye Haiyan in their featured article resembles laziness, horniness, narcissistic, bad-tempered, violence, greedy and deception. Me being a prostitute – earned very detailed description in the coverage; me defending human rights – it deserved one sentence; me working with HIV patients – not even worth a mention! It stated that the sources came from the police, Ye Haiyan's daughter, her boyfriend, and her sister. This is rubbish!

The rumours go on virtually too, and the trolls never disappear from my sight. Is it because I appear vulnerable so that anyone can go around spitting on me, swearing at me, and slapping my face? Is it because I don't have any rich relatives or parents who are public servants? When will these people stop torturing me? I thought I was strong enough to cope, but I cannot take it anymore! Everyone has a limit! I really hope all the bad things can go away soon so that I can live a normal life again. I'm tired.

Talk later.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 21-26 June 2013)

Although Ye Haiyan faced many problems, I was pleased to learn that some people were willing to support her “above and beyond” the online sphere. For instance, when Ye Haiyan needed financial support upon being forced to relocate, she reported that she had received 5,400yuan (about USD\$800) of monetary donations from six different sources on 14 June 2013. Moreover, the hand-drawn pink poster which she held outside the primary school during her last protest was auctioned for a phenomenal amount of money – 17,338 yuan (about USD\$2,560).

Dear Internet friend,

Today when we went back to our new rental property (near Liu Li Luo) (see Figure 64), we found out that everybody else has electricity in the neighbourhood but our power circuit was deliberately damaged! I am already out of Bobai; why can't they leave me alone?!

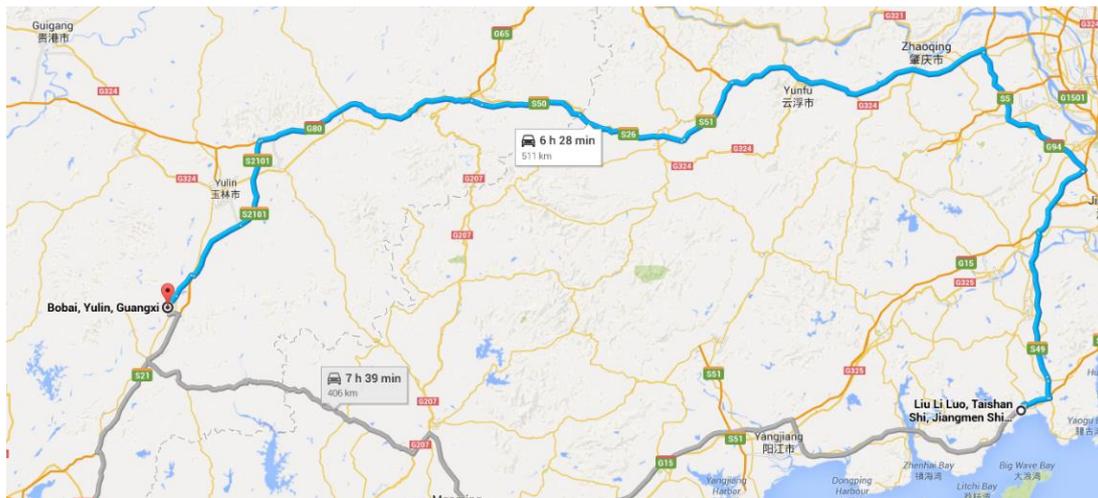


Figure 64: A Map Illustrating the Distance between Ye Haiyan's Old and New Rental Properties

I do not feel safe sitting in the dark. The air is also infused with uneasiness. I am still thinking: what have I done wrong to suffer such repercussions? If I don't even know what I have done wrong, how can I make it right? To see that Ye Haiyan is at a point where she has no home to return to, her whole family has nowhere to go, is this not enough? Will this drama stop if I bleed and die? Will that make people happy?

Some friends suggested that perhaps I should escape to Hong Kong, go overseas to avoid the attention for a while. What do you think? To be honest, I do not want to leave this country with sadness on my back; I do not wish to leave my man and my child! Moreover, I do not wish to run away. I have done nothing wrong!

By the way, my poster was auctioned for 17,338 yuan! Can you believe it?! But due to personal difficulties, I cannot afford to donate to our last operation. Please forgive me. At the moment, my main hurdles are rent, relocation, my child's school transfer, and my family's living expenses, including transportation. Therefore, I must use this money towards my family.

Talk soon.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 27-30 June 2013)

Although Ye Haiyan had received support from many people, opposing voices were equally strong. Ye Haiyan's updates continued to reveal her negative experiences.

Dear Internet friend,

I thought really hard about why I am hated by so many people. Let me know if you think I am on the right track.

1. My relationships with public figures could be a problem. The perception is that I tried to influence them so that they can advocate for me. For example, lawyer Yuan was attacked severely online. Is this because he shared my posts? I actually don't know him in person.

2. My relationship with Ai WeiWei could be another problem. The thing is, we hardly contact each other after his photo project finished a while back, and I am not using Twitter that often.

3. My disrespect towards the Women's Association, maybe that's a problem too. Although they disagree with my proposition to legalise prostitution and I also said some bad things about them in the past, they need to understand that I was not speaking just for myself.

4. I am too noisy on the Internet. Should I be quiet and just mind my own business? Will they spare my life if I comply?

These are my four conclusive points, what do you think? I have never thought that my action would bring public hatred and dismay. But who should I apologise to? Should I apologise to the public? I seek your forgiveness. I hope the public can leave me and my family alone. I don't wish to drag my family down with me. If anything ever happens to me, I have no other request, I hope that my friends will be kind enough to take care of my child. She is lovely and bright; she will never hurt anyone.

Talk soon.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 30 June 2013)

Even though the sex offenders were locked away from the original case, retaliation towards Ye Haiyan intensified. I found the recounts of Ye Haiyan's lived experiences incredibly moving. The more I read, the more empathetic I felt towards her situation. At one point I also felt puzzled and helpless. Particularly, it was heart-wrenching to see the photo of Ye Haiyan which captured her being evicted from her rental home – her belongings were abandoned on the side skirt of the road while she sat on a suitcase, embracing her young daughter.

Dear Internet friend,

We went through a lot these last couple of days. We got evicted for the second time. We are now wandering on the street near State Highway No.365, which is a little far from town. Yes, you heard me right; our belongings are dumped on the side of the road (see Figure 65).

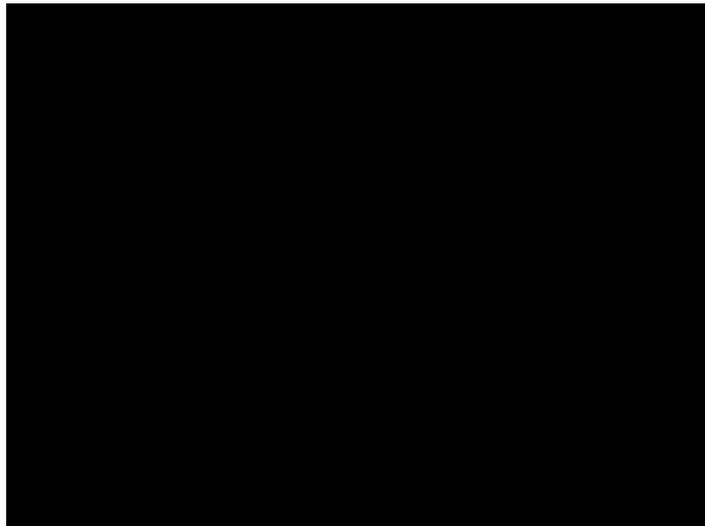


Figure 65: Photo of Ye Haiyan Embracing her Daughter after Eviction from her Residency

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo post from 6 July 2013)

Let me tell you what happened. Because the rental house had no electricity, we decided to stay at a motel. But in the middle of the night, six to seven mysterious men came by; they took us by force and kicked us out of the motel. They said we were not allowed to stay there. When my partner wanted to use his cell phone, they stopped him and told him that he would get bashed if he did not comply.

Where should we go then? We were taken back to the rental property, we were forcefully evicted. I wanted to cry. But I couldn't, I had to comfort my child. She was scared. I told her that we will be okay; worse comes to worse, we can stay with the police. I did not want to tell her though, that those mysterious men who kicked us out in the first place [at the motel], were indeed policemen. My daughter still believes that police protects this society. How can I ruin their righteous images in her heart?

Yet some bastards on the Internet sceptically asked why our belongings were so neatly arranged, they thought this must be a deliberate show that is staged! I do not have time and energy to explain that we were still in the middle of unpacking when we were evicted.

Anyways, talk later when I settle down again.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 1-19 July 2013)

Ye Haiyan's situation was later depicted by political activist cartoonist Badiucao in a cartoon titled "Common enemy of the country" (see Figure 66).

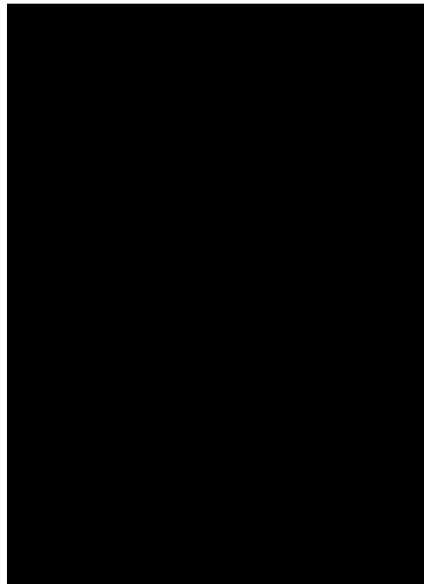


Figure 66: Badiucao's Interpretation of Ye Haiyan's Situation

(Source: <http://twitter.com/badiucao/media>)

It was only after Ye Haiyan moved back to her parents' house that it looked like the bullying towards her had finally stopped.

Dear Internet friend,

Thank you for your concern, we have safely relocated back to my hometown in Hubei, where my parents live. I can still access the Internet if I go to Internet cafés in the nearby city centre. Although I am not online all the time, I do care about my friends. No matter how disappointed I am with this society, how much despair I feel, I will not lose faith in those who are working in philanthropy. I hope you can spare some attention to HIV patients in poorer regions.

Today an Internet friend (not so rich himself) insisted to donate 3,000yuan to me. I cannot take his money. But he is very persistent. He said, if you cannot take it, then give this to your HIV friends, buy them an air conditioner. I've contacted Ximei by phone, they have three rooms there, I will install one air conditioner if the hospital allows. It is hard for me to leave those friends with HIV behind.

It is unfortunate to witness those who are living comfortably but chose to act out of sympathy to advocate for the victims, yet attracted mad dogs to tear them apart. I am truly heartbroken. Yet, I do not have what it takes to help, as we are all living within the radius of mad dogs. But I hear your voices from time to time, and I am very grateful for those who care about me.

I do not wish to blame anyone for what happened to me. I believe that everyone has a chance to be a good person. I will give all strangers a chance of my trust. I would trust them wholeheartedly until they prove me wrong. Because only then, I would have no regret, I could be at ease knowing that I did not accuse any good man. If hurting myself in the process to elucidate the truth is inevitable, then let that be the case.

By the way, you know that forensic scientist Peng Zhonggui has admitted at court that he has breached professional forensic ethics? Apparently, he admitted that he did not examine the medical records of those who claimed to be injured by me and that the photos were provided from another source. Peng is an old man, maybe he too needed money so badly that he went against his morals? I don't know. Right now I just want to live quietly. I have always been an ordinary woman. Therefore, going back to the countryside actually suits me. I am living well back at home. Every day I can see the blue sky and green trees, the air is clean, and the surroundings are tranquil.

Don't miss me too much.

Ye Haiyan

(Source: Ye Haiyan's Weibo posts from 9-29 July 2013)

Perhaps Ye Haiyan and her family will be safe again after the public attention has subsided. Perhaps people will remember Ye Haiyan as the lady who held a pink poster to protest outside a primary school with a blunt message that read “principal, get a room with me, leave the primary school children alone”. Perhaps they will not remember her at all.

8.3. Case Data Overview

Ye Haiyan’s case timeline spans across approximately two months – it is relatively short-lived in comparison to Ma Yue’s case (where it stretched over more than three years). However, the volume of the dataset for Ye Haiyan’s case was much bigger, as it took up more than 4,000 pages in Microsoft Word. The sheer traffic volume of corresponding comments meant that this case required more time and effort to record, sort, reformat and filter before I could begin the data analysis process. Like the previous case study, I have recorded the number of shares and likes for all posts published by Ye Haiyan during the observation period of this case to provide an overview (see Figure 67).

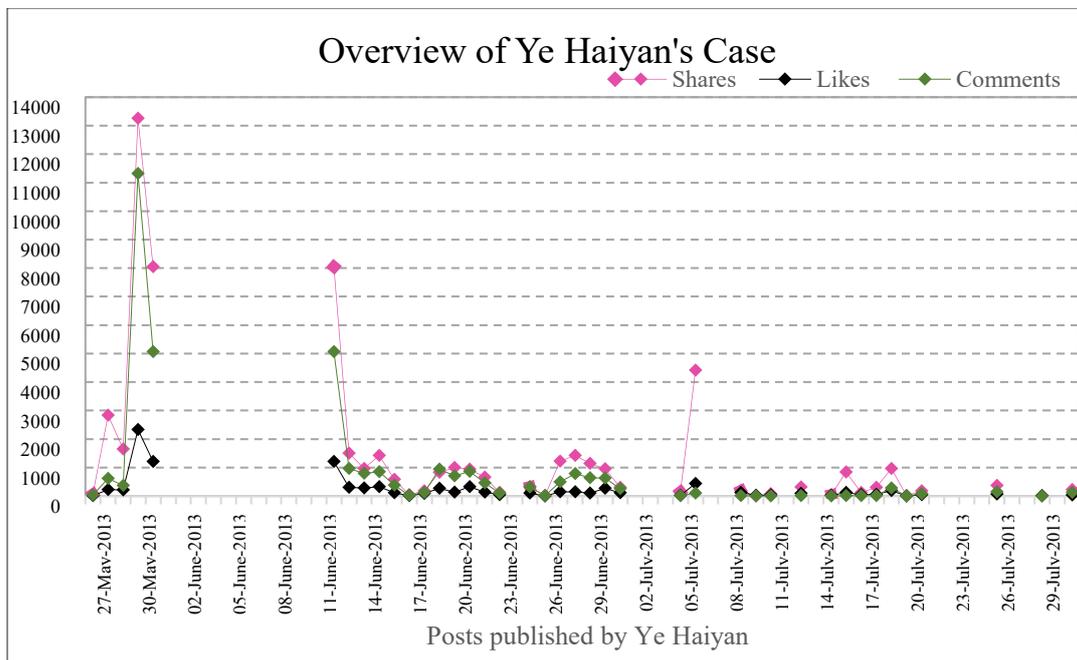


Figure 67: An Overview of Ye Haiyan’s Case

From 27 May to 31 July 2013, Ye Haiyan published around 450 posts on her Weibo account. These posts attracted around 27,953 comments in total. However, unlike Ma Yue’s case, where I could use the first two months of traffic volume as a benchmark to

pinpoint the “spikes”, it would be illogical to do the same for Ye Haiyan’s case since this case lasted about two months in total. Thus, I have decided that using the numbers of corresponding comments from the first two days to determine subsequent “spikes” would be a better way to reflect the peaks in Ye Haiyan’s case due to its confined timeframe (see Table 22).

Table 22: Ye Haiyan’s Post Details for 27-28 May 2013

Date	Number of Posts	Time of Post Published	Corresponding Comments
27-May-13	3	15:10	2
		15:34	18
		21:01	9
28-May-13	24	07:40	42
		08:04	35
		10:03	24
		10:12	11
		10:13	16
		10:26	4
		10:26	14
		10:54	8
		10:58	17
		10:59	7
		11:08	30
		11:22	178
		11:48	5
		14:21	23
		14:52	30
		15:06	16
		17:16	13
		19:51	11
		20:13	8
		21:10	12
		21:10	5
		21:13	15
		23:48	74
		23:52	17
		Total	644

Table 22 shows that Ye Haiyan published three posts on 27 May and 24 posts on 28 May 2013. As highlighted in the table, the post published on 28 May at 11:22 am attracted the highest number of comments. Using this as a benchmark, I have noted down all subsequent posts that received more than 170 comments in Ye Haiyan’s case (see Table 23).

Table 23: Ye Haiyan’s Case Timeline with Posts Attracted 170+ Comments

Case Timeline	Number of Posts which Received 170+ Comments	Total Number of Corresponding Comments from Posts which Received 170+ Comments	Remarks of External Events
28-May-13	1	178	Ye Haiyan’s “note to the principal” poster became an overnight Internet sensation.
30-May-13	8	10,577	Eleven people intruded Ye Haiyan's home. Ye Haiyan was arrested by the local police as a result of the "fight". Ai Xiaoming posted a topless picture on her blog to advocate for Ye Haiyan. Ai also received support from fellow scholars and poets. Netizens started to send postcards to the police station where Ye Haiyan was detained.
12-Jun-13	10	4,880	Ye Haiyan was released from detention.
13-Jun-13	3	672	
16-Jun-13	1	210	
19-Jun-13	1	172	WanNing Second Primary School Principal Chen Zaipeng sentenced to 13years and 6 months for the crime of rape. WanNing Real Estate City Council member Fung Xiaosong sentenced to 11 years and 6 months for the crime of rape. Ye Haiyan’s protest poster got auctioned at a price of 17,338 yuan (the equivalent of around USD\$2,675).
27-Jun-13	1	206	Ye Haiyan continued to be harassed by local police after relocation to a nearby city.
Total	25	16,895	

Interestingly, although Ye Haiyan’s case took place from the end of May in 2013, to the end of July in 2013, posts that attracted more than 170 comments are only recorded from 28 May 2013 to 27 June 2013. This suggests that public interest generated in Ye Haiyan's case dropped drastically after the end of June in 2013 despite Ye Haiyan continued to be victimised to the point where she was eventually evicted by her landlord as of early July in 2013. For instance, Ye Haiyan and family got evicted from her former residence and her belongings were dumped on the side of the road as of on 6 July. Therefore, it would make sense for me to “zoom in” on the period where the case received the most online traffic. As illustrated in Table 2, Ye Haiyan published 25 high traffic volume posts (posts that generated 170 or more subsequent responses) from 28 May 2013 to 27 June 2013. Together, these high traffic volume posts attracted a total of 16,895 corresponding comments. To narrow down my focus, I must first pinpoint the location of the “spikes”.

Figure 68 suggests the largest “spike” of this case occurred on the 30 May 2013, the day where Ye Haiyan was detained by the local police.

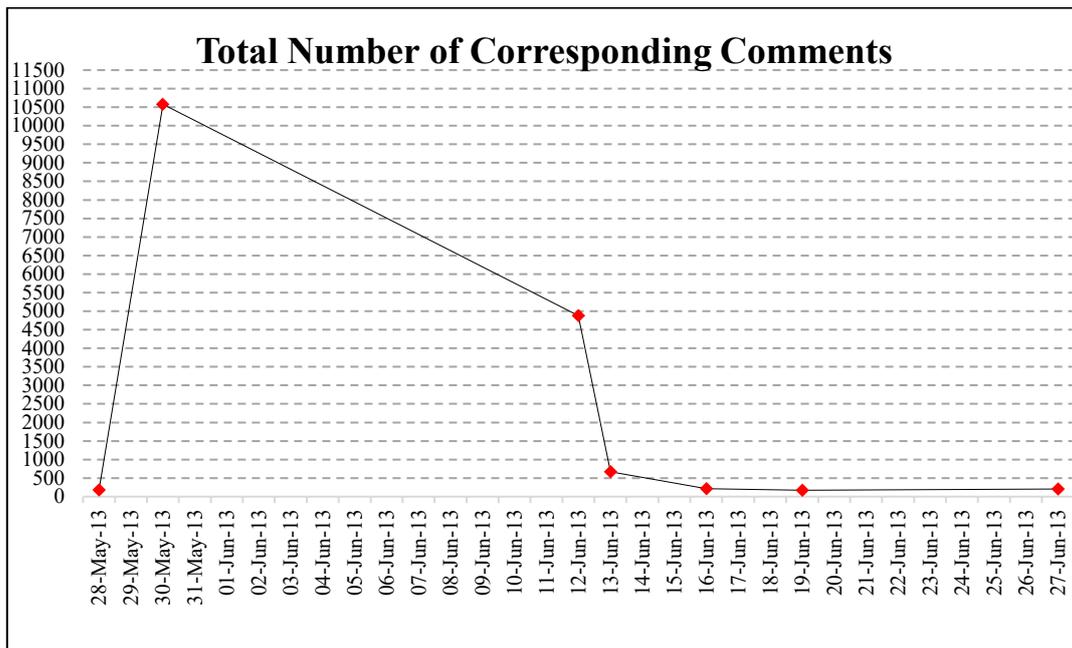


Figure 68: “Spikes” in Ye Haiyan’s Case

Due to Ye Haiyan’s detention from the 30 May to 11 June 2013, she was unable to access Weibo. It was only when Ye Haiyan was released twelve days later that she could resume online communication. Following this first main “spike”, another prominent “spike” emerged on the 12 June, the day when Ye Haiyan was released from detention. The

number of corresponding comments recorded shows that this second “spike” is comparatively smaller than the previous one. Since not all “spikes” are obvious as the two noted above, in order not to overlook the less obvious “spikes”, I have included the number of Shares and Likes associated with these identified high traffic volume posts to further support various identified “spikes” in Ye Haiyan’s case (see Figure 69).

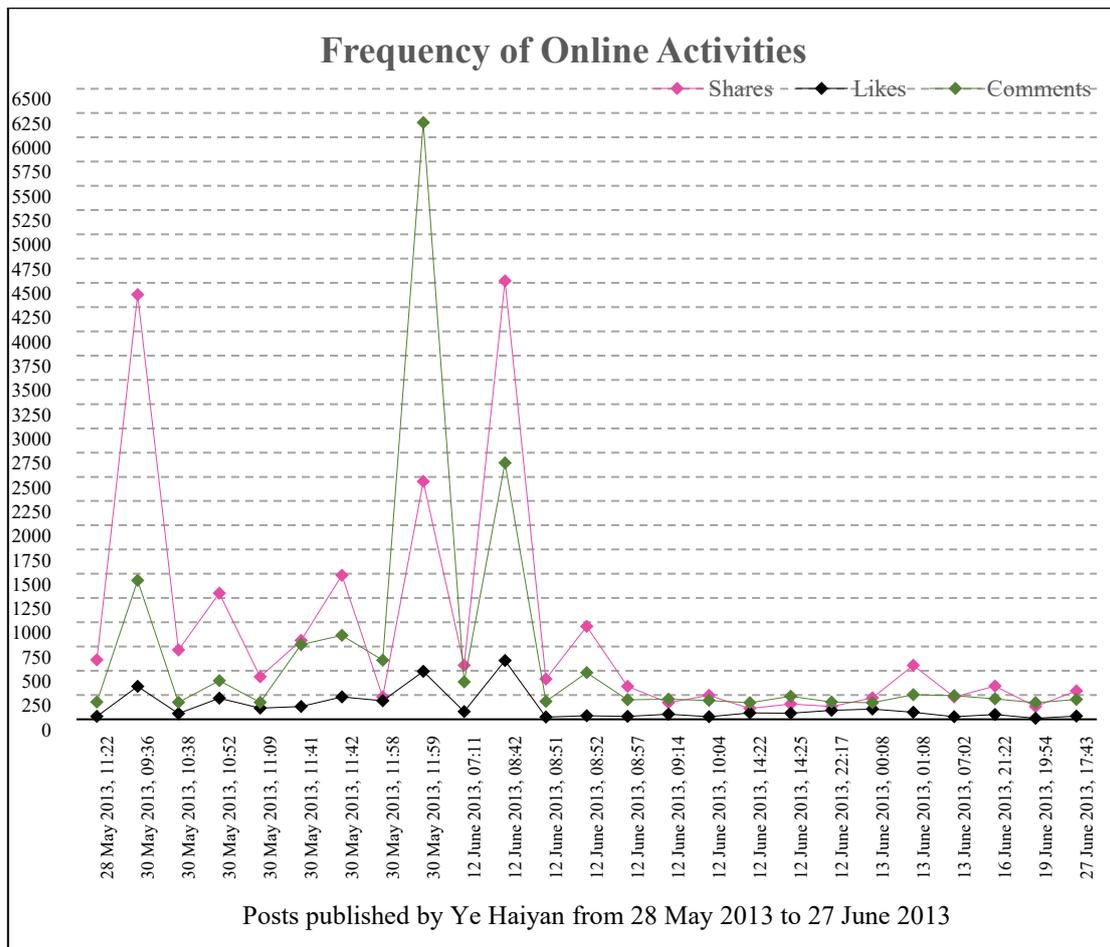


Figure 69: Online Activities that Took Place in Ye Haiyan’s Case

It was interesting to see that while posts published by Ye Haiyan on the 30 May at 09:36 and on 12 June at 08:42 did not attract the highest number of comments, these two posts were the most widely shared by pseudo-bystanders. Based on the information discussed thus far, I have identified 10 Key posts in Ye Haiyan’s case in total (see Table 24).

Table 24: Key Posts that are Associated with the “Spikes” with Potentially Useful Comments

High-traffic volume posts	Post Details	Description of post	Total corresponding comments	Potentially useful comments
Key Post 1	30/05/2013_09:36	Questioning social injustice	1,432	860
Key Post 2	30/05/2013_10:52	Questioning why the attention is fixated on her instead of the incident.	397	195
Key Post 3	30/05/2013_11:42	Real-time updating of an emergency situation	865	591
Key Post 4	30/05/2013_11:59	Real-time updating of an emergency situation and asking for help to contact the police. Using this post as a documentation for legal purposes	6,152	4,984
Key Post 5	12/06/2013_08:42	Real-time updating of a real-life situation	2,643	1,550
Key Post 6	12/06/2013_08:52	Real-time updating of a real-life situation	482	367
Key Post 7	13/06/2013_01:08	Questioning the credibility of the attacker who she allegedly injured.	255	134
Key Post 8	13/06/2013_07:02	Asking for advice with regards to her child's school relocation in the Guangdong province.	245	237
Key Post 9	16/06/2013_21:22	Self-analysis and conclusive points gathered from this incident.	210	149
Key Post 10	27/06/2013_17:43	Warning those who continued to harass her that she would take the matter legally if such behaviour persisted.	206	114
Total			12,887	9,181

Table 24 shows that the most prominent post published by Ye Haiyan was at 11:59 am on 30 May 2013, which generated an accumulative 6,152 comments. However, as I have learned from Ma Yue’s case that numbers alone can only indicate that this pool of data is different to others, it remains insufficient to provide rich insightful information as to what might have contributed to their differences. As not all comments are useful for this research, it was important to “weed out” comments that were irrelevant. To do so, I manually went through all the comments to remove messages that contained emoticons only and short messages that only consist of words like “support” or “spread”, to further

delineate potentially useful responses that could provide insights to answer my research questions. Still, there remained over 9,000 potentially useful comments in Ye Haiyan's case after the initial filtering process. This was still tenfold larger than the size of Ma Yue's case dataset ($n = 872$ comments).

Similar to Ma Yue's case, Ye Haiyan's case also captured an overwhelming amount of one-off correspondence. I have also noticed numbers of pseudo-bystanders who appeared multiple times in the online discussions, this was, however, not so prominent in Ma Yue's case. As such, I have decided to record the names of pseudo-bystanders who made multiple comments in response to the ten Key posts identified in Ye Haiyan's case, as an indication of their engagement (high involvement) and to delve further as to the nature of repeated engagement. In total, 32 pseudo-bystanders commented 20 times or more in Ye Haiyan's case (see Table 25, the highlighted individuals appeared in more than one Key post). I will refer them as Key pseudo-bystanders from now on. Interestingly, 30 of the 32 Key pseudo-bystanders were captured in Key post 4.

Table 25: Key Pseudo-bystanders with 20+ Comments in Ye Haiyan's Case

High-traffic Volume posts	Key Pseudo-bystanders	Number of Comments Published by Key Pseudo-bystanders
Key post 1	Jack 威尔希尔	4
Key post 2	Jack 威尔希尔	4
Key post 3	Jack 威尔希尔	30
	深爱迩 11	4
Key post 4	辟谣与真相	11
	那谁飘飘-剪刀手	20
	老脏头	20
	Jooock	21
	__深蓝__	23
	时光吹老了好少年 2000	23
	战略潜伏	24
	设立国教绑架国与民者可为神为主	24
	修心 lily	27
	怪我太忤逆	28
	lam 网神	29
	郎哲 20130603	31
	MeLinCh	32
	爱_没有如果	32
	深爱迩 11	34
	秋天的雨 qc	42
	何马__	45
	我本无心微	49
	发自内心的说话	52
	卉娘晚晴	53
	安防学者周扬帆	58
	雷逐风	72
	踏刃而起 battle	72
	兰草会开花	89
	牌坊婊	99
	JO-Y-OUNG-2014 搞定 ACCA 全科	104
	那时地我们	120
新上甘岭志愿军-视角	224	
TianBert	254	
巧克力是一朵花	342	
Key post 5	战拖拉夫卡	25

	辟谣与真相	184
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While Table 24 shows how frequently these Key pseudo-bystanders' have commented to reflect their online engagement, it did not show how they might have influenced others (for instance, how many direct replies these individuals received). Therefore, I proceeded to track their direct replies by searching @username (see Table 26).

Table 26: Responses Received by Key Pseudo-bystanders

Key Pseudo-bystander	User Name of Key Pseudo-bystander	Number of Comments Published by Key Pseudo-bystander	Number of Direct Corresponding Comments to Key Pseudo-bystander
1	巧克力是一朵花	342	0
2	TianBert	254	0
3	新上甘岭志愿军-视角	224	0
4	辟谣与真相	195	107
5	那时地我们	120	3
6	牌坊婊	99	0
7	兰草会开花	89	69
8	踏刃而起 battle	72	68
9	雷逐风	72	75
10	安防学者周扬帆	58	0
11	卉娘晚晴	53	68
12	发自内心的说话	52	62
13	我本无心微	49	54
14	何马__	45	31
15	秋天的雨 qc	42	0
16	Jack 威尔希尔	41	13
17	深爱迩 11	34	22
18	JO-Y-OUNG-2014 搞定 ACCA 全科	32	0
19	爱_没有如果	32	0
20	MeLinCh	32	0
21	郎哲 20130603	31	0
22	Iam 网神	29	28
23	怪我太忤逆	28	0
24	修心 lily	27	0
25	战拖拉夫卡	25	0
26	设立国教绑架国与民 者可为神为主	24	0
27	战略潜伏	24	7
28	时光吹老了好少年 2000	23	5

29	<u>深蓝</u>	23	24
30	Jooock	21	42
31	那谁飘飘-剪刀手	21	0
32	老脏头	20	18

Surprisingly, almost half of the identified Key pseudo-bystanders ($n = 15$) had zero direct replies on Weibo. In fact, as Table 26 shows, the top three Key pseudo-bystanders (*巧克力是一朵花*, *TianBert* and *新上甘岭志愿军-视角*) who made the most comments have received zero corresponding responses. Supposedly, having attracted no subsequent correspondence implies that the comments made by these Key pseudo-bystanders are *C0 comments* (comments that do not generate subsequent comments).

However, after taking a closer look at these comments, I have discovered a bizarre phenomenon – that an overwhelming amount of comments were actually direct replies dedicated to four specific online users. However, there was no evidence of the posts of those four people. For instance, leading Key pseudo-bystander *巧克力是一朵* has published 342 comments in total, of which, 124 comments were direct replies to three of the four users who were absent: *一凡视角* (91 times), *就不告诉你就不* (28 times) and *三叶地* (5 times). Below are some examples of these direct replies:

巧克力是一朵: [reply @一凡视角] So you are a CCTV (China Network Television) journalist, Fifty-cent dog, are you happy? [2013-6-2 23:46]

巧克力是一朵: [reply @一凡视角] Then you write, write what you want. [2013-6-2 23:49]

巧克力是一朵: [reply @一凡视角] I don't care, please, it's too hard to communicate with a mad dog. [2013-6-2 23:50]

巧克力是一朵: [reply @一凡视角] So I can't talk if I just registered? You go on and be a good gatekeeper, Fifty-cent. [2013-6-2 23:51]

The time intervals and context from these direct replies suggest that they were one half of an online dialogue. I suspect that the other half of the dialogue was “missing” as they were deleted *after* the online conversations had taken place, though it was unclear whether

the deletion was carried out by the individual or at an administrative level by Weibo. As a result, the original comments were no longer available to retrieve on Weibo (which is one main setback when using archival online data). Despite the fact their original comments could not be found, the direct replies toward these “missing” individuals suggest that they were also engaged in online discussions at one point. Hence, I refer to these missing individuals as *Ghost* pseudo-bystanders (see Table 27). I also used these direct replies as *C2 comments* (subsequent responses that are generated based on other comments) for Ye Haiyan’s case. This will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Table 27: Direct Replies Generated by Ghost Pseudo-bystanders

<i>Ghost</i> Pseudo-bystander	Direct Replies From Others
一凡视角	183
就不告诉你就不	75
扬帆-Philosopher	71
三叶地	55
Total	385

To analyse Ye Haiyan’s case data, I first turned *C0 comments*. As these are not the focus of my study, I have selectively coded all the relevant *C0 comments* extracted from Key post 10 only, as this Key post had the least number of comments.

Table 28: Categories Generated from *C0 Comments* in Ye Haiyan’s Case

Category	Category Description	Frequency
Accepting	Being powerless	1
	Relating back to personal experience	1
	Expressing empathy	3
	Accepting injustice	2
Acknowledging	Acknowledging inequality	3
Questioning	Questioning ethics	1
	Suggesting responsibility to other stakeholders	3
	Questioning status quo	2

Table 28 shows the categories I extracted from the *C0 comments* of “accepting”, “acknowledging” and “questioning”. For instance, some of these responses suggest that pseudo-bystanders may perceive corruption as a “normal” behaviour:

flyingdolphin88: You should leave Guangxi, when you are in Guangdong, it is normal to receive government attention. You should go to Beijing, Beijing is a capital, it should have a higher tolerance level. [2013-6-27 18:04]

北京王工三世 : In Guangdong? Not only in Guangdong, if they wish to pick on you they could do that in every corner, this is because the government officials are basically all legal-blinds, they do whatever they want, [we are] already used to it! [2013-6-28 09:36]

By relating the matter as a regional issue and getting “used to” the power abuse suggests that some pseudo-bystanders may accept social injustice as a “normal” part of life as the practice is so prevalent. Since *C0 comments* did not generate subsequent online discussions, this further strengthens the idea that not only are pseudo-bystanders less involved when their online action is restricted to “accepting”, “acknowledging” and “questioning”, they are also less likely to engage others. This is also in line with Ma Yue’s case, where the same categories were used for *C0 comments*.

To find out what sparked online discussions. I moved on to coding the *C1 comments*. Supporting Ma Yue’s case, the categories used also reflected pseudo-bystanders’ action identified in Chapter Seven (i.e., “accepting”, “acknowledging”, “questioning”, “expressing support”, “exemplifying collective action”). Additionally, seven new sub-categories were identified in the *C1 comments* extracted from Ye Haiyan’s case (see highlighted items in grey in Table 29). Note that instead of forming a separate new description, I have modified the description “advocating for subway safety” in Ma Yue’s case to “advocating for subway safety/school safety”. This is because both “subway” and “school” invariably encapsulated concerns in relation to the environment in which pseudo-bystanders are surrounded.

Table 29: Categories Generated from *CI Comments* in Ye Haiyan's Case

Category	Category Description	Frequency
<i>Accepting</i>	Being powerless	2
	Expressing negative emotions	4
	Expressing Empathy	9
	Expressing Condolence	1
	Accepting injustice	7
	Subtotal	23
<i>Acknowledging</i>	Recognising the case	1
	Associating with another incident/consequence	5
	Believing in the power of truth	1
	Hoping for transparency	2
	Hoping for public awareness	2
	Expressing solidarity	13
	Acknowledging conformity	17
	Expressing hope	4
	Acknowledging inequality	14
	Subtotal	59
<i>Questioning</i>	Questioning the case	7
	Requesting information from victim's associate	6
	Questioning ethics	12
	Questioning the evidence	13
	Questioning mainstream media	8
	Suggesting other avenues to obtain evidence	2
	Suggesting responsibility to other stakeholders	20
	Seeking for update on case	1
	Questioning status quo	14
	Suggesting public awareness	7
	Seeking the truth	6
	Being sceptical in a sarcastic way (new)	23
	Questioning the intention/motive of behaviour (new)	1
	Subtotal	120
	<i>Expressing Support</i>	Discrediting predator and/or associates
Cursing the opposition		6
Justifying the behaviour of predator and/or associates		4
Discrediting victim's associate		11
Aligning personal values		1
Quoting victim's associate's words to show respect		3

	Empathising based on social identity	3
	Concerning for victim and/or victim's associate	15
	Expressing respect	5
	Praising victim's associate	7
	Supporting based on social identity	9
	Demanding scientific evidence	1
	Demanding responsibility	4
	Providing further information to enhance credibility	10
	Elaborating ideas associated with credibility	8
	Disapproving predator and/or associates	21
	Disapproving of victim's associate	17
	Approving of victim's associate	19
	Demanding the truth	2
	Expressing engagement via mainstream media	1
	Supporting the truth while disapproving of victim's associate	6
	Advocating support	47
	Relating to other specific underlying issue (new)	8
Subtotal	229	
<i>Exemplifying Collective Action</i>	Identifying systemic issue	59
	Identifying censorship	3
	Ignoring censorship	1
	Seeking loopholes in censorship	3
	Disapproving censorship	1
	Advocating for subway safety/school safety	3
	Advocating human right issue	6
	Discrediting current legal system	10
	Discrediting authorities	39
	Calling for public awareness	42
	Calling for collective action	33
	Calling for personal action to defend ethical stance (new)	12
	Explaining the significance of collective action (new)	3
	Subtotal	215
<i>Stating Random Comments</i>	Aligning value with communist party	1
	Insulting with sarcasm and/or personal attacks (new)	7
	Identifying "paid trolls" (new)	1
	Subtotal	9
Total		655

The only difference is that the category “*stating random comments*” was also identified in the *CI comments* in Ye Haiyan’s case. Figure 70 summaries how frequently these comments are reflected in *CI comments*.

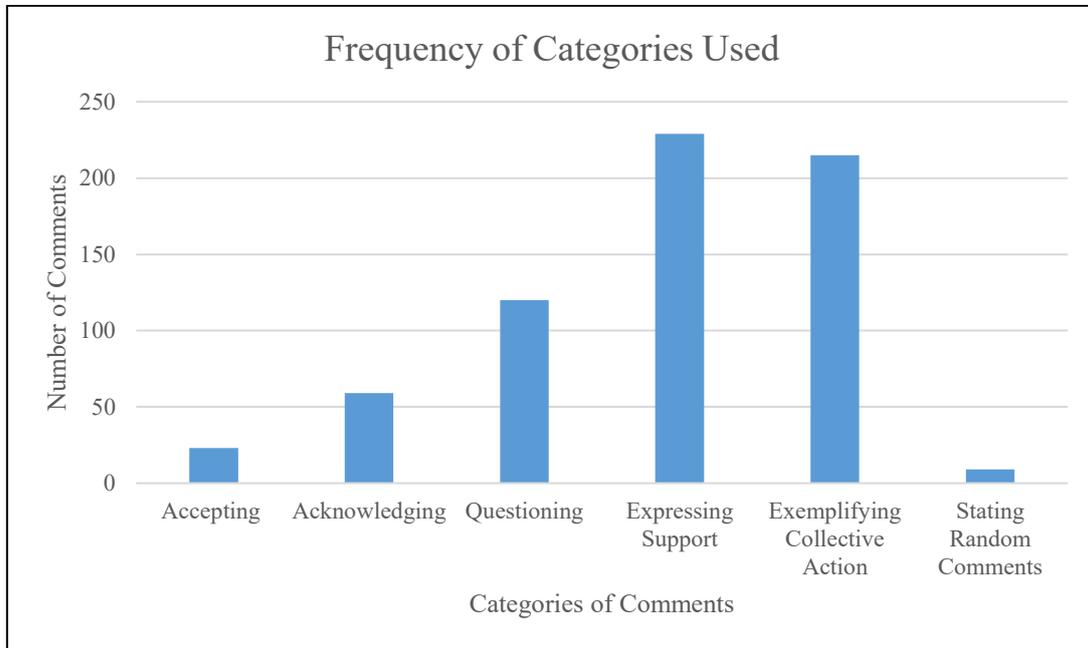


Figure 70: Frequency of Categories Used in C1 comments

While the *CI comments* from Ye Haiyan’s case span across all six categories, the frequency counts of the *CI comments* (total $n = 655$) indicates that the majority of these comments fall under the categories of “*expressing support*” ($n = 229$) and “*exemplifying collective action*” ($n = 215$). This suggests that when pseudo-bystanders’ comments reflect a higher level of involvement in response to corruption cases in a social media context, they are likely to attract subsequent online discussions from others. This finding is also consistent with the previous case.

As this research also intends to explore what may trigger pseudo-bystanders to become involved to address corruption cases via social media to help victims of corruption, those who adopt the “*good Samaritan*” stance, in this case, are particularly relevant. Therefore, I believe the responses that fall under the categories of “*expressing support*” and “*exemplifying collective action*” are likely to offer valuable insights to answer my research questions. Table 30 presents some examples that reflect pseudo-bystanders from the “*good Samaritan*” stance whose online action reflect “*expressing support*” and “*exemplifying collective action*”:

Table 30: Examples of Pseudo-bystanders who Adopt the “Good Samaritan” Stance who are Highly Involved

Category	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
<p>Expressing Support</p>	<p><i>傻根恶搞</i> : The grassroots protest itself was a forceful behaviour, if relevant authorities have addressed the incident properly, there would not have been so many netizens involved, some media outlets are characterised by not only not examining the case, but also shift focus on to speculations.</p> <p>Advocate for sister Ye Haiyan 🙌 [2013-5-30 11:25]</p>	<p><i>苦难无名</i> : Our country needs voices, needs advocacy. Even if I do not entirely support all your views, you should be respected because of your courage. Fighting, the journey is long, hope you can continue without fear. [2013-6-13 10:33]</p>	<p><i>CC 家有傻白甜</i> : I know that it is wrong for a principal to rape little primary school female students, I don't care whether this is self-promotion or not (referring to Ye Haiyan's advocacy), now that someone had stood up, all we can do is support [her], even though we are only using our voices! [2013-5-31 10:40].</p>	<p><i>花痴一个_丑女一枚</i> : Although you have been detained, I will still share your posts, in order for more people to know that you have fallen into a trap. You and I have the same name...I respect you! Practice makes perfect! [2013-6-1 09:14]</p>
<p>Exemplifying Collective Action</p>	<p><i>轻叩天堂之门</i> : This is the post published by a female activist to advocate for the rights of children, she is now detained. If you think that her detention is unfair, please share! If you think good people should receive fair treatment, please share! If you think our society deserves a bit of justice, please share! [2013-5-30 21:32]</p>	<p><i>TianBert</i> : Heard that Ms. Ye is officially detained, they even said that she hurt three women with a knife, isn't this accusing the innocent? We should launch protests, let us bind together to resist the useless Chinese government. Even if overseas' Internet Providers are censored, I will get someone to bypass the Firewall to show this ugly incident to foreigner friends, so that they can see how useless the Chinese government is and how unjustly they dealt with this legally. [2013-5-31 17:19]</p>	<p><i>唱国歌都违法了</i> : You need more than silent support [2013-6-13 01:25]</p>	<p><i>牌坊婊</i> : I don't care if she was a sex worker! I don't care if she is seeking attention! She used this self-damaging way to openly defend the rights of primary school children in order to attract the public's attention. I must use all my strength to support this case. [2013-6-2 22:46]</p>

In particular, I found pseudo-bystanders whose comments that fall under the description “calling for personal action to defend ethical stance” within the “*exemplifying collective action*” category highly provocative and contentious. Perhaps these comments are seen as prompts by other pseudo-bystanders who share a similar stance to stand up for the victims. The following comments illustrate such contention:

小二来盘血腥羊肉 : Many people are like this, if they themselves are not disadvantaged, they would not care, they may talk but won't resist, they observe those who resist from afar and go into hiding. Some even consider resisting as a way to show off. If in the future, if the matter involves your child, the one that's being trapped in a flooded paddy is yourself, I sincerely hope no one comes to help you. [2013-5-30 15:55]

思绪乱了悲伤的旋律 : If I am indifferent, then when I encounter injustice, who will fight for me? If I am silent today, when I struggle in the future, who will shout for me? [2013-5-30 22:03]

小花花 99 : Today if I don't speak up for you, tomorrow no one will speak up for me. [2013-5-30 22:13]

大雨不停 : What kind of country is this? The person who objected to child abuse is being retaliated against? Everyone who has a conscience should wake up, support Ms. Ye, otherwise one day, when your daughter is abused, there will be no voice to advocate for you. [2013-5-31 06:37]

狂热fly : Good people and justice always get beaten by bad people and evil, everybody, hurry up, come to help good people and justice, because if we don't, they will diminish, and we have no idea when we will need them ourselves! [2013-5-31 08:27]

南瓜三叔 : Let our support not be confined here, can we take some action? To help her is to help yourself. [2013-6-12 22:41]

Brother 停子 : Is there anything we can do? [2013-6-12 23:07]

失心流浪客 : If we do not stand up today, tomorrow we can never stand up! I support you, from spirit to action, you are not alone! [2013-6-13 02:07]

These examples suggest that it seems logical and necessary for pseudo-bystanders to offer support as they regard the incident as a significant threat to their own ethical stance. This is because they believe the case itself has an indirect but prolonged effect. Thus, by proactively urging others in the same space to defend their ethical stance, pseudo-bystanders' collective resistance may help to prevent similar negative experiences in the future. In fact, this train of thought is shared by Ye Haiyan from the very beginning when she decided to partake in the grassroots protest. In a post she published on 29 May 2013, at 00:23, she wrote:

I would like to say to those in the system who don't understand my action that, one day, if your child or your relatives are getting hurt, perhaps you too would need a voice to say to the world that those who hurt you are in the wrong. Pity that you can't comprehend now. But you should understand at least: it is a horrible and unsafe world to anyone, where a principal can take a primary school student to a hotel room. Would you want your child to be in this situation?

Perhaps this is what triggered Ye Haiyan to become an advocate for the school children in the first place. This reminds me of a famous poem written by Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) with regards to how the German intellectuals failed to speak up amidst the Nazis' rise to power. There are variations of this poem. The one below is taken from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. (Marcuse 2014):

*First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out –
Because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out –
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out –
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.*

The codes used to analyse *CI comments* suggest that responses stemmed from the category of “*expressing support*” and “*exemplifying collective action*” are likely to generate subsequent discussions thus far. However, the analysis emerged from coding of

all the *C2 comments* (i.e., subsequent comments to *C1 comments*) painted a very different picture. Table 31 below shows that the most frequently used codes in *C2 comments* emerged under the “*stating random comments*” category. In particular, “Replying to an argument (to an alleged ‘*paid troll*’)” was used 142 times in the *C2 comments* drawn from Ye Haiyan’s case.

Table 31: Categories Generated from *C2 Comments* in Ye Haiyan’s Case

Category	Frequency
<i>Accepting</i>	5
<i>Acknowledging</i>	23
<i>Questioning</i>	28
<i>Expressing Support</i>	31
<i>Exemplifying Collective Action</i>	27
<i>Stating Random Comments</i>	390
Total	504

In fact, most *C2 comments* appeared to be counterarguments in the form of direct replies to another online user that whose comments fall under the description of “Insulting with sarcasm and/or personal attacks”. Some examples of this are captured in Table 32.

Table 32: Examples of Counterarguments Infused with Sarcasm and/or Personal Attacks

	Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
Sarcasm	<p>光头周晓伟 : [reply to @一凡 视角]: Hurry and go to Senkaku Islands to display your love for the country. [2013-6-2 23:17]</p>	<p>踏刃而起 battle : [reply to @就不告诉你就不]: Okay! I have an uncle who is also a school principal for a few decades, I now see his true colour! Tomorrow I will go to his house, kill him and also my cousins to keep this world peaceful!</p>	<p>发自内心的说话 : [reply to @扬帆-Philosopher]: Okay, if the leader wants to rape my daughter, I will try my best to convince my daughter to comply. [2013-6-5 07:55]</p>	<p>新上甘岭志愿军-视角 : [reply to @三叶地]: Today you have posted lots of comments to praise America, I feel your diligence in earning some pennies ~~~ [2013-6-3 22:58]</p>
Personal attack	<p>技防专家 : [reply to @一凡 视角]: You bastard, worse than a scumbag! What are you, so scumbag! Your brain is like a pig! Why is it that something always happens in China during critical times! Does it require that many people to be logical? You are a scumbag with a pig's brain! [2013-6-1 21:29]</p>	<p>安防学者周扬帆 : [reply to @就不告诉你就不]: Damn, so you are still a student, an angry youth without any social experience. [2013-6-5 07:30]</p>	<p>安防学者周扬帆 : [reply to @就不告诉你就不]: You think history will repeat? Stupid. [2013-6-5 15:25]</p>	<p>新上甘岭志愿军-视角 : [reply to @三叶地]: I thought you are intelligent~~ but turns out to be an illiterate ~~~~~ [2013-6-3 22:40]</p>

As mentioned earlier, because original comments made by the Key *Ghost* pseudo-bystanders remained missing, I was only able to see one-sided responses rather than the entire online dialogues. Nevertheless, judging from the nature of these *C2 comments*, I assume that the messages that triggered these subsequent responses were equally provocative to aggravate any form of argument. This suggests that pseudo-bystanders are likely to engage in online discussions when they are provoked by comments with hostility.

8.4. Extended Findings – Mediating Pseudo-bystander Intervention

In this section, I will discuss findings drawn from Ye Haiyan’s case based on two cycles of coding analyses. While these findings are primarily derived from Ye Haiyan’s case, they have been crosschecked with Ma Yue’s case (and later on triangulated with Case Three, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case) in a corroborative way to ensure robustness.

8.4.1. Findings from the First Cycle Coding Analysis – Provoking Pseudo-bystanders’ Ethical Stance and the Presence of “Trolls”

In the First Cycle Coding analysis, I examined Ye Haiyan’s case data by applying two rounds of coding, as I did with the previous case, to extract meaning from the data in two distinct ways. Similar to Ma Yue’s case, Ye Haiyan’s case data confirms that pseudo-bystanders’ responses fall under one of the categories of “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*”, “*questioning*”, “*expressing support*”, “*exemplifying collective action*” and “*stating random comments*”. Furthermore, based on the first round of the First Cycle Coding analysis in Ye Haiyan’s case, I identified two new findings. Firstly, the *significance* of ethical stance. Secondly, some online “bystanders” are “*trolls*”.

Pseudo-bystanders may become involved to address corruption cases via social media in an attempt to defend their ethical stance. In other words, those who assume personal responsibility to address societal issues not only tend to become highly engaged in a social media context, they may also encourage others in the same space to take action by proactively reminding them the significance of preserving their own ethical stance. For instance, CC 家有傻白甜 commented:

I know that it is wrong for a principal to rape little primary school female students, I don't care whether this is self-promotion or not (referring to Ye Haiyan's advocacy), now that someone had stood up, all we

can do is support [her], even though we are only using our voices! [2013-5-31 10:40].

Pseudo-bystanders’ ethical stance may be a significant trigger for them to involve themselves in addressing corruption cases in a social media context. For instance, when pseudo-bystanders feel that their ethical stance is threatened, they are likely to assume personal responsibility to tackle the systemic issue, and thus to engage in proactive behaviours. In contrast, when pseudo-bystanders see the case as an episodic incident which remains on an interpersonal/case level, they tend to separate the victims/events from their own lives. This “not-in-my-backyard” mentality makes them more reluctant to stand up for the victims. For instance, those who chose to dismiss Ye Haiyan’s call for help (*i.e.*, when she reported that intruders were forcing their way in to her home) demonstrated this attitude.

An interesting observation in Ye Haiyan’s case is that pseudo-bystanders often referred to others as “*paid trolls*”. This is especially prominent with *C2 comments* in response to the Key *Ghost* pseudo-bystanders identified in this case. However, there are two particular types of “*paid trolls*” emerged through these threads of one-sided conversations in Ye Haiyan’s case (see Table 33).

Table 33: *Ghost* Pseudo-bystanders as Alleged “*Paid Trolls*”

Ghost Pseudo-bystander	Type of “Paid Trolls” Identified by Others
一凡视角	Fifty-cent army
就不告诉你就不	Penny party
扬帆-Philosopher	Fifty-cent army
三叶地	Penny party

On the one hand, the “fifty-cent army” or “water soldiers” are commonly referred to as those who are allegedly paid by the Chinese government to spread good vibes about the country while attacking online users who criticise authorities and/or the communist party (Han 2015). On the other hand, “penny party” refers to those who are purportedly employed by other foreign governments to publish comments with the intention to tarnish China’s current regime. As such, these “*paid trolls*” are seen to be culturally bound with a political agenda involving China.

While there is no solid evidence to “prove” that these *Ghost* pseudo-bystanders are “*paid trolls*”, their online presence evidently disrupted the flow of the online discussions as seen from the direct responses they attracted. Moreover, regardless of whether these “*paid trolls*” belong to the “fifty-cent army” or the “penny party”, their initial comments may have emerged as successful “baits” to fuel subsequent online discussions.

Hence, I propose that comments that fall under the “*stating random comments*” category could also be regarded as *CI comments*, in the sense that they may influence others by leading them to engage in subsequent online discussions in a particular direction. As the “*paid trolls*” are most likely to provoke other pseudo-bystanders who hold opposing views to defend their stances, the case itself became evidently less and less relevant. This is because many of these online discussions morphed into ongoing political debates where individuals with radical views virtually condemn one another instead of focusing on the current issue at hand.

Therefore, trolling could be used to strategically derail focus from the case, as they may intentionally turn the online discussion into a series of interpersonal/political debates. I have noticed that some specific socio-political issues were raised in various threads of online discussions stemming from this case. These controversial topics include the legalisation of prostitution, the cultural revolution, freedom of speech, corruption in the public sector, human rights and feminism.

While not all correspondence to these topics of online discussions is equally engaging, the contentions often resonate and thus provoke other pseudo-bystanders to use social media to respond. For example, the following comments are grounded in the judicial interpretation, by the Chinese Supreme People’s Court and Supreme People’s Procuratorate (as of 8 September 2013) to prevent netizens from spreading “online rumours”, which stipulates that “false information” cannot be shared more than 5,000 times on the Internet or offenders could face up to three years in prison (Yang 2014):

_4 号 : reply@一凡视角: So I am a criminal, how uneasy, how much did you earn, how many times did you watch the news? [2013-6-2 22:57]

_4 号 : reply@一凡视角: Yes~ for this post I hid for several years, shared over 5,000 times, a few hundred original post~ you caught me~ oh yeah I want to ask

you how much do you earn for each of your replies to me? Or you are a self-funded fifty-cent army???
[2013-6-2 23:06]

Indeed, since March 2012, posts by users with more than 100,000 followers are purported to be the subject of scrutiny by the “Internet-police” in China (Callick 2013). In turn, underlying issues like generating “online rumours” continued to shift the focus of online discussions from the current case. For example, of the 183 direct replies to an alleged “paid troll” 一凡视角, only the following two comments specifically mentioned the victim/case:

张轩陌 : reply@一凡视角: On Weibo, many people questioned whether particular authorities are using this incident to attack Ye Haiyan, they did not ‘defame’ or ‘slander’, only questioned. If we don’t even have the right to question the government, how can we talk about the most basic democracy? Moreover, we are directing at the government, not the country. A country is a country, a government is a government. Do not mix these two and obscure the facts. [2013-6-12 20:34]

巧克力是一朵花 : reply@一凡视角: Are you saying that in order not to disturb the society we shall praise the principal taking the primary school children to a hotel room? [2013-6-2 20:46]

In fact, one particular pseudo-bystander 兰草会开花 already noticed that the focus on the case had been “blurred” amidst these online debates:

Stop arguing, the main topic is now blurred. Everyone, please pay attention to the case of young female victims were sexually assaulted. This is the most important. This matter affects everybody [2013-6-1 10:38].

The identification of “paid trolls” is more prominent in Ye Haiyan’s case, as they were spotted and reported by other pseudo-bystanders. Whereas, in Ma Yue’s case, the online presence of “trolls” in general was rare. Perhaps this also explains why Ye Haiyan’s case data is significantly larger than the previous case study. The higher traffic volume may attract these “trolls”, as they are likely to find “baits” when they are exposed to more online users. While individuals who were revealed as “paid trolls” could well be ordinary

netizens with radical political views, they certainly do not quite fit the descriptions of the three broad bystander stances (“good Samaritan”, “in-betweener” and “bad Samaritan”) as the primary stances identified in Ma Yue’s case. This is because these so-called “trolls” in Ye Haiyan’s case appeared to be more actively engaged and contentious than the pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “in-betweener” stance.

In general, pseudo-bystanders who are seen as “trolls” tend to be ambiguous, as they do not articulate a clear positionality in their online action as to which side of the fence they wish to sit on. However, arguably, they seemed to favour the perpetrators (more than the victims), as seen in Ye Haiyan’s case. For example, some direct replies towards another alleged “paid troll” 扬帆-Philosopher suggest a pro-perpetrator tendency:

发自内心的说话 : reply@扬帆-Philosopher: After the forensic verification in front of the WanNing City Courthouse that said the hymen of these children were broken then they said they were intact ([I] just want to ask, is it so difficult to provide forensic report of this? Why so much uncertainty?), from the start it was a crime of sexually assaulting young girls then it was considered rape (please remember, this is public lawsuit so you can't hear the voices of the children and their parents), law is a serious matter, all these contradiction, don't you think the law has become a joke in front of these people? [2013-6-2 10:46]

学徒小七 : reply@扬帆-Philosopher: You saw that she butchered people? Who did she kill? Guy or girl? [2013-6-3 08:18]

Regardless of the intention of these alleged “paid trolls” as to whether they are pro-victim or not, Ye Haiyan’s case suggests that trolling could be an effective way to attract subsequent online responses. Hence, I have added “Troll” as a separate pseudo-bystander stance and “stating random comments” as an online action to reflect the behaviour of those who are being intentionally provocative on social media platforms (see Table 34).

Table 34: Theming the Data – Bystanders’ Intervening Behaviour

Online Action	Level of Involvement	Stance	Level of Power	Themes
“ <i>Stating Random Comments</i> ”	Based on another agenda	“ <i>Troll</i> ”	Depending on others’ responses	Provoking subsequent online discussions

To further make sense of the findings from the First Cycle Coding analysis, I followed the same code mapping method as I did in the previous case. While the perceived levels of corruption (*i.e.*, personal, case, institutional and societal) identified previously in Ma Yue’s case are validated here, two broader categories became apparent when the coded data after the second round in the First Cycle Coding analysis. Ye Haiyan’s case further suggests that the data can be divided into two different piles to reflect how pseudo-bystanders response to corruption events (see Table 35).

Table 35: Code Mapping in Ye Haiyan’s Case

Personal	Episodic (Passive or Reactive)
Case	
Institutional	Systemic (Active or Proactive)
Societal	

Data from Ye Haiyan’s case suggests that when the corruption case is considered an episodic problem, pseudo-bystanders tend to become either “passive” or “reactive”. For instance, by perceiving Ye Haiyan’s case as a personal issue for the victim(s), pseudo-bystanders are likely to perceive the issues that arise as a result of a standalone incident. Thus, pseudo-bystanders are likely to be “passive” (*e.g.*, their online engagement is limited) or “reactive” (*e.g.*, cease to stop once they have identified what might have caused the problem).

On the other hand, when the corruption case is perceived to be an ongoing systemic issue at the institutional or societal level, pseudo-bystander are more “active” or “pro-active” in response (*e.g.*, wish to identify the root of the problem, but also attempt to prevent similar problems from reoccurring in the future). This is especially the situation when pseudo-bystanders also perceive the case to be at odds with their ethical stance. To

prevent the same problem from repeating in the future, pseudo-bystanders from this stream of thought tend to be more proactively involved in addressing the issue. They are also likely to influence others who adopt the same ethical stance, to take collective action. Pseudo-bystanders may collectively engage in subsequent action like: 1) rallying for support and calling for the public's attention via social media, 2) signing a petition or 3) sending postcards to the local police station to demand social justice. One pseudo-bystander, 牌坊婊, quoted a famous Chinese philosopher Hu Shih, which captured this mentality perfectly:

Now someone is telling you to 'sacrifice your personal freedom in exchange for the freedom of the country'. But I have to tell you, fighting for an individual's freedom is fighting for the country's freedom, fighting for personal ethics is fighting for the society's ethics [2013-6-1 22:20].

This example illustrates that the choice to be “reactive” or “proactive” is linked to the pseudo-bystander's ethical stance, which also sets the direction for their subsequent involvement to address the problem.

Moreover, Ye Haiyan's case also suggests that pseudo-bystanders' action to intervene in corruption cases via social media may be mediated by the various perceptions the individual holds. This corroborates the findings from Ma Yue's case. For instance, Ye Haiyan's case illustrates that the pseudo-bystanders' perceived power may influence their level of involvement and their subsequent online action. When pseudo-bystanders consider themselves as being “powerless”, they are likely to restrict their online action and remain less involved. One comment by 我是小勇马甲 is one example that reflects this perception:

We are watching without sound or power, as if we can see the future of no rights and no money, yet the violent disorder keeps on going in circles, those bullies often cannot see themselves being bullied in the future [2013-5-31 08:51].

Often, pseudo-bystanders who are identified as “powerless” also tend to diffuse their responsibilities by expecting others to address the issue. For instance, pseudo-bystanders

evidently turned to the media to subvert the problems raised in Ye Haiyan's case. The following examples show this approach:

未希英国代购: Your Weibo and pictures are published in the Chinese section of BBC in England, hope relevant organisations can help you soon. Please hold on, be safe [2013-5-31 06:07].

叶知秋 1204 : What happened to sister Ye? I follow your Weibo every day, why have you not updated? Are you really arrested? Is your child safe? It's almost 1st June (referring to Children's Day), yet the damage to the children is not cured. Leaders if you love the children then you should have made timely decisions to protect them! And not let the delinquents revenge sister Ye? More so, cannot suppress those who speak the truth! Hope through the power of public and media sister Ye can be protected! [2013-5-31 05:47]

In contrast, when pseudo-bystanders perceive themselves to be powerful or have the power to influence change to an extent, pseudo-bystanders tend to be more active in addressing the "problem". Particularly, when pseudo-bystanders are able to relate to the case, the societal problem becomes their problem. Thus, in building on a vision that they could bring about change collectively, they may proactively rally support and encourage others to stand up for what they believe is "right". This may result in the mobilisation of collective action.

Based on the First Cycle Coding analysis, two additional findings from Ye Haiyan's case became evident:

Extended Finding 1: When the corruption case poses no threat to pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance, individuals are likely to accept, acknowledge or question social injustice at a personal and case level, view the incident as an episodic affair, and thus remain reactive, if not reluctant to address the issue(s) raised.

When pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance is not threatened, they tend to accept, acknowledge or question social injustice on a personal or case level. They may regard the problem as a one-off incident. While these individuals may still empathise and engage with various ongoing online discussions in relation to the case, they are likely to consider

the cause of the episodic problem as not prevalent. Thus, their online action and involvement in response to addressing the issue remain limited.

Extended Finding 2: When the corruption case threatens pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance, they are likely to recognise social injustice being prevalent and systemic at an institutional and societal level. This may empower pseudo-bystanders to act proactively by taking personal responsibility for addressing the issue(s) raised, and in turn, mobilise others to foster collective action in a similar vein.

When pseudo-bystanders view social injustice as a threat to their ethical stance and as being a systemic issue, they are likely to be more proactively engaged to address such “problem” with the intention to prevent a similar situation from reoccurring in the future. Therefore, these individuals may assume the responsibility of intervening. They may also be in the position to influence and empower others with similar contentions to pursue collective action.

8.4.2. Findings from the Second Cycle Coding Analysis

Following the same longitudinal qualitative data summary template provided by Saldaña (2002) as I did with Ma Yue’s case in Chapter Seven, I proceeded to analyse the 10 Key posts in Ye Haiyan’s case in the Second Cycle Coding analysis. Each Key post represents a fragment, or what Saldaña (2015) refers to as “snapshot” in time (see Figure 71).

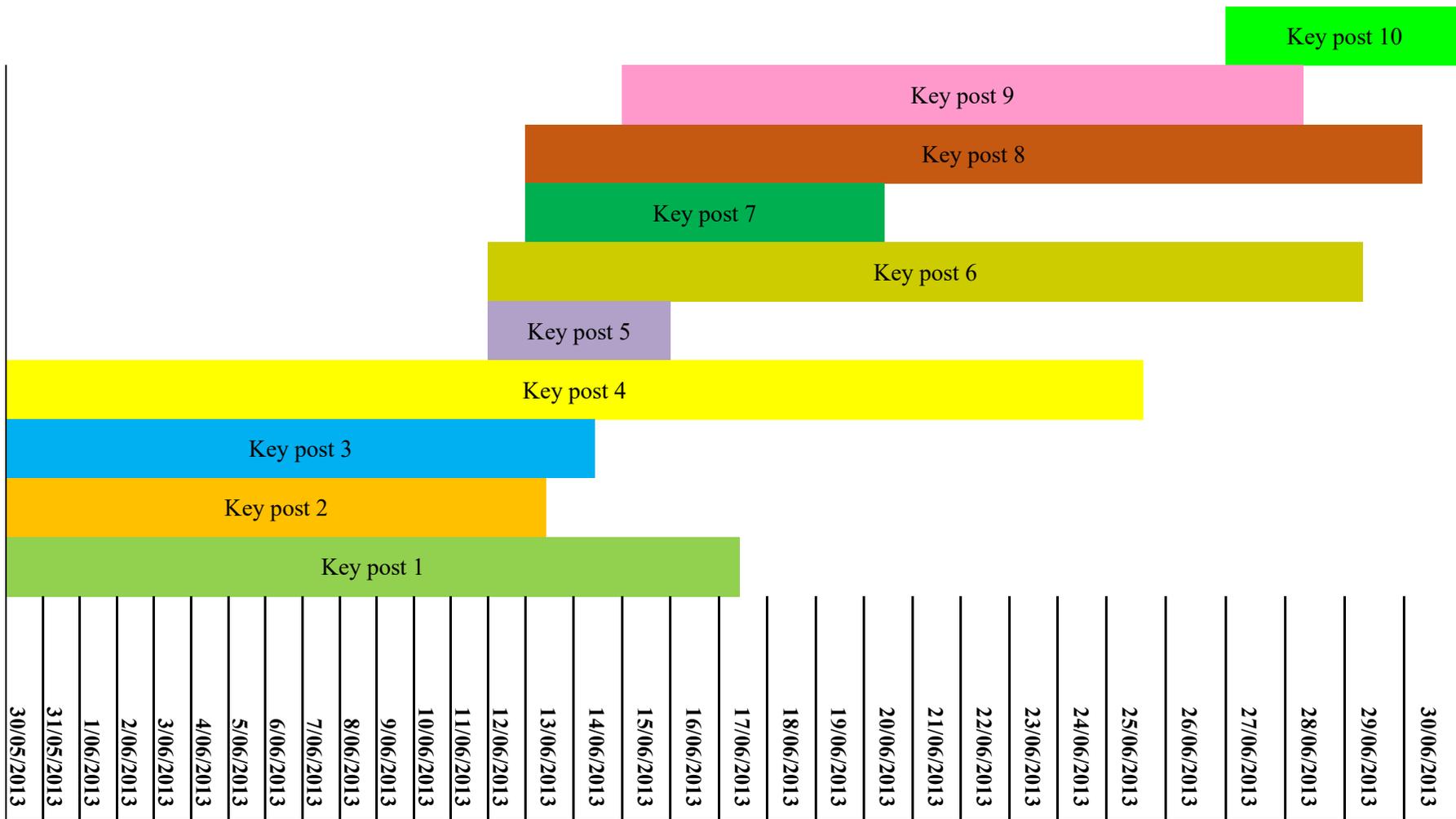


Figure 71: Timeline of Various “Snapshots” Observed in Ye Haiyan’s Case

While all Key posts invariably offer invaluable insights, I found Key post 5 (published on 12/06/2013 at 08:42 by Ye Haiyan) particularly interesting. This is because while this particular post generated over 2,000 comments in the space of three days, the comments came to a sudden stop thereafter. Therefore, I was intrigued to find out what contextual/intervening conditions may have influenced pseudo-bystanders to continue their engagement in online discussions in response to corruption cases. I was also curious as to what led them to abruptly stop engaging.

Table 36 and Table 37 are records of my observations based on the data drawn from the 10 Key posts identified in Ye Haiyan's case. I first examined each of the Key posts and their corresponding comments separately as separate "snapshots". Not all remarks were easily noticeable at first. However, various patterns slowly emerged after repeated examinations of the data. For example, Key post 4 lasted the longest duration in time, and also contained the most turning points to Ye Haiyan's case which made observations difficult. This was when Ye Haiyan was detained and Ai Xiaoming rose to become a leading advocate.

Subsequently, Ye Haiyan's case became an overnight focal point that captured both social media and mainstream media's attention (Offbeat China 2013). While the victimisation of Ye Haiyan continued, debates over various social issues dominated the focus of most online discussions. These online discussions deviated the public's attention from the power abuse and cover-up of how the primary school aged children were sexually abuse as well as Ye Haiyan's subsequent victimisation for speaking up. Likewise, it took me a while to notice that pseudo-bystanders started to show more acceptance towards social injustice shortly after Ye Haiyan was released from detention. For example, one pseudo-bystander 天创流 even anticipated more negative behaviour towards Ye Haiyan would follow:

I guess the next step they will splash you with dirty water, throw animals at you, and inflict behaviours such as smashing glasses in the middle of the night etc., perhaps report to the police first. [2013-6-12 09:08]

Thus, when a short-term end-state goal is achieved (such as Ye Haiyan's release), it seemed to prompt the new perception that was no further need for the bystander to keep

engaging. In this case, there was a sudden drop of public attention after Ye Haiyan was discharged from detention, even though she continued to be bullied to the point of being evicted from her rental property and dumped on the street by the police. This highlights that the efforts pseudo-bystanders put into addressing corruption cases in a social media context vary by the end-state goals the bystander wishes to attain. For instance, when Ai Xiaoming demanded Ye Haiyan to be discharged from the local police station, this may guide bystanders to achieve two very different outcomes. On the one hand, bystanders can interpret the release as a short-term end-state goal, which may encourage them to engage episodic action (*e.g.*, send postcards or share the incident on social media platforms). On the other hand, bystanders are likely to continue to engage in ongoing action to achieve a sustainable outcome when they associate their efforts with long-term end-state goals (*e.g.*, eradicate corruption and sexual violence against female).

Table 36: Longitudinal Summary of Observation (1)

Longitudinal Coding	1.Increase/Emerge	2.Cumulative	3.Surge/Epiphany/ Turning Point	4.Decrease/Cease	5.Constant/Consistent	6.Idiosyncratic	7.Missing
Key Post 1	Disapproval of relevant institutions – Women’s Association Support and expression of solidarity				Concern for the original case Concern for the victim’s associate		
Key Post 2	Disapproval of government Criticism of victim’s associate			Disapproval of Women’s Association	Concern for the case Concern for the victim’s associate Solidarity and support		
Key Post 3	Individuals taking personal responsibility to intervene	Visible bystander stances – for and against victim’s associate	Victim’s associate’s real-time update on retaliation from the community		Concern for the victim’s associate Solidarity and support Criticism of victim’s associate Disapproval of government		
Key Post 4	Discussion of specific social issues Demanding authorities to release victim’s associate Advocating for human rights Sarcasm and personal attacks	Public awareness Anticipation of victim’s associate being released	Victim’s associate asked online community to contact the police Victim’s associate being detained by local police Ai Xiaoming’s online campaign calling for release of victim’s associate Media attention	Concern for the original case	Concern for the victim’s associate Solidarity and support Disapproval of government Criticism of victim’s associate		Further update from victim’s associate The motives behind these ongoing retaliations towards victim’s associate Comments published by Ghost pseudo-bystanders

Key Post 5	Relief from supporters		Victim's associate being released after 12 days	Collective intervention Advocating for human rights Concern for the victim's associate Disapproval of government	Solidarity and support Criticism of victim's associate Discussion of specific social issues Sarcasm and personal attacks	Retaliation from the local community towards victim's associate	Concern for the original case Anticipation for further collective action
Key Post 6		Updates from victim's associate		Public awareness	Solidarity and support Criticism of victim's associate Discussion of specific social issues Sarcasm and personal attacks		
Key Post 7	Validation for supporters	Knowledge of case progression	Emerging new evidence to prove victim's associate's innocence	Criticism of victim's associate Sarcasm and personal attacks Discussion of specific social issues	Updates from victim's associate Solidarity and support		
Key Post 8	Concern for the victim's associate	Victim's associate getting frustrated as she continued to struggle amidst retaliation			Updates from victim's associate Solidarity and support		
Key Post 9	Acknowledging social injustice			Solidarity and support			
Key Post 10	Acceptance of social injustice Criticism of victim's associate		Victim's associate got evicted from her residency		Updates from victim's associate	Victim's associate decided to auction poster to raise funds for relocation expenses	Direction for further future advocacy

Table 37: Longitudinal Summary of Observation (2)

Longitudinal Coding	1.Increase/ Emerge	2.Cumulative	3.Surge/ Epiphany/ Turning Point	4.Decrease/ Cease	5.Constant/ Consistent	6.Idiosyncratic	7.Missing
Summary of Differences Over Time	Emerging bystander stances	Knowledge of the case and victim's associate	Surging public awareness after Ai Xiaoming's nude online campaign became viral on the Internet. However victim's associate the attention subsided quickly upon her released from detention	Attention to the original case Need for collective action	Expression of solidarity	Retaliation from local community	Validation of motives behind the ongoing retaliation/bullying towards the victim's associate
Summary of possible Contextual/Intervening Conditions Influencing Changes	Self-perception of power and responsibility	Validation of bystander stances who through the visibility of others with similar contentions	Real-life events Media attention Negative emotions projected by the victim's associate as a result of ongoing retaliation from her local community	Attention was shifted as the victim's associated became the focal point Further collective action was not taken after victim's associated was released from detention	Empathetic responses	The idea of bringing shame to local community	Direction for further future collective action
<p>Interrelationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pseudo-bystanders <i>go through a</i> process to address corruption cases depending on their perception of power, responsibility, nature of the corruption case and their involvement level. Pseudo-bystanders' process to address corruption cases are influenced by their ethical stance and knowledge on the case. End-state goals that are confined to interpersonal and case tend to influence the behaviour and level of engagement which pseudo-bystanders pursue – short-term vs. long-term outcomes. 			<p>Changes that Oppose/Harmonise with Human Development/Social Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The visibility of others who harbour similar contentions (via external events or within the virtual community) may provide social validation, and thus encourage pseudo-bystanders to engage in collective action. Frequent updates of negative emotions from victim's associate may cause desensitisation. Contentious and on-topic trolling on an interpersonal level have the tendency to fuel online engagement and/or shift public focus. 		<p>Participant/Conceptual Rhythms (Phases, Stages, Cycles etc., in Progress)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pseudo-bystanders may become proactive in their intervention when they assume personal responsibility to address the issue, particularly as they perceive the issue being systemic and that they interpret the incident to have an impact on their lives. When pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance is threatened, they tend to defend their adopted ethical stance. Collective action is likely to take place upon specific instructions and/or an exemplar being visible to set the agenda 		
<p>Preliminary Assertions as Data Analysis Progresses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pseudo-bystanders' decision to intervene is influenced by the knowledge they obtain from others and is mediated by their self-perception of power and responsibility. While proactive behaviours may lead to collective action, this is likely to happen when pseudo-bystanders feel their ethical stance is threatened; they tend to assume personal responsibility to tackle a systemic issue. On the contrary, provocative comments are likely to generate reactive responses. Collective action towards particular end-state goals varies depending on whether these end results are short-term or long-term, and thus likely to be achieved upon specific instructions and/or an exemplar of such behaviour becoming visible and prevalent, and thus diffuse risks. Constant media attention and frequent updates involving negative emotions may stigmatise pseudo-bystanders' level of engagement. 							

8.4.2.1. Accumulated Knowledge about the Case Progressively

Interestingly, results from the Second Cycle Coding analysis suggests that pseudo-bystanders' accumulated knowledge about the case influences how they go about addressing the problem over time. This may include the stance they choose to adopt, their end-goal(s) they wish to achieve, their perceptions of power, level of corruption, responsibility and barriers/risks. In turn, this affects their involvement as well as the subsequent online action they adopt to address corruption cases in a social media context. As seen in Ye Haiyan's case, pseudo-bystanders often rely on others in the same space to provide information about the corruption case. Therefore, social media becomes an important tool in the pseudo-bystander intervention context, as it enables pseudo-bystanders to learn more about the situation. For example, Ye Haiyan constantly posted updates about the case of sexual assaults (*e.g.*, the petition, the protest and the outcome of the trial) as well as her own victimisation as a result of her advocacy (*e.g.*, being evicted from her landlord). Accordingly, some highly involved pseudo-bystanders took action upon "knowing" about the situation. This was evident when they contacted the police when Ye Haiyan was facing intruders, sent postcards to the local police station in which Ye Haiyan was detained and donated money to assist Ye Haiyan to overcome financial difficulties.

8.4.2.2. Identification of End-state Goals

Pseudo-bystanders seem to differentiate end-state goals as being either short-term or long-term. Therefore, the more specific and clear the victims' end-state goals are articulated, the more effective collective action is likely to be. However, while a high level of public awareness is achieved in Ye Haiyan's case, the sharp decline of such attention could be due to the short-term end-state goal being achieved. As such, when Ye Haiyan was released from detention and the perpetrators were sentenced to be imprisoned, pseudo-bystanders who adopted the "*good Samaritan*" stance may have thought this was the desired outcome. Thus, having witnessed this the end-state goal, they perceived that no further collective action was necessary thereafter.

Another reason for the decline of pseudo-bystanders' involvement may be due to the lack of direction for future action of advocacy. This may have discouraged pseudo-bystanders

from further engaging in collective action. I have constructed the following flowchart (Figure 72) to further assist this understanding:

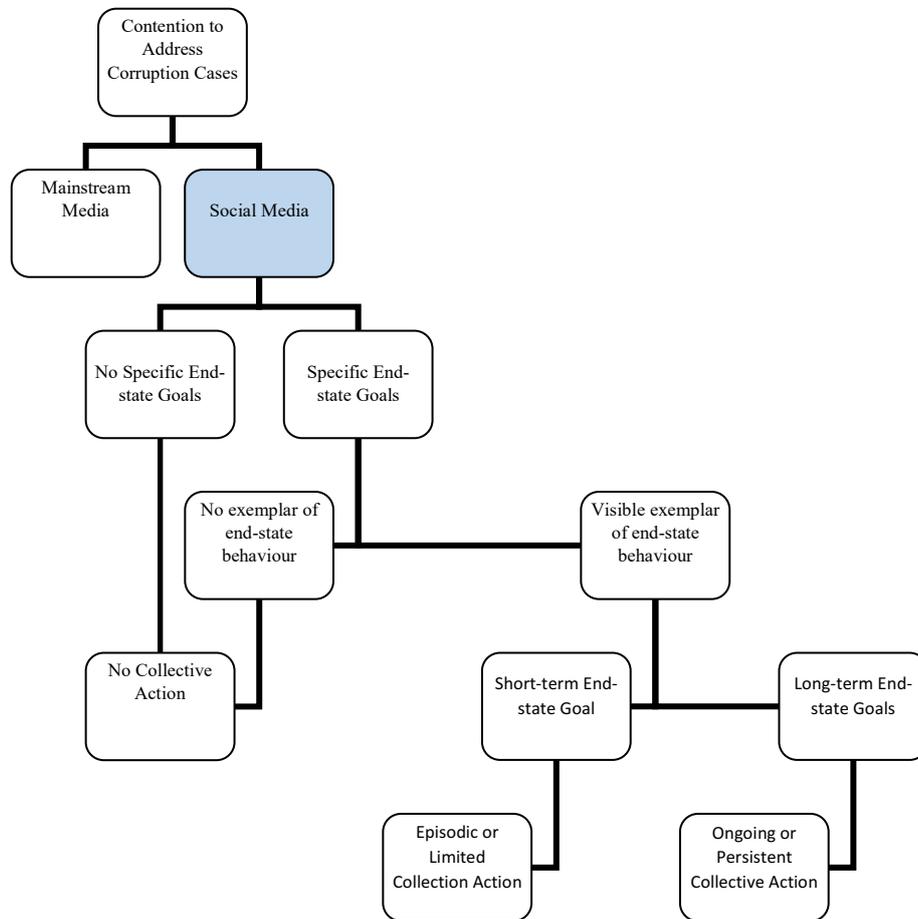


Figure 72: From Contention to Collective Action

8.4.2.3. Diluting Barriers and Risks

Ye Haiyan’s case further demonstrates how social media can be used as an effective platform to generate collective action to address corruption cases. One explanation is perhaps that it allows pseudo-bystanders to communicate and share knowledge about the case with others who have a similar ethical stance. This not only dilutes the associated risks and barriers of taking action, but also strengthens the “we-intention” when individuals perform these action collectively.

In turn, this provides social validation for pseudo-bystanders so that they feel “safe” to adopt the same behaviour. For example, when Ai Xiaoming demanded the release of Ye Haiyan in a form of photo protest, many others followed her action by taking pictures of themselves with variations of the “Principal, come get a room with me, leave the primary

school students alone” slogan. This illustrates that when a behaviour becomes readily visible and prevalent, the usual associated barriers and risks of adopting a similar behaviour are diluted and shared amongst pseudo-bystanders (in this instance, the “*good Samaritan*” stance). Thus, such pro-victim behaviour becomes “safe” to adopt in a collective manner.

Moreover, some pseudo-bystanders even went beyond the online sphere by sending postcards to the local police station where Ye Haiyan was detained to demand her release. In other words, the visibility of others validates the stances which pseudo-bystanders choose to adopt and weakens associated threats to their intervention process as it becomes openly acknowledged and shared.

8.5. Case Summary

Ye Haiyan’s case suggests that pseudo-bystanders adopt intervention action in one or several categories of “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*”, “*questioning*”, “*expressing support*”, “*exemplifying collective action*” in response to addressing corruption cases via social media. This corroborates with Ma Yue’s case. In addition, the findings from Ye Haiyan’s case suggest that a “*troll*” is an additional pseudo-bystander stance and that when they are “*stating random comments*”, some pseudo-bystanders are provoked to respond. I then returned to Ma Yue’s case data to verify these extended findings.

Furthermore, evidence from Ye Haiyan’s case illustrates that when pseudo-bystanders generate responses to the corruption case from a personal and case level, they tend to be “reactive”, and thus pseudo-bystanders are likely to regard the incident as an episodic affair. On the other hand, pseudo-bystanders tend to come across as more “proactive” and powerful when their ethical stance is being threatened. Findings from Ye Haiyan’s case also suggest that pseudo-bystanders’ accumulated knowledge on the case also enables them to recognise the problem as being a systemic issue with a wider impact that could also affect them.

I also identified that pseudo-bystanders’ end-state goals may significantly influence the way they subsequently intervene in corruption cases via social media. For instance, while the intended message from Ai Xiaoming’s online campaign could have been predominately to raise public awareness and to curb corruption and power imbalances, the majority of pseudo-bystanders may not see beyond the short-term end-state goals (*e.g.*,

discharging of Ye Haiyan from detention). Hence, when public attention shifts to an interpersonal or case level, pseudo-bystanders overlook the core of the problem that may require ongoing efforts to address.

In summary, Ye Haiyan's case shows that pseudo-bystanders are likely to be proactively involved in the process of addressing corruption cases in a social media context when they:

- have clearly identified the end-state-goal(s) and are given visible directions as to how to achieve these goals;
- feel empowered to change the situation, which occurs when they perceive the corruption cases as being a systemic issue that is prevalent on a wider societal level;
- assume personal responsibility in addressing a wider social issue;
- perceive that the associated barriers and risks are shared, and thus become diluted.

Moreover, pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance and accumulated knowledge about the corruption case may also influence their decision to intervene. Figure 73 captures the extended conceptual framework, which I have progressively developed by integrating the extended findings stemming from Ye Haiyan's case. I have also provided a summary of these extended findings in Table 38.

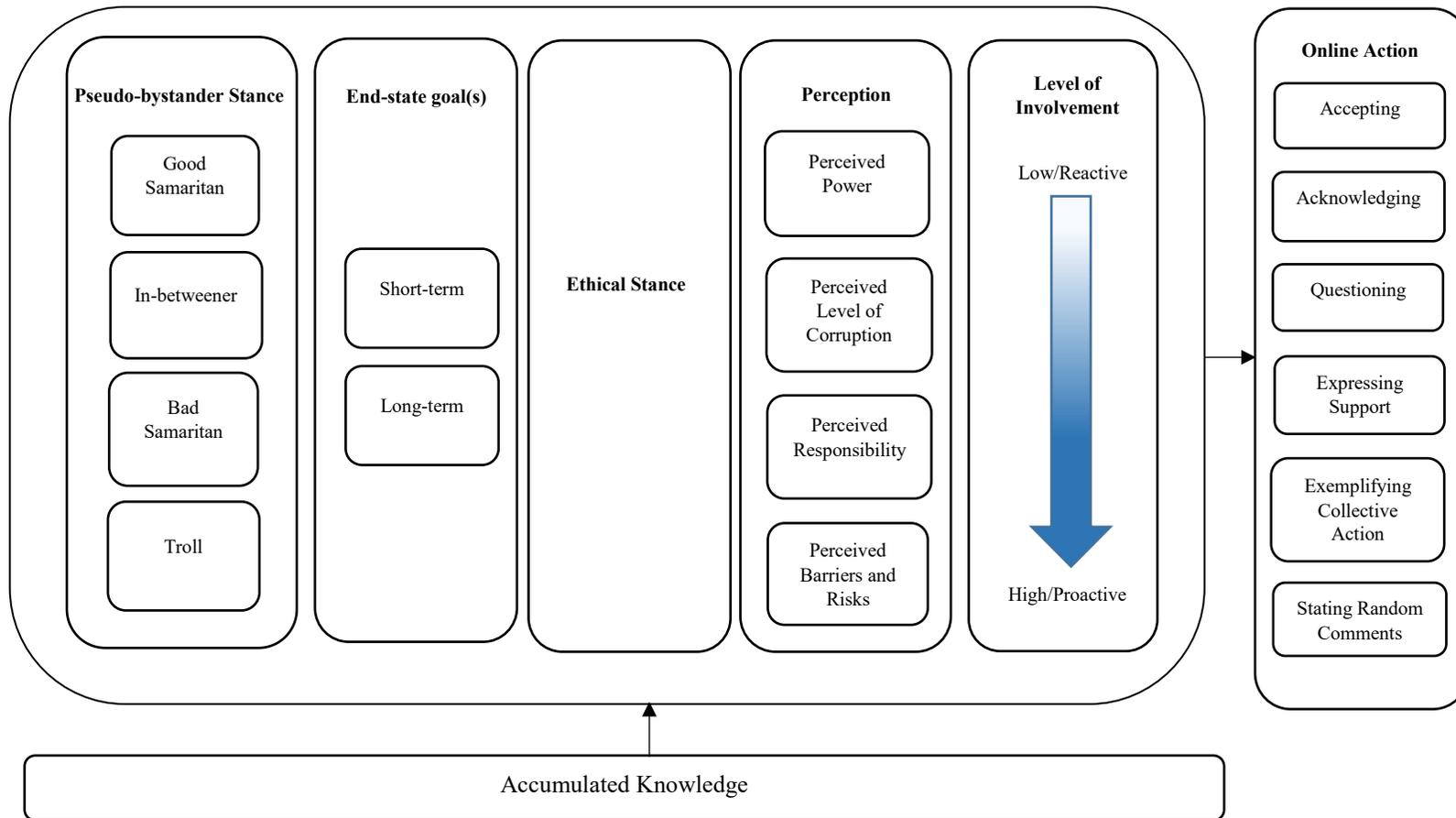


Figure 73: Extended Findings – How Pseudo-bystanders Intervene in Corruption Cases via Social Media

Table 38: Summary of Key Findings from Case Two: Ye Haiyan’s Case

Research Questions	Key Findings
<p><i>RQ1: What stances and/or roles might pseudo-bystanders adopt when they address corruption cases via social media?</i></p>	<p>Findings from Ye Haiyan’s case corroborates with the three broad pseudo-bystander roles (or stances) which were previously identified in Ma Yue’s case: “good Samaritan” (pro-victim), “bad Samaritan” (pro-perpetrator) and “in-betweener” (neutral). Moreover, Ye Haiyan’s case also identifies an additional pseudo-bystander stance: “troll”.</p>
<p><i>RQ2: Do pseudo-bystanders go through a similar bystander intervention process to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p>a) <i>What influences pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p>c) <i>How do pseudo-bystander roles and their level of involvement influence their subsequent online action to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>Pseudo-bystanders’ end-state goals may influence their level of involvement, which subsequently reflects their online action in response to corruption cases via social media.</p> <p>Ye Haiyan’s case further identifies that the perceptions of barriers and risks may influence pseudo-bystanders’ level of involvement in intervening in corruption cases, along with their perception of power, level responsibility and the extent of corruption occurring in the case.</p>
<p><i>RQ3: What stimuli triggers individuals to become involved from one stage to another in the online intervention process to take action to address corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>Ye Haiyan’s case illustrates that pseudo-bystanders are likely to be mobilised to intervene in corruption cases when a higher public profile bystander (e.g., Ai Xiaoming) becomes involved.</p> <p>Pseudo-bystanders’ ethical stance (particularly when it is threatened) and their accumulated knowledge that pseudo-bystanders attain about the corruption case may also influence their action to intervene.</p> <p>When the end-state goals are clearly identified, and perhaps exemplified, pseudo-bystanders are likely to be mobilised. Pseudo-bystanders’ focus on addressing the corruption case may be distracted by trolling comments.</p>

**Chapter Nine: Results from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's Case –
The Sound of Silence**



Figure 74: Case Three Cover Illustrated by Author Pei Yi Wang

9.1. Chapter Introduction

Following the same data analysis process as used in the previous two cases, I will present the third case study, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, in a similar fashion in this chapter. Findings from this case are expected to shed light on the research questions. This case is also used to triangulate and fine-tune what I have previously discovered from the cases of Ma Yue and Ye Haiyan. By comparing and crosschecking with new findings emerging from this third and final case, I was able to further delineate and interpret the key themes with a better understanding. In turn, this helps me to refine the overall findings across all three case studies examined in the current research to answer the research questions. At the end of this chapter, I will provide a summary of results generated from the cases of Ma Yue, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu.

9.2. Case Background

To provide a comprehensive background of the case, I have decided to include the content of the original online campaign launched by Ikumi Yoshimatsu on Change.Org. With the intention of urging Japan's current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to review the country's existing stalking laws, Ikumi Yoshimatsu made a plea in both English and Japanese. Below is the English version of the online petition (published on 9 January 2014):

Dear Prime Minister Abe,

As you know, I am the first Japanese woman to be crowned Miss International in the 52-year long history of the pageant. Since winning my crown in October 2012, I have been the victim of stalking, intimidation, threats, extortion, and blackmail by a powerful Japanese talent agency executive known to have ties to organized crime.

This man tried to abduct me from a TV studio, made threatening calls to my family, and hired private investigators to stalk me, peep into my windows and photograph my home.

The Japanese organisers of the Miss International 2013 world grand prix even asked me to "Play Sick" and "Keep Quiet" in order to appease my stalker after he made threatening phone calls to their sponsors. Because of this, I became the first Miss International titleholder in the 52-year history of the

pageant prevented from passing my crown to my successor. I fear for my life and require 24hr security.

I went to the police with more than 30 exhibits of evidence including recordings and photographs. As is typically the case in Japan, the police did nothing more than offer to increase patrols in my area. They did nothing to assure my safety or to punish my stalker.

In an unprecedented move, I became the first Japanese woman ever to publically name her tormentor and went public with my story. In sharp contrast to strong global coverage in the foreign media, not a single Japanese newspaper or TV station has covered the story out of fear of reprisal from my stalker who is linked to organized crime.

My blog has been read by millions of people and thousands have written messages of support and shared their own stories of fear, intimidation, and violence.

Japan is plagued by a “culture of silence” toward crimes against women that has been the standard for centuries.

Mr. Abe, as prime minister you have been a strong and vocal supporter of women’s rights. You have called time and time again for a “society in which women shine.”

Your strong leadership on this issue would be a game-changer.

As a first step, I ask that you establish a task force to investigate stalking and violence against women with the objective of laying out an immediate national strategy to address these issues and offer real protection for women.

Out of all the industrialized nations, Japan is by far the lowest ranking country on Gender Equality. – [It is ranked] a disgraceful 105 out of 136 countries.

We need strict anti-stalking laws and strong punishment for perpetrators of crimes against women. We need a police force that will protect women and immediately act to prevent stalking and intimidation.

We need Restraining Orders granted by the courts for any woman who has been threatened, BEFORE she is actually harmed, murdered, or forced to commit suicide. We need media that report on these issues without fear.

Without protecting the women of Japan, our country will never enjoy the economic and moral benefits of a truly equal society.

Ikumi Yoshimatsu – Miss International 2012

(Source: Change.org official petition, <<https://www.change.org/p/stalker-zero-end-the-japanese-culture-of-silence-toward-crimes-against-women>>, Viewed 04/02/2014)

Now, let me go back in time to explain Ikumi Yoshimatsu's story. In 2012, Ikumi Yoshimatsu became the first Japanese person ever crowned with the title Miss International (see Figure 75).

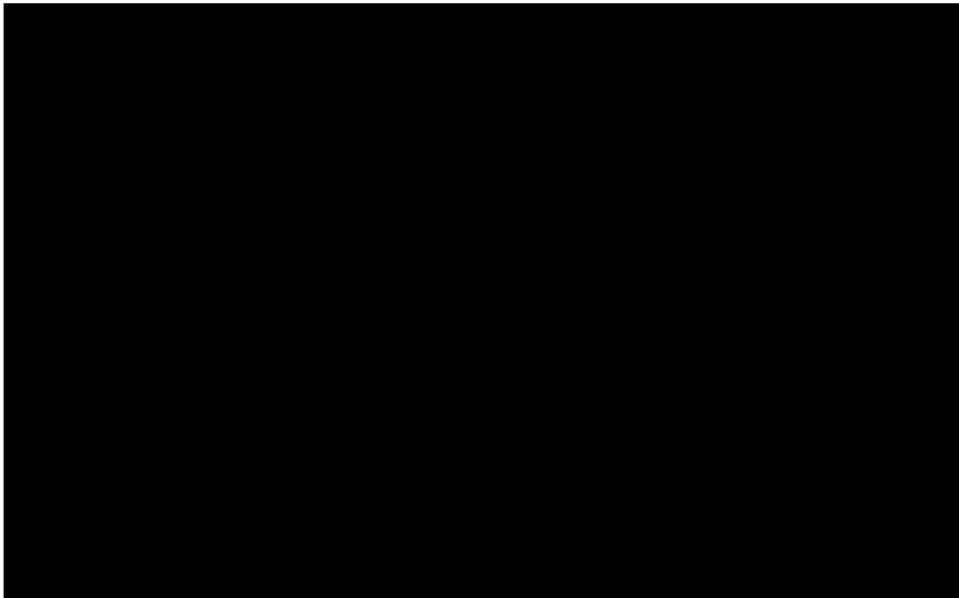


Figure 75: Ikumi Yoshimatsu at the 2012 Miss International Contest

(Source: Kyodo/Landov appeared in Dailybeast.com, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/12/18/japan-s-miss-international-takes-on-mob-backed-entertainment-complex.html>, published on 19 December 2013)

Since winning the beauty pageant, Ikumi Yoshimatsu has suffered from ongoing harassment imposed by Genichi Taniguchi (Yoshimatsu 2013). The alleged perpetrator is a “powerful” figure in Japan’s entertainment industry and exerted his power to the

detriment of Ikumi Yoshimatsu. Given the uniqueness of the Japanese entertainment scene, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's story would make more sense after I explain how the *keiretsu* (conglomerates) of Japanese *jimusho* (talent agency) typically operate.

In Japan, artists typically work under the arrangements of *jimusho* instead of venturing on their own. While a *jimusho* essentially relies on the artists to make money, it remains advantageous for artists to join and be “looked after” by a *jimusho*. This is because these *jimusho* entities are well connected and able to provide ongoing training and job opportunities in the entertainment industry (Marx 2010). Moreover, top *jimusho* entities are often part of a *keiretsu* (conglomerate). Such powerful *keiretsu* are usually private and small, as they are often associated with organised crimes groups, and thus tend to avoid public attention (Adelstein 2014). For example, according to a leaked document from the Japanese police force in 2007, Burning Productions is suspected to be one of the most powerful *keiretsu* associated with Japan's underworld activities (Adelstein 2016).

Interestingly, even though Burning Productions is one of the most powerful *keiretsu* in Japan, the company itself only has a capital of ¥20million (about USD\$180,000), a sum that seems dwarfed against other moderate-sized record labels such as EMI Music Japan (with over ¥1.667billion (about USD\$15m) in capital). To validate the powerful existence of the Burning Productions *keiretsu*, Marx (2012) investigated the transfer of publishing rights. Unsurprisingly, Marx (2010; 2011; 2012) found that the publishing rights of mega-hits from popular artists like *Ayumi Hamasaki* and *Every Little Thing* all channelled back to Burning Productions despite that these artists' record label Avex Trax, was a much bigger company on paper. Thus, such “invisibility” continues to enable Burning Productions to exercise their power to dominate the Japanese entertainment industry without public attention and pressure (Adelstein 2014; Marx 2010; 2011; 2012).

Under this opaque hierarchical *keiretsu* system, top *jimusho* entities often gain control over the Japanese entertainment industry. This is because they are not only powerful enough to promote an aspiring artist to become tomorrow's rising star, but also able to destroy their careers overnight (Marx 2010; 2011; 2012). For instance, when a particular artist is “blacklisted” by a powerful *jimusho*, it is typical for the artist to face retaliation from the entertainment industry in Japan (*e.g.*, denied work/exposure from sponsors and media outlets). The *keiretsu* groups have substantial influence over the exposure and

casting of talent on various platforms. Thus, television shows, sponsorship in commercials, magazines, and other high profile work in Japan may side with the perpetrator and boycott the “blacklisted” artist out of fear (Marx 2010). The perpetrator in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, Genichi Taniguchi, is someone who is strongly associated with Burning Productions (Adelstein 2016).

As the president of talent agency Pearl Dash and executive of another called K-Dash (both affiliates of Burning Productions), Genichi Taniguchi is an influential figure in the Japanese entertainment world. He was first introduced to Ikumi Yoshimatsu as “the man who decides the rules of the industry” (Adelstein 2016, 2014, 2011; Marx 2010). However, Ikumi Yoshimatsu promptly refused to work under Pearl Dash and K-Dash. This is because she was aware of Burning Productions’ strong ties to criminal activities and so she could not “morally, and ethically work with such people” (Yoshimatsu 2013). Because of her refusal, Genichi Taniguchi followed Ikumi Yoshimatsu, and one day abruptly entered her dressing room during a television shooting on 28 December 2012 and attempted to abduct her. Although the buildings’ security guards took him away immediately, this experience left Ikumi Yoshimatsu shaken and traumatised.

Besides the negative psychological impact, Genichi Taniguchi also abused his power to stigmatise Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s career as an artist (Adelstein 2014; FCCJ 2013; Yoshimatsu 2013). For example, Genichi Taniguchi allegedly threatened the Miss International office in Tokyo via a telephone call on 13 September 2013. He insisted that if they allow Ikumi Yoshimatsu to pass the crown to her successor in the upcoming beauty pageant context, he would then order Japanese tabloids to release fictitious stories about her, and thus damage the organiser’s reputations (Yoshimatsu 2013). Fearful of Genichi Taniguchi’s intimidation, the organiser of Miss International instructed Ikumi Yoshimatsu to “play sick” and “keep quiet”, so that she would not appear on stage in the 2013 Miss International beauty pageant to honour her successor (Yoshimatsu 2013). Genichi Taniguchi continued to exploit his power in the Japanese entertainment industry by using his powerful networks to influence and threaten sponsors, television networks, magazines *etc.* to stop them from working with Ikumi Yoshimatsu. So apart from the personal trauma, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s career options in the entertainment industry also evaporated.

Furthermore, Genichi Taniguchi persistently threatened Ikumi Yoshimatsu's family members in her hometown in Kyushu (FCCJ 2013; Yoshimatsu 2013). For instance, on 13 June 2013, Genichi Taniguchi contacted Ikumi Yoshimatsu's father at his workplace by telephone. In the telephone conversation, Genichi Taniguchi told Ikumi Yoshimatsu's father that his daughter may end up like Ako Kawada (an announcer who worked for Tokyo Broadcasting System that died mysteriously in 2008) if she persisted with not joining his talent agency (Adelstein 2013; Yoshimatsu 2013). Although Ikumi Yoshimatsu's concerned father told Genichi Taniguchi to stop harassing him and his family, Genichi Taniguchi continued this type of negative behaviour by contacting Ikumi Yoshimatsu's family via telephone, text messages and letters (Yoshimatsu 2013).

Being a victim of stalking, extortion, attempted abduction, verbal threats and constantly followed by private investigators hired by Genichi Taniguchi, Ikumi Yoshimatsu decided to report the incidents to the police with evidence (*e.g.*, voice recordings and footages of the private investigators that trailed her) (Yoshimatsu 2013). However, Ikumi Yoshimatsu received little protection from the Japanese police force. More disturbingly, one police officer suggested to Ikumi Yoshimatsu that she should consider complying and joining the perpetrator's talent agencies to avoid ongoing harassment (Yoshimatsu 2015). Feeling helpless, distressed, scared and frustrated, Ikumi Yoshimatsu turned to social media to blog about her ordeal (Yoshimatsu 2013, 2015).

On her official blog as a celebrity (Figure 76), Ikumi Yoshimatsu publically named and shamed her tormentor Genichi Taniguchi for his abuse of power and his relentless campaign against her via several posts during December 2013. As it was considered extremely rare in Japan for a high-profile public figure like Ikumi Yoshimatsu to publicly "break the silence", this raised a certain level of public attention in the online environment. For instance, one of the very first posts Ikumi Yoshimatsu published with regards to her incident reached thousands of online users.

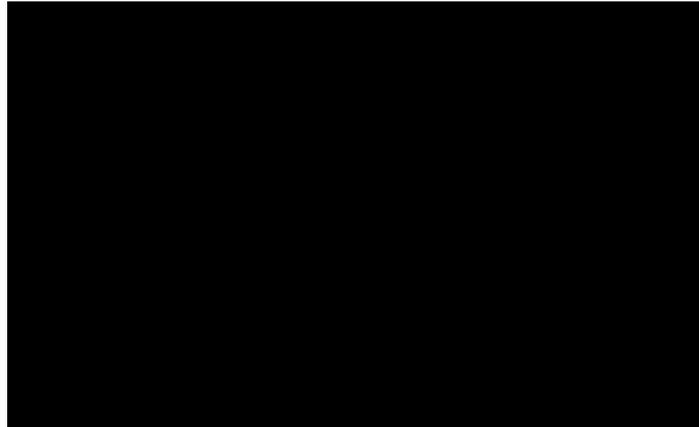


Figure 76: Ikumi Yoshimatsu's Official Blog Cover Photo

(Source: <http://ameblo.jp/ikumi-621/>)

Refusing to become a “silent victim”, Ikumi Yoshimatsu went on to voice her situation publicly both online and in real-life (Yoshimatsu 2015). First, she held a press conference on 13 December 2013 to expose the harassment by Genichi Taniguchi. Ikumi Yoshimatsu shared her experiences in the presence of various major Japanese media outlets at the Shihou Kisha Club. However, almost all Japanese mainstream media outlets chose to remain silent by not reporting her case. The following quote was drawn from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's blog on 16 December 2013:

There was a lot of big Japanese TV channels and obviously, major Japanese Newspaper outlets were also at the venue where I held the press conference. I have already posted on my blog that there were lots of microphones, cameras, glances from the media and flashes from the cameras. It took a lot of courage for me to confess in that situation, so much that my hands were shaking from the intimidating atmosphere. When the press conference finished, I felt like everyone was interested about the events, which I was talking about as I answered many questions from the Japanese media. However, on the Internet, a lot of my articles were deleted, and currently, Japanese newspapers and televisions are not even reporting about it. I feel like Japan's culture of 'not doing anything when everyone knows what is happening' and 'put the lid on when something bad smells' is significantly shown [through their inaction].

Indeed, the “culture of silence” in the Japanese mainstream media was apparent in this case. There are currently around 130 newspapers in Japan, of which, 114 are in Japanese (Online Newspapers 2017). However, only two Japanese newspapers reported Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s story at the time (Adelstein 2013). These newspapers were the *Saga Shimbun*, which was based in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s home prefecture (see Figure 77), and the liberal tabloid, *Nikkan Gendai* (Adelstein 2013). Another exception was Japan’s best-selling weekly magazine *Shukan Bunshun*, which featured Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s story on a four-page article that was published on 12 December 2013. Nevertheless, Adelstein (2013) points out that Genichi Taniguchi’s name was not mentioned in any of these media clippings. For instance, *Saga Shimbun* refers to Genichi Taniguchi as “this man” (see Figure 77).

	<p>[Translation]</p> <p><i>Miss Yoshimatsu's brave confession on her online blog that she received threats to abandon her job as Ms International.</i></p> <p><i>Miss Yoshimatsu is the first Japanese woman to win the Ms International competition. She was born in a town called Tosu in Saga prefecture. She claims that her role as Miss International has been forcibly taken away from her by threats and harassments.</i></p> <p><i>The confessions on her blog, published on 11th was titled “To all of those who are worried about me”. The organiser of the event instructed her to not attend the ceremony and instead, fake her physical condition. She was supposed to pass the crown to the new winner of Miss International.</i></p> <p><i>The main reason behind this was threats imposed by the executive of a big entertainment company over a telephone call. On her blog, she says that this man has been stalking her for over a year.</i></p> <p><i>According to the story from the people who are also involved in this case, there seems to be an unsettled financial problem between the Miss Yoshimatsu's American manager and the stalker.</i></p> <p>Miss Yoshimatsu expressed her stance during our interview in prosecuting this man for interfering her work to the court. She states that “This case is not only my personal issue, but for all the women in this society. I hope this would ignite the change [needed] for this society.”</p> <p>The organization that is responsible for hosting Miss International did not give us any comments regarding this case. The man accused for stalking her commented: “I have not seen the blog and the court has not contacted me neither. I know some gossip magazines are writing about me but none of that information is true”.</p>
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Figure 77: Saga Shimbun Featuring a Brief Story on Ikumi Yoshimatsu, with Translation

(Source: <http://www.saga-s.co.jp/news/saga.0.2595685.article.html>, Published on 13 December 2013)

In fact, it was not until Ikumi Yoshimatsu presented an English version of her story at a press conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ) on 16 December 2013 that this matter escalated to an international stage, and thus received worldwide attention (Adelstein 2014). For instance, the video footage that captured Ikumi Yoshimatsu's entire press conference on the FCCJ's official channel on YouTube was viewed 78,639 times in less than two months and subsequently attracted 161 comments.

It turned out that Ikumi Yoshimatsu's English press conference at the FCCJ took place just one day before the actual Miss International 2013 ceremony, where Japan's First Lady, Akie Abe (wife of current Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe) partook in the judging panel. Unbeknown at the time, the First Lady was to play a significant role in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. It appears that Ikumi Yoshimatsu's "voice" from her blog and the YouTube video from FCCJ had reached others. On 17 December 2013, Akie Abe uploaded photos of the beauty pageant event onto her Facebook page (Figures 78 & 79); her post was flooded with comments that urged the First Lady to investigate Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case.

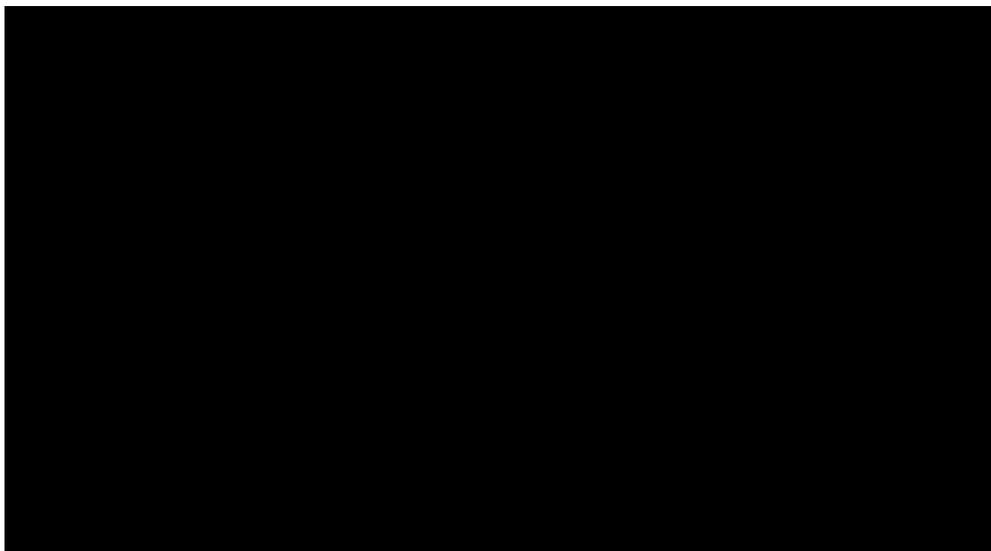


Figure 78: 2013 Miss International Beauty Contest

(Source: Akie Abe's Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/akieabe>, published on 17 December 2013)

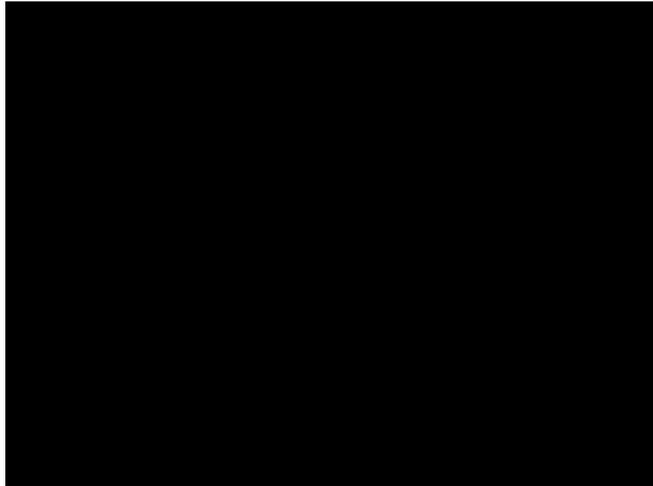


Figure 79: Judging Panel for 2013 Miss International Beauty Contest

(Source: Akie Abe's Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/akieabe>, published on 17 December 2013)

Unaware of Ikumi Yoshimatsu's situation at the time, Akie Abe was intrigued by the outpour of Facebook comments in relation to Ikumi Yoshimatsu. Subsequently, Akie Abe responded on her Facebook page on 18 December: "The place was very lively and filled with beautiful emotion. I didn't know what happened to Ms. Yoshimatsu last year. I would like to know the truth behind this incident" (Abe 2013). Akie Abe kept her promise. On 25 December 2013, she arranged to meet with Ikumi Yoshimatsu (Figure 80).

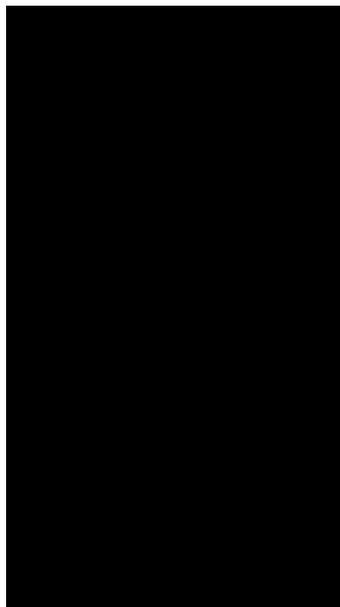


Figure 80: Ikumi Yoshimatsu with Akie Abe (1)

(Source: Ikumi Yoshimatsu's Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/yoshimatsuikumi>, published 25 December 2013)

As a result of this meeting, the duo launched an online petition titled *Stalker Zero* on Change.org on 9 January 2014, calling Japan's Prime Minister Shinzō Abe (the husband of Akie Abe) and his ruling party to immediately review Japan's outdated law on stalking and impose tougher legal punishments on stalkers (Figure 81).



Figure 81: Change.org Campaign Stalker Zero

(Source: <https://www.change.org/p/stalker-zero-end-the-japanese-culture-of-silence-toward-crimes-against-women>)

Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case highlights that it was extremely difficult for victims to prosecute stalkers from a legal perspective. For instance, the police took no further action to stop Genichi Taniguchi's power abuse and stalking behaviour towards Ikumi Yoshimatsu. Moreover, it was as late as 2013 before the Japanese Act on Regulating Stalking was changed so that emails were considered as a recognised platform of harassing others. This means other electronic communications such as those through social media platforms or via SMS (Short Message Service) are yet to be recognised.

Therefore, victims who are stalked via other electronic communications remain unable to take legal action against their perpetrators, and thus cannot be protected by the "law". For instance, Ikumi Yoshimatsu was unable to use the text messages sent by Genichi Taniguchi as "evidence" of his stalking behaviour. More generally, legal prosecution on stalkers in Japan usually occurred as a result of a romantic relationship. Hence, from both a legal and social perspective, it was impossible for Ikumi Yoshimatsu to file a restraining order against her stalker, Genichi Taniguchi, with whom she is not romantically involved.

This shows Japan's stalking law is clearly inadequate to protect victims like Ikumi Yoshimatsu. Thus, the main drive behind the *Stalker Zero* campaign was to have these laws amended.



Figure 82: Ikumi Yoshimatsu Akie Abe (2)

(Source: Ikumi Yoshimatsu's Facebook Page, <https://www.facebook.com/yoshimatsuikumi>, published on 28 January 2014)

The responses for the online petition *Stalker Zero*, led by Ikumi Yoshimatsu, and backed by Akie Abe, were tremendous. By 16 January 2014, just one week after the launch of *Stalker Zero*, it had already received 20,000 signatures. The duo's public outcry attracted an outpour of support coming from both within Japan and abroad. As a result, by the end of January 2014 – in just three weeks after its launch, more than 114,000 people signed the petition (Japan Times 2014). This online petition closed in March 2014 with 131,280 signatures. Legendary musician/activist Yoko Ono was one supporter, who shared Ikumi Yoshimatsu's campaign on Twitter to her 4.78 million followers (Figure 83). Note that I also decided to sign this particular petition on 4 February 2014, from Australia. This illustrates that there really was a global reach.



Figure 83: Yoko Ono's Tweet

(Source: Yoko Ono's Twitter, <https://twitter.com/yokoono>, published on 3 February 2014)

The solidarity gained from social media platforms and the *Stalker Zero* campaign via Change.org showed that Ikumi Yoshimatsu could employ alternative methods in an online environment to expose her tormentor publicly. However, it also highlights the salient “culture of silence” in Japan’s mainstream media in response to Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s call for support. For example, in spite of Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s efforts to boost public awareness in Japan and globally, there remain no reports (in English or Japanese) on her stalking incident on the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) websites. Likewise, there were no traces of Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s story in any other major newspaper outlets, including the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, *Mainichi Shimbun* and *Asahi Shimbun* (as of 3 February 2014, when I searched on the Internet).

Moreover, Ikumi Yoshimatsu revealed on her blog on 14 January 2014 that a “system error” inconveniently wiped out her published posts that mentioned Genichi Taniguchi’s name. For instance, an unnamed third party deleted one particular post that attracted 535 Likes on Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s blog and 495 comments. Nevertheless, Ikumi Yoshimatsu later found out that the real reason for the removal of the blog posts was due to Genichi Taniguchi’s lawyer contacting the website’s administration team to request the deletion

of her content. While the initial posts were temporarily restored, Ikumi Yoshimatsu eventually removed them again on 1 December 2014 due to a specific court order in favour of Genichi Taniguchi, when “the opponent told the court to delete the blog article about that incident” (Yoshimatsu 2014). Hence, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s blog posts from December 2013 and January 2014 that mentioned the stalking incident were scrapped from the website. This demonstrates that Genichi Taniguchi was able to abuse his power and connections in the Japanese entertainment industry to intimidate aspiring female artists like Ikumi Yoshimatsu, the poor legislation also continues to sanction such exploitation of power by not allowing victims to have a “voice”.

Disappointingly, in spite of the overwhelming support Ikumi Yoshimatsu had received locally and abroad, the Japanese court’s final decision rejected her request to file a restraining order against Genichi Taniguchi (Adelstein 2014). Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s incident further highlights how the current laws on stalking are flawed, as they cannot protect victims of stalking, even if the victim is able to provide considerable evidence as well as receiving widespread public support. Despite this setback, Ikumi Yoshimatsu continued to “speak out”, not only as a victim of power abuse, but also to advocate for other women who may suffer under similar circumstances (Figure 84).

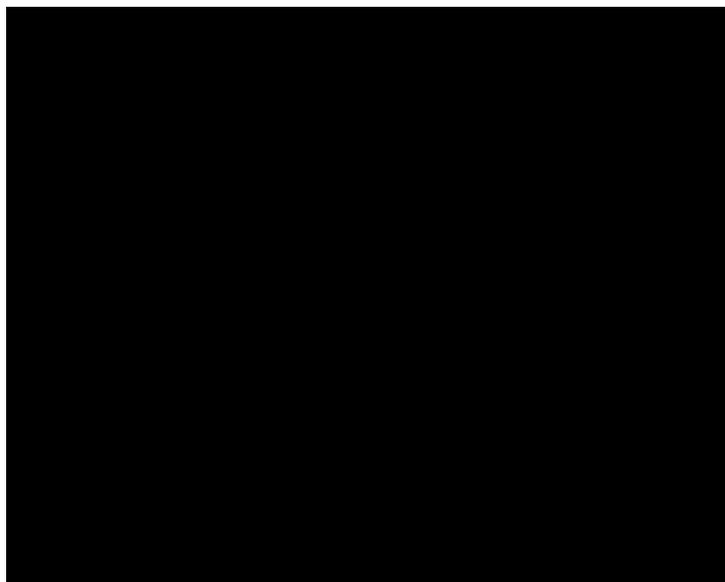


Figure 84: Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Facebook Photo Message

(Source: Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/yoshimatsuikumi>, published on 22 November 2014)

Two years after she publicly named and shamed her tormentor, on 23 December 2015, Ikumi Yoshimatsu presented at an international TED X Kyoto Conference held at the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. At this international conference, Ikumi Yoshimatsu delivered a presentation titled “*Fighting for new laws to protect women in Japan*” and spoke about her firsthand experiences. By telling others how she was negatively affected as a victim of power abuse and in doing so, brought “the man behind the curtain” to light, Ikumi Yoshimatsu continues to raise public awareness about the “dark side” of the Japanese entertainment industry.

While promoting an active role for women is positioned as the central piece of Japan’s economic policy under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, he is yet to address problems like stalking, which Japanese women continue to face. Perhaps others will remember Ikumi Yoshimatsu as not just a pretty face that won the first Japanese Miss International in 52 years, but also as a brave woman who stood up against her tormentor’s power abuse. Perhaps Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s “voice” that pierced through the “culture of silence” will continue to reach, captivate and inspire many people across the globe. Perhaps her legacy will eventually influence change in Japan’s stalking law. Or, perhaps not.

9.3. Case Data Overview

From a glance, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case seemed to stretch from October 2012 to December 2015. However, the online traffic volume from Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s official blog suggests that this case predominately peaked around December 2013 to January 2014. In fact, 16 of the 18 blog posts related to this case were published during this period. However, I could not capture all the blog posts and comments published due to the court’s final decision to deny Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s request for a restraining order against Genichi Taniguchi. Consequently, Ikumi Yoshimatsu had to retract information she had previously published on her official blog that mentioned the stalking incident. While the majority of these deleted posts and associated comments from Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s blog were no longer available for viewing, records of their online traffic volume still provide clues as to where the “spikes” in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case occurred.

As Ikumi Yoshimatsu continues to use her official blog to promote her work as an artist, only the deleted blog posts about the stalking were used in this case study. I was able to

access them to record their online traffic volume before they were completely removed from the website (see Table 39).

**Table 39: Online Engagement Generated by Deleted Posts on Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Blog
(as of 4 April 2014)**

Date	Blog Post Title	Likes on Blog	Comments on Blog	Remarks from the Blog Post
11 December 2013	<u>心配してくれている皆様へ ご報告</u> (A report to everyone who is worried about me)	1,894	738	Ikumi Yoshimatsu filed an official lawsuit against her stalker Genichi Taniguchi and publicised her situation on her personal blog.
13 December 2013	<u>記者会見 / 皆さんの声届いています</u> (Press conference/reaching a collective voice)	603	302	Japanese media conference held at the Shihou Kisha Club but the Japanese media remained largely silent afterward.
16 December 2013	<u>外国人記者クラブにて記者 会見</u> (Foreign correspondent club press conference)	1,064	852	On Dec. 16, another press conference was held at the FCCJ for foreign news outlets
19 December 2013	<u>世界中へ発信 Newsweek "The Daily Beast"</u> (A letter to the world ~ ‘The Daily Beast’)	600	1,079	Jake Adelstein (a former investigative journalist who is expert in writing about Japan’s underground crime groups) published an article about Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s incident on The Daily Beast titled “Japan’s Miss International Takes on Mob-Backed Entertainment Complex”
22 December 2013	<u>信じがたい事実...</u> (Believe it or not...)	897	1,349	
25 December 2013	<u>安倍昭恵夫とクリスマス</u> (Christmas with Abe Akie)	642	1,759	Akie Abe met up with Ikumi Yoshimatsu
4 January 2014	<u>遅くなりましたが明けまし ておめでとうございます</u> (Happy Belated New Year)	369	571	
8 January 2014	<u>緊急キャンペーン『ストー カーゼロ』開始!</u> (Starting the urgent campaign Stalker Zero)	621	513	Akie Abe backed up Ikumi Yoshimatsu to launch an online petition titled “Stalker Zero”
9 January 2014	<u>パンクが復旧しました!</u> (The puncture is restored)	423	1,025	Change Org. petition opened for individuals to sign, (available in both English and Japanese)
13 January 2014	<u>執行官の件について</u> (About the investigators)	443	460	
14 January 2014	<u>ブログ記事削除の件につい て</u> (Blogs being deleted)	535	495	Ikumi sent an inquiry to the web engineer with regards to the deletion of blog entries published on Dec 11 and 23. The blog entries were eventually restored. “Stalker Zero” petition reached 20,000 signatures
16 January 2014	<u>『STALKER ZERO』記録的 なペースで2万人達成</u>	470	1,084	It turned out that the Genichi Taniguchi’s lawyer requested to remove the contents as it threatens

	(Stalker Zero reaching 20,000 signatures)			to damage the reputation of his client. However, Ikumi argues that she was only writing her part of the experience, the damage to her emotional and mental state is equally important to financial damages. So the website restored her blog.
22 January 2014	<u>世界が味方に！ 5万人突破！</u> (To friends around the globe! Reaching 50,000 people!)	405	439	Online petition update: “Stalker Zero” has reached 50,000 signatures
24 January 2014	<u>『ストーカーZERO』キャンペーン 10万人突破！</u> (Stalker zero campaign reaching 100,000)	364	679	Online petition update: “Stalker Zero” has reached 100,000 signatures
30 January 2014	<u>週刊文春の取材を受けました</u> (Materials from Shukanbunshou)	405	236	Ikumi Yoshimatsu had an interview with the <i>Shukanbunshou</i> magazine, she was accompanied by Akie Abe
31 January 2014	<u>探偵連行の動画</u> (Animate of the associate private investigator)	315	287	Footages of the private investigator hired by Genichi Taniguchi from 25 August 2013, 13:00-21:00 and 30 September 2013, 9:00 to 17:00 emerged as evidence of Ikumi Yoshimatsu being a victim of stalking. Police arrested the man in question, but Genichi Taniguchi denied having hired such person.
9 February 2014	<u>現状報告と感謝</u> (Recent update and thank you)	-	-	Recent update on the stalking case and thanking supporters.
4 February 2014	<u>ヨーコ・オノ・レノンさんが賛同！ FCCJ 表紙・記事！</u> (Support from Yoko Ono! FCCJ article!)	369	398	Screenshot of a Tweet by Yoko Ono, who showed support towards the “Stalker Zero” campaign and a link to external sources, which reported Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case.
1 December 2014	<u>ブログ削除・非公開のお知らせ</u> (Notice regarding deletion of blog posts)	169	37	Public notice that her blog posts might be removed.
Total		10,588	12,303	

Evidently, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s official blog generated little online traffic in terms of both visitors and their responses prior to her blogging about the stalking incident. For example, a “typical” post published on Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s blog (*i.e.*, on 11 November 2013, unrelated to Genichi Taniguchi) only attracted 80 likes and 20 comments (Yoshimatsu 2013). In contrast, public interest surged when Ikumi Yoshimatsu publicised her stalking incident. This was reflected in the high volume of online responses as illustrated in Table

39 (see highlighted numbers). However, Ikumi Yoshimatsu was unable to disclose more details about the case due to the court’s decision. Her official blog had also disabled the “commenting” function at the time of my analysis. Consequently, I only managed to capture a portion of the comments from the deleted posts before their deletion. Therefore, the analysis of this case study is primarily drawn from the most recent data, that is, the deleted blog post on Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s official blog, which was published on 4 February 2014, and its corresponding comments ($n = 398$). Upon triangulating the event from various online and offline sources (*e.g.*, newspaper and magazine articles in both Japanese and English), I constructed the overarching timeline for Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case (see Table 40).

Table 40: Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case Timeline

Case Timeline	Key Events
October 2012	Ikumi Yoshimatsu won the Miss International Title
October 2012 to December 2013	Genichi Taniguchi persistently harassed Ikumi Yoshimatsu (<i>e.g.</i> , trying to abduct her, hired private investigators to follow her, threatened her family and work-related parties, and used his networks to jeopardise her career as an artist). Ikumi Yoshimatsu reported the incidents to the police
12 December 2013	Filed a legal lawsuit against Genichi Taniguchi
13 December 2013	Press conference held in Japanese
16 December 2013	Press conference held in English
18 December 2013	Akie Abe acknowledged that she would look into Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case
25 December 2013	Meeting with Akie Abe
9 January 2014	Launch <i>Stalker Zero</i> campaign, with an aim of reaching 150,000 signatures
4 February 2014	Yoko Ono signed the <i>Stalker Zero</i> petition and sent out a tweet about it
March 2014	Closing of <i>Stalker Zero</i> campaign, which obtained 131,279 supporters as a result
August 2015	The court dismissed Genichi Taniguchi’s allegations in the lawsuit that Ikumi Yoshimatsu filed against him
23 December 2015	TED X Kyoto presentation on “Fighting for new laws to protect women in Japan”

To analyse this case and supplement the data available from December 2013, I also captured online responses generated in other social media platforms including Twitter, YouTube and Facebook. These social media platforms served as suitable *main streams* as they are generally accessible to an international audience, as opposed to social media platforms that are more Japan-oriented (such as Mixi). These *main streams* provided

insightful information as to how pseudo-bystanders (including those from different countries), may intervene in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. As Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case is also used to triangulate findings derived from the previous two cases, it would therefore, be advantageous to capture a breadth of pseudo-bystanders globally so that I could further delineate commonalities and differences when I carry out the cross-case analysis.

To pinpoint the exact location of relevant key information on these other social media platforms, I resorted to the following approaches:

Twitter: selecting Tweets by replying to an online user – one feature of Twitter is the @ function (similar to Weibo). This allowed me to delineate all correspondence towards @Ikumiyoshimatsu to identify relevant discussions on Twitter. As a result, I captured 340 responses between 12 December 2013 and 30 March 2014 for further examination.

Facebook: selecting comments by online user and post relevance – the First Lady of Japan, Akie Abe, was initially informed by various pseudo-bystanders with regards to Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case via Facebook. Hence, I captured relevant posts and associated comments published on Akie Abe's Facebook account. Specifically, only two Facebook posts published by Akie Abe are relevant to this case. The first post (published on 17 December 2013) attracted 53 comments, 3,000 likes and 84 shares. The second post (published on 25 December 2013) generated 283 comments, 8,800 likes and 1,875 shares.

Additionally, two particular posts and associated comments from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's Facebook account were also included in the data analysis process of this case. As Ikumi Yoshimatsu predominately used her official blog for communicating the stalking incident, she revealed very little about the situation on her Facebook account. Thus, the Facebook posts observed were fewer in number. The first relevant post (published on 28 January 2014) attracted 51 comments, 1,421 likes and 65 shares. The relevant second post (published on 22 February 2014) attracted 21 comments, 1,019 likes and 38 shares.

YouTube: selecting videos by organisation and topic relevance. Comments from two particular YouTube videos are used in this case. These YouTube videos not only offered details into Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, they also generated insightful comments published by various pseudo-bystanders. The first YouTube video captured Ikumi Yoshimatsu's

entire English conference at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ) that took place on 16 December 2013. The FCCJ then uploaded the footage on the same day on YouTube. The video was viewed over 100,000 times and generated 184 comments at the time of the analysis. The second YouTube video was distributed by TED X Talks, where Ikumi Yoshimatsu presented in Kyoto at an international conference titled “Courage X Creativity” on 23 December 2014. It received 13,000 views and generated 299 comments in the space of ten months. This presentation took place after the Japanese courts rejected Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s request for a restraining order against Genichi Tanguchi. By speaking out in a global forum like TED X, Ikumi Yoshimatsu continued to challenge the “culture of silence” and resist the power abuse imposed by the Japanese entertainment industry tycoon, Genichi Taniguchi.

To identify potentially useful comments from the various online sources in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, I “mined” through the responses manually, as I did with the previous two cases. While the majority of discussions examined were useful, I also came across a handful of responses that were “irrelevant” or “unhelpful” to answer my research questions. Thus, I went through a process of “weeding out” the responses from various social media platforms (e.g., cheering comments like “頑張って (fighting)”). Consequently, there remained 1,509 comments from a variety of sources for me to analyse (see Table 41).

Table 41: Comments to be Included in the Data Analysis for Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Social Media Platform	Number of Comments after Filtering
Blog (http://ameblo.jp/)	355
Facebook	390
Twitter	290
YouTube	474
Total	1,509

As both Japanese and English are used in the data collected for this case (depending on the social media platform) before I could reformat the raw data to make it more easily accessible for the data analysis process, I had to first make sure that I understood the content of the data. As mentioned previously, while I can also understand Japanese

(having successfully obtained a bachelor degree major in Japanese and worked in Japan for two years), I nevertheless decided to hire a native Japanese person who is bilingual to translate all the Japanese data into English to ensure accuracy. This process took several months, as the translator also translated supplementary data like newspaper and magazine articles that were written in Japanese (which I used for the purpose of triangulation).

Given that Ikumi Yoshimatsu has a celebrity status, one may expect that it would be relatively “easier” for Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s “story” to generate public interest. However, this was not the case. Evidently, the Japanese police and the majority of media outlets in Japan had all turned their backs on her. Consequently, Ikumi Yoshimatsu had to employ social media to raise public attention. Once again, this illustrates that social media can be employed an effective platform by the victims and victims’ associates to seek help from others, regardless of whether they are famous or not.

While Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case originates from a completely different country and context, compared with the first two Chinese corruption cases, the findings that emerged from the First Cycle Coding analysis, at first glance, are strikingly similar to both cases of Ma Yue and Ye Haiyan. For instance, all three cases involved high-profile individual supporting the victims. The pseudo-bystanders’ stances identified (*i.e.*, “*good Samaritan*”, “*in-betweener*”, “*bad Samaritan*” and “*troll*”) in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case and their online action (*i.e.*, “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*”, “*questioning*”, “*expressing support*”, “*exemplifying collective action*” and “*stating random comments*”) are also in line with previous findings. Furthermore, seven new observations emerged from Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case data. Table 42 captures some example responses that reflect these additional findings.

Table 42: New Observations Generated in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's Case

New Observation	Description	Category	Example From Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case (Case Three)
Indicating Real-life Action	Demonstrating that he/she acts beyond the online environment	<i>Exemplifying Collective Action</i>	<i>パシリ 1号: She is famous! I did not expect this. I feel like things are moving toward to a better situation. I like where this is heading. I am planning to do my thing as well (but I cannot write about it here...) I will continue to give out flyers. [2014-02-05 23:20:04]</i>
Identifying Cultural Issue	Specifically relating the incident to cultural roots	<i>Acknowledging</i>	<i>Eddy: Yakuza's historically controlled the Japanese entertainment business and it remains difficult to cut the ties with them...this is such an unfair situation... Ms. Yoshimatsu's case is a prime example of this society's problem. I am sure there are many others who suffer from a similar situation in Japan. [2014-02-06 00:11:32]</i>
Feeling Shameful as a Result of Damaging National Pride	Feeling that the incident is causing damage to his/her social identity, specifically his/her national pride	<i>Acknowledging</i>	<i>応援者: ...This is a problem, which we, as citizens of Japan should solve; and we should be ashamed that we did not show any interest towards this topic. I hope that group stalking will be subverted and we need to work hard to spread the words...[2014-02-07 01:02:53]</i>
Seeking Advice on Participation	Seeking advice from others in the same space about their involvement (e.g., problems with signing the online petition)	<i>Questioning</i>	<i>野芥の空百道の海: ...Maybe try to organize a concert? Maybe demonstration is also a good idea... [2014-02-07 09:11:12]</i>
Blaming on the Victim's Ignorance	Implying that the victim should know better	<i>Accepting</i>	<i>Mater Alma: It is a well-known taboo that there is a massive SEX SLAVE system that connects Talent agents, TV broadcast companies, Advertising agencies, Police/Court authorities and Politicians. She is so naive!! She is so dead!!!! May the force be with her...</i>
Providing Update/Case Progression	Providing additional information to inform others about the progress of the case	<i>Expressing Support</i>	<i>WMC Live: #StalkerZero @ikumiyoshimatsu talks about her new petition on http://WMCLive.com w/ @TheRobinMorgan http://chn.ge/1of7hKX :: on @itunes [2014-03-30]</i>
Criticising the Delivery of Contention	Agreeing with the message but not the mode of delivery	<i>Questioning</i>	<i>結局は皆自分が一番かわいしい: Yoko Ono barely has any effect on this incident. We can say the same thing for the petition, people on the internet will not be doing anything unless it is directly affecting them in real-life. [2014-02-06 09:18:18]</i>

Upon noticing these nuances in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, I went back to the previous two cases to check if they are also applicable. By doing so, this helped me to further corroborate and extend what I have found previously in the cases of Ma Yue and Ye Haiyan. For instance, the intention to support the victims in real-life was evident in all three cases. An example in Ma Yue's case is when people gathered at the subway station to commemorate Ma Yue's death anniversary. Similarly, in Ye Haiyan's case, supporters purportedly made monetary donation to aid her financial struggles. This suggests that it may be possible for pseudo-bystanders to become involved to take action both online *and* in real-life. In Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, Akie Abe promptly organised a meeting with Ikumi Yoshimatsu upon noticing her situation. Even though I did not record any physical action from other pseudo-bystanders in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, indications of real-life action were evident in various responses. This suggests that pseudo-bystanders are likely to do so when such opportunity arises.

Another example is that updates on the cases are evidently provided by either those who are directly involved (*e.g.*, victims and victim's associates) or indirectly involved (*e.g.*, others who are following the progression of the case). In turn, communicating relevant information plays an important role in building the readers' knowledge, maintaining their interest and/or influencing their involvement over time.

Interestingly, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case also suggests that some individuals tend to blame the victim for the power abuse. These responses often imply that Ikumi Yoshimatsu should expect what she had gone through as part of being an artist in Japan. This "you should have known" mentality can also be seen in Ye Haiyan's case to a degree, in how she was dealing with the situation. On the other hand, this mentality was less prevalent in Ma Yue's case. After all, it would have been extremely difficult to argue that it was Ma Yue's fault since all he did was utilising a well-established public transport system like any given Beijing commuter, on any given day.

Since only Weibo was used to extract pseudo-bystanders' responses from both Ma Yue's case and Ye Haiyan's case, it was interesting to see that Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case emerged with similar results to the previous two case studies across four different social media platforms. For instance, if we look at the overall picture illustrated across all the selected social media platforms examined (see Figure 85), the majority of comments in

Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case also fall under the category of “*expressing support*”. This is also the most popular category in both Ma Yue’s case and Ye Haiyan’s case.

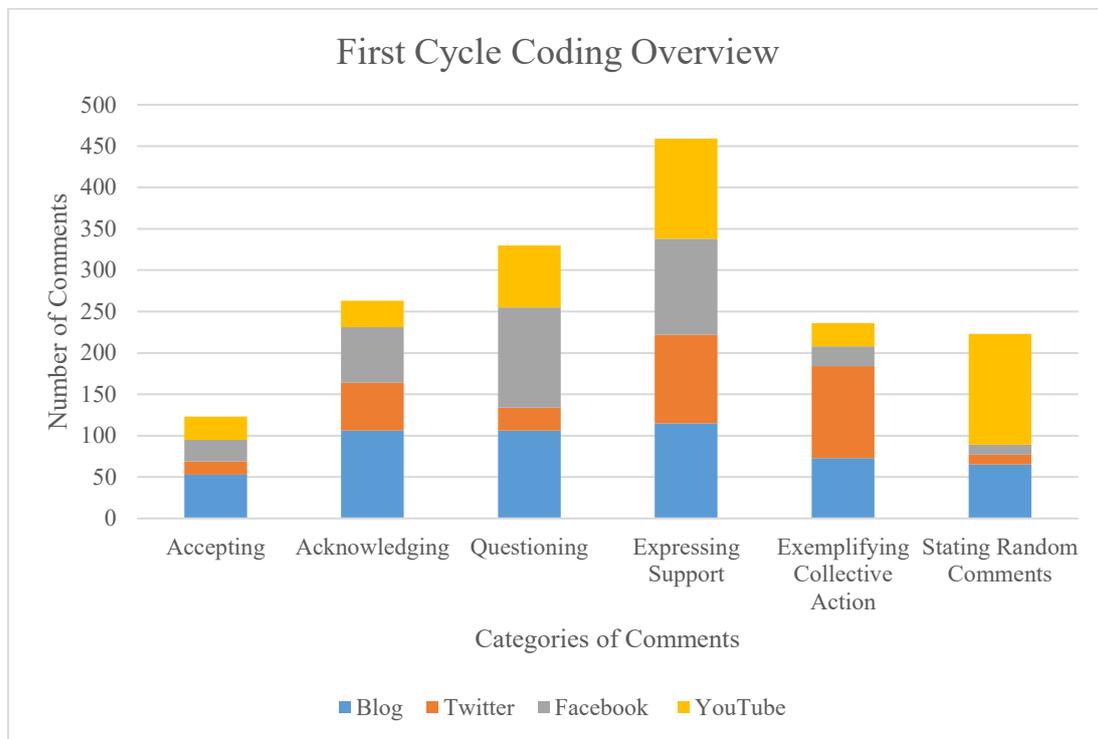


Figure 85: An Overview of Initial First Cycle Coding Results in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case illustrates that pseudo-bystanders adopt similar online action via a variety of social media platforms (as in, beyond Weibo), and that the results of the first two cases are not parochial to China. Pseudo-bystanders thus share similar behavioural patterns when intervening in corruption cases via social media, across both countries. This suggests that the findings reported here may well capture pseudo-bystanders’ response and intervening action in corruption cases elsewhere too.

In general, evidence from all three cases suggests that social media provides a valuable platform for pseudo-bystanders to express their support. Nevertheless, if we narrow our focus on the social media platforms observed solely in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, it illustrates something different. To understand how different social media platforms may have contributed to Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, I recorded the top three categories for the data captured in each social media platform observed (see Table 43).

Table 43: Most Used Categories in Examining Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Social Media Platform	Most Used Category	Description	Frequency
Blog	<i>Questioning</i>	Questioning the media	26
		Suggesting responsibility to other stakeholders	22
	<i>Acknowledging</i>	Voicing solidarity	26
	<i>Stating Random Comments</i>	Introducing abstract idea	24
		Introducing religion	20
Twitter	<i>Exemplifying Collective Action</i>	Calling for public awareness	44
		Calling for collective action	43
	<i>Expressing Support</i>	Providing update/case progression	62
		Supporting based on social identity	16
	<i>Acknowledging</i>	Hoping for public awareness	25
Facebook	<i>Questioning</i>	Suggesting responsibility to other stakeholders	46
		Questioning mainstream media	44
	<i>Expressing Support</i>	Expressing solidarity	52
		Relating to specific underlying issues	23
	<i>Acknowledging</i>	Expressing admiration for victim's associate	22
YouTube	<i>Stating Random Comments</i>	Replying to an argument (to an alleged “paid troll”)	78
		Relation to specific underlying issues	60
		Introducing abstract idea	36
		Insulting with sarcasm and/or personal attack	20
	<i>Questioning</i>	Being sceptical in a sarcastic way	25

Table 43 shows that “questioning” is the most popular category for both Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s blog and Facebook, whereas, Twitter captured responses that reflected the category of “*exemplifying collective action*” and YouTube attracted the most comments in the “*stating random comments*” category. This illustrates that although social media could be powerful when used as a vehicle to facilitate bystander intervention in general,

the functionality and level of effectiveness may vary from one social media platform to another.

Consistent with the analysis of the previous two cases, to further explore Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case data, I divided relevant responses into *C0 comments* (generated no replies/retweets), *C1 comments* (replies/retweets) and *C2 comments* (actual replies) Firstly, I examined some *C0 comments*. As *C0 comments* are not the main focus of this current study, I only coded selective responses that generated no replies/retweets. To do so, I randomly extracted 10 *C0 comments* from each social media platform for the purpose of this analysis. Table 44 shows the categories reflected in these responses.

Table 44: An Overview of *C0 Comments* in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

<i>C0 Comments on Social Media Platform</i>		Categories					
		Accepting	Acknowledging	Questioning	Expressing Support	Exemplifying Collective Action	Stating Random Comments
Blog	10	2	6	1	3	0	0
Twitter	10	0	4	2	2	1	1
Facebook	10	3	1	2	0	0	4
YouTube	10	1	3	2	1	1	2
Total	40	6	14	7	6	2	7

Table 44 illustrates that the majority of *C0 comments* across all social media platforms fall under the category of “*acknowledging*”. For example, it was common to see pseudo-bystanders expressing their solidarity and hope via their responses, as the following comments show:

つばき: Please don't be negative. There are a lot of people supporting you and so am I" [2014-12-01 23:08:04]

吉松さんがんばって: I am impressed by Ms. Yoshimatsu's brave confession. The victims of stalkers are terrified and depressed every day. They are struggling and fighting within themselves. I am one of them. I hope everyone will raise their voice as one through Ms. Yoshimatsu's brave action. There are a lot of comments from the people who suffered from stalkers and it's not an easy journey. Let's do our best to help each other out. It is starting to be

*noticed around Japan. I am always supporting you.
[2014-02-08 13:25:18]*

なあ: I hope that the number of supporters grows. I hope that your voice spreads around Japan so that people change the way they think about the real definition of human rights... I hope that the Japanese government changes the stalking law so that the number of victims from stalkers in Japan becomes zero. [2014-02-06 16:07:04]

The above examples suggest that some pseudo-bystanders may recognise the situation explicitly. However, their response did not mobilise others in the same space to engage in subsequent online discussions. Therefore, I proceeded to explore *CI comments* to see what pseudo-bystanders do differently to influence others to become involved.

Accordingly, I identified and analysed 144 *CI comments* exacted across various social media platforms observed in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. Due to the different nature of these social media platforms, using a one-size-fits-all approach to identify *CI comments* was impractical. To better capture relevant *CI comments*, I decided to do so on a case-by-case basis and adopted different approaches to suit each particular social media platform. For instance, I delineated all the comments that generated subsequent replies from the Ikumi Yoshimatsu's blog and YouTube as *CI comments*. As for Twitter, I used *Retweet* instead of *Reply* to identify *CI comments*, as *Retweeting* was the preferred online engagement from fellow pseudo-bystanders via this particular social media platform instead of the *Reply* function. Whereas, it seems to be more appropriate to use the *Like* function to delineate *CI comments* on Facebook, as the majority of pseudo-bystanders tend to *like* rather than *reply* to someone else's comments. For this reason, I considered comments that have attracted more than 10 likes on Facebook as *CI comments* in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. Table 45 shows the breakdown of all *CI comments*.

Table 45: An Overview of *CI Comments* in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

CI Comments on Social Media Platform		Categories					
		Accepting	Acknowledging	Questioning	Expressing Support	Exemplifying Collective Action	Stating Random Comments
Blog	20	2	5	8	2	8	14
Twitter	33	1	3	2	13	18	1
Facebook	54	4	11	35	24	9	0
YouTube	37	4	6	10	9	3	7
Total	144	11	25	55	48	38	22

Table 44 shows that the most popular category for *CI comments* is “*questioning*” for all social media platforms except Twitter. Whereas, Twitter provided the highest number of comments by pseudo-bystanders that fell under the “*exemplifying collective action*” category. Naturally, I was intrigued to find out more about what made Twitter different from the other social media platforms. Since I used the *Retweet* function to identify *CI comments* captured in Twitter, it was logical for me to examine the top Tweets that had been *retweeted* the most. Out of the 230 Tweets that were *retweeted*, I only considered 33 of which to be *CI comments*, because only these have been *retweeted* ten times or more by others in the same space (see Table 46).

Table 46: Identification of *CI Comments* through Retweets on Twitter in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Number of Retweets	Originally Tweeted by
397	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 8 January 2014
287	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 23 January 2014
227	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 28 January 2014
136	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 9 January 2014
132	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 11 January 2014
122	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 21 January 2014
104	茂木健一郎 @kenichromogi 14 January 2014
94	リーガン美香 Mika Regan @Mika_Regan 17 December 2013
80	Change.org @Change 6 March 2014
70	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 25 December 2013
66	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 12 January 2014
61	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu March 18
60	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 22 February 2014
57	R from JPN 44@matsu193 19 January 2014
50	Ikumi Yoshimatsu @ikumiyoshimatsu 22 February 2014
46	Change.org @Change 18 January 2014
42	Change.org @Change 23 January 2014
29	Change.org @Change 17 January 2014
24	Change.org @Change 26 January 2014
24	集団ストーカー抵抗軍 サンライズマン @SUNRISEMAN450 9 January 2014
21	Change.org @Change 31 January 2014
19	Tokyo Weekender @WeekenderJapan 22 February 2014
17	R from JPN 44@matsu193 11 January 2014
14	Change.org @Change March 26
14	NHKから国民を守る党 代表 立花孝志 @tachibanat 12 January 2014
13	Change.org @Change 30 January 2014
12	薔薇子 @AkasakaRose2013 March 19
12	R from JPN 44@matsu193 28 January 2014
11	R from JPN 44@matsu193 19 January 2014
10	Canadian Samurai @ShaneLukas 7 March 2014
10	R from JPN 44@matsu193 12 January 2014
10	在日反日まとめ情報 徹底拡散！ @kagehikosirou 9 January 2014
10	Christopher Johnson @globaliteman 16 December 2013

It turns out that seven out of the top 10 *retweeted* Tweets were published by Ikumi Yoshimatsu herself. While social media may be effective to help victims to raise public

awareness in general, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case further suggests that the use of Twitter may enhance the level of spread, especially when the person who is spreading the information already has a large group of followers. For a "celebrity" like Ikumi Yoshimatsu, Twitter emerged as a valuable platform for raising public attention, which was possible because she already had an assembly of followers as her audience on this particular social media platform. Another interesting note is that many Twitter users also shared Tweets that are published by Change.org with regards to the *Stalker Zero* campaign. This highlights that Twitter could be an effective online medium for organisations like Change.org to spread information to raise public awareness.

Overall, the initial findings from the First Cycle Coding analysis illustrate that there is a small portion of pseudo-bystanders, whom, to some extent, reflected *Acceptance* to what happened to Ikumi Yoshimatsu in their responses. This suggests a certain level of denial and/or normalisation of inequality in the way they perceived Ikumi Yoshimatsu's incident. Especially, such perception can be alarming when infused with the tendency to blame the victim. The mentality of following response from *Biheartjp* on YouTube demonstrates this:

There are a lot of people who are telling us that the Japanese Entertainment industry is abnormal to the rest, but I feel like it's all the same for other countries. Miss International is just a normal person with good physical appearance and if you don't have any other skills, you have to know how to present yourself. If you don't want to do that, just quit it and get a job like a normal person. Why do you want to be in that industry? Isn't it just a place where people think that they are the top shit. All I feel like is that people here are mainly male and right wings. This Miss International competition is something similar to women auction and I think its discrimination towards the female gender. We should stop this now.

Another interesting finding is that the majority of pseudo-bystanders explicitly acknowledged the incident in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, as they showed understanding of the complexity of the situation. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders revealed that they are quite aware that the current stalking laws in Japan are flawed. The following response is one example:

ストーカーZERO へ : *This incident involves too many factors such as the entertainment industry, media, religious organisations, court, police and anti-social organisations. As a result, it is hard for those who are famous to protest against this incident. The media reported her interview on TV and the police did not give her an appropriate response lead to revealing the shady part of this incident. There are a lot of people who suffer from stalking for various reasons and yet the law right now cannot protect all those people. It is important to change the law for those people. For the discussion between the congress for stalking law, I think the law should not limit the definition of stalking which only involves people like lovers. [2014-02-08 22:59:46]*

The above response illustrates an understanding that Ikumi Yoshimatsu's incident is more than just a case of stalking, but an issue deeply interwoven with other aspects and stakeholders of the Japanese society. Nevertheless, pseudo-bystanders may remain inactive to intervene directly because they perceive themselves being powerless to influence change to the existing laws to help Ikumi Yoshimatsu, and thus take no further action to address the situation. Some pseudo-bystanders pointed out that the prevalence of such "silence" might be a cultural issue. For example, the following response by 身勝手な男達 reflects this:

I think there are a lot of similar points between stalking crime and kidnapping young girls. The male offenders from both crimes are very similar. They lack emotions to think about the other people. They are very selfish, thinking that the world spins around them. It gets to the point where it's wrong if the woman doesn't listen to you and thinking that you are doing something good for them. You can't really do anything if there are that kind of people targeting you and it's too late if the crime happens. In America, it is very strict about these things, but in Japan, the historical education tells us that women should always listen to men. The stalkers target people with weak social status. It is very scary for women to walk outside if they are targeted by these cowards, rich and creepy people. The Japanese government really needs to face these problems and do something about it, otherwise, it will never stop. I hope the victims of

these crimes are receiving proper mental treatments. [2014-02-08 00:32:49]

Besides acceptance and acknowledgement, some pseudo-bystanders also raised questions. For instance, they appeared to be highly sceptical about the silence of the Japanese media, the entertainment industry or the socio-political climate of the current Japanese society. The following response is an example is a particular comment made by one pseudo-bystander that received 153 likes on Facebook.

Koji Moritani: Why can't Japan protect woman's rights? Why are all the Japanese media not doing anything about the unfair situation that is happening to Miss International? Why is our prime minister not doing anything about it? She is risking her career and why can't Japanese government do anything for her? Why is that organization hosting an event about woman's rights that ignores the woman who is trying to fight on the court for justice? And why is the first lady attending that event? Are you guys really protecting women's rights? [17 December 2013 at 23:27]

Despite there were no straightforward answers to the questions *Koji Moritani* raised, it shows that he/she went beyond accepting and acknowledging the power imbalance as the “status quo” in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case.

Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case also illustrates that pseudo-bystanders’ positionality may vary depending on how they perceive the power abuse. For example, indignation towards the Japanese media’s unresponsiveness is evident in other pseudo-bystanders’ responses. Nevertheless, there are a few exceptions. For example, one pseudo-bystander 三苦秀利 interprets such inaction as a “choice”, as the “Japanese media has the freedom of speech and freedom of not telling the truth” [28 December 2013 at 23:22 on Facebook]. By denying the responsibility of bringing Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case to light, the unresponsiveness of the Japanese media may legitimise the right for others to look away, and further normalise the inadequate laws, as well as the pseudo-bystanders’ inaction to intervene.

Equally, when the pro-victim stance becomes the norm, it may mobilise bystander intervention in an online sphere and beyond. The following comments illustrate the mobilisation of this pro-victim contention:

Justice Law: I've never heard a more accurate description of what women face here in Japan. Those who try to deny the facts and alter her message are either completely unaware of the reality here or simply chose to advocate the culture of silence toward crimes against women that she so eloquently describes. I've been following her case from a legal perspective since her first press conference. Ikumi Yoshimatsu is an amazing individual who is brave enough to fight for change. [YouTube]

JustAskingAndCurios: This is outrageous! The Japanese media and government (police) are impotent. It is up to the Japanese people to demand changes to regulate the entertainment industry by boycotting the shows/events and make changes to give equality to women in Japan. Let's all support Ms. Yoshimatsu. [YouTube]

Canadian Samurai: [reply to ShaneLukas]: @ikumiyoshimatsu you are a courageous voice for a serious issue in Japan and elsewhere. Stay strong on this World Women's Day! [7 Mar 2014 on Twitter]

R from JPN 44: [reply to matsu193]: @ikumiyoshimatsu Good Work! This is big news! Finally, the Japanese #ShukanBunshu is writing another article about her. I would like everyone to support and spread this, please participate! #YoshimatsuIkumi #Spread [28 Jan 2014 on Twitter]

The above examples show that pseudo-bystanders explicitly called for others to participate in collective action (e.g., boycotting). In turn, this may lead to others engaging in similar action (online and in real-life) to support the victim. This is significant because it demonstrates that pseudo-bystanders' action in an online environment could have real-life implications. However, not all pseudo-bystanders are deemed supportive.

Like the previous case studies examined in the current research, online discussions in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case are often sparked by trolling comments. To better understand how various trolling comments generate subsequent online discussion, I decided to specifically track and examine responses from those who commented multiple times. To do so, I explored comments generated from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's TED presentation video,

which was shown on YouTube, as it has the highest number of direct replies out of all social media platforms for this particular case (see Table 47).

Table 47: Top Pseudo-bystanders who Responded to Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s YouTube Video Multiple Times

User Name of Pseudo-bystander	Number of Comments Published	Number of Replies Received
<i>yello bird</i>	57	39
<i>belialpt</i>	56	44
<i>Matt Taylor</i>	21	29
<i>Justice Law</i>	14	18
<i>Red Pill Brotherhood</i>	6	3
Total	154	133

Table 47 shows that out of all the pseudo-bystanders who responded multiple times, *yello bird* and *belialpt* seemed to be the most engaged participants in the online discussions generated from Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s YouTube video. We should note that while not all pseudo-bystanders whose opinions remain deviated from the norm should be identified as “trolls”, there are some key observations that make individuals like *belialpt* emerge as a “troll” in this case. Firstly, *belialpt*’s intense involvement was evident, as he/she alone left 56 comments. Secondly, besides expressing his/her opinions, *belialpt* also attempted to start an argument by proactively replying to other pseudo-bystanders. The following examples illustrate this:

belialpt: [reply to +Takehiko Mori] Japan is safer in these matters than any western country already. And there's a good reason she is talking in English and not in Japanese, because this is propaganda and a blunt lie. Check her blog if you don't believe me.

belialpt: [reply to +SSchithFoo] This story is also a lie and she had to apologize publicly for it.

belialpt: [reply to +Soko Shoko] I'm open for discussion, let's talk about change then and not about raising awareness. What and how should it be changed?

yello bird was another active “troll” in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case. Comments published by both *yello bird* and *belialpt* came across as provocative and often attracted rebutting responses from others. For example:

yello bird [reply to +Justice Law] Have you ever lived in Japan? For how long? You can speak and read Japanese language, right? So reply [to] my above comment in Japanese.

Justice Law [reply to +yello bird] I don't think that you understand the real meaning of her "apology" as being part of a Japanese legal settlement. It's obvious to everyone in Japan that she did get something in return for the apology (perhaps a restraining order) but that the Japanese court system simply does not want to open the floodgates of change for female victims of stalking and harassment. I don't think that anyone (other than you and your friend) really think that ANYTHING was her fault. That's called "victim blaming" and it's an outdated concept.

Another observation is that Matt Taylor, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s contract manager at the time, also participated in some of these online discussions. For example:

Matt Taylor [reply to +yello bird] The reason her talk is in English, not Japanese, is because TED is an international platform... Not limited to just Japan. Like her Change.org petition, this issue is important for victims of stalking all over the world and people need to understand the scale of the problem in the #2 most industrialized country in the world.

Matt Taylor [reply to +yello bird] So when you say that her case is "rare" and "distorted".. you are saying that the Japanese entertainment industry, which is WORLD FAMOUS for sexual exploitation is, in fact, a "clean" industry that rarely exploits women?

Matt Taylor [reply to +yello bird] If I "ran away", why am I such a public figure? Am I running away from you? -No. If you doubt that he is Yakuza, you are really naive and know nothing of the Japanese entertainment industry. If you think he's a nice guy and didn't murder or cause the death of the announcer, that's your opinion.

Matt Taylor [reply to +yello bird] ...that's why you can't use your real name, right? You are an internet troll working for an idiot. Everyone knows how Japan works.

This suggests that *C1 comments* could fall under the category of “*stating random comments*”, as they can lead to ongoing threads of arguments between a few individuals. For instance, others may respond to their comments when they are provoked (e.g., their ethical stance is threatened, or in an attempt to defend the victim). Since most of the 133 responses to the TED X Talk YouTube video are actually replies to others (what I referred to as *C2 comments* in this study), it would be logical to explore them as well. The following graph illustrates the categories reflected in these *C2 comments*:

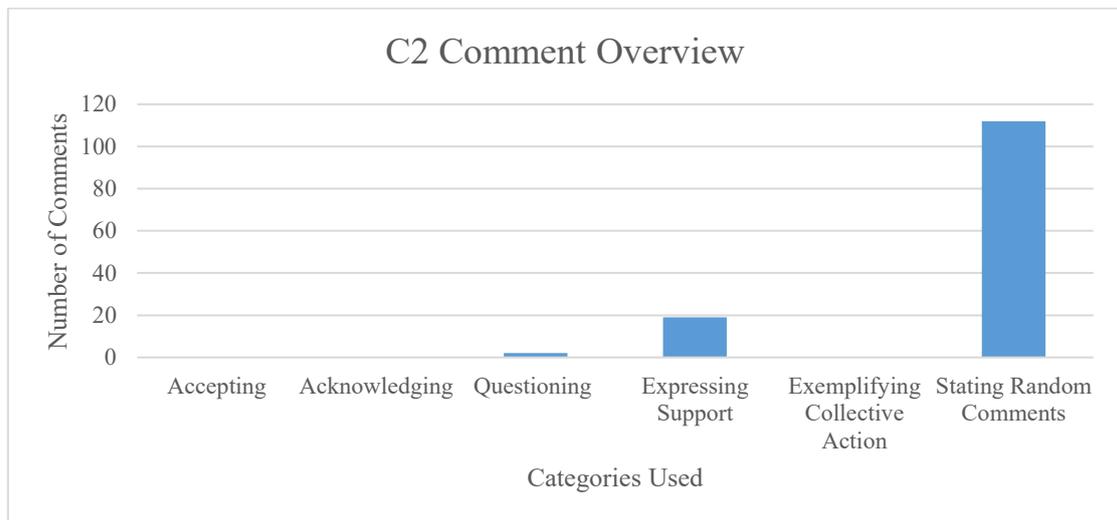


Figure 86: An Overview of *C2 Comments* from YouTube examined in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Figure 86 shows that most *C2 comments* extracted from YouTube fell into the “*stating random comments*” category. As Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case illustrates, replying to “*trolls*” tends to further intensify their trolling behaviour, which can distract pseudo-bystanders from the corruption case, and thus hinder their subsequent intervening action. For example, one of the longest conversational threads on YouTube for this case has 67 replies in total. The topic revolved around “gender”. These findings highlight that YouTube seems to provide a breeding ground for “*trolls*”. In general, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case illustrates that trolling comment tend to distract pseudo-bystanders from focusing on the real issue at hand, and thus hinder their subsequent action to intervene in corruption

cases via social media. Therefore, “*trolls*” can be a major threat in the mobilisation of bystander intervention to help victims of corruption in a social media context.

Furthermore, I also noticed that the victims in all three case studies responded differently to others’ comments, including those who are identified as “*trolls*”. For instance, Ma Yue’s mother replied to other pseudo-bystanders, but not those who were identified as “*trolls*”. The rapport she had built with others could thus encouraged them to become more involved and take action to intervene. There were also fewer “*trolls*” identified in Ma Yue’s the case. On the other hand, Ye Haiyan interacted with other pseudo-bystanders the most, and also interacted with those who were identified as “*trolls*”. While Ye Haiyan’s case attracted more trolling comments, she also received an overwhelming amount of support from others. Ikumi Yoshimatsu did not respond to any trolling comments, nor did she directly interact with other pseudo-bystanders at all. There are some “*trolls*” identified in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, but there also appeared to be many supporters who are “*good Samaritans*”. Therefore, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case demonstrated she still received support from others (online and in real-life) regardless of having no direct interaction with them. This variance could be explained in one of three ways: 1) nationality (*e.g.*, she is Japanese), 2) status (*e.g.*, she is a famous figure) or 3) physical appearance (*e.g.*, she is beautiful). It was not possible to determine which of the three reasons applies in the case.

9.4. Additional Findings – Mobilising Pseudo-bystander Intervention

In this section, I will discuss how the additional findings drawn from Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case may replicate, extend or refute discoveries previously identified in the cases of Ma Yue and Ye Haiyan.

9.4.1. Findings from the First Cycle Coding Analysis – Promoting Awareness

Additional findings have emerged from the First Cycle Coding analysis in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case. Consistent with the previous two case studies, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case also illustrates that the victim can employ social media to solicit intervention in their corruption cases. Additionally, Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case suggests that pseudo-bystanders do not necessarily have to be an individual – they can be an organisation as well (see Table 48).

Table 48: Different Types of Pseudo-bystanders Identified in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Pseudo-bystander Type	Nature	Online Engagement	Communication
Organisations	Formal	Limited	One-way
Individuals	Informal	Extensive	Two-way

Interestingly, while individual pseudo-bystanders are most likely to leave comments on both Facebook and YouTube, organisations are more inclined to communicate with other individuals via Twitter. For example, alternative news outlet Al Jazeera invited Ikumi Yoshimatsu to speak in a live interview about stalking behaviour and concurrently *tweeted* updates of the discussion under the username The Stream (@AJStream). Similarly, other organisations like Women’s Media Center Live (@wmclive), Change.org (@change) and Kyodo News Int’l (@kyodonewsintl) are also seen to have used Twitter to spread information about Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s story.

The objective of these organisations seemed to be primarily propelling others to share information rapidly on Twitter. For example, Tokyo Weekender @WeekenderJapan *tweeted* about Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case with an external link, which redirects readers to a feature article on the Tokyo Weekender website: “Read about Ikumi Yoshimatsu's battle against yakuza harassment in Japan's entertainment industry. @ikumiyoshimatsu <http://ow.ly/tTN1S>”. The *tweet* was subsequently *retweeted* 19 times on 22 February 2014. I consider Tokyo Weekender an organisational type of pseudo-bystander based on its involvement – it “chose” to report the incident rather than ignore it. While these organisations rarely interacted with their readers, it nevertheless suggests that they are capable of raising public awareness through reporting and sharing information about Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case. This suggests that victims of corruption could reach relevant organisations and utilise that organisation’s social media presence to raise public attention.

9.4.2. Findings from the Second Cycle Coding Analysis

After the First Cycle Coding analysis, I was able to identify various themes drawn from Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case and triangulate them with the findings from the previous two case studies. The Second Cycle Coding was then used to ensure further exploration of the dataset so that I could interpret rich insight and themes in a robust way. By reorganising

and reanalysing the case data using the Longitudinal Coding method, I was able to delineate and compare intervals of online data to identify and reflect the similarities and difference that seemed to influence changes throughout Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. I will now discuss the results from the Second Cycle Coding analysis.

9.4.2.1. Using Different Social Media Platforms

Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case suggests that pseudo-bystanders may intervene differently depending on the nature of the social media platform they use. The way pseudo-bystanders respond differently on various social media platforms is perhaps due to the nature of how each social media platform operates. In turn, this affects how pseudo-bystanders exchange information with others. For instance, as Twitter only permits 140 characters in each *tweet*, the messages published on this particular platform tend to be short, succinct and/or usually include a link to re-direct readers to external information, which contains more detail and depth. Whereas, in the case of Ikumi Yoshimatsu's blog, Facebook and YouTube, pseudo-bystanders are free to input more content in their responses as they wish, because these other social media platforms have fewer constraints.

This may also explain why social media platforms like YouTube has captured more comments that fall under the code category of "*stating random comments*" in comparison with Twitter. For example, with Twitter, if you reply, only your followers and the person with whom you are replying can see your responses. Hence, there are hardly any trolling comments. Moreover, it takes a lot of effort to generate individual replies on platforms like Twitter. In contrast, YouTube allows comments to be easily accessible to other viewers, and thus attracts more "bait" to feed the practice of trolling in an online environment. Figure 87 illustrates the longevity of online engagement generated for Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case across YouTube, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's official blog, Twitter and Facebook.

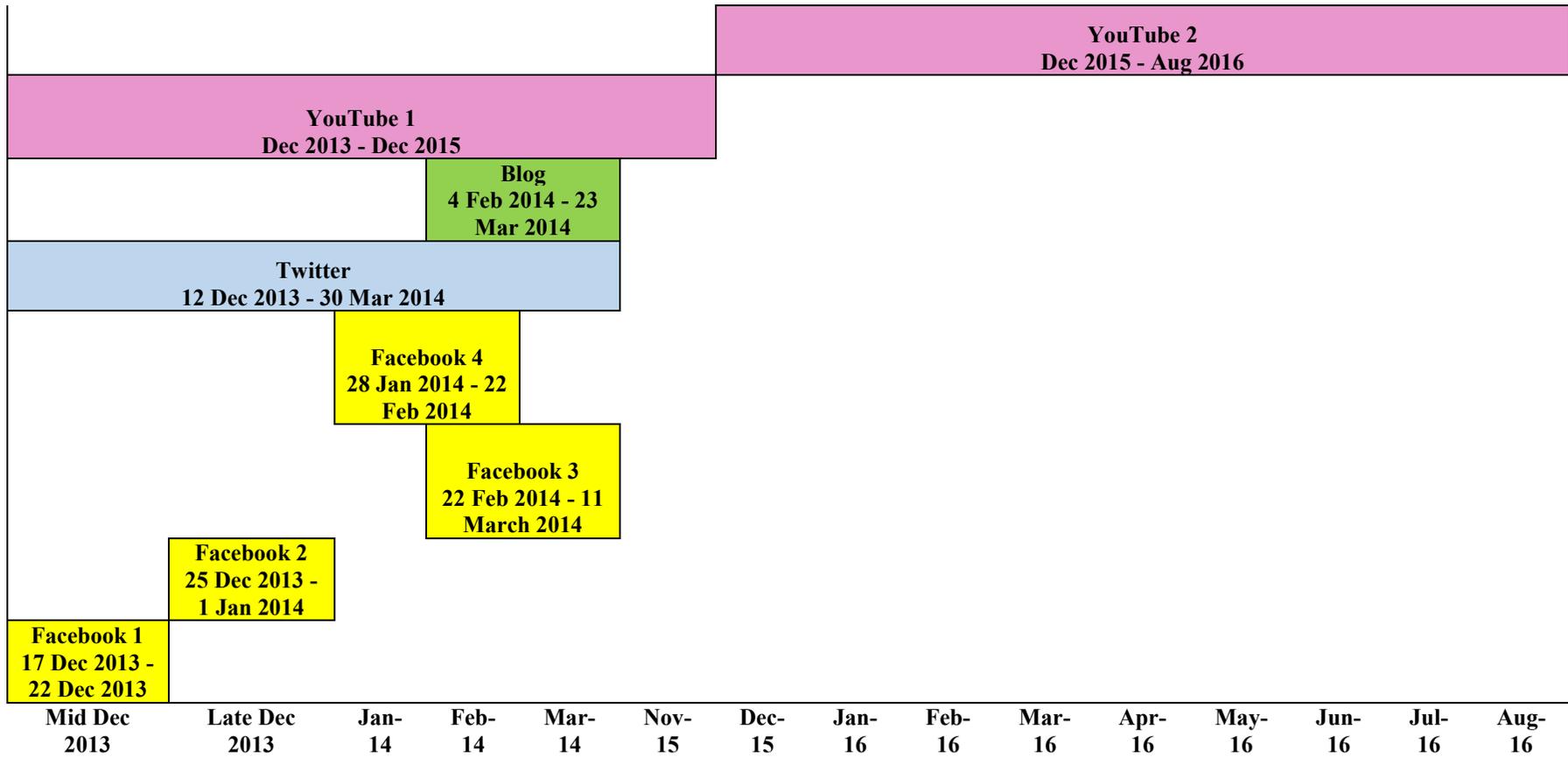


Figure 87: Timeline of Various “Snapshots” Observed in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Interestingly, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case generated a longer online engagement period in comparison with the previous two cases. One possible explanation is that Ikumi Yoshimatsu used several social media platforms to share her negative experiences. In particular, YouTube seems to be the platform that retains the longest attention span for pseudo-bystanders. For example, the FCCJ conference video continued to generate comments after two years since it was first uploaded on YouTube on 16 December 2013. Responses to Ikumi Yoshimatsu's TED X Talk video also lasted about eight months. In contrast, discussions via Facebook and Ikumi Yoshimatsu's personal blog seem to be very short-lived (about three to six weeks). Perhaps the online engagement longevities is closely linked with how the information is archived, retrieved and shared. For instance, based on my own experience in collecting the case data, it was more difficult to trace posts that were previously published on Facebook, as doing so required me to scroll down pages and pages of information in chronological order. Whereas, I was able to locate the YouTube videos with a simple word search (*e.g.*, "Ikumi Yoshimatsu").

To further explore what may have influenced the changes in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case over time, I followed Saldaña's (2003) longitudinal qualitative data summary template, as done in the previous two case studies to carry out the Second Cycle Coding analysis. Accordingly, I have noted some key observations when examining these "snapshots" across various social media platforms in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case (see Tables 49 & 50).

Table 49: Longitudinal Summaries of Observations (1)

Longitudinal Coding	1.Increase/Emerge	2.Cumulative	3.Surge/Epiphany/ Turning Point	4.Decrease/Cease	5.Constant/Consistent	6.Idiosyncratic	7.Missing
Blog	Awareness of the incident “Trolls”	Support	Exposure of the stalking incident Yoko Ono signed the petition		Underlying gender/ cultural and other issues		
Twitter	Collective action	Insights/Information about the incident	Yoko Ono signed the petition		Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s voice Related news on <i>Stalker Zero</i>		Trolling comments Question of the mainstream media
Facebook 1	Public awareness		Akie Abe’s recognition of Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s incident				
Facebook 2	Discussion on Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets	Questioning of Japanese media’s role in exposing this incident	Akie Abe became interested in intervening Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s incident		Solidarity Underlying gender/ cultural and other issues	Conflicting political views	
Facebook 3			Joint interview featuring Ikumi Yoshimatsu and Akie Abe		Solidarity		
Facebook 4	Public awareness		Akie Abe took action to intervene by heling Ikumi Yoshimatsu to launch the <i>Stalker Zero</i> campaign		Solidarity		
YouTube 1	Questions of Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s manager Matt Taylor Questioning of Japanese media’s role in exposing this incident and the entertainment industry	Public awareness Emerging gender and cultural issues	Court decision to not warrant restraint order towards Genichi Taniguchi Press conference in English held at FCCJ	Discussion on Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets	Solidarity Underlying gender/ cultural and other issues		
YouTube 2	Replies to arguments between various <i>Keyboard Warriors</i>	Questions of Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s manager Matt Taylor	TED x Kyoto presentation on an international platform	Questioning of Japanese media’s role in exposing this incident and the entertainment industry Solidarity	Underlying gender/ cultural and other issues	Conflicting values	Related news on <i>Stalker Zero</i> Akie Abe/Yoko Ono

Table 50: Longitudinal Summary of Observation (2)

Longitudinal Coding	1.Increase/ Emerge	2.Cumulative	3.Surge/ Epiphany/ Turning Point	4.Decrease/ Cease	5.Constant/ Consistent	6.Idiosyncratic	7.Missing
Summary of Differences Over Time	Public awareness	Solidarity	External influences	Questioning of Japanese media’s role in exposing this incident and the entertainment industry	Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s voice	Conflicting values	Related news on <i>Stalker Zero</i>
Summary of Possible Contextual/ Intervening Conditions Influencing Changes	Accessibility of information in the public domain	Visibility of external influences with similar contentions providing validation in the same space	Social media attention	The decline of continuous external influences	Support from others to fight against corruption	Experience and knowledge	Direction for further collective action
<p>Interrelationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different social media platforms may provide different functions in assisting pseudo-bystanders’ action to intervene. Pseudo-bystanders may adopt different online action in their intervention process to address corruption cases in an online context, even if they share the same stance. Various pseudo-bystander roles may lead them to different levels of involvement, and thus subsequently lead to different online action to intervene in corruption cases via social media including “accepting”, “acknowledging”, “questioning”, “expressing support” and “exemplifying collective action”. 		<p>Changes that Oppose/Harmonise with Human Development/Social Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of direction may hinder pseudo-bystanders to engage in further action to intervene. External influences may boost/ weaken involvement Random trolling behaviour may shift topic of focus 			<p>Participant/Conceptual Rhythms (Phases, Stages, Cycles etc., in Progress)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pseudo-bystander roles and their involvement may shift over time 		
<p>Preliminary assertions as data analysis progresses (refer to previous matrices)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are different types pseudo-bystanders (e.g., individual and organisation) There are variances among individual pseudo-bystanders It is possible for pseudo-bystanders to shift from “not taking action” to “taking action” Different pseudo-bystander roles and their associated involvement may influence their action in the intervention process 							

The Second Cycle Coding analysis of Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case data suggests that the employment of various social media platforms to spread contentions and to mobilise collective action may be more effective when they are aligned with specific end-state goals. For instance, Facebook and Twitter could be useful when used to communicate timely information to influence immediate action in the bystander intervention context. In general, social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter tend to share more "recent" happenings, and so these interfaces may be more suitable to raise public attention to achieve a specific short-term goal (*e.g.*, to sign an online petition). For example, these platforms were used to inform others about the *Stalker Zero* online petition to boost participation. Whereas, YouTube seems to be more suitable to spread contentions with relatively long-term end-state goals or to mobilise action that requires ongoing efforts. For example, to persuade individuals to adopt a different attitude towards corruption. This is because YouTube is less time-restricted, and so it allows the intended messages to be relatively easy to retrieve at a later stage. This may also explain why the second YouTube video still attracted comments after it was published almost two years after the initial outbreak of Ikumi Yoshimatsu's incident. Therefore, while social media may be a valuable tool to raise public awareness in general, specific social media platforms should be employed strategically to maximise the effectiveness of each one.

However, one major downfall of using social media is that the intended message may be diluted over time. This is evident in the second YouTube video in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. There was no mention of Akie Abe and Yoko Ono in the responses generated from this Ted X video, nor was there any mention of the *Stalker Zero* campaign that resulted in 131,280 signatures worldwide – these were significant mobilisations with the intention to subvert power abuse. Interestingly, the gradual declining public interest and solidarity, initially prompted by celebrities and joint action (*e.g.*, the online petition associated with the case), was also evident in the previous two case studies. This suggests that supporters with a celebrity status (or equivalent) may be an effective trigger to influence immediate action, but that did not sustain over an extended period. Moreover, guided action (*e.g.*, signing the online petition) towards attaining short-term end-state goals may be effective when clear instructions are provided. However, while pseudo-bystanders may be triggered to carry out subsequent action, they are likely to move on once they perceived

the end-state goal is achieved (or in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, when the online petition expired).

9.4.2.2. The Emergence of Pseudo-bystander Roles

The findings from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case are consistent with the pseudo-bystander stances identified from the other two case studies examined in this research. Additionally, after triangulating various results emerging from both the First and Second Cycle Coding analyses, it appears that there might also be different roles among these pseudo-bystander stances. For instance, the corresponding comments in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case often mentioned the famous people who became involved, notably, Japan's First Lady Akie Abe and musician-activist Yoko Ono. While both Akie Abe and Yoko Ono appeared to have adopted the "good Samaritan" stance to support Ikumi Yoshimatsu, their functions and intervening action are characteristically different from the other pseudo-bystanders. This suggests that there might be variances within the pro-victim stance. Therefore, I proceeded to re-categorised the data by delineating different pseudo-bystander roles. Consequently, I identified eight specific pseudo-bystander roles in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case that could exist within each stance: *Passengers*, *Witnessing Supporters*, *Keyboard Warriors*, *Activist Warrior*, *Leader Warrior*, *Celebrity Warrior*, *Cyber-Side-tracker* and *Cyber-Bully* (see Table 51).

Table 51: Pseudo-bystander Roles in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Individual Pseudo-bystander Role	Description	Online Action that Reflect these Roles
<i>Passenger</i>	Simply happen to notice the situation	Acknowledging the incident
<i>Witnessing Supporter</i>	Notice and acknowledge with interest	Expressing that they would like to find out more about the incident
<i>Keyboard Warrior</i>	Take a stance	Explicitly voicing their support
<i>Activist Warrior</i>	Adopt action to intervene	Demonstrating that they have taken action to advocate or intention to participate
<i>Leader Warrior</i>	Mobilise others to intervene	Calling others to participate by giving instructions with regards to participation
<i>Celebrity Warrior</i>	Usually associated with a high level of fame, authority or knowledge	Akie Abe (First Lady of Japan) who backed the launch of <i>Stalker Zero</i> , Yoko Ono (Musician) who <i>tweeted</i> the online petition
<i>Cyber-Side-Tracker</i>	Engage on a different topic, usually without the intention to help the victim(s)	Distracting others by introducing other agenda
<i>Cyber-bully</i>	Mocking the victim/situation	Provoking others with hostility

Table 51 shows that pseudo-bystanders adopted different actions in response to Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case. For example, a *Passenger* may simply respond by Liking a post to show that they acknowledged this incident. From a post published by Ikumi Yoshimatsu on 11 December 2013, 1,894 “Likes” were generated. Whereas, an *Activist Warrior* may become more involved in their online action. For example, one pseudo-bystander named 鷺津彰 translated Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s entire press conference at the FCCJ from English to Japanese (more than 4,000 words) to inform those who did not understand English.

Based on this new insight, I went back to the previous two cases to spot variances among pseudo-bystander comments to determine whether these roles were also evident. This now meant looking beyond the broad stances and re-interpreting comments through this new lens. Hence, for each stance, I determined that these newly identified roles were evident in all cases. This enabled me to further align pseudo-bystanders’ involvement and actions with the newly identified roles. For example, a “good Samaritan” *Witnessing Supporter* tends to acknowledge the corruption case in their responses, whereas, a “good

Samaritan” *Leader Warrior* is highly involved, as he/she often encourages others to stand up for the victim and demand justice.

Interestingly, I noticed that the most prominent role is *Celebrity Warrior*, as they stood out the most across all three cases (see Table 52).

Table 52: Celebrity Warriors Identified in the Current Research

Pseudo-bystander Role	Ma Yue’s Case	Ye Haiyan’s Case	Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case
<i>Celebrity Warrior</i>	Wang Xuemei	Ai Xiaoming	Akie Abe, Yoko Ono

Wang Xuemei, Ai Xiaming, Akie Abe and Yoko Ono are considered *Celebrity Warriors* because they are highly regarded by others in terms of fame, authority or knowledge. Their involvement also seemed to raise a high level of publicity. Nevertheless, not all who adopted the role of *Celebrity Warrior* demonstrate similar levels of involvement. For instance, both Akie Abe and Yoko Ono are considered *Celebrity Warriors* as seen in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, but their involvement reflected in their online action and beyond are very different. Yoko Ono was relatively passive in her involvement in comparison with what Akie Abe did to support Ikumi Yoshimatsu. While Yoko Ono may not have mobilised others to intervene subsequently, by publicising her support towards the *Stalker Zero* campaign, she had nevertheless contributed to bringing this case to light. Therefore, *Celebrity Warriors* may be used as an effective external influence to generate solidarity and mobilise bystander intervention, even when their involvement is limited, or varied.

Another interesting observation is that Akie Abe did not seem to be highly involved from the very beginning, as she only commented “ ...I didn’t know what happened to Ms. Yoshimatsu last year. I would like to know the truth behind this incident” on her Facebook, once alerted by others about Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s incident (Abe 2013). Soon after, when Akie Abe learned more about Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s experience, she became Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s advocate and ally to support the launch the *Stalker Zero* online petition. This shows that pseudo-bystanders’ involvement can possibly shift from being limited to extensive participation over a short period of time.

This case also illustrates that in spite of the fact that Ikumi Yoshimatsu happened to be the victim in this case, she also adopted the pseudo-bystander roles of both a *Leader Warrior* and a *Celebrity Warrior* to support other women who are victims of stalking and power abuse. Similarly, both Ma Yue's mother and Ye Haiyan could be seen as *Leader Warriors* who mobilised others to address social injustice in spite of their own victimisation. Therefore, there may not only be different characteristics embedded in the various pseudo-bystander roles, but also fluidity in how individuals adopt them (*i.e.*, adopting multiple roles, changing roles over time, or moving from victim to "bystander" for others). Accordingly, pseudo-bystanders' subsequent action in addressing corruption cases via social media can vary depending on the roles that they adopt and their level of involvement.

9.5. Case Summary

Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case illustrates that victims of corruption could resist disempowerment by employing social media to pierce through the "culture of silence", prominently in Japan. Ikumi Yoshimatsu was unable to have a "voice" in real-life, despite having reported the power abuse imposed by her tormentor to the police, attempting to file a restraining order legally and holding a press conference in Japanese – she was dismissed by the police, denied by the court and her story continued to be ignored by the Japanese mainstream media. Social media became the only alternative way for her to not only expose her stalker, and to advocate and amplify her contentions.

Although Ikumi Yoshimatsu failed to prosecute her tormentor Genichi Taniguchi legally in the end, her efforts in speaking up nevertheless gained a lot of public awareness and support throughout her case progression.

Using Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, I was able to triangulate findings that emerged from the previous two case studies and so refine the findings from all three cases. Consistent with the findings from both Ma Yue's case and Ye Haiyan's case, Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case suggests that there are variances within pseudo-bystanders, as not all pseudo-bystanders use social media in the same way, and their subsequent online action is influenced by the roles that they adopt and their varying level of involvement. In addition to the broader pseudo-bystander stances previously identified in the first two cases (*i.e.*, "good Samaritan", "in-between", "bad Samaritan" and "troll"), I have identified eight

distinctive individual pseudo-bystander roles in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case: *Passenger*, *Witnessing Supporter*, *Keyboard Warrior*, *Activist Warrior*, *Leader Warrior*, *Cyber-Side-tracker* and *Cyber-Bully*. Specifically, the presence of a few *Celebrity Warriors* stood out in all three case studies examined. From Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case, there are not only individual pseudo-bystanders, but also organisational pseudo-bystanders who may wish to intervene to address corruption by adopting various online action. While these institutions tend to communicate using a one-way method, their involvement may nevertheless complement individual pseudo-bystanders' to intervene collectively in an online environment.

While the point of this study is not to analyse which social media platforms are more effective and powerful, the responses generated from these different social media platforms in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case have provided rich insights as to how social media can be used by different pseudo-bystanders to intervene in corruption cases collectively. Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case highlights that not all social media platforms are equally effective in communicating contentions. This, in turn, may affect how pseudo-bystanders obtain accumulated knowledge about the case over time. I have put together all findings gathered thus far in Figure 88. A summary of the additional findings derived from Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case is presented in Table 53.

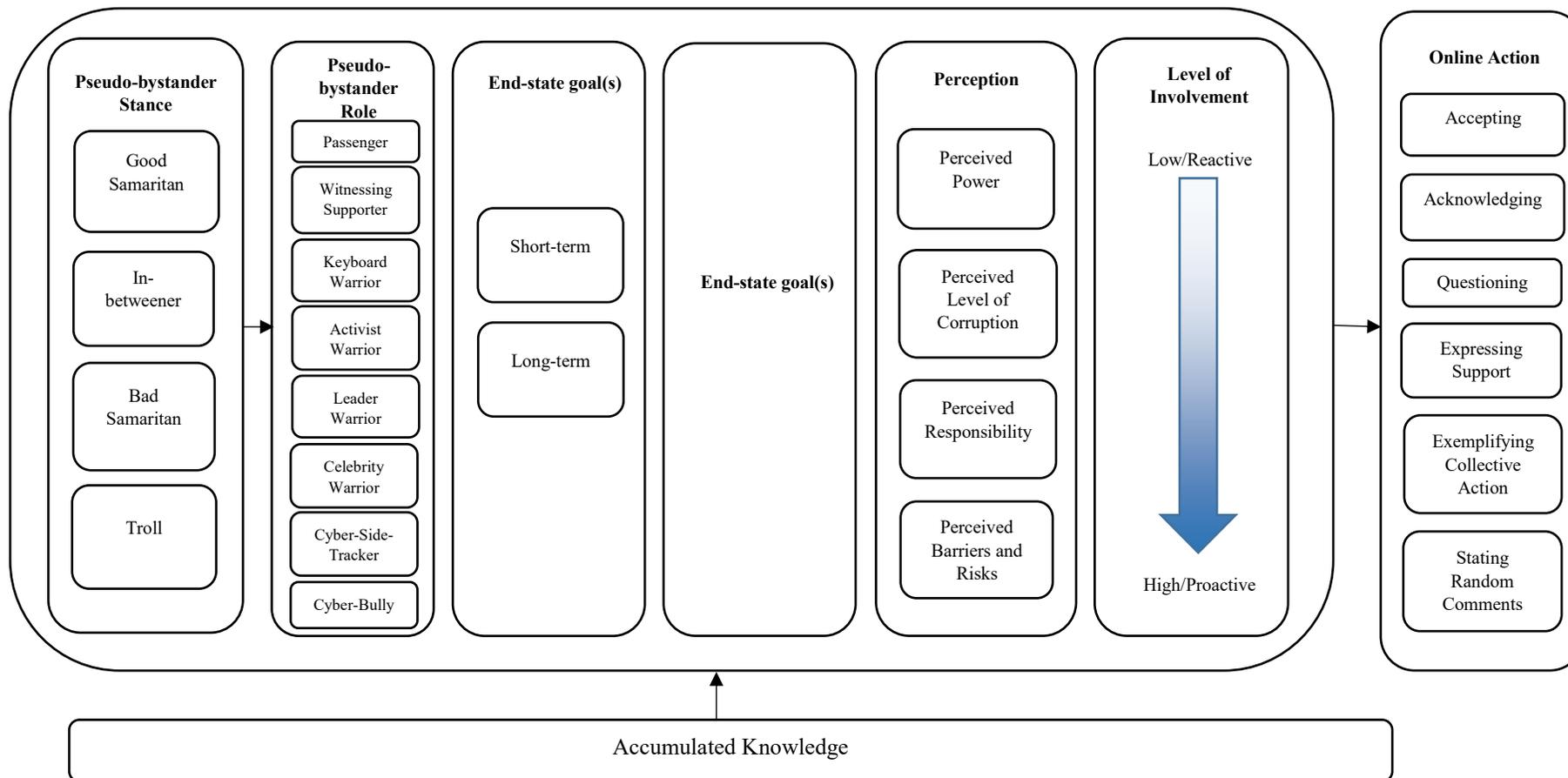


Figure 88: Refined Findings – How Pseudo-bystanders Intervene in Corruption Cases via Social Media

Table 53: Summary of Key Findings from Case Three: Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case

Research Questions	Key Findings
<p><i>RQ1: What stances and/or roles might pseudo-bystanders adopt when they address corruption cases via social media?</i></p>	<p>Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case suggests that there are two types of pseudo-bystander roles: “organisational” and “individual”. “Organisational” pseudo-bystanders may complement “individual” pseudo-bystanders to raise public awareness in the context of bystander intervention.</p> <hr/> <p>Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s reveals that eight specific pseudo-bystander roles: <i>Passenger</i>, <i>Witnessing Supporter</i>, <i>Keyboard Warrior</i>, <i>Activist Warrior</i>, <i>Leader Warrior</i>, <i>Celebrity Warrior</i>, <i>Cyber-Side-tracker</i> and <i>Cyber-Bully</i>.</p>
<p><i>RQ2: Do pseudo-bystanders go through a similar bystander intervention process to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p><i>a) What influences pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p><i>b) How do pseudo-bystander roles and their level of involvement influence their subsequent online action to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>Pseudo-bystanders may become more involved over time and/or adopt different roles. This, in turn, influences their subsequent behaviour.</p>
<p><i>RQ3: What stimuli triggers individuals to become involved from one stage to another in the online intervention process to take action to address corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>Different social media platforms can be strategically employed to attain different end-state goals.</p> <hr/> <p><i>Celebrity Warriors</i> can be an effective external influence to mobilise collective action.</p>

9.6. Results Summary – Synthesis of Key Findings

After presenting the results of all three case studies examined in this research, I will now provide a brief synthesis. While I have used three particular cases in this research to examine the phenomena of how social media can be used to mobilise pseudo-bystanders to help victims of corruption in an online environment, the findings may also be applicable at a broader scale. For instance, the findings derived from these cases could contribute and inform our understanding from a bystander and political/social activist angle as well as a marketing and consumer behaviour perspective. This is because I not only observed interactions as they unfolded, but I was also seeking the presence of some factors (motivated by consumer roles, involvement and influencing factors). Therefore, not only did I follow a systematic procedure to identifying various patterns emerging from each case, I also interpreted my findings with a holistic understanding. In this section, I will first discuss some general observations across the cases of Ma Yue, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu. Then, I will explain how these cases may address my research questions.

9.6.1. General Observations

In the current study, I examined over 3,000 comments via various social media platforms. Table 54 provides an overview of the three case studies examined in this research.

Table 54: A Summary of Case Data Drawn from the Three Case Studies Examined in the Current Research

Case Studies	Who Disclosed the Corruption Cases	Languages Used	Social Media Platforms Used	Comments Examined in the Current Research (After Filtering)	Longevity of Online Correspondence Generated By Pseudo-bystanders	Duration of “Spikes” examined typically lasts
Ma Yue’s Case	Victim’s Associate: Ma Yue’s mother	Chinese	Weibo	872	Five days ~ One month	One day ~ Two weeks
Ye Haiyan’s Case	Victim’s Associate: Ye Haiyan, who then became a victim of power abuse	Chinese	Weibo	750	Three ~ 24 Days	
Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s Case	Victim: Ikumi Yoshimatsu	Japanese and English	Blog	355	One and a half months	
			Facebook	390	Six days ~ One month	
			Twitter	290	Three months	
			YouTube	474	Eight months ~ Two years	
Total				3,131		

Overall, the three case studies examined in the current research suggest that social media is an important mechanism for exposing corruption, as well as for connecting victims of corruption and pseudo-bystanders. Besides enabling victims of corruption to have a voice and making them visible to others, social media can also be employed to bring perpetrators and other pseudo-bystanders to light (see Appendix 3).

The cases of Ma Yue, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu illustrate that victims (and/or their associates) can employ social media to alert others of the corruption case. Therefore, access to social media is a fundamental requirement for both victims of corruption (to disclose their ordeals in an online environment) and other pseudo-bystanders in the same space (to learn about the corruption cases in the first place). Evidence from the current study illustrated that social media may be an effective platform for victims of corruption to reach many pseudo-bystanders in a very short time. The hype (or “spikes”) generated via these online environments typically lasted up to two weeks. Furthermore, in spite of

different languages and the social media platforms used across the three case studies, the pseudo-bystander roles identified and how pseudo-bystanders' intervene to address corruption cases via social media did not drastically differ from one case to another.

9.6.2. Cross-Case Analysis

In the current research, I used the same data analysis process to examine three separate case studies. To ensure robustness of my findings, I have progressively triangulated the results from the cases of Ma Yue, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu. This way, I was able to not only identify common themes from these cases, but to also extend the overall findings. The findings here thus reflect both state and corporate levels of corruption from their efforts in covering-up crime. Figure 89 illustrates the emergence of the key findings.

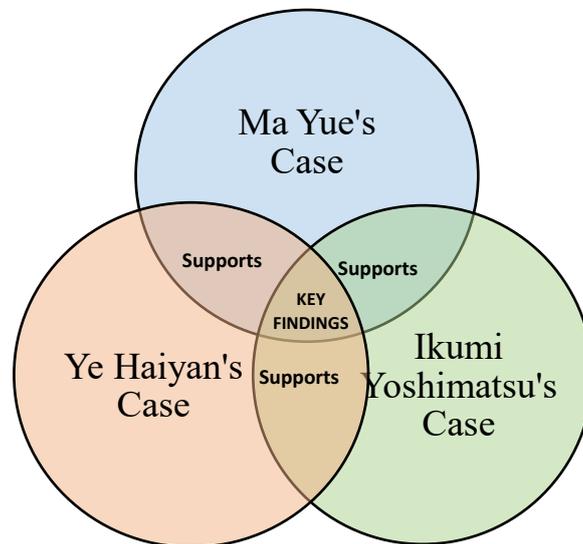


Figure 89: Synthesising Findings from Three Case Studies in the Current Research

This process required a substantial amount of time, as I needed to go back and forth to crosscheck with previous cases to triangulate and verify additional findings from subsequent cases. By doing so, key findings are essentially supported with evidence across *all three case studies* in my research. To verify and strengthen the overall key findings across all cases, I went to look for them specifically within the dataset. For example, I first identified three broad pseudo-bystander stances in Ma Yue's case, this was corroborated with findings from subsequent cases. In Ye Haiyan's case, it appeared that pseudo-bystanders could also adopt a "troll" as a stance in response to corruption cases. Therefore, I went back to check if this was applicable in Ma Yue's case and then later on, in Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. Specific pseudo-bystander roles also started to

emerge when I was analysing Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case. To triangulate these specific pseudo-bystander roles, I went back to delineate the same roles in both Ma Yue and Ye Haiyan's cases. It is unlikely that I would be able to identify these specific roles if broader pseudo-bystander stances had not be explored in the previous two cases.

9.6.2.1. Online Action and Involvement

Findings from the current research suggest that pseudo-bystanders may adopt six different online actions to intervene in corruption cases via social media: "*accepting*", "*acknowledging*", "*questioning*", "*expressing support*", "*exemplifying collective action*" and "*stating random comments*". In other words, pseudo-bystanders may respond by do nothing and accepting the situation; acknowledge the issue; actively research about the subject; inform others about the situation; call for collective action to resist power abuse; or take advantage of the situation to satisfy their own agenda. Some examples can be seen in Table 55.

Table 55: Examples of Online Action

Online Action	Extent of Involvement	Example	Quotes from the Case Studies Examined in the Current Research
“Accepting”	Limited	Indicating that corruption is somewhat tolerable and thus no intervention is required	<i>北京王工三世 : In Guangdong, if they wish to pick on you they could do that in every corner, this is because the government officials are basically all legal-blinds, they do whatever they want, [we are] already used to it! [2013-6-28 09:36] (From Ye Haiyan’s case)</i>
“Acknowledging”	Limited	Indicating that corruption is unfair but no further intervening action is taken	<i>锐叉儿的: Wang Xuemei chose to resign in response to Ma Yue’s case, during the cultural revolution a lot of people chose to commit suicide, nowadays many people because they are worried about politics, economy, pollution etc., they choose to migrate, many others choose to be silent when facing unfairness.... Leaving and escaping should not be our only choice, but, really, what other options do we have? [2013-8-24 10:33] (From Ma Yue’s case)</i>
“Questioning”	Limited	Ambiguous about how corruption can be addressed	<i>Koji Moritani: Why can’t Japan protect woman’s rights? Why are all the Japanese media not doing anything about the unfair situation that is happening to Miss International? Why is our prime minister not doing anything about it? She is risking her career and why can’t Japanese government do anything for her? Why is that organization hosting an event about woman’s rights that ignores the woman who is trying to fight on the court for justice? And why is the first lady attending that event? Are you guys really protecting women’s rights? [17 December 2013 at 23:27] (From Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case)</i>
“Expressing Support”	Extensive	Showing support and explicitly advocating for victims of corruption, indication of intervention in an online context	<i>花痴一个_丑女一枚 : Although you have been detained, I will still share your posts, in order for more people to know that you have fallen into a trap. You and I have the same name...I respect you! Practice makes perfect! [2013-6-1 09:14] (From Ye Haiyan’s case)</i>
“Exemplifying Collective Action”	Extensive	Demonstrating how intervention can be done to support victims of corruption, rally others to participate in collective action	<i>R from JPN 44: [reply to matsu193]: @ikumiyoshimatsu Good Work! This is big news! Finally, the Japanese #ShukanBunshu is writing another article about her. I would like everyone to support and spread this, please participate! #Yoshimatsulkumi #Spread [28 Jan 2014 on Twitter] (From Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case)</i>
“Stating Random comments”	Limited to Extensive action	Provoking others to respond	<i>yello bird [reply to Justice Law] Have you ever lived in Japan? For how long? You can speak and read Japanese language, right? So reply [to] my above comment in Japanese. (From Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case)</i>

9.6.2.2. Behavioural Change and the Oscillation of Pseudo-bystander Roles

Results from the three case studies examined indicated that pseudo-bystanders tend to go through a process in response to corruption cases via social media (*i.e.*, from no action to adopting intervening action). Furthermore, it appears that pseudo-bystanders may also shift from one role to another as the case progresses. For instance, pseudo-bystanders may become more involved over time and thus progress from a passive role to a more active role, or vice versa. The following example demonstrates that a pseudo-bystander could oscillate from a passive role to a more active role:

小 Q 美国代购联盟: "Been following Ma Yue's incident for a few days, Wang Xuemei's video has been deleted on various websites inside the country, you can only see it from overseas websites, this is really sad! Wang Xuemei in Weibo has also been transformed into a sensitive word. As a public media outlet Sina is also controlled by a cooperate of power...[2013-8-29 05:51]"

*竹林女侠爱MARI : [reply@小Q 替你在美国淘宝
"Do you have the website overseas?" [2013-8-29
14:26]*

*小 Q 美国代购联盟 : [reply@竹林女侠爱]
"YouTube has... you need to bypass the country's
firewall." [2013-8-29 22:38]*

*竹林女侠爱MARI : [reply@小Q 替你在美国淘宝
"What's the title called?" [2013-8-29 22:40]*

*小 Q 美国代购联盟 : [reply@竹林女侠爱 MARI]
"You only need to search for Wang Xuemei, you will
see it.. there are also other videos..." [2013-8-29
23:03]*

*竹林女侠爱MARI : [reply@小Q 替你在美国淘宝
"Okay, I'm watching now, thanks!" [2013-8-29
23:36]*

The above online dialogue illustrates that *小 Q 美国代购联盟* shifted from perhaps a *Witnessing Supporter*, who noticed the corruption case, to a *Keyboard Warrior*, who

attempted to raise awareness in a public space (*i.e.*, by informing how others may access Wang Xuemei's video) in the space of just a couple of days. Equally, pseudo-bystanders may also step back from an active role to adopt a relatively passive role over time. For example, one pseudo-bystander 张露霞LULU, warned others that: "you must remember, you cannot repost more than 500 times. This is because there is no official approval of this conclusion. Internet friends, you must beware of your safety~!" [2013-9-10 14:02]. Under the current political climate in China, by opening criticising the government and related authorities could bring unwanted attention to the individual. Therefore, individuals' may cease involvement and their ongoing efforts to advocate for the victims if their own safety becomes a concern.

In general, the prospect of pseudo-bystanders oscillating between roles is a significant finding in the bystander intervention process. Moreover, understanding how pseudo-bystanders go through different stages to intervene and what triggers them to adopt various roles that may lead them to become more (or less) involved could better facilitate and promote helping behaviour to support victims of corruption in the future. Table 56 presents a summary of key findings. I will discuss how they answer my research questions next in Chapter Ten.

Table 56: A Summary of Key Findings from the Cases of Ma Yue, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu

Research Questions	Key Findings	
<p><i>RQ1: What stances and/or roles might pseudo-bystanders adopt when they address corruption cases via social media?</i></p>	<p>Pseudo-bystander Stances</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Good Samaritan” • “Bad Samaritan” • “In-betweener” • “Troll”
	<p>Pseudo-bystander Type</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Organisational” and “Individual”
	<p>Specific Pseudo-bystander Roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Passenger</i> • <i>Witnessing Supporter</i> • <i>Keyboard Warrior</i> • <i>Activist Warrior</i> • <i>Leader Warrior</i> • <i>Celebrity Warrior</i> • <i>Cyber-Side-tracker</i> • <i>Cyber-Bully</i>
<p><i>RQ2: Do pseudo-bystanders go through a similar bystander intervention process to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p><i>a) What influences pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p> <p><i>b) How do pseudo-bystander roles and their level of involvement influence their subsequent online action to intervene in corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>The Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step One: Gain Access to Social Media Platforms • Step Two: Notice the Event via Social Media Platforms • Step Three: Interpret the Situation through Information Search • Step Four: Assume Personal Responsibility • Step Five: Decide Appropriate Action to Help • Step Six: Act to Intervene and Review Action to Inform Future Decisions
	<p>Pseudo-bystander Action</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “<i>Stating Random Comments</i>” • “<i>Accepting</i>” • “<i>Acknowledging</i>” • “<i>Questioning</i>” • “<i>Expressing Support</i>” • “<i>Exemplifying Collective Action</i>”
	<p>Influences of Online Action (Responses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived power • Perceived level of corruption • Perceived responsibility • Perceived barriers and risks, • Perceived end-state goals, • Ethical Stance • Accumulated knowledge

<p><i>RQ3: What stimuli triggers individuals to become involved from one stage to another in the online intervention process to take action to address corruption cases using social media?</i></p>	<p>The Stages of Change in the Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precondition > find out about the corruption case • 1. Precontemplation > interest in the corruption case • 2. Contemplation > intend to act • 3. Preparation > plan action • 4. Action > attempt action • 5. Confirmation > assess action to inform future decisions
	<p>Triggers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to the corruption case • Celebrity Advocacy helps to increase public awareness • Empathetic responses and personal connection • Threats to ethical stance • Instructions of how to intervene
	<p>Possible Reasons for “Spikes” to Subside</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diffusion of responsibility • Attainment of short-term goal • Lack of further instruction to intervene • Lack of (new) knowledge about the case
	<p>The Use of Social Media</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access to corruption cases • Establishes personal connections • Generates empathy • Communicates contentions effectively • Provides updates • Demonstrate collective action • “Fast-tracks” behavioural change • Allows victims to have a voice • Potential to reach globally

Chapter Ten: Discussion and Conclusions

10.1. Chapter Introduction

Existing literature suggests that bystander intervention may generally prevent or reduce harm to victims (Banyard & Moynihan 2011; Hoefnagels & Zwikker 2001; Levine & Thompson 2004; Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Polder-Verkiel 2012; Pozzoli & Gini 2013). As discussed in previous chapters of this thesis, social media has become a useful vehicle to generate collective action to fight corruption. Therefore, by exploring how pseudo-bystanders utilise social media to intervene, our current understanding would be improved as to how helping behaviour can be better facilitated to support victims of corruption.

The current study identified three main research gaps. Firstly, we know little about pseudo-bystanders – who they are and what action they adopt to intervene in corruption cases via social media. In fact, besides the *whistle-blower*, other bystander roles in a corruption context are unidentified in existing studies (both online and in real-life). Secondly, while Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process has been a widely recognised model that informs how bystanders may generally intervene, it remains unclear whether bystanders go through a similar process to carry out intervention in an online environment. Lastly, triggers that prompt pseudo-bystanders to take action are unknown. Therefore, I was intrigued to find out what differentiates those who choose to act, from those who do not. I also wanted to explore how pseudo-bystanders intervene in corruption cases using social media, as well as what triggers them to intervene. Accordingly, I examined three separate case studies to answer my research questions (refer to *section 1.5* in Chapter One).

There were a set of *a priori* constructs to be observed, informed by marketing theories: 1) Roles adopted (from consumer roles); 2) Consumer involvement theory; 3) Factors influencing behaviour change (from precontemplation to confirmation). The findings presented identified new insights across all three spectrums. In this chapter, I will illustrate how the overall findings from these case studies contribute to existing knowledge. I will also discuss various practical implications, limitations encountered in this study as well as directions for future research. Lastly, I will conclude this thesis by

sharing some personal implications to shed light on what this study means to me personally.

10.2. Identifying Pseudo-bystander Roles

The current understanding of bystanders reveals they are generally deemed as either active or inactive (Bickman 1972; Burn 2009; Darley & Latané 1968; Latané & Darley 1970; Manning, Levine & Collins 2007). As the objective of the current study is to find out how pseudo-bystanders can be mobilised to help victims of corruption, it would be logical to look at bystanders in the corruption context. Unfortunately, our current understanding of bystander roles in the corruption context is scarce and *Whistle-blower* appears to be the only bystander role in this area.

Near and Miceli (1985) define the act of whistle-blowing in general as the “disclosure by organisation members (former or current) of illegal, immoral or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers, to persons or organizations that may be able to effect action” (p. 4). Brown (2009) further points out that whistle-blowing may not be limited to the organisational context, in the sense that “the disclosure about suspected or alleged wrongdoing... affects more than simply the personal or private interests of the person making the disclosure” (p. 668). For instance, individuals who are unnecessarily “organisational members” may expose systemic corruption out of “public interest” (Brown 2009). Therefore, a *whistle-blower* is a proactive bystander role.

Interestingly, Dozier & Miceli (1985, p 824) suggest that a *whistle-blower* “always has the option to ignore or to cover the wrongdoing rather than to expose it”. This implies that the *whistle-blower* can choose to act differently. For instance, a *whistle-blower* with a high level of involvement may take action to intervene personally (e.g., exposing the wrongdoing); this may be drastically different to someone who simply alerts or helps others to intervene. However, existing literature fails to differentiate to the extent that *whistle-blowers* become involved. Furthermore, apart from the role of a *whistle-blower*, other bystander roles in the corruption context remained unidentified. Therefore, to identify other bystander roles confronted by corruption, I turned to the bullying context, where different types of bystanders have been previously identified.

In the context of bullying, there are typically four types of bystanders: “Assistant” (who joins the bullying), “Reinforcer” (who supports the bully), “Outsider” (who remains

passive and uninvolved) and “Defender” (who sticks up for the victim) (Craig *et al.* 2009; Salmivalli 1999). These bystander roles provide a general indication of bystanders’ positionality in a bullying situation. However, bystanders’ positionality alone is inadequate to differentiate their level of involvement and their subsequent action may be influenced as a result. Therefore, the current research explored this aspect. The findings from the current study suggest the variance of pseudo-bystanders is much greater. In particular, I have identified four stances (or broad roles) and eight specific pseudo-bystander roles which individuals may adopt when addressing corruption cases via social media. I will now discuss them in detail.

10.2.1. Various Pseudo-bystander Stances

Bystander behaviour has been traditionally explored in interpersonal situations (*e.g.*, to aid an emergency or crisis faced by an individual) as well as prosocial contexts (*e.g.*, natural disaster) (Anker & Feeley 2011). In general, bystanders are portrayed as “others”, who may or may not have an inter-group relationship with the victim or the perpetrator (Price *et al.* 2014). The findings from the current study indicate that pseudo-bystanders adopt different stances when intervening in corruption cases using social media. Identifying pseudo-bystander stances seems to be the first step in attempting to understand the pseudo-bystander phenomenon.

These pseudo-bystander stances reflect the individuals’ response to the corruption cases as being pro-victim, neutral, pro-perpetrator, or ambiguous. In this study, I refer to these four main pseudo-bystander stances as “*good Samaritan*”, “*in-between*”, “*bad Samaritan*” and “*troll*” respectively. This broadly corroborates the type of bystanders in the bullying context in general. For example, the “*good Samaritan*” is equivalent to the “Defender”, who actively helps the victim; the “*in-between*” is similar to the “Outsider”, who remains uninvolved, the “*bad Samaritan*” is the “Assistant”, who helps the bully, or the “Reinforcer”, who encourages and supports the bully. “*Trolls*” have not been previously identified in the bystander context, although they could be present both online and in real-life situations. Hence, identifying three of the four stances is consistent with previous knowledge. I will now discuss how these pseudo-bystander stances contribute to existing knowledge.

10.2.1.1. “Good Samaritan”

Evidence from the current research suggests that social media may be effectively employed (more so than mainstream media) to communicate negative experiences and generate empathetic responses from others to support victims of corruption. This can be partly explained by Hadjistavropoulos *et al.*(2011), who suggest that verbal communication is effective as it is easier for an outsider to decipher, especially when one is to communicate an internal, personal and highly subjective experience such as pain (physical or mental). So when the lived experiences are communicated using the first person peripheral via social media, it naturally retains the narrator’s “voice” that persuades pseudo-bystanders to put themselves in the shoes of the victims. Therefore, to an extent, the subsequent helping behaviour (*e.g.*, pro-victim sentiments and solidarity) by pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “*good Samaritan*” stance can also be interpreted as empathetic responses. This supports the view that empathy could be one reason why bystanders might offer help, and thus intervene in emergencies (Cheon *et al.* 2011; Thomas, McGarty & Mavor 2009).

By allowing corruption victims to share their painful experiences, social media essentially enables them to communicate with others in an uncensored environment. The damage caused by corruption can severely affect the lives of victims and their associates and can often leave them traumatised by the negative experience. By sharing this ordeal in a public online space such as that provided by social media, victims of corruption experience a type of “voice therapy” to cope with the situation, which helps to reduce psychological burdens (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2005). Thus, some pseudo-bystanders who behave as “*good Samaritans*” help victims of corruption by listening, responding and caring, which eases the victims’ pain and helps them to cope with the situation mentally.

10.2.1.2. “In-betweener”

Conversely, other bystanders do not respond in the same way, as they do little to appease or support the victims. Existing literature tends to cast a negative connotation on these “unresponsive” bystanders (*e.g.*, Darley & Latané’s (1968) “bystander effect” previously discussed in Chapter Three). While pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “*in-betweener*” stance tend to show less empathy towards the victim in their responses in comparison to the “*good Samaritans*”, appearing to be “inactive” or “indifferent” does not necessarily

make them anti-victim. Evidence from the current study suggests that pseudo-bystanders who assume the “*in-between*er” stance when confronted by corruption via social media are somewhat neutral, in the sense that they may simply position themselves as an observer of the situation. This is similar to a *psychoanalytic* view in psychotherapy, where the therapist tries to understand the client’s perspectives, but at the same time tries to remain objective (Barrett-Lennard 1981).

Moreover, evidence from the current research suggests that pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “*in-between*er” stance may be inherently different from the role of an “Outsider” suggested by Salmivalli (1999). Outsiders tend to remain inactive *throughout* the situation. However, the current study reveal that pseudo-bystanders who are “*in-betweeners*” may still be involved without explicitly taking sides (e.g., asking questions), and thus play a more interactive role than an “Outsider”. In fact, “*in-betweeners*” may change their stance in due time as they learn more about the case. For example, Akie Abe in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, was an “*in-between*er” before she became a “*good Samaritan*” to support the victim.

However, existing literature tends to view the inaction of bystanders as a fixated choice (e.g., the unresponsive bystanders in the cases of Kitty Genovese, as suggested by Gansberg (1964)). Labelling the individuals as being “unresponsive” and “uninvolved” essentially overlooks the possibility of them becoming more involved in future. The idea that an “*in-between*er” may evolve over time and become more engaged and active could improve our understanding, and motivation, in promoting helping behaviour. For example, victims of corruption may receive a higher chance of support if we can understand what prompts “*in-betweeners*” to convert to “*good Samaritans*” on a large scale (e.g., an effective way to learn more about the cases). Therefore, we should also see “*in-betweeners*” as an important cohort in the bystander intervention context, as they may grow into an army and support victims of corruption.

10.2.1.3. “Bad Samaritan”

The identification of “*good Samaritan*” and “*in-between*er” only paints two-thirds of the picture. This is because pseudo-bystanders may also choose to side with the perpetrators and/or take advantage of the victims to cause further harm. In this study, I refer to these individuals as the “*bad Samaritans*”. This is consistent with existing studies that suggest

bystanders can be pro-perpetrator (Price *et al.* 2014; Salmivalli *et al.* 1996). For instance, in the bullying context, an alliance between the bully and the bystander can be “harmful” as they often reinforce negative behaviour towards the victim directly (Price *et al.* 2014). The current study extends existing knowledge by elaborating upon what constitutes the notion of “harmful”. Evidence from the current research suggests that pseudo-bystanders could “side against the victim” by engaging in actions that are likely to hinder the victims plead for help. For instance, pseudo-bystanders may discredit the victims (and/or their associates) (*e.g.*, those who questioned Wang Xuemei’s analysis in Ma Yue’s case) or discourage others from demanding justice (*e.g.*, those who justified the government’s censorship). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that pseudo-bystanders could also become “*bad Samaritans*” indirectly, as they may not necessarily have a pro-perpetrator intention to begin with. Consequently, pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “*bad Samaritan*” stance can cause harm to victims of corruption and disrupt the likelihood of victims of corruption receiving help from others.

10.2.1.4. “Troll”

The practice of trolling can be understood as “provocative posting intended to produce a large volume of frivolous responses” (Indiana University 2014). The word “*troll*” can be used as a noun to refer to individuals who deliver such posts (a “*troll*”), or a verb that indicates the actual action (trolling/to troll) in an online environment. While *trolls* may be a known online phenomenon, they have not been recognised as a bystander role in existing bystander studies. It may be possible for bystanders to adopt the “*troll*” stance in real-life, but it is much easier to carry out trolling behaviour in an online environment. This is because an anonymous environment (*i.e.*, the Internet) is ideal for those who wish to pursue a virtual avatar beyond the boundaries of social convention (Buckels, Trapnell & Paulhus 2014). Therefore, a “*troll*” is identified as a distinctive pseudo-bystander stance in the current study.

Evidence from the current research suggests that the “*troll*” stance is different from a “*bad Samaritan*” stance, as the fundamental objective is diverse (as opposed to supporting the perpetrator or causing the victim further harm). “*Trolls*” are often described as disruptive, trouble-making, deceptive, narcissistic, sadistic, hostile, antisocial and offensive, all for the purpose of self-amusement (Binns 2012; Buckels, Trapnell &

Paulhus 2014). Thus, by adopting a “*troll*” stance, pseudo-bystanders may strive for amusement from casual sadism and “feel sadistic glee at the distress of others” (Buckels, Trapnell & Paulhus 2014, p.101). This was evident in the case studies examined in the current research, where some pseudo-bystanders’ intention was clearly not to support the victims or the perpetrators, but neither was it totally neutral or objective.

Moreover, the online activities of these “*trolls*” often deliberately derailed the public’s focus on the corruption cases. For example, the plague of “*trolls*” may distract other pseudo-bystanders’ by provoking them with politically fuelled debates and personal attacks. Just like the “*bad Samaritans*”, the persistent trolling behaviour may damage the victims’ well-being and distract others from becoming involved and demonstrating they care. Therefore, to minimise their negative impact in the pseudo-bystander context, we should consider how “*trolls*” can be effectively managed. For instance, Binns (2012) suggests that while members can report them and alert others, the best way is actually to “ignore” them. By not responding to their “bait”, the “*troll*” is likely to move on. Indeed, the current study illustrates that responding to these “*trolls*” can lead to ongoing online debates that essentially divert attention away from the corruption case.

While existing studies portray “*trolls*” as having either no particular agenda or an anti-agenda in general (Binns 2012; Buckels, Trapnell & Paulhus 2014), the current research reveals that not all “*trolls*” intend to provoke online discussion to satisfy their own amusement. Although off-topic “*trolls*” (*e.g.*, selling products or promoting religion) are spotted in the three case studies examined in this research, they are not considered as “bystanders” of the corruption case, as their discussions are irrelevant. Whereas on-topic “*trolls*” are deemed more relevant in the pseudo-bystander context, as they are likely to provoke others. Table 57 shows various types of “*on-topic trolls*” identified in the current study. Apart from the *Random* type of “*trolls*”, other pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “*troll*” stance tend to have a narrower cultural focus.

Table 57: Different Types of “On-topic Trolls”

Country	Type	Alleged Incentives	Agenda
China	Fifty-cent army/Water soldier	Paid	To praise the Chinese government
	Penny party	Paid	To criticise the Chinese government
Japan	<i>Netouyo</i>	Unspecified	Known to deliver extreme right-wing comments
China and Japan	Random	Unpaid Sadistic	Side-spin agenda on other social/political issues Cause distress to others

I will now discuss the specific pseudo-bystander roles stemming from these four pseudo-bystander stances.

10.2.2. Specific Pseudo-bystander Roles

A role is essentially a connection between a person and a function (Mieg 2006). For instance, one may be an “expert” (social role), as he/she is able to exchange relevant and valuable knowledge to the community. Similarly, an individual can adopt a certain role in the bystander context to bring about change to the situation, for better or worse. Previously, four types of bystanders were identified by Salmivalli (1999) (*i.e.*, “Assistant”, “Reinforcer”, “Outsider” and “Defender”) and seven bystander roles were identified by Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) (*i.e.*, “Bully (Aggressive) Bystander”, “Puppetmaster Variant of the Bystander”, “Victim (Passive) Bystander”, “Avoidant Bystander”, “Shame Bystander” and “Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander”). However, while these bystander roles provide a general sense as to how bystanders may position themselves in the context of bullying, they are insufficient to explain how their functions are different, nor do they fully apply to the corruption or online context. For instance, how bystanders intervene in an online, corruption case and to what extent these roles may influence bystanders’ subsequent action, are not previously known. As previously discussed throughout Chapters Two to Four, there are many variables that contribute to one’s decision to adopt an intervention (*e.g.*, personal, psychological, economic, situational and socio-cultural factors such as knowledge and experience, perception of risks and social norm (Bennet, Banyard & Garnhart 2014; Levine et al. 2002; Pozzoli & Gini 2013)). The current study examined the phenomenon of pseudo-bystanders, an online environment,

and illustrates that there are variations between individuals who fall with this cohort. Furthermore, it appears that these pseudo-bystanders can be influenced to adopt certain roles and behaviours by the victims or others in an online environment.

Besides the four broad pseudo-bystander stances discussed thus far, findings from the current research suggest that pseudo-bystanders could be grouped under eight specific roles to better explain their functions in a pseudo-bystander intervention context. These specific pseudo-bystander roles are *Passenger*, *Witnessing Supporter*, *Keyboard Warrior*, *Activist Warrior*, *Leader Warrior*, *Celebrity Warrior*, *Cyber-Side-tracker* and *Cyber-Bully* (refer back to Table 51 in Chapter Nine). By putting the stances and roles together in a matrix, I ended up with 20 potential combinations of pseudo-bystander roles (see Table 58).

Table 58: Pseudo-bystander Roles and Stances when Intervening in Corruption Cases using Social Media

Pseudo-bystander Stance	Passenger	Witnessing Supporter	Keyboard Warrior	Activist Warrior	Leader Warrior	Celebrity Warrior	Cyber-Side-Tracker	Cyber-Bully
“Good Samaritan” (Pro-victim)	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> Passenger	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> Witnessing Supporter	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> Keyboard Warrior	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> Activist Warrior	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> Leader Warrior	<i>“Good Samaritan”</i> Celebrity Warrior		
“In-betweener” (Neutral)	<i>“In-betweener”</i> Passenger	<i>“In-betweener”</i> Witnessing Supporter	<i>“In-betweener”</i> Keyboard Warrior	<i>“In-betweener”</i> Activist Warrior	<i>“In-betweener”</i> Leader Warrior	<i>“In-betweener”</i> Celebrity Warrior		
“Bad Samaritan” (Pro-perpetrator)	<i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> Passenger	<i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> Witnessing Supporter	<i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> Keyboard Warrior	<i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> Activist Warrior	<i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> Leader Warrior	<i>“Bad Samaritan”</i> Celebrity Warrior		
“Troll” (Distracting and Provoking)							<i>“Troll”</i> Cyber-Side-tracker	<i>“Troll”</i> Cyber-bully

The combinations of pseudo-bystanders featured in Table 58 using the identification of stances and specific roles in this study illustrate the variances as to how pseudo-bystanders take action. For instance, pseudo-bystanders from the same stance may act differently depending on the specific role they adopt. I will now use the “*good Samaritan*” stance as an example to explain this phenomenon. A “*good Samaritan*” *Passenger* may notice the situation and feel empathetic; a “*good Samaritan*” *Witnessing Supporter* may notice *and* acknowledge the situation with interest to support victims of corruption; a “*good Samaritan*” *Keyboard Warrior* may question the case to raise public attention, a “*good Samaritan*” *Activist Warrior* may express support for the victim, a “*good Samaritan*” *Leader Warrior* may rally support from others to intervene, a “*good Samaritan*” *Celebrity Warrior* advocates for the victim and mobilise their followers to do the same. This example extends to all pseudo-bystander stances and roles. As the findings from the three case studies suggest, the stances and roles identified do not seem to be static. This further creates a powerful opportunity to promote helping behaviour when pseudo-bystanders are mobilised to generate collective action.

However, we should also keep in mind that pseudo-bystanders’ online action might not always be consistent with their real-life behaviour. Lim (2013) points out that “terms such as slacktivism (lazy activism), clicktivism (click activism), armchair activism and keyboard activism question the worthiness of digital activism, often deeming it subordinate to “real” (physical) activism” (p. 637). Nevertheless, evidence from the case studies suggests that activism in an online environment may lead to pseudo-bystanders engaging in real-life action. For example, some pseudo-bystanders became involved by signing an online petition before joining a real-life protest or boycotting. This was seen in all three case studies, where some pseudo-bystanders subsequently engaged in real-life action to show solidarity.

Support for this notion is provided by Price *et al.* (2014), who suggest that bystanders’ roles often interplay between the online context and in real-life. For instance, Price *et al.*’s (2014) study suggests that social conventions and friendship, moral responsibility, personal agency, empathic reasoning and power relations may influence cyber-bystanders’ decision to intervene in an online environment. Given that the intention to engage in helping behaviour in a real-life situation may start from when the pseudo-bystanders first

become involved in an online context, it can lead to the mobilisation of collective action. Therefore, to better promote and facilitate helping behaviour to support victims of corruption, we should pay more attention to the *Keyboard Warriors*, especially those who adopt the “*good Samaritan*” stance.

This is because the online action of “*good Samaritan*” *Keyboard Warriors* may subsequently intensify their involvement to become *Activist Warriors* to intervene in real-life, and thus advocate for justice to address undue punishments. The role of an *Activist Warrior* complements previously identified pro-victim bystander roles such as “defender” and “helpful bystander” identified in the bullying context, who also provide support for the victim. The *Activist Warrior* may/may not actually change the outcome of the situation, but when there are a large number of them actively involved in addressing the situation, they eventually create a movement (e.g., the mobilisation of others signing a petition), or the real-life action taken by those at Gezi Park).

Additionally, the current research revealed that an individual bystander may alternatively become a *Leader Warrior*, as their action (usually led by extensive involvement) mobilises others to engage in similar action, and so they thus display leadership characteristics. This way, they offer guidance in mobilising collective action, especially when they exemplify the behaviour publicly. Other roles include those pseudo-bystanders who are already public figures, famous people, or those perceived to hold positions of authority or expertise are different from a *Leader Warrior*. In this study, I refer to such high profile pseudo-bystanders as *Celebrity Warriors*.

Celebrity endorsement is commonly used in a consumer purchasing context to promote a product/service, as they can often be seen as external stimuli to influence consumers purchasing decisions (Ohanian 1990). The high impact of celebrities is also evident in social movements. For example, at the time of writing, a campaign led by American actress Alyssa Milano, that intended to raise awareness for victims of sexual harassment and assault, became viral. On 15 October 2017, Alyssa Milano *tweeted* via Twitter “if you’ve been sexually harassed or assaulted, write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet”. As of 22 October 2017, this particular tweet alone received 68,000 comments and was shared 25,000 times (Milano 2017). The reach was global. Similarly, it was evident that the *Celebrity Warriors* identified in the current research positively influenced others by

modelling the behaviour. In turn, their involvement encouraged other pseudo-bystanders to take action. While the involvement of *Celebrity Warriors* may contribute to mobilising bystander intervention collectively, this role has not been identified in existing literature in the bystander context. Hence, this finding contributes to our existing knowledge on bystanders roles.

Price *et al.* (2014) suggests online users who are identified as “cyber-bullies” can engage in aggressive behaviour intentionally and repeatedly, where their comments are often hostile and provocative (Price *et al.* 2014). However, evidence from the current study suggests that not all “trolls” are aggressive and hostile. For this reason, I labelled pseudo-bystanders who adopt the on topic “troll” stance as either a *Cyber-Side-tracker* or a *Cyber-Bully* in my study to delineate those who distracts others (*e.g.*, by introducing other topics) and those who are hostile (*e.g.*, attacking or provoking others). Next, I will discuss how various specific pseudo-bystander roles can be further differentiated.

10.2.2.1. Different Approaches Associated with Pseudo-bystander Roles

As mentioned earlier, findings from the current research suggest that pseudo-bystanders are not equally “active” and that not all pseudo-bystanders intervene in the same way. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders may only provide symbolic support (*e.g.*, posting empathetic responses) rather than pragmatic support (*e.g.*, sign the petition, protest, donate *etc.*). Thus, to differentiate various levels of involvement in the roles that pseudo-bystanders adopt, I further divided these specific pseudo-bystander roles into four subcategories that reflect their different approaches to engage in subsequent action: *Passive*, *Active*, *Proactive* and *Reactive* (see Table 59). Consequently, this has created 80 potential combinations of pseudo-bystanders in total. These pseudo-bystander roles from my study are presented in Table 60.

Table 59: Subcategories of Pseudo-bystander Roles

Approached Associated With Various Pseudo-bystander Roles	Extent of Involvement
Passive	Limited action
Active	Moderate action
Proactive	Extensive action
Reactive	Triggered action

Table 60: Combinations of Possible Pseudo-bystander Stances and Roles

Pseudo-bystander Stance	Pseudo-bystander Role	Approaches			
		Passive	Active	Proactive	Reactive
“Good Samaritan”	Passenger	Passive “Good Samaritan” Passenger	Active “Good Samaritan” Passenger	Proactive “Good Samaritan” Passenger	Reactive “Good Samaritan” Passenger
	Witnessing Supporter	Passive “Good Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter	Active “Good Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter	Proactive “Good Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter	Reactive “Good Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter
	Keyboard Warrior	Passive “Good Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior	Active “Good Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior	Proactive “Good Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior	Reactive “Good Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior
	Activist Warrior	Passive “Good Samaritan” Activist Warrior	Active “Good Samaritan” Activist Warrior	Proactive “Good Samaritan” Activist Warrior	Reactive “Good Samaritan” Activist Warrior
	Leader Warrior	Passive “Good Samaritan” Leader Warrior	Active “Good Samaritan” Leader Warrior	Proactive “Good Samaritan” Leader Warrior	Reactive “Good Samaritan” Leader Warrior
	Celebrity Warrior	Passive “Good Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior	Active “Good Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior	Proactive “Good Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior	Reactive “Good Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior
“In-betweener”	Passenger	Passive “In-betweener” Passenger	Active “In-betweener” Passenger	Proactive “In-betweener” Passenger	Reactive “In-betweener” Passenger
	Witnessing Supporter	Passive “In-betweener” Witnessing Supporter	Active “In-betweener” Witnessing Supporter	Proactive “In-betweener” Witnessing Supporter	Reactive “In-betweener” Witnessing Supporter
	Keyboard Warrior	Passive “In-betweener” Keyboard Warrior	Active “In-betweener” Keyboard Warrior	Proactive “In-betweener” Keyboard Warrior	Reactive “In-betweener” Keyboard Warrior
	Activist Warrior	Passive “In-betweener” Activist Warrior	Active “In-betweener” Activist Warrior	Proactive “In-betweener” Activist Warrior	Reactive “In-betweener” Activist Warrior
	Leader Warrior	Passive “In-betweener” Leader Warrior	Active “In-betweener” Leader Warrior	Proactive “In-betweener” Leader Warrior	Reactive “In-betweener” Leader Warrior
	Celebrity Warrior	Passive “In-betweener” Celebrity Warrior	Active “In-betweener” Celebrity Warrior	Proactive “In-betweener” Celebrity Warrior	Reactive “In-betweener” Celebrity Warrior
“Bad Samaritan”	Passenger	Passive “Bad Samaritan” Passenger	Active “Bad Samaritan” Passenger	Proactive “Bad Samaritan” Passenger	Reactive “Bad Samaritan” Passenger
	Witnessing Supporter	Passive “Bad Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter	Active “Bad Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter	Proactive “Bad Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter	Reactive “Bad Samaritan” Witnessing Supporter
	Keyboard Warrior	Passive “Bad Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior	Active “Bad Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior	Proactive “Bad Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior	Reactive “Bad Samaritan” Keyboard Warrior
	Activist Warrior	Passive “Bad Samaritan” Activist Warrior	Active “Bad Samaritan” Activist Warrior	Proactive “Bad Samaritan” Activist Warrior	Reactive “Bad Samaritan” Activist Warrior
	Leader Warrior	Passive “Bad Samaritan” Leader Warrior	Active “Bad Samaritan” Leader Warrior	Proactive “Bad Samaritan” Leader Warrior	Reactive “Bad Samaritan” Leader Warrior
	Celebrity Warrior	Passive “Bad Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior	Active “Bad Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior	Proactive “Bad Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior	Reactive “Bad Samaritan” Celebrity Warrior
“Troll” (on-topic)	Cyber-Side-Tracker	Passive “Troll” Cyber-Side-Tracker	Active “Troll” Cyber-Side-Tracker	Proactive “Troll” Cyber-Side-Tracker	Reactive “Troll” Cyber-Side-Tracker
	Cyber-Bully	Passive “Troll” Cyber-Bully	Active “Troll” Cyber-Bully	Proactive “Troll” Cyber-Bully	Reactive “Troll” Cyber-Bully

While not all 80 specific pseudo-bystander roles presented in Table 56 are verified in the current research, I believe it nevertheless provides a much more comprehensive overview of possible roles which pseudo-bystanders could adopt to address corruption in a social

media context. As the objective of my research is to determine how social media can be used to help victims of corruption, pseudo-bystanders who adopt roles within the “*good Samaritan*” stance are particularly relevant. The specific pseudo-bystander roles identified in my research complements and extends bystander roles in existing studies. This is illustrated in Table 61.

Table 61: How My Research May Inform Existing Bystander Roles

Pseudo-bystander Stance	Pseudo-bystander Role	Approaches			
		Passive	Active	Proactive	Reactive
"Good Samaritan"	Passenger	Passive "Good Samaritan" Passenger	Active "Good Samaritan" Passenger	Proactive "Good Samaritan" Passenger	Reactive "Good Samaritan" Passenger
	Witnessing Supporter	Passive "Good Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter	Active "Good Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter	Proactive "Good Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter	Reactive "Good Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter
	Keyboard Warrior	Passive "Good Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior	Active "Good Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior	Proactive "Good Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior	Reactive "Good Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior
	Activist Warrior	Passive "Good Samaritan" Activist Warrior	Active "Good Samaritan" Activist Warrior	Proactive "Good Samaritan" Activist Warrior	Reactive "Good Samaritan" Activist Warrior
	Leader Warrior	Passive "Good Samaritan" Leader Warrior	Active "Good Samaritan" Leader Warrior	Proactive "Good Samaritan" Leader Warrior	Reactive "Good Samaritan" Leader Warrior
	Celebrity Warrior	Passive "Good Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior	Active "Good Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior	Proactive "Good Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior	Reactive "Good Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior
"In-betweener"	Passenger	Passive "In-betweener" Passenger	Active "In-betweener" Passenger	Proactive "In-betweener" Passenger	Reactive "In-betweener" Passenger
	Witnessing Supporter	Passive "In-betweener" Witnessing Supporter	Active "In-betweener" Witnessing Supporter	Proactive "In-betweener" Witnessing Supporter	Reactive "In-betweener" Witnessing Supporter
	Keyboard Warrior	Passive "In-betweener" Keyboard Warrior	Active "In-betweener" Keyboard Warrior	Proactive "In-betweener" Keyboard Warrior	Reactive "In-betweener" Keyboard Warrior
	Activist Warrior	Passive "In-betweener" Activist Warrior	Active "In-betweener" Activist Warrior	Proactive "In-betweener" Activist Warrior	Reactive "In-betweener" Activist Warrior
	Leader Warrior	Passive "In-betweener" Leader Warrior	Active "In-betweener" Leader Warrior	Proactive "In-betweener" Leader Warrior	Reactive "In-betweener" Leader Warrior
	Celebrity Warrior	Passive "In-betweener" Celebrity Warrior	Active "In-betweener" Celebrity Warrior	Proactive "In-betweener" Celebrity Warrior	Reactive "In-betweener" Celebrity Warrior
"Bad Samaritan"	Passenger	Passive "Bad Samaritan" Passenger	Active "Bad Samaritan" Passenger	Proactive "Bad Samaritan" Passenger	Reactive "Bad Samaritan" Passenger
	Witnessing Supporter	Passive "Bad Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter	Active "Bad Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter	Proactive "Bad Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter	Reactive "Bad Samaritan" Witnessing Supporter
	Keyboard Warrior	Passive "Bad Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior	Active "Bad Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior	Proactive "Bad Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior	Reactive "Bad Samaritan" Keyboard Warrior
	Activist Warrior	Passive "Bad Samaritan" Activist Warrior	Active "Bad Samaritan" Activist Warrior	Proactive "Bad Samaritan" Activist Warrior	Reactive "Bad Samaritan" Activist Warrior
	Leader Warrior	Passive "Bad Samaritan" Leader Warrior	Active "Bad Samaritan" Leader Warrior	Proactive "Bad Samaritan" Leader Warrior	Reactive "Bad Samaritan" Leader Warrior
	Celebrity Warrior	Passive "Bad Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior	Active "Bad Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior	Proactive "Bad Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior	Reactive "Bad Samaritan" Celebrity Warrior
"Troll"	Cyber-Side-Tracker	Passive "Troll" Cyber-Side-Tracker	Active "Troll" Cyber-Side-Tracker	Proactive "Troll" Cyber-Side-Tracker	Reactive "Troll" Cyber-Side-Tracker
	Cyber-bully	Passive "Troll" Cyber-bully	Active "Troll" Cyber-bully	Proactive "Troll" Cyber-bully	Reactive "Troll" Cyber-bully

Assistant, Reinforcer, Bully (Aggressive) Bystander, Puppet-master Variant of the Bystander, Victim (passive) Bystander, Abdicating Bystander

Shame Bystander

Avoidant Bystander

Defender, Helpful (Altruistic) Bystander

Outsider

Whistle-blower

As discussed earlier, the only widely recognised bystander role in the context of corruption is *whistle-blower* (Brown 2009, 2013; Lambsdorff 2002; Latimer & Brown 2008). My research further captures the complexity of roles, as I aligned them with pseudo-bystanders' involvement and their subsequent intervening action. For instance, *whistle-blowers* can also be seen as an *Activist Warrior*. This is because whistle-blowing is essentially an action that requires a high level of involvement, and can put the person's safety at risk. Accordingly, *whistle-blowers* may be identified as Proactive (they may have planned their intervention and/or follow up after they "blow the whistle"), or Reactive (their intervening action is led by a sense of urgency).

Similarly, the level of passivity may vary in other pre-identified roles, such as the "Victim (Passive) Bystanders" in Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco's (2004) study. While the authors noted that these people are "passively and fearfully drawn into the victimisation process" (p.218), my findings demonstrate variations within this role. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders perceived the perpetrator's actions as being "understandable", and thus showed acceptance of the social injustice. Such "justification" may reflect a mentality of a *passive "bad Samaritan" Passenger*, in the sense that he/she acknowledges the incident and to an extent, approves of the negative behaviour. Whereas for pseudo-bystanders who adopt a *passive "bad Samaritan" Activist Warrior* role, they tend to place the blame on the victim. This suggests that while both roles stem from the "*bad Samaritan*" stance and are deemed "passive" in their action, the extent to each role (is involved) in the victimisation process is inherently different. The specific pseudo-bystander roles identified in my study thus corroborate, and extend, previously identified roles, by capturing the nuances of different actions and involvement of bystanders.

Interestingly, Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) suggest that the individuals who adopt the roles of "Avoidant Bystander" and "Outsider" tend to be uninvolved onlookers. For example, the role of "avoidant bystander" indicates that this is someone who mainly "facilitates victimisation by denial of personal responsibility" (Twemlow, Fonagy & Sacco 2004, p. 218). However, evidence from the current study suggests otherwise. This is because while both of these roles may adopt the pseudo-bystander stance of "*in-between*", it does not necessarily mean that they remain "passive" in pseudo-bystander context. For example, it is possible for an "*in-between*" to become a *proactive 'in-*

betweeners' Keyboard Warrior, by seeking responsibility from others instead of assuming personal responsibility to adopt action to intervene. To do so, he/she may continue to become involved with the situation explicitly in an online environment (e.g., asking questions and engaging in online discussions) without siding with the victims or the perpetrators. For example, some pseudo-bystanders demanded evidence/responses from relevant organisations, as seen in the case studies examined in the current research.

In some instances, passive action could also be a *starting point* for pseudo-bystanders before they become more involved. Various pseudo-bystanders observed in the current research indicated that they had been following the progression of the case for some time (some even for days and others for years). This suggests that pseudo-bystanders could have been *passive passengers* or *witnessing supporters* without making their online presence explicit earlier, before adopting a more active role as the case progressed. However, the concept of bystanders shifting roles over time has not been previously captured in bystander research, and so the findings here make a novel contribution to knowledge. It is worth noting that it is the duration of events reported via social media that allow pseudo-bystanders to shift their stances and roles as the case unfolds. This is similar to how bystanders in the physical environment may be passive observers prior to becoming actively involved.

Lastly, evidence from the current study reveal that not all “*trolls*” act the same way in an online environment, even if they are driven by a cultural-specific agenda. For example, those from the “fifty-cent army” may habitually use the exposure of the case to praise the Chinese government (= active), whereas those from the “penny party” may only submit posts to defend the Chinese government when it appears to be held accountable for the corrupt behaviour (= reactive).

Furthermore, a “Shame Bystander” previously identified by Twemlow, Fonagy and Sacco (2004) is similar to a pseudo-bystander who adopts the role of a *Cyber-bully*. This is because both roles tend to blame the victim for being the cause of the problem (e.g., for personal or political reasons). For instance, it was evident in the cases that some individuals perceived the power abuse to be, somehow, the victim’s “fault” (e.g., in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, as if it is something she should expect for working in the entertainment industry in the first place). By externalising the blaming, the *Cyber-bully*

publishes sadistic comments to shame the victim. Interestingly, findings from the three cases suggest that such public shaming can also spark solidarity amongst those who are supporters of the victim. In turn, a *Cyber-bully* may trigger other bystanders to defend the victim more strongly. By identifying the diversity of roles assumed by bystanders, these findings extend our current knowledge of the bystander phenomenon in an online environment, including the various roles of “*trolls*”. Next, I will discuss the process that pseudo-bystanders go through when intervening in corruption cases via social media.

10.3. Bystander Intervention in an Online Context

As previously discussed in Chapter Three, bystander intervention is one an effective way to help victims of corruption. Consistent with Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process (refer back to Figure 4 in Chapter Three), the current study suggests that pseudo-bystanders go through a similar bystander intervention process to intervene in corruption cases via social media. The current study also extends Latané and Darley’s (1970) five-step model by adding an extra step for pseudo-bystanders, suggesting that the first step for bystanders is gaining access to social media. Moreover, I have specifically clarified and modified the language for each step in the bystander intervention process so that it is more suited to describe how bystanders intervene in an online context. In this section, I will explain the six steps in the pseudo-bystander intervention process and the various factors that mitigate pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene (see Figure 90).

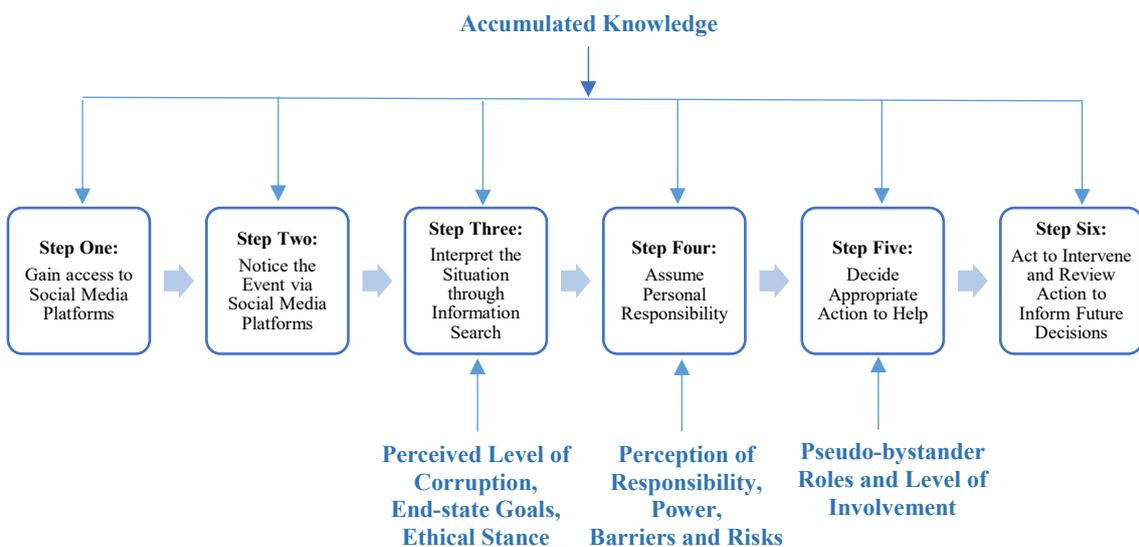


Figure 90. Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process and Mitigating Factors

10.3.1. The Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process

The steps pseudo-bystanders go through to intervene, as adjusted as identified from my research are: (1) gain access to social media platforms, (2) notice the event via social media platforms, (3) interpret the situation through information search, (4) assume personal responsibility, (5) decide appropriate action to help and (6) act to intervene and review action to inform future decisions. I will now explain each of these stages in detail.

10.3.1.1. Step One: Gain Access to Social Media Platforms

Bystanders need to be present physically to intervene in real-life situations. While this is not in the case in an online context, it is pivotal for pseudo-bystanders to have access to social media platforms in order to be “confronted” by corruption events in the first place. In general, social media provides a valuable platform for pseudo-bystanders to address corruption cases despite time and distance differences. This was evident in Abraham Briggs’s incident (previously discussed in Chapter Two), where he live-streamed his suicide in Florida on an Internet forum and a 17-year-old forum member from India ended up contacting the Miami police immediately upon noticing the alarming situation (Polder-Verkiel 2012).

While pseudo-bystanders may learn about corruption cases via social media and overcome time and distance barriers, the current study found that when information is incoherent, missing or inaccessible, it inhibits pseudo-bystanders from proceeding to subsequent steps in the intervention process. For instance, pseudo-bystanders would not be exposed to the corruption case if they were not members of social media platforms used by victims (or associates) to communicate their experience. Therefore, gaining access to social media platforms should be the first step in the pseudo-bystander intervention process. If pseudo-bystanders do not have access to social media platforms, they would be out of reach for victims of corruption and thus unable to carry out subsequent intervening action to address the situation.

10.3.1.2. Step Two: Notice the Event via Social Media

The first step in Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process is that the bystander must notice the event. Evidence from the current study also indicates that pseudo-bystanders must first “discover” the corruption case before they can become involved and adopt action to intervene. Pseudo-bystanders could find out about the

corruption case in a number of ways. The victim (and/or their associates) as well as other sources (*e.g.*, friends, people they follow on social media *etc.*), may inform pseudo-bystanders about the corruption case via various social media platforms (*e.g.*, weblog, Weibo, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube). For instance, the victims (and/or associates) featured in all three case studies examined in the current search (*i.e.*, Ma Yue's mother, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu) all actively used social media to inform the public about power abuse.

In general, the current research suggests that social media is an effective platform to amplify the corruption cases, as it enables the news to travel to many recipients locally and internationally, and very quickly. This alerts pseudo-bystanders to the problem so they can choose whether to adopt subsequent action to address the situation. The findings of the current study are therefore consistent with the first step of Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process.

10.3.1.3. Step Three: Interpret the Situation through Information Search

Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process suggests that upon noticing the event, bystanders go proceed to identify and interpret the situation to assess whether or not it is deemed intervention-appropriate. Extending this notion, evidence from the current study suggests that upon discovering the corruption cases, pseudo-bystanders go through a phase to search for information so that they can better interpret the situation. This contributes to current knowledge by supporting and extending the second step in Latané and Darley's (1970) bystander intervention process by incorporating "information search" within this step. This step further highlights the important role of social media in allowing pseudo-bystanders to absorb information from various online sources to assess the corruption cases. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders learned about the corruption case directly from the victim (*e.g.*, via blog posts, photos and videos published by the victim), others learned from secondary sources (*e.g.*, via eWOM from others within and beyond their immediate social network).

In a consumer purchasing context, online consumers who are powerful "opinion leaders" from one's reference groups are likely to provide provocative information and influence the attitude and behaviours of others (Chu & Kim 2011; Xun & Renolds 2010). As noted in Chapter Four of this study, "opinion leaders" are usually armed with more experience

or perceived as experts. They invariably have extensive exposure to a product as early adopters, and thus display a relatively high level of involvement in an online environment (Pang & Lee 2008). In turn, individuals who become “opinion leaders” are likely to influence others and subsequently initiate boycotts of a certain product, brand or person.

Similarly, existing studies suggest that the presence of others could be equally powerful when used to mobilise bystanders and encourage intervention (Cheon *et al.* 2011; Levine & Cassidy 2010; Levine & Thompson 2004; Manning, Levine & Collins 2007). The current research suggests that some pseudo-bystanders are more influential, in the sense that they are more likely to mobilise others to become involved to adopt collective action (*e.g.*, Wang Xuemei, Ai Xiaoming and Akie Abe). Findings from the three cases studies examined in the current research reveal that some pseudo-bystanders identified certain *Celebrity Warriors* as “opinion leaders”. This is akin with how consumers often refer to others’ opinion to determine their own purchasing decisions (Chu & Kim 2011; Lyon & Henderson 2005). The online presence of these “opinion leaders” are significant during the information search stage, as their involvement seemed to intrigue other pseudo-bystanders to find out more about the corruption cases.

Therefore, opinion leaders (especially those who adopt the “good Samaritan” stance) could serve as a catalyst in the second step of the bystander intervention process, as they are likely to activate a social norm that leads to collective action in a positive way. In this light, they can be viewed as a credible source that provides compelling opinions to influence others to engage in intervention. This is in line with Manning, Levine and Collins’s (2007) study, which suggests that the power of social groups can be used to encourage and promote helping behaviour. Therefore, the information pseudo-bystanders are exposed to during this step and the source that they obtain such information from could be a crucial turning point influence bystanders to intervene.

10.3.1.4. Step Four: Assume Personal Responsibility

As Bickman (1972, p. 439) points out, “noticing and defining an event as an emergency does not necessarily mean that an individual will assume responsibility for intervening”. Therefore, Latané and Darley (1970) added step three to the bystander intervention process which involves assuming personal responsibility. The findings of the current study support the inclusion of this step. It appears that assuming personal responsibility

is a critical step that persuades pseudo-bystanders to then take action. Particularly, when pseudo-bystanders perceive that their collective action could mobilise societal change (e.g., when they believe that “*fighting for an individual’s freedom is fighting for the country’s freedom*”), they become motivated to intervene.

Besides the perception of responsibility, the findings of the current study suggest that pseudo-bystanders also take into consideration their perceived power as well as barriers and risks associated with their (potential) intervention. Evidence from the case studies reveal that some pseudo-bystanders are aware of the potential consequences that their online action could bring and such awareness may restrain them from taking further action. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders are aware that they “*cannot repost more than 500 times*” to avoid scrutiny by the “net police”. Therefore, pseudo-bystanders’ own safety could be a factor that hinders them from taking action to intervene. This is particularly the case under a suppressive political climate (Callick 2013).

However, pseudo-bystanders are likely to engage in intervening action when they perceive that associated barriers and risks are diluted or when they feel empowered to achieve change. The presence of barriers and risks may explain, to an extent, why some pseudo-bystanders do not seem to take personal responsibility for addressing the situation, even if they empathise with the victim. This supports Bennett, Banyard and Garnhart’s (2014) study where they identified factors such as “fear for own safety” and “lack of confidence in the ability to help” as partly contributing to why bystanders fail to intervene.

10.3.1.5. Step Five: Decide Appropriate Action to Help

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, pseudo-bystanders’ roles and level of involvement influence them to act differently. This is in line with the fourth step in Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process, where bystanders decide how and which alternative action to pursue to intervene. In general, pseudo-bystanders with lower involvement appear to be more subtle in their online action. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders’ responses indicated that they acknowledged the situation, although they remained “hopeful” that change will happen (e.g., the truth will be revealed, legal punishment for the perpetrator will be granted, the current law will be amended *etc.*), they did not take further action to become personally involved in addressing the situation.

In contrast, when pseudo-bystanders' involvement is high, they are more inclined to engage in online action. Their comments may come across as "strong" or "proactive" (e.g., expressing support and rally for collective action). For instance, some pseudo-bystanders continued to share the victim's posts and encouraged others to do the same, while others have suggested actions in real-life to support the victim and/or actually engaged in these actions themselves.

Table 62 summarises how pseudo-bystander roles and their level of involvement may inform their subsequent online action when addressing corruption cases via social media.

Table 62: The Interconnection between Pseudo-bystander Roles, Level of Involvement and Online Action

Pseudo-bystander Role	Passive	Active	Proactive	Reactive	Level of Involvement	Online Action
<i>Passenger</i>	Recognition without awareness and/or interest	Recognition with awareness	Recognition with awareness and interest	Intrigued to find out more	 <p>Very Low</p> <p>Very High</p>	<i>“Accepting”</i>
<i>Witnessing Supporter</i>	Observation with explicit acknowledgement	Research on subject to form a stance	Make stance explicit	Simulation by external influences		<i>“Acknowledging”</i>
<i>Keyboard Warrior</i>	Support others’ opinions	Express contention	Seek information to support contention	Defend stance when provoked		<i>“Questioning”</i>
<i>Activist Warrior</i>	Intervene when convenient	Intervene when possible	Planned Intervention and follow up	Intervene with a sense of urgency		<i>“Expressing Support”</i>
<i>Leader Warrior</i>	Lead by vision	Lead by instruction	Lead by action (model behaviour)	Situational leader (e.g., with expertise)		<i>“Exemplifying Collective Action”</i>
<i>Celebrity Warrior</i>	Episodic advocacy	Continuous advocacy	Advocacy with action and/or interaction	Advocacy by appointment	Low/High	<i>“Expressing Support”</i> or <i>“Exemplifying Collective Action”</i>
<i>Cyber-Side-Tracker</i>	Troll with specific agenda	Troll to distract others	Troll to manipulate others	Troll by incentives (paid troll)	Low/High	<i>“Stating Random comments”</i>
<i>Cyber-Bully</i>	Troll with hostility	Troll to Intimidate	Troll to provoke others	Troll by replying to others	Low/High	<i>“Stating Random comments”</i>

10.3.1.6. Step Six: Act to Intervene and Review Action to Inform Future Decisions

As previously mentioned, pseudo-bystanders may adopt six different online actions to intervene in corruption cases via social media: “*accepting*”, “*acknowledging*”, “*questioning*”, “*expressing support*”, “*exemplifying collective action*” and “*stating random comments*”. After taken action to intervene, the findings from the current research reveal that some pseudo-bystanders often proceeded to review their action to inform their future intervening behaviour. Some pseudo-bystanders indicated they will engage in future action to support the victim, for instance, launching protests, resist government censorship, inform others *etc.* For instance, some pseudo-bystanders decided to share their experience with others (*e.g.*, via social media postings), repeat the action (*e.g.*, carry out a similar action), or intensify/cease their involvement in the future. The post-intervention behaviour not only informs their future decisions but also make them visible to others in an online environment. In turn, others may engage in similar action. This supports the idea that social media plays an important role in mobilising collective action, as previously identified (Obar, Zube & Lampe 2012; Theocharis *et al.* 2015).

As noted earlier in Chapter Four, we should not confuse online action with real-life action, nor should we consider them less influential. Evidence from the current study suggests that pseudo-bystanders’ online action often complement their real-life action (*e.g.*, expressing support by participating in physical protests, donating money, sending postcards *etc.*). Thus, the online action may be small, but an important step, which pseudo-bystanders take to become involved in addressing corruption cases.

In summary, evidence from the current study illustrates that pseudo-bystanders must first become members of various social media platforms (*e.g.*, Weibo, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) in order to be exposed to corruption events in the first place. Upon noticing the corruption event, pseudo-bystanders became intrigued to find out more about the situation. Some of them then proceed to assume personal responsibility and determined appropriate supporting action. After taking action to intervene, pseudo-bystanders might repeat or intensify their involvement in the future. Since not all pseudo-bystanders become equally involved or result in taking action to address the situation, it is important to understand what might influence their decision to intervene. I will now discuss some of the mitigating factors identified in the current study.

10.3.2. The Mitigating Factors

Eight mitigating factors in the pseudo-bystander intervention process were identified in the current study. I will now discuss each in detail and situate them within relevant literature.

10.3.2.1. Accumulated Knowledge

Existing literature suggests that individuals invariably interpret the situation in the bystander intervention process before they take action to intervene (Banyard 2008, 2011; Burn 2009; Latané & Darley 1970; Hoefnagels & Zwikker 2001). These studies recognised that the bystanders' interpretation of the situation is partially based on the bystanders' knowledge and often assumes that such knowledge is a pre-condition. For instance, Banyard (2008) suggests that greater knowledge of information about sexual violence may lead to a higher chance of bystander intervention.

Similarly, bystander intervention in an online environment is that pseudo-bystanders' knowledge about the corruption case largely depends on the information they accumulate over time. This is because pseudo-bystanders are constantly exposed to a plethora of information, which can be used to aid their interpretation of the situation. The information they are exposed to thus shape their interpretation of the situation, which may facilitate or inhibit their decision to intervene. Therefore, knowledge sharing can play an important role in the bystander intervention process, as it can also be understood as a collective learning process within social movements (Romanos 2013). I should also point out that knowledge in this context encapsulates various types of information. For example, knowledge about the corruption case itself (*e.g.*, what happened) is different from the knowledge of intervention (*e.g.*, direction of what to do).

Considering how cognitive biases are often formed to help us cope with overload or lack of information (see Baddeley, Curtis & Wood 2004; De Martino *et al.* 2006; Hilbert 2012, Slovic 2001), social media plays an important role in facilitating pseudo-bystanders to learn about the cases. This is because social media essentially enables pseudo-bystanders to accumulate extensive knowledge about the corruption cases by providing a breadth of new information so that the pseudo-bystanders can “revise the story” with their enhanced understanding over time. Social media also helps pseudo-bystanders to triangulate the

victim's "stories" by providing them "evidence" of the victims' lived- experience. In turn, this helps pseudo-bystanders to better interpret the situation and make informed decisions.

However, one downfall of using social media to communicate corruption events is that the continuity of the learning process may manifest into information-overload for those on the receiving end. Thus, the over-exposure of information may, in turn, hinder pseudo-bystanders from becoming involved or maintaining their involvement over time, as they may become desensitised and not engage in the intervention process. This may also partially explain why the "hypes" via social media tend to come and go so quickly.

10.3.2.2. Perceived Level of Corruption

As discussed in Chapter Three, "emergency helping" seems to be the dominating context in current bystander literature, where intervention often relies on bystanders' interpretation of the urgency with which victims need help (Burn 2009; Latané & Darley 1970; Pozzoli & Gini 2013). Against the backdrop that corruption is often a non-urgent context, pseudo-bystanders' interventions are likely to be influenced by how they interpret the severity of the corrupt situation (rather than its "urgency"). For instance, M'endez and Sep'ulveda (2012) suggest that individuals tend to assess corrupt behaviour on a case-by-case basis and adopt anonymous criteria to make their own judgement about corruption.

While existing literature suggests corruption can occur on different levels (*e.g.*, interpersonal corruption (Chan, Cheng & Szeto 2002), institutional corruption (Rosenblatt 2012), systemic corruption (Smith *et al.* 2003)), Walton's (2013) study further points out that corruption can also be a *subjective* construct. The findings from the current research support this notion by revealing that pseudo-bystanders perceived the level of corruption differently (*i.e.*, personal, case, institutional, societal). For instance, when pseudo-bystanders perceive the corruption case at a personal level, they tend to overlook the underlying abuse of power imposed by the more powerful perpetrators. Therefore, a tolerable perceived level of corruption is likely to hinder their decision to intervene. This is consistent with Walton's (2013) study, which suggests that if the corrupt practices are perceived as "petty", then the corruption may be normalised, and thus contribute to its prevalence.

Additionally, evidence from the current study illustrates that when pseudo-bystanders realise that the corruption reflects a wider social injustice problem and is prevalent at an institutional or systemic level, it heightens their perception of responsibility and power to intervene. This ultimately determines their level of involvement, and in turn, influences them to take action. This finding is a unique contribution to bystander research in the context of corruption, as previous studies did not fully explore the interconnection between the levels of corruption, responsibility, and power to intervene, as perceived by bystanders in relation to their subsequent action to address corruption.

10.3.2.3. End-State Goals

Given that collective action equates to “the pursuit of a single goal or multiple goals by more than one individual” (Obar, Zube & Lampe 2012, p. 3), helping behaviour can be more effectively promoted when bystanders share a common goal. However, not all pseudo-bystanders who intervene in corruption cases using social media have aligned goals. Therefore, to understand how to mobilise helping behaviour more effectively in an online environment, it is important to understand how pseudo-bystanders’ end-state goals may differ. In other words, the end-state goals which pseudo-bystanders identified may significantly influence their decision to intervene.

Findings from the current research reveal that when pseudo-bystanders identified a short-term outcome as their end-state goal, their involvement tends to naturally decline or stop altogether after the attainment of that. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders indicated that they were pleased to find out that mainstream media started reporting Ma Yue’s case. This could be the end of their engagement if their aim was for the case to reach the wider public. Whereas, when the identified end-state goals were to eradicate prevalent corruption and resist power imbalance at a systemic level, pseudo-bystanders were likely to continue their involvement. For example, some pseudo-bystanders continued to follow and advocate for Ikumi Yoshimatsu even though the results of the online petition (*i.e.*, the Japanese stalking laws to protect victims of stalking and power abuse remain unchanged). Thus, it is important to communicate various end-state goals in a clear, purposeful and consistent manner to ensure that victims receive the help they require instead of temporary relief from their suffering.

10.3.2.4. Ethical Stance

Existing literature suggests that moral disengagement contributes to bystanders being indifferent, and thus inhibits them from intervening (Polder-Verkiel 2012; Price *et al.* 2014; Obermann 2011). For instance, moral disengagement may determine the inaction of bystanders in the case of bullying (Hymel & Bonanno 2015; Price *et al.* 2014; Thornberg & Jungert 2013). While the factors that prompt bystander intervention (such as guilt and remorse in doing the “right” thing) has been a subject of exploration to an extent (D’Cruz & Noronha 2011), the standard of moral correctness remains problematic to pinpoint. This is because what is morally “correct” can vary from one pseudo-bystander to another. Thus, it remains unclear how moral standards may influence bystanders’ subsequent action in the online sphere (Price *et al.* 2014).

Findings from the current study shed some light on this as they suggest that pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene in corruption cases via social media may be closely connected to the ethical perspective they endorse. This is in line with Liu’s (2017) idea that the reasoning behind human behaviour is fundamentally driven by various ethical perspectives. Table 63 shows some examples of how end-state goals and the perception of corruption may differ depending on the ethical stances adopted.

Table 63: Potential End-state Goal(s) Reflected in the Ethical Stance Adopted

Ethical Stance	Essence of the Ethical Stance	Potential End-state Goal(s) Reflected in the Ethical Stance	Pseudo-bystanders’ Perception of Corruption
Deontology	Minimalist or negative aspect of ethics which mainly concerns right and wrong as well as duties, rules and punishments, <i>e.g.</i> , moral principles suggested by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) (Knights & O’Leary 2006)	Seeking legal punishments for those who committed the crime (short-term goal).	Personal level/ Institutional level
Ethics of Justice	Focuses on distributive justice and promotes democracy, fairness and equitable treatment of all people, <i>e.g.</i> , John Rawls’ theory of justice (Rawls 2009)	To warrant the victims’ right to express their personal views (short-term goal).	Personal level/ Case level
Utilitarianism	Part of Consequentialist theories that values rationality and reason over pleasure, and focuses on maximising the goodness/wellbeing in society by measuring the probable outcome or consequences (Knights & O’Leary 2006)	Temporary relief for the victim (short-term goal).	Personal level/ Case level
Levinasian	Based on the ethical proposition of Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) that illuminates ethics of responsibility and commitment with consideration of subjectivity, social relations and respect of the others (Bauman 1993; Hancock 2008; Knights & O’Leary 2006; Levinas 1981)	Collective action to redress social injustice to cultivate a better future for fellow citizens (long-term goal).	Personal level/ Societal level

Evidence from the current study suggests that the ethical stances grounded in deontology, ethics of justice and utilitarianism are fixated at a personal and case or institutional level, where pseudo-bystanders focus on the attainment of a short-term goal. For instance, when pseudo-bystanders have a “black and white” view of ethics, their efforts to intervene is largely influenced by what they perceive as morally “right” (e.g., legal punishment of the perpetrators, holding relevant organisations to be accountable). When pseudo-bystanders adopt the view of Ethics of justice, they tend to emphasise the concept of “fairness”, and thus interpret the corruption victims’ experience as unfair and unjust (e.g., focusing on the treatment of the victim). When pseudo-bystanders adopt a Utilitarianism ethical stance, they often take into consideration how the majority would feel about the situation. For instance, this may potentially influence pseudo-bystanders to overlook the negative impact on those marginalised individuals, and thus dismiss the corruption victims’ call for help, especially if others do not “approve” of the victim in the first place.

Findings from the current study suggest that only pseudo-bystanders who adopt the Levinasian values are inclined to be highly involved and be more willing to reach out to help the victims. The Levinasian ethical stance further supports that empathy has a positive impact on bystander intervention (Cheon *et al.* 2011; Thomas, McGarty & Mavor 2009). When pseudo-bystanders adopt a Levinasian ethical stance, they tend to focus on the victim’s lived experience in an empathetic way, rather than what is right or wrong. Therefore, instead of seeing the intervention as a moral obligation, pseudo-bystanders genuinely *want* to help, as they perceived that their intervention might influence change at a societal level. In this sense, victims’ communication via social media may be a key to effectively foster collective action and promote helping behaviour, especially if it can reach or influence others who have a Levinasian ethical stance.

Used as an intercessor for both victims and bystanders to exchange information and form alliances, the current study illustrates that social media allows victims of corruption to communicate an internal, personal and highly subjective experience such as pain (physical or mental) to others in an effective way. Social media essentially provides a valuable platform that enables both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication to reach many others. By allowing supplementary artefacts like pictures, dialogues and videos to accompany the “stories” told by victims facilitate bystanders to decode various

lived experiences communicated by corruption victims and to respond in an empathetic way as “good Samaritans”.

10.3.2.5. Perceived Responsibility

As mentioned earlier, assuming personal responsibility is regarded as a critical step that persuades bystanders to intervene. Hence, failing to assume responsibility can lead to “inaction” in the bystander context (Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014). As such, the diffusion of responsibility is recognised as one of the most significant factors that contribute to the “bystander effect”, and thus hinders bystanders’ decision to intervene (Bickman 1972; Latané & Darley 1970). Markey (2000) further suggests that the online environment may provide a breeding ground for the “bystander effect”. Markey’s (2000) study found that individuals take longer to receive help when the number of people in the online chat increases, and thus suggests that the online presence of others further cultivates the diffusion of responsibility for individuals to become involved. Price *et al.* (2014) also suggests that it is not atypical for bystanders to “palm off” responsibility to entities with higher power/knowledge to deal with the problem at hand.

The findings from the current study partially support the contention of the “bystander effect”, wherein pseudo-bystanders in the three case studies often suggested that others should address the problem instead of assuming personal responsibility of addressing the problem themselves. For example, all three cases intended to raise awareness from the wider public (*e.g.*, the petitions). To an extent, some pseudo-bystanders regard the corruption cases to be the public’s responsibility rather than their own, especially after it receives increased exposure. This may explain why the level of online engagement drastically dropped after it was reported in mainstream media, or when pseudo-bystanders demanded that the media must take responsibility for addressing the situation.

Notwithstanding the observation of the “bystander effect”, other pseudo-bystanders responded differently and seem to be motivated to act despite the high number of people engaged online. This is particularly so when pseudo-bystanders believe that their personal involvement may bring about change. In fact, they appear to be motivated by the presence of many others and assume responsibility as part of a collective action.

The findings emerging from the current study also suggest that when pseudo-bystanders establish a personal connection with the victim (and/or their associates), their perceived responsibility becomes heightened. This, in turn, influences them to become more involved. For instance, pseudo-bystanders who were identified as the “*good Samaritans*” in the current study generally indicated that they decided to become involved not because they feel obliged to help, but because they *want to* (e.g., emotionally compelled). This supports an important element in maintaining online participation as explained in Wang and Fesenmaier’s (2004) study, which examined the contribution and participation in online travel communities. Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) suggest that individuals with experience *want to* give back to the community as “a matter of choice rather than of imperative” (p. 713). Therefore, increasing pseudo-bystanders’ desire to assume responsibility could be an important aspect in mobilising and sustaining bystander intervention.

10.3.2.6. Perceived Power

Closely related to the concept of perceived responsibility is one’s perception of power. Existing literature suggests that rather than basing their perceived power on the actual skills, the perception of power may exceed one’s actual ability to act (Anker & Feeley 2011; Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014). For instance, physique may be irrelevant in the context of bullying – a small-built person could be the bully and the person with a larger build could be the victim despite the fact that he/she is physically stronger. Thus, the concept of power disparity is largely psychological (Banyard, Plante & Moynihan 2004; Oh & Hazler 2009; Polder-Verkiel 2012).

Consistent with the idea that “power” is a psychological construct, findings from the current study suggest that pseudo-bystanders’ perception of power influences the extent to which they engage in subsequent action to address corruption via social media. For instance, some pseudo-bystanders perceived that they have little power to subvert corruption or to make a difference (e.g., “*I am powerless to assist you*”), and so they may feel like they have no choice but to conform and “accept” the situation and thus limit their involvement in intervening. Therefore, despite acknowledging the negative impact of the corruption on the victim, the perception of the bystander’s own lack of power can hinder or mitigate his/her decision to intervene.

In contrast, other pseudo-bystanders perceived that, collectively, they are empowered to “stand up” and to “speak up” against the powerful (or what Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) refers to as “predatory elites) to influence change of the situation. Accordingly, it is speculated that witnessing others standing up for the victims may help pseudo-bystanders to overcome the power struggle psychologically, and thus encourage them to adopt similar behaviour. For example, these pseudo-bystanders believe that if they do not “speak up” themselves, “tomorrow no one will speak up” for them. In turn, despite the power disparity, by forming solidarity to call for collective action to bring about change, pseudo-bystanders could become powerful together in joint action.

Therefore, social media can play an important part in subverting power disparity by enhancing the visibility of others engaging in helping action. For instance, by allowing others to demonstrate an intervening action (e.g., sharing an online petition or uploading a photo of themselves to protest). In a consumer purchasing context, social media allows consumers to resist controversial advertising by providing a platform for them to discuss and disseminate information collectively (Kerr *et al.* 2012). Similarly, the acquisition and exchange of important information become important for pseudo-bystanders.

Evidence from the current research suggests that social media can be used as a valuable platform for pseudo-bystanders who share similar contentions to connect and form resistance collectively. For example, when Ai Xiaoming protested for Ye Haiyan’s release from detention, it encouraged many others to take action to demand the same outcome in an online environment (e.g., take picture and share) and in real-life (e.g., send postcards). This suggests that when pseudo-bystanders receive validation from others, it empowers pseudo-bystanders to intervene. This also explains why social media can potentially become a powerful vehicle to mobilise grassroots action as suggested in existing literature (e.g., Mou *et al.* 2013; Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Lim 2012).

10.3.2.7. Perceived Barriers and Risks

Existing literature suggests that bystanders’ decision to intervene is mitigated by both internal and external barriers and risks (Bennette, Banyard & Garnhart 2014; Guy & Patton 1989). Consistent with this notion, the current study found that some pseudo-bystanders are hesitant in becoming involved when faced with barriers and risks. For instance, taking into consideration the current political and social climate in China, openly

criticising the government/relevant authorities and/or challenging cultural norms could bring unwanted attention to the individual. Therefore, pseudo-bystanders' intention to engage in an intervention may drop when their perceived barriers and risks increases. Table 64 presents some examples of potential barriers and risks identified from the case studies examined in the current research.

Table 64: Examples of Barriers and Risks Identified in the Current Study

	Actual/ Perceived	Internal/ External
Barriers	Becoming desensitised – overload of information (<i>Actual</i>)	Precarious harm – feeling too negative to further engage (<i>Internal</i>) Accessibility – key information being censored (<i>External</i>)
Risks	Social risks – conformity (<i>Perceived</i>) Political risks – legal consequences (<i>Perceived and/or actual</i>)	Psychological risks – affected by negative emotions (<i>Internal</i>), concern for personal safety (<i>Internal</i>), Political risks – censorship (<i>External</i>)

However, for others, the visibility of seeing other bystanders adopting intervening action via social media validates that they are not alone, and thus reduces their perceived political and social risks. In turn, this encourages them to engage in intervention. Therefore, social media not only provides a valuable platform for individuals to connect and validate shared contentions, it also helps to dilute the anxiety they feel associated with various perceived barriers and risks.

This is akin to how Sivers (2010) conceptualises the “first follower”. For instance, if only one man dances in the crowd, it makes him stand out like a “sore thumb”. However, if others start to follow, it may turn into a vibrant party. In other words, when others normalise and legitimise the behaviour, it becomes acceptable (Hutchinson *et al.* 2009). In this light, social media enables many “first bystander followers” to become visible to others, so that their online action can be duplicated on a large scale. Thus, findings from the current research are in line with previous studies that proposed that the presence of other bystanders could foster collective action when positively activated (*e.g.*, Levine & Cassidy 2010 and Levine & Crowther 2008). This idea also corroborates with the way pseudo-bystanders perceived power (as mentioned earlier, while pseudo-bystanders can

be empowered to intervene individually, they are likely to become more “powerful” when intervening collectively).

However, this also means that the visibility of pseudo-bystanders who adopt the “*bad Samaritan*” and “*troll*” stances may reduce the perceived barriers and risks for others who share similar mentalities. Consequently, they may encourage others to gang up and engage in negative behaviours that may cause further harm to the victims. In fact, this phenomenon is particularly prominent in the context of cyberbullying. This is because seeing others bullying and insulting the victim in an online environment validates such negative behaviour (Price *et al.* 2014). This type of negative influence is also evident in all three case studies examined in the current research.

10.3.2.8. Bystander Roles and Level of Involvement

As discussed earlier, the current research found that not all pseudo-bystanders who decide to intervene, do so in the same way. For example, when pseudo-bystanders adopt the “*good Samaritan*” stance, they may generally side with the victim, but their intention to engage in subsequent intervening action may be very different. I argue that pseudo-bystanders subsequent actions are explained by the role they adopt as well as their level of involvement. Involvement Theory was originally developed in a consumer behaviour context to inform marketers how consumers are likely to make purchasing decisions (Smith & Swinyard 1983). The findings from my study suggest that the concept of “involvement” can be used also to shed light on pseudo-bystanders’ behaviour.

Akin to how consumers become involved in a routine, limited or extensive way (Lamb *et al.* 2013), findings from the current study suggest that different pseudo-bystanders also invest their time and effort to intervene differently. For instance, pseudo-bystanders’ short responses reflect a low level of involvement. This is akin to how a consumer displays a low level of involvement towards a routine purchase (*e.g.*, breakfast cereal), which usually does not involve a high level of attention, as the associated risks tend to be less substantial (Balabanis & Reynolds 2001; Fesenmaier & Johnson 1989; Lamb *et al.* 2013). Thus, efforts towards purchasing something like breakfast cereal is likely to remain minimal.

In contrast, when the product is regarded “high risk”, consumers tend to become more involved in determines their purchasing decision. Similarly, pseudo-bystanders became extensively involved in their online action when they perceived the corruption case to have taken place at a societal level and to have a wider impact. This prompted pseudo-bystanders to actively push for societal change and, via many posts, encourage others “stand up”. In turn, these highly involved pseudo-bystanders (*e.g.*, Proactive *Leader Warrior*) not only assumed personal responsibility to intervene, but also mobilised others to adopt similar action.

Pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene is mediated by various factors discussed thus far. Next, I will discuss some triggers identified in the current study that evidently prompted pseudo-bystanders to become involved and ultimately take action to intervene.

10.4. Triggers Prompting Pseudo-bystanders to Intervene

McKenzie-Mohr (2013) suggests that small commitments made by individuals can often lead them to engage in bigger commitments. For example, by first agreeing to a trivial request, the chance of them accepting a subsequent larger request increases. This is because individuals are inclined to be consistent, so that others perceive them as being honest, trustworthy, reliable and having integrity (McKenzie-Mohr 2013). Furthermore, written commitments are regarded as more effective than verbal ones. Having the written commitment made visible on a public domain further validates an internal commitment, and thus becomes more binding for the individual to take subsequent action (McKenzie-Mohr’s 2013; McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz 2014).

Therefore, social media is one effective platform for pseudo-bystanders to document and share their commitment with others. For example, prior to becoming involved in Ikumi Yoshimatsu’s case, Akie Abe responded on her own Facebook page that she would look into the matter (she kept her promise, she proceeded to meet up with Ikumi Yoshimatsu shortly after). In a sense, by expressing one’s solidarity openly in an online space (*e.g.*, Weibo and Facebook), pseudo-bystanders are essentially making a small commitment to address corruption. Subsequently, pseudo-bystanders intensify their commitment by progressing to engage in other action beyond an online environment (*e.g.*, to join a protest in real-life action to advocate for the victim of corruption). This prompt shift of pseudo-

bystanders' behaviour is worth noting. In this way, social media allows such response to be immediate, and thus "fast-tracks" subsequent behaviours.

How bystanders evolve from not taking action to adopting action to intervene can be interpreted as a behavioural change process. The Stages of Change Theory is the most well-known theory that explains how individuals go through different stages to adopt a new behaviour (McKenzie-Mohr 2013). As previously discussed in Chapter Three, there are five spiral stages in the Stages of Change Theory: Precontemplation, Contemplation, Preparation, Action and Confirmation (or Maintenance) (Prochaska & DiClemente 1983). These stages are predominately used to capture changes that unfold in health behaviours and in psychotherapy (McKenzie-Mohr 2013; Norcross, Krebs & Prochaska 2011). Nevertheless, I argue that the Stages of Change Theory can be similarly used to shed light on the pseudo-bystander intervention process. In addition, findings from the current research suggest that social media can be used as a powerful mechanism to "fast-track" pseudo-bystanders' behaviour in the process to become more involved.

By breaking down pseudo-bystanders' behaviour into the five stages of change, specific triggers identified in the current study can be linked to each stage. Several triggers were identified that seem to encourage pseudo-bystanders to shift forward from one stage to another in the bystander intervention process. These triggers are: exposure to the corruption case via social media platforms, external influences, threats to ethical stance, direction for intervention, personal connection and assessment of end-state goal. Together, they help to explain how pseudo-bystanders progressively morph from the Precontemplation stage to the Confirmation stage to adopt intervening action to address corruption cases via social media (see Figure 91). Next, I will discuss how the Stages of Change Theory and how each of these triggers may be relevant and useful in explaining the pseudo-bystander intervention process.

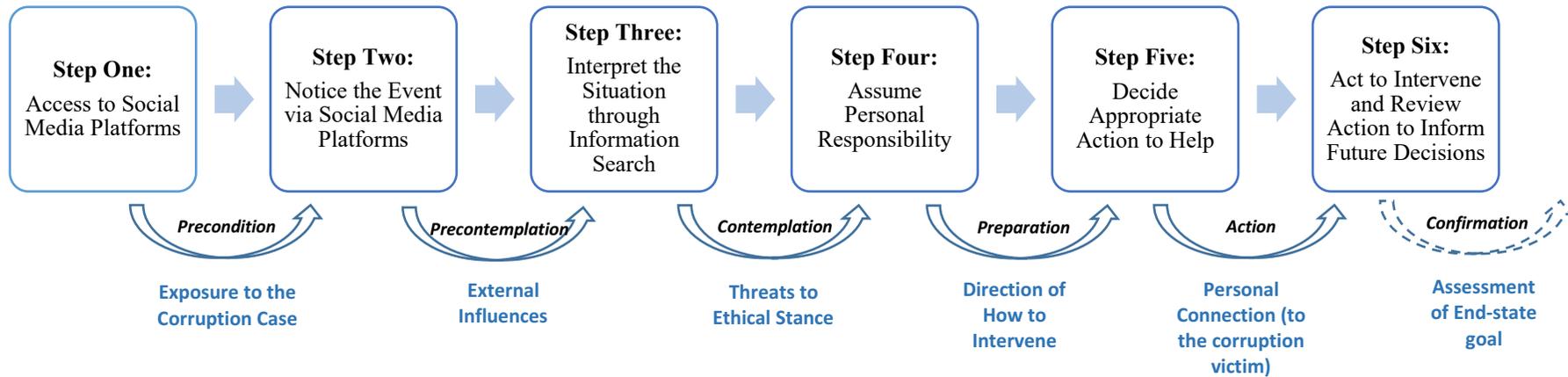


Figure 91: Refining the Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process Using the Stages of Changes Theory and Various Triggers Identified the Current Study

10.4.1. Precondition: Exposure via Social Media Platforms

In the consumer context, Chu & Kim's (2011) study suggests that consumers carry out three main online actions: opinion seeking, opinion giving and opinion passing. For instance, by voicing their negative purchasing experience on social media, dissatisfied customers can influence other customers or potential customers. The negative publicity generated online may provide "deterrence signals" to other consumers against a particular product/brand/organization, thus discourage them from purchasing from the same provider, resulting in real-life action such as boycotts (Gebel 2012; Zureik & Mowshowitz 2005). Similarly, the current study shows that as pseudo-bystanders spread contentions on social media, it alerts and influences others.

Given that pseudo-bystanders must discover the corruption case, accessibility to social media naturally emerges as a precondition in the social media context. It is essential that pseudo-bystanders have access to social media in the first place. Since pseudo-bystanders can only engage in action to intervene in corruption case when they are aware of the situation, exposure to the corruption case via social media platforms should be regarded as a precondition that leads pseudo-bystanders to notice the event and subsequently engage in the intervening behaviour.

10.4.2. Precontemplation Stage: External Influences

Precontemplation is "a stage in which there is no intention to change behaviour in the foreseeable future (Norcross, Krebs & Prochaska 2011, p. 144). This complements the second step of the pseudo-bystander intervention process, where bystanders first notice the situation via social media platforms. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the information communicated and the way it is delivered at this stage can play a crucial role, as this must come across as important enough for pseudo-bystanders to take notice of the situation amongst the online "noise". The current study illustrates that social media can be used as an effective vehicle for the victims and/or victims associates to reach out to others in a compelling way. Visual cues depict an "in-group" member experiencing emotional pain may positively trigger one's own mental state, causing them to empathise with the victim (Cheon *et al.* 2011). By combining video and pictures to support their story, victims of corruption can better relate their experience and gain empathy from

pseudo-bystanders. This also supports Price *et al.*'s (2014) view that empathy and emotional engagement are positively reflected in helping behaviour.

Moreover, pseudo-bystanders may be empathetic because they are provoked by the salience of a particular social role (*e.g.*, as a subway commuter (Ma Yue's case), a mother (Ma Yue's and Ye Haiyan's case), or a woman (Ye Haiyan's and Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case). Pseudo-bystanders may see their potential intervention in a corruption case as an opportunity to cultivate their own social identities through various norms and values, which may influence their intention to become further engaged. This can be explained by Price *et al.*'s (2014) idea that in-group social identity is intrinsically linked with responsibility, as one presumes there is a duty associated with his/her social role.

In particular, findings from the three cases suggest that external influences may be a key trigger that prompts pseudo-bystanders to shift from the Precontemplation stage to the Contemplation stage. For instance, actions from *Celebrity Warriors* have a positive impact in generating public awareness (note: once a *Celebrity Warrior* came on-board, the number of comments skyrocketed). While the presence of other pseudo-bystander roles may also influence others in the same space, *Celebrity Warriors* seem to have a higher chance of mobilising collective action. Given that social network plays an important role in influencing the attitude and behaviour of netizens in how they participate in political campaigns (Attia *et al.* 2011; Lim 2012), the current research further validates that reference groups and their action to intervene may have a similar impact on pseudo-bystanders as an external stimulus. Such social influence can also be understood as social diffusion, which can often occur through word-of-mouth (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz 2014).

The current research further highlights the profound impact of the electronic form (*i.e.*, eWOM) when used to raise public awareness, especially when *Celebrity Warriors* are present to lead the advocacy. This supports existing bystander intervention literature that recognises social norms could positively affect the engagement of helping behaviour (Levine & Cassidy 2010; Manning, Levine & Collins 2007; Pozzoli & Gini 2013). In this sense, norms are fundamentally "social" when underlying values are shared and deviation may trigger social disapproval (Barr & Serra 2010). In other words, bystanders may be influenced by normative pressure to adopt action as well as inaction (Levine *et al.* 2002).

Pseudo-bystanders' interpretation of what "corruption" means may also be influenced by the reference group they associate themselves with during the Precontemplation stage. This also supports Levine & Cassidy's (2010) study, which suggests that the groups may promote helping behaviour especially when collective identity is salient.

10.4.3. Contemplation Stage: Threats to Ethical Stance

McKenzie-Mohr and Schultz (2014) point out that the Contemplation stage remains an important one, as this is also when "commitments are most likely to be effective" (p. 38) as everyone is more or less inclined to value consistency. Existing literature suggests that bystanders generally engage in intervention, as helping seems like the right thing to do (Banyard 2008; Staub 1978). Findings from the three case studies further highlight that moral obligation alone may be inadequate to compel pseudo-bystanders to take action to intervene, even if they seem committed to the idea of "helping". This is because there is a difference between knowing the "right thing to do", morally, and actually doing it. For example, some pseudo-bystanders indicated that they are motivated to act, but were also reluctant to increase their intervening behaviours.

As mentioned earlier, pseudo-bystanders seemed to align their own ethical stances with their desired end-state goals. Evidence from the current study further suggests that a threat to the pseudo-bystanders' ethical stance could act as a trigger that prompts them to move to the next stage and become more involved. Some pseudo-bystanders indicated that when their ethical stance is threatened, physically or symbolically, it warrants them to defend it what they believe it is right with "*all their strength*". For instance, this was seen in Ma Yue's case, where some pseudo-bystanders felt wronged by the state-owned subway company denying closure to Ma Yue's mother with regards to Ma Yue's death. Similarly, some pseudo-bystanders defended Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu because they felt the unfair treatment towards the victims was intolerable. Such strong disagreement prompted pseudo-bystanders to shift from the Contemplation stage to the Preparation stage. In other words, protecting what one believes to be the "right" may also empower pseudo-bystanders to engage in action to address corruption cases in a social media context.

10.4.4. Preparation Stage: Direction of How to Intervene

The Preparation stage seems to complement the fourth step in the pseudo-bystander intervention process, where pseudo-bystanders assume personal responsibility after having evaluated the situation. The current research suggests that pseudo-bystanders' decision to assume responsibility is mitigated by their perception of power, responsibility, the level of corruption as well as associated barriers and risks. Therefore, pseudo-bystanders' evaluation of each will motivate or inhibit them from taking subsequent action to intervene.

Given that corruption is a complex problem, there remains no simple way to “fix” the corruption cases, though, knowing what to do to subvert the situation, or taking a small step to alleviate the situation, may ultimately prompt pseudo-bystanders to take action. For instance, Sulkowski's (2011) study suggest that bystanders are likely to report threats of violence when they retain a high level of trust in community support systems. In this sense, “trust in the community support systems” is an important condition that may influence the intervention.

The current research shows that providing “instructions” on how to intervene can act as a “blueprint” for pseudo-bystanders and enhance the practicality of fostering helping behaviour. For example, various petitions launched in all three cases served as a “prompt” in the Preparation stage that guided pseudo-bystanders to take action. In essence, these petitions gave pseudo-bystanders a sense of direction as to where their efforts could lead to in achieving a common goal. This supports the view that “having the knowledge of what to do” remains the key to bystanders' decision to engage in helping behaviour (Bennett, Banyard & Garnhart 2014, p.486).

As previously discussed, the visibility of others (*e.g.*, seeing others adopting certain action) that is prevalent in online forums may help to weaken barriers and risks perceived by pseudo-bystanders. Therefore, visible helping behaviours carried out by a reference group or others in the same space, with whom pseudo-bystanders associates themselves, may provide social validation and/or reduce social risks, as well as direction to intervene. In turn, this subsequently legitimises one's perceived power and influences their decision to adopt similar behaviour. This is in line with McKenzie-Mohr and Schultz (2014)

suggestion that the visibility of others adopting the same action can successfully influence an individual to conform to a range of behavioural changes.

10.4.5. Action Stage: Establishing Personal Connection

The Action stage is where pseudo-bystanders decide how to help and determine what online action is deemed appropriate. Evidence from the current study indicates that pseudo-bystanders' roles and their level of involvement often influence their subsequent intervening action. Accordingly, pseudo-bystanders may incorporate various online activities (*e.g.*, commenting, sharing information about the corruption case on various social media platforms and signing online petitions) as well as real-life action to support victims of corruption (*e.g.*, joining a protest). In general, the type of action varies depending on the time and energy that pseudo-bystanders are willing to spend. Evidence from the current study suggests that when pseudo-bystanders establish a personal connection to the corruption case, they are likely to be provoked to take action to intervene. For example, pseudo-bystanders (particularly ones that adopted the “*good Samaritan*” stance) often expressed empathy towards the victim, revealing how they were emotionally affected by the victims' “stories” or their shared social identity, and thus heightening their personal connection.

Potter, Moynihan and Stapleton's (2011) study is one example in existing literature that illustrated the relationship between a personal connection and bystanders' attitude. Potter, Moynihan and Stapleton (2011) suggest that when students feel personally connected to the images of a social marketing campaign in the context of reducing gendered violence, they tended to show greater attitude change. Evidence from the current study further extends the concept of personal connection by suggesting that rather than feeling “responsible” and “accountable”, pseudo-bystanders often discover the *meaning* of their intervention, in a personal way. For example, in Ma Yue's case, some pseudo-bystanders intervened because he/she believes the corruption case may lead to something that can be prevented in the future, to ensure the safety of future commuters. Hence, I argue that personal connection is a significant trigger that prompts individuals to take action. Pseudo-bystanders become involved on the premise that the intervention means something significant to them, as they could also become victims of corruption. Therefore, personal connection could also be interpreted as an emotional response to the injustice

experienced by corruption victims, especially when pseudo-bystanders are propelled to adopt action to intervene by an internal stimulus (e.g., evoked by empathy).

10.4.6. Confirmation Stage: Assessment of End-State Goal(s)

In the Stages of Change Theory, efforts associated to maintain the behavioural change is referred to as the Confirmation (or Maintenance) stage (McKenzie-Mohr 2013). Findings from the current research illustrate that highly involved pseudo-bystanders usually demonstrate a stronger online presence than those who are less involved. Furthermore, pseudo-bystanders may also carry out various post-intervention behaviours during the Confirmation stage. For instance, pseudo-bystanders may sign an online petition, and encourage other individuals within and beyond their social network to do the same. Currently, the last step of the bystander intervention process proposed by Latané and Darley (1970) stops at the act to intervene without exploring post-intervention behaviour. Thus, the Confirmation stage may further explain what happens after the intervention has taken place.

Similar to the Post-Purchase stage in a consumer purchasing context, where consumers evaluate their purchasing decision to inform their further behaviour, findings from this research suggests that pseudo-bystanders engaged a similar behaviour to assess their intervention. In this light, the post-intervention behaviour is largely dependent upon the pseudo-bystanders' identified end-state goal(s) associated with their intervention, and the outcome of the intervention may serve as feedback/update information to reinform their behaviour (McKenzie-Mohr & Schultz 2014). By identifying a short-term goal as the objective of their intervention (e.g., mainstream media coverage, release from detention and public participation in an online campaign), pseudo-bystanders are likely to cease their involvement to intervene once they have attained such goals.

On the other hand, when pseudo-bystanders perceive the corrupt behaviour as a systemic issue at the social level, they are likely to continue their involvement to intervene (e.g., continue current intervention, follow up current intervention, or adopt new intervention to address the current or future problems). Hence, for pseudo-bystanders to foster a commitment to address social problems such as corruption, they would perhaps require constant reminders of the long-term end-state goal(s) so that they can assess their ongoing

efforts accordingly. When bystanders adopt intervening behaviour collectively and persistently, it is likely to increase the chance of victims receiving help.

By merging the pseudo-bystander intervention process proposed by the current study with the Stages of Change Theory, as well as various mitigating factors and triggers discussed thus far, I now have a comprehensive process that illustrates how pseudo-bystanders may intervene in corruption cases via social media (see Figure 92).

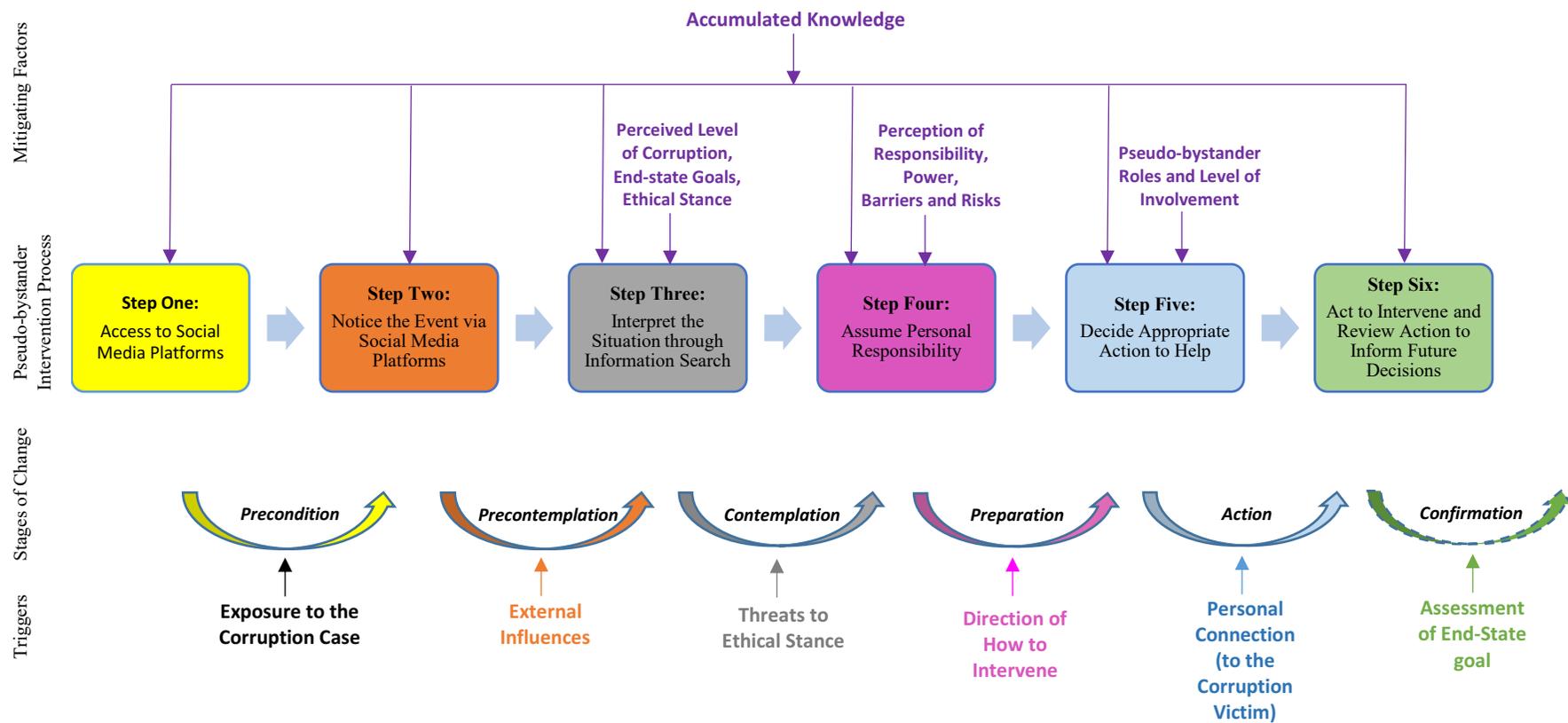


Figure 92: A Comprehensive Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process

10.5. Contribution to Knowledge

The current research has made theoretical contributions as well as methodological ones.

10.5.1. Theoretical Contributions

By examining the intersection between corruption, the social phenomenon of bystander behaviour and collective action through social media, this thesis argues that social media can mobilise bystanders to become involved and take action to intervene and help victims of corruption. Borrowing various marketing theories (*e.g.*, consumer roles, consumer decision making process and involvement), and reimagining pseudo-bystanders as consumers, this study provides a critical lens to investigate how bystanders may intervene in corruption cases using social media.

The theoretical contributions of this study shed light on specific pseudo-bystander roles, the intervention process in an online environment, and various triggers associated with how social media may be employed to help victims of corruption. Existing literature suggests that *whistle-blower* is the only widely recognised bystander role in a corruption context (Brown 2009, 2013; Lamsdorff 2002b; Latimer & Brown 2008). Apart from this, there are also several bystander roles previously identified in a bullying context (see Salmivalli *et al.* 1996; Salmivalli, Huttunen & Lagerspetz 1997; Twemlow *et al.* 2004). The current study extends our understanding by systematically conceptualised specific pseudo-bystander roles using an inductive approach. Based on findings drawn from the three case studies examined in this research, I have first segregated the conventional bystanders into two main cohorts: pseudo-bystanders who are involved and online users who are uninvolved (see Figure 93).

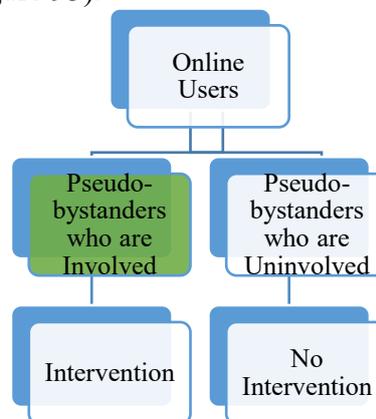


Figure 93: Focus of the Current Study

As only pseudo-bystanders who are involved in a situation may subsequently intervene, they became the focus of this study. I have identified four broad stances that these involved pseudo-bystanders may adopt in their intervention process: “*good Samaritan*”, “*in-betweener*”, “*bad Samaritan*” and “*troll*” (see Chapter Six and Chapter Seven). From these pseudo-bystander stances, eight specific pseudo-bystander roles emerged: *Passenger*, *Witnessing Supporter*, *Keyboard Warrior*, *Activist Warrior*, *Leader Warrior*, *Celebrity Warrior*, *Cyber-Side-tracker* and *Cyber-Bully*. These roles may also be *passive*, *active*, *proactive* or *reactive* in nature, reflecting the pseudo-bystanders’ different approaches to take action. Based on this conceptualisation, this study suggests that there are as many as 80 distinctive pseudo-bystander roles. However, given that the objective of this study is to help victims of corruption, pseudo-bystander roles which stemmed from the “*good Samaritan*” stance are the most likely to promote helping behaviour. Of which, *Celebrity Warrior* is one valuable pseudo-bystander role in mobilising bystanders’ action in an online environment to raise public awareness. It is also extremely valuable from the activist perspective to learn that it is possible to achieve the ultimate goal, that is, to motivate a desired action from a bystander. This is because collective actions to intervene are likely to influence change and thus increase the chance of corruption victims receiving help and deterring future potential perpetrators from progressing a corruption action or event.

The current study also contributes to existing knowledge on the bystander intervention process in an online context. The findings of the current study illustrate that pseudo-bystanders go through a similar process when intervening in corruption cases via social media. The steps pseudo-bystanders go through to intervene are: (1) gain access to social media platforms, (2) notice the event via social media platforms, (3) interpret the situation through information search, (4) assume personal responsibility, (5) decide appropriate action to help and (6) act to intervene and review action to inform future decisions. Steps 2-5 corroborate Latané and Darley’s (1970) bystander intervention process, however, some adjustments are recommended as a result of current findings. First, the pseudo-bystander intervention process proposed by the current study stresses that gaining access to social media platforms should be the first step before bystanders can notice the corruption event in an online context. This provides an extension to existing knowledge. Second, I have refined Step Three re-casting it as the information search step, where

pseudo-bystanders tend to seek information about the case to form an interpretation. I also refined the post action behaviour in the last step so that it appropriately addresses how pseudo-bystanders re-assess their intervening action to inform their future behaviour.

This study has also explored the interconnection between pseudo-bystanders' roles, their level of involvement and their subsequent intervening action. The online actions identified include "*stating random comments*", "*accepting*", "*acknowledging*", "*questioning*", "*expressing support*" and "*exemplifying collective action*". Moreover, this study found that pseudo-bystanders' perception of responsibility, power, level of corruption, barriers and risks, their ethical stance, accumulated knowledge as well as the roles they adopt and their level of involvement mitigate their decision to intervene. In general, when pseudo-bystanders' involvement is high, they are more inclined to adopt action that is associated with higher risks and efforts (e.g., "*expressing support*" and "*exemplifying collective action*").

Furthermore, the Stages of Change Theory (Prochaska & DiClemente 1983) was used to explain how social media may "fast-track" pseudo-bystanders in the intervention process to adopt action. By analysing and triangulating online responses from three case studies systematically, I have identified several specific triggers associated with various stages in their behavioural change process that prompt pseudo-bystanders to shift from one stage to another to become more involved. These key triggers identified in the current study include exposure to the corruption event via social media platforms, external influences, threats to their ethical stance, instruction/direction for intervention and personal connection.

Lastly, the findings emerging from the three case studies examined in this research illustrate that social media is not only a powerful vehicle to connect consumers, but is a valuable platform for victims of corruption and pseudo-bystanders to expose corruption and to promote bystander intervention. Social media is also the key to accelerating pseudo-bystanders in shifting from the Precontemplation stage (*i.e.*, with no intention to intervene) to the Confirmation stage (*i.e.*, taking and maintaining their action to intervene). This thesis confirms that social media plays an important role in mobilising collective action at a grassroots level to facilitate and promote collective bystander intervention to help victims of corruption.

In turn, the findings derived from the current study could inform knowledge in the field of consumer behaviour and have practical implications. For instance, there could be more consumer roles than those previously identified in existing studies (*e.g.*, the initiator, the influencer etc. (Bonoma 1982; Webster & Wind 1972)). The complexity and nuances of various stances and roles adopted by pseudo-bystanders illustrated in the current study could further shed light on other consumer roles in both the online environment and in real-life. In turn, this may extend the theory of consumer roles. For example, a “troll” could go beyond an online phenomenon and emerge in real-life to hinder buying decisions by purposefully distracting the decision-maker and counter-arguing the potential benefits of a purchase - this could be a colleague, a friend or a family member. Similarly, triggers that “fast-track” pseudo-bystanders to adopt new behaviours via social media identified in the current study further validates the power of eWOM in relation to how contention can travel so rapidly to influence others (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010). For example, consumers can be influenced to commit to/repel from making a purchasing decision. On a large scale, this could potentially lead to collective action that makes or breaks any business.

10.5.2. Contribution to Methodology

The current study makes several methodological contributions to qualitative research using online data. By incorporating netnography and Investigative Research on the Internet (IRI), I demonstrated how social media data can be systematically extracted and analysed through an interpretivist lens. Given that netnography primarily stems from a marketing field to examine consumer behaviour, this research illustrates that it can also be used to explore the phenomenon of bystander intervention in an online environment. Specifically, this research contributed methodologically to qualitative enquires using case studies from a social media context by demonstrating how data can be systematically analysed. While using netnography and data extracted from social media platforms are not new research paradigms (*e.g.*, several seminal publications by Kozinets (2002, 2007, 2009, 2010) shed light on what netnographers would typically do to conduct online investigations), it was difficult to follow in practice as there is no one-size-fits-all formula to carry out netnographic studies. Therefore, instead of providing descriptions of what was done, I decided to also explain why the research was carried out in certain ways. I believe the lengthy documentation of the research process was essential, as it will enable

others to understand the logic behind each step of my research process. In turn, this may benefit researchers in the future who wish to conduct inquiries with a similar nature using online data extracted from social media platforms.

Building on Kozinets' (2002, 2010) six main criteria when conducting netnographic studies (*e.g.*, to select a particular online community), this study further suggests five additional selection criteria (see Table 65).

Table 65: Case Study Selection Criteria

Source	Criterion
Kozinets' (2002, p. 63; 2010, p. 89)	Relevant
	Active
	Interactive
	Substantial
	Data-rich
	Heterogeneous
Additions from the Current Study	Accessibility
	Duration Suitability and Intensity
	Measurability
	Significance
	Comprehensibility/Language

Together, I used the 11 criteria presented in Table 65 systematically to select the most suitable cases for the current study. To do so, I first developed a weighting system and a selection formula (*i.e.*, Total Criteria Worth, also referred to as "Case Suitability" = Value x Weighting + Deal-breaker). I then based the scores derived from this system to delineate the top three most appropriate online cases studies to be included in this research. The systematic selection is to ensure rigor in purposeful sampling (see Chapter Five). Subsequently, I examined the online data drawn from the case studies followed Saldaña's (2015) coding guidelines.

Saldaña (2015) provided several broad steps to follow in carrying out coding analyses in qualitative studies (*i.e.*, First Cycle Coding, After First Cycle Coding, Second Cycle Coding, After Second Cycle Coding). Guided by his work, I developed a more specific, nine-step, data analysis process so that I could explore each case drawn from social media

platforms in depth. The robustness of this data analysis process is tested and validated across the three case studies examined in this research.

The methods and approaches used in this study are expected to inform future inquiries that use online data, especially qualitative research using case studies to explore and analyse a large volume of qualitative web-archive data extracted from various social media platforms, including but not limited to Weibo, Facebook, weblogs, Twitter and YouTube. This knowledge will provide practical guidance to assist future netnographers to select and analyse online data in a systematic and rigorous way. Moreover, the data analysis process developed in the current research will provide a useful and practical guideline for future studies that involve mining a substantial amount of data extracted from various social media platforms. While the findings of the current study are predominately based on data drawn from social media platforms, I cannot guarantee that the data examined are all genuine responses. Where it was apparent, I identified and separated “paid” contributors (paid-trolls) in some instances. It would be beneficial for future researchers to consider what can be done to ensure transparency in social media platforms so that it can maintain integrity as an open communication platform for all, while at the same time, ensuring it does not become discredited with information that is purposefully false, deceptive or inflammatory.

10.6. Conclusions: Harnessing the Power of Social Media to Help Victims of Corruption

Traditionally, bystanders are only able to help victims when they are physically present and confronted by emergencies. However, social media has changed this by providing a platform for victims to share their lived-experiences and reach out for help. Pseudo-bystanders are now able to virtually “witness” and learn about these lived-experiences from a different time and place, and adopt action to intervene individually and collectively, within both an online environment and in real-life.

This thesis argues that as an emergent vehicle to mobilise collective action, social media can be equally valuable in promoting bystander intervention to address corruption. It is important to rally support to help victims of corruption because the negative impacts of corruption on victims is detrimental and can be lifelong. Thus, to understand how social media can be used to mobilise pseudo-bystanders to help victims of corruption, the

current study was driven by the research questions presented in Chapter One of this dissertation.

This study focuses on roles that pseudo-bystanders may adopt in the intervention process, how their online action may be intrinsically linked to their level of involvement and what triggers them to intervene in corruption cases in a social media context. This thesis argues that pseudo-bystanders can be first differentiated by four broad stances: “*good Samaritan*”, “*in-betweener*”, “*bad Samaritan*” and “*troll*”. Then, within these broad stances, pseudo-bystanders can be categorised into specific roles of *Passenger*, *Witnessing Supporter*, *Keyboard Warrior*, *Activist Warrior*, *Leader Warrior*, *Celebrity Warrior*, *Cyber-Side-tracker* and *Cyber-Bully*. Depending on the pseudo-bystanders’ levels of involvement, these roles may also be *passive*, *active*, *proactive* or *reactive*.

By synthesising findings from all three case studies and building on the bystander intervention process suggested by Latané and Darley’s (1970), a comprehensive pseudo-bystander intervention process has been formed. The pseudo-bystander intervention process consists of six steps: (1) gain access to social media platforms, (2) notice the event via social media platforms, (3) interpret the situation through information search, (4) assume personal responsibility, (5) decide appropriate action to help and (6) act to intervene and review action to inform future decisions. In line with existing literature, evidence from this research supports that the perception of responsibility and associated barriers/risks also influence pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene. Additionally, findings from this study suggest that the pseudo-bystanders’ perception of power, level of corruption, end-state goals, ethical stance and accumulated knowledge in relation to the corruption cases also determines pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene.

Furthermore, I used the Stages of Change Theory to explain how pseudo-bystanders’ decision to intervene can be interpreted as a behavioural change process. Accordingly, I have identified specific triggers associated with these various stages, including exposure to the corruption case via social media platforms, external influences, threats to their ethical stance, direction for intervention and personal connection. Findings from the current study suggest that these triggers effectively prompt pseudo-bystanders to shift from one stage forward to another to arrive at the action stage. Pseudo-bystanders may also assess/re-assess their end-goals to determine their future participation.

This research examined large volumes of qualitative online data extracted from various social media platforms. Building on Kozinets' (2002; 2010) six major criteria to evaluate suitable online communities when conducting netnographic studies (Relevant, Active, Interactive, Substantial, Data-rich and Heterogeneous); this study further incorporates five additional considerations: Accessibility, Duration Suitability and Intensity, Measurability, Significance and Comprehensibility/Language. A nine-step data analysis process was developed and validated across three case studies to extract themes from a large volume of social media data rigorously and systematically. By focusing on identifying, comparing and contrasting explicit and implicit themes within qualitative online data, analytic categories and concepts were derived in an organised way. This process should help to guide future studies that use online social media platforms to conduct qualitative research.

10.6.1. Practical Implications

Corruption is pervasive where the abuse of one's power for personal gain does not recognise borders, cultures or contexts. Victims of corruption suffer at the hands of others, and for some, this suffering is extensive and can be lifelong. As discussed in Chapter Two, victims of corruption are often "invisible" (Meng & Friday 2014) and may struggle to seek help from others. If bystanders' involvement to intervene can make a difference in preventing and/or reducing the victims' sufferings, it is important to understand how helping behaviour can be mobilised effectively and on a wider scale.

The current study suggests that social media can be an effective tool to promote bystander intervention. For example, social media can be used to expose corruption events, generate various triggers and mobilise pseudo-bystanders to help victims of corruption. This study demonstrates that the power of social media can be strategically harnessed to rally support. Table 66 outlines some pragmatic examples of how victims can utilise social media more effectively to reach other pseudo-bystanders.

Table 66: Some Practical Implications that may Help Victims of Corruption to Mobilise Bystander Intervention by Using Social Media

The Pseudo-bystander Intervention Process	Possible Triggers for Greater Involvement	Practical Implications for Victims
1. Gain Access to Social Media Platforms	Exposure	Become members of various social media platforms and start communicating with others about the corruption event.
2. Notice the Event via Social Media Platforms	External influences	Develop social media strategies to appeal to the wider public, <i>e.g.</i> , seek help from <i>Celebrity Warriors</i> if possible.
3. Interpret the Situation through Information Search	Threats to ethical stance	Emphasise impact on the victims when delivering information, <i>e.g.</i> , to show how corruption is unethical from a Levinasian perspective.
4. Assume Personal Responsibility	Instruction/direction for intervention	Identify end-state goals and provide simple but specific guidance to adopt collective action, <i>e.g.</i> , link to the online petition.
5. Decide Appropriate Action to Help	Personal connection	Establish a personal connection with other pseudo-bystanders, <i>e.g.</i> , provide artefacts/stories and retain narrative consistently across all social media platforms.
6. Act to Intervene and Review Action to Inform Future Decisions	Assessment of end-state goal	Update pseudo-bystanders with the outcome of the case, <i>e.g.</i> , re-evaluate short-term/long-term goals.

By incorporating social media strategically in accordance with the triggers that prompt pseudo-bystanders to become more involved at various stages in the intervention process, victims may bring power abuse to light and obtain help from others more effectively. In this light, victims who are disadvantaged in episodic or chronic, emergency or non-emergency situations (*e.g.*, corruption, bullying, violence, child abuse, rape and natural disasters) may become more “visible” via social media, and thus increase their chance of receiving help. Therefore, findings from this study may complement the facilitation and mobilisation of collective action in real-life situations to influence widespread change at a societal level.

Furthermore, this study may inform current and future researchers who are using netnography and/or other approaches to examine online data in a similar context in various ways. For instance, researchers working in fields that are intersecting with bystander intervention (*e.g.*, bullying and bystander engagement, social media and online

activism, political participation and civic engagement) may find the data analysis process developed in the current study useful. Knowledge derived from this research may also benefit various organisations (*e.g.*, businesses, government organisations and non-profit organisations) and other individuals (*e.g.*, managers, teachers and social workers). For instance, new insights generated from the current study enable strategic and effective design and implementation of bystander intervention initiatives to promote bystander awareness within organisations and/or communities and cultivate supporting climate to encourage bystanders to adopt action to intervene at different stages of the intervention process.

10.6.2. Limitations and Future Research

One limitation of using online data is that not all relevant web-archival data were available for me to capture and store for the purpose of the current study. This is due to the timeframe of the data collection period taking place after the occurrences of the actual corruption cases. As a result, some data may be missing due to unforeseen circumstances (*e.g.*, blockage from government censorship, deletion). This was seen in both Chapter Six (Ma Yue's case) and Chapter Eight (Ikumi Yoshimatsu's case).

Despite some cross-checking of the coding framework with numerous others, one limitation of the current research is that due to major constraints such as time, language and accessibility, I was unable to have all the data recorded by another independent person. It would have been useful to have more than one person coding the entirety of the data, as this would further strengthen the inter-coder reliability. Moreover, despite my efforts to reduce human-related errors during data analysis process, I cannot guarantee perfection in the data analysis process (*e.g.*, in relation to counting, coding and translating a large volume database). However, I believe these minor discrepancies did not skew the results in a significant way.

While this study focused on how pseudo-bystanders may respond to corruption in an online environment, I was more interested in those who are deemed pro-victim, as they are likely to engage in subsequent helping behaviour to support victims of "cover-up" corruption cases. Perhaps future studies could also explore the various roles and responses available to perpetrators. Furthermore, I am aware that there could be an inconsistency between my interpretation of pseudo-bystanders' online behaviour and their *actual*

behaviour. Therefore, rather than viewing their online engagement as a substitution or entirely separated from pseudo-bystanders' real-life behaviour, this study simply interprets both the online and offline environment as interconnected "fields", or locations, where intervening action takes place. Building on the current study, future studies may wish to further validate and/or compare pseudo-bystander roles, pseudo-bystander involvement and the pseudo-bystander intervention process that emerged from this study, with real-life bystander behaviour. For example, future research could explore the role of social media in mobilising bystander intervention to promote helping behaviour beyond the online environment to understand how their online action may significantly influence their actual behaviour in real-life. Similarly, the various stances, roles, involvement and triggers identified here could be explored in other online cases and real-life cases to determine their applicability elsewhere.

This study illustrates that social media can be used as a powerful platform for victims of "cover-up" corruption cases to seek and receive help. In turn, this may lead to the mobilisation of others to become involved to help the victims. While it is unclear to what extent the exposure of corruption on social media would have on punishing the perpetrator or deterring future corruption, social media should, at the very least, provide victims of corruption with a voice to reach out to others. In future studies, it would be worthwhile to investigate how public pressure may have contributed to prosecuting the perpetrators and/or to reducing the incidence of corruption.

Also worth noting is that of the three case studies examined, two originated from China and one from Japan. It may thus appear that this research is predominately led by an Asian focus. However, while both nations generally value harmony and collectivism over individualistic values, China and Japan are very different countries in terms of economic, historical and political climates. Thus, rather than highlighting pseudo-bystanders' behaviours that are limited to China and Japan specifically, this study argues that social media can potentially empower victims and pseudo-bystanders to mobilise collective action in general. As existing studies on bystander intervention (at least ones reviewed in this thesis) are largely drawn from non-Asian countries, the findings that emerged from the current research suggests that pseudo-bystander behaviour may not be restricted by the bystanders' physical location or their culture. The current study suggests that there

are fluidity and unification in social conventions within an online environment in the bystander intervention context. To verify this, future research could compare pseudo-bystander intervention by using cases that arise in countries dissimilar to China and Japan. For instance, the nature of power abuse in Ma Yue's case (*e.g.*, the missing video of Ma Yue's death and the flaws of the medical reports) seem to be very different to how, say, cases of corruption are exposed in the west (*e.g.*, in the United States, where bystanders recorded and exposed police misconduct and killings via social media that allegedly led to the social movement of "Black Lives Matter" (Carney 2016)). Rather than comparing the corrupt contexts and the severity of the victims impacted, it would be valuable to see whether bystanders in various countries are mobilised in similar ways via social media to help victims of power abuse.

Moreover, there are some limitations associated with the pseudo-bystander roles. For instance, not all 80 specific pseudo-bystander roles identified in the current study are equally viable. This is because some roles are more easily identified, as they are more prominent than others in the case studies. Furthermore, some roles may not be applicable, such as the passive "*good Samaritan*" *Keyboard Warrior*, who, if a "warrior", is less likely to be passive. Future studies could validate the conceptualisation of these other roles. Additionally, the variance of the "*trolls*" is not fully identified in the current study and thus could be further explored in future studies. Although the current study identified various pseudo-bystander roles, it did not capture the longevity of these roles, nor how they interact with one another in the same space. In this light, a longitudinal study with focuses on the progression and interactions of various roles could inform how specific pseudo-bystander roles identified in the current study may be maintained over time.

Lastly, this study argues that social media may be used to fast-track pseudo-bystanders' behavioural change to adopt intervening action to address corruption. Perhaps future studies could also examine social media's role in mobilising behavioural change in the field of social marketing under the same light.

10.6.3. Personal Implications

Through my role of a participant observer in the examination of Ma Yue, Ye Haiyan and Ikumi Yoshimatsu's cases, I became increasingly engrossed with the victims' lived experiences. For instance, I was very sad after reading about Ma Yue's story. At one point,

I also shared Wang Xuemei's video on social media and started to tell others about the incident.

I was also drawn to Ye Haiyan's online presence during the analysis of her case. While I never made any engagement with her, I felt like I knew her. This is because she shared so much of her life online. For example, I felt upset when Ye Haiyan was detained, and I was even more frustrated when she was evicted by her landlord. Ye Haiyan's photo that showed her embracing her daughter on the side of the road (Figure 64) made me cry. Moreover, Ai Xiaoming's topless protest left such a strong impression on me that it inspired me to draw the illustration covers for all three case studies in the current research.

Essentially, the more I learned about these "stories", the more I wanted to become involved. For instance, when Ikumi Yoshimatsu launched the *Stalker-Zero* online petition, I put my name down without hesitation. I began following the progression of Ikumi Yoshimatsu's story closely and went beyond what was required for my data analysis process (e.g., I started watching documentaries about Japanese Yakuza and researched about her alleged perpetrator Genichi Taniguchi's associate company Burning Productions).

Social media was definitely a gateway for me to learn about the lives of others. Upon my own involvement with the three case studies examined in this research, I was definitely more aware of other corruption cases. For instance, when I first learned about Tang Lung Wai's story via YouTube, I was intrigued to find out more. Therefore, I started to follow his story on Facebook. Consequently, I decided to include his story in the Introduction chapter of this thesis. Perhaps my involvement was triggered by a personal connection. This is because, towards the final stages of my candidature, I also became a victim of corruption in an unexpected way.

On 21 September 2016, my distressed mother informed me in a shaky voice that my father was imprisoned in China without any clear charges. The Hunan Province Yongzhou City Lengshuitan Police executed the arrest so that my father was in captivity to "assist" the Hunan Province Yongzhou City Lengshuitan Financial Crimes Investigation Team to investigate an internal dispute regarding his company. At the time, my father was appointed as the CEO of Sheng Xiang Hydropower Co. Ltd. in China.

This sudden news sent my family into a state of panic. My life was turned upside down. To deal with my father's imprisonment, my mother had to leave my two younger sisters here in Australia and travel back to China. Despite being told by my father's business associates and the lawyers hired by his company that "*laws do not work in China*", I wanted to understand my father's legal rights. My father's arrest warrant stated that he needed to be placed "under surveillance". However, according to Act 72 of the Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China, it stipulates that the People's Supreme Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate of the People's Republic of China and relevant authorities may only place a suspect under surveillance if the suspect falls under the following condition(s):

1. Has severe illness, unable to take care of one's own basic daily activities;
2. Is pregnant or currently breast-feeding;
3. Is the sole carer for someone who cannot take care of one's basic daily activities;
4. Under unforeseen circumstances or needs stemmed from a current case, which may be more suitable to implement a facility with proper surveillance;
5. By the end of the custody period, if the case remains open, and thus needs to be monitored continuously.

My father did not fit any of the above descriptions. Furthermore, he was not placed "under surveillance", he was imprisoned! To the best of my knowledge, the Hunan Province Yongzhou City Lengshuitan Police and Hunan Province Yongzhou City Lengshuitan Financial Crimes Investigation Team had no rights to detain my father without any substantial evidence supporting their allegations. At the time of writing, it had been almost nine months since my father's detention. His passport was confiscated and he was prohibited to make any contact with the outside world apart from his lawyers. Without a proper legal trial, he was put in a confined cell with 12 other inmates. He had to do minor labour work. He had no access to hot water for most days of the week during Hunan's harsh winter. He was forced to spend his 60th birthday in jail.

My father was eventually released from prison, after nine heart-wrenching months. However, we do not feel entirely safe, as he could be captured again without further explanation. Ironically, this thesis is what kept me going. The knowledge derived from this study is extremely valuable to me in many ways. For instance, I learned that the first

step to seeking help is by becoming “visible”. If social media can empower victims of corruption to have a “voice”, I shall not be silent. I have no idea what the future holds for my family, but this is the beginning of my story.

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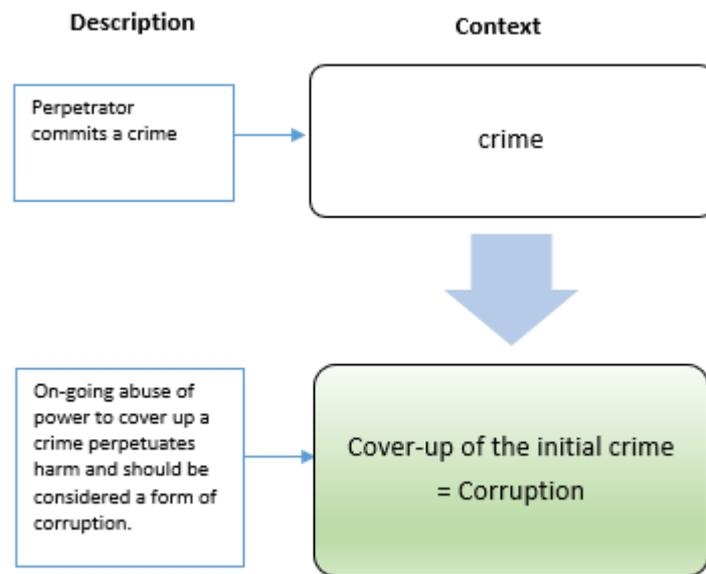
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Appendix 1: The Corruption Context



Appendix 1. Corruption Context of the Current Study

Appendix 2: The Code Book

Code Category	Code No.	Code	Code Description
Accepting	1	Being powerless	Feeling like they are unable to help the situation
	2	Relating back to personal experience	Discuss personal stories
	3	Expressing negative emotions	Express how they feel <i>e.g.</i> , sad, angry <i>etc.</i>
	4	Expressing care for victim/victim's associate's health	Wishing victim to take care of themselves
	5	Expressing Empathy	Feel for the victim and understand their perspective
	6	Expressing Condolence	Feeling the loss of victim
	7	Greeting victim/victim's associate	Saying hello
	8	Complementing victim	Praising victim could be about their looks or their behaviour
	9	Accepting injustice	Thinking it is normal to experience injustice
	91	Blaming on the victim's ignorance	Implying that the victim should have known better
Acknowledging	10	Recognising the case	Acknowledging about the victim's incident(s)
	11	Recalling encounter with victim/victim's associate	Personal encounter with victim/victim's associate
	12	Expressing admiration for victim's associate	Personal admiration
	13	Acknowledging the complication of the case	Acknowledging that the case is interwoven with many complicated details
	14	Associating with another incident/consequence	Linking other incidents with the current incident
	15	Believing in the power of truth	Believing that the truth will win in the end
	16	Hoping for transparency	Acknowledging the current situation is lacking transparency
	17	Hoping for public awareness	Acknowledging the current situation is lacking public awareness
	18	Hoping there will be closure	Hoping that closure will be reached in the end
	19	Expressing solidarity	Expressing 'we intention', <i>e.g.</i> , a lot of people are supporting you

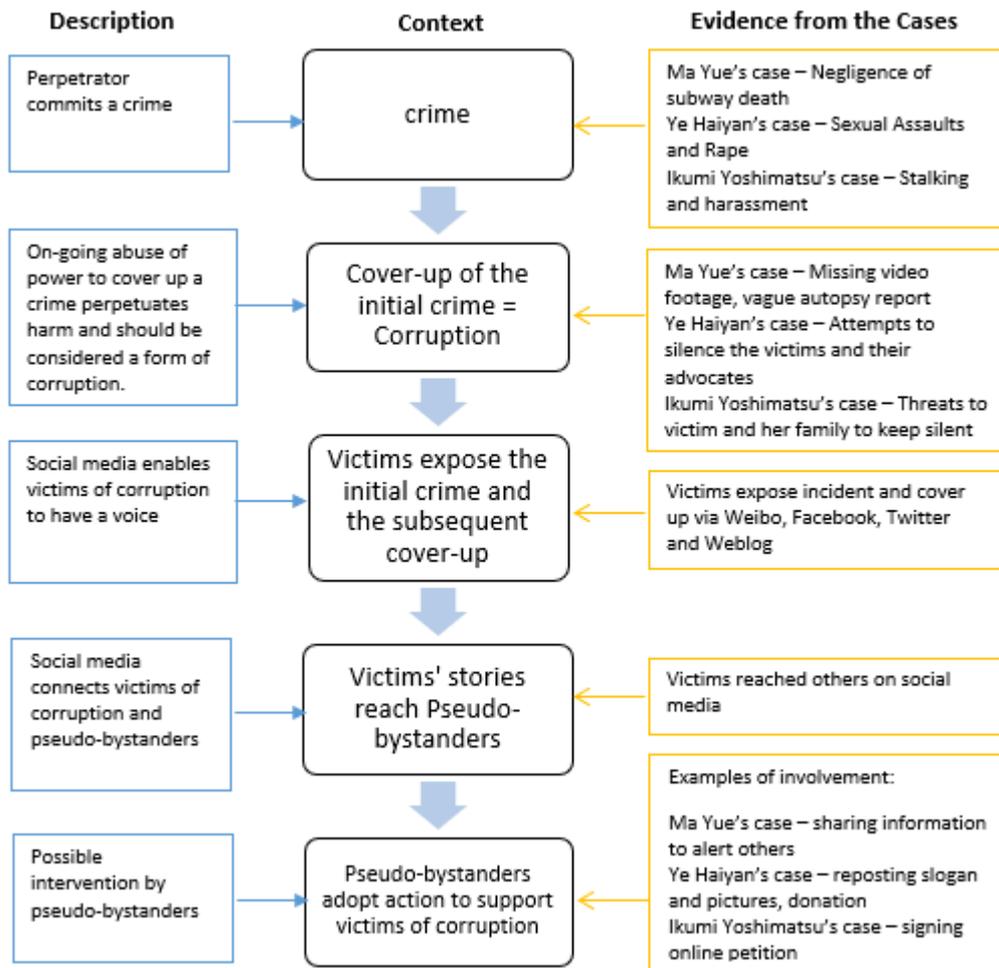
	20	Acknowledging conformity	Acknowledging how the majority perceives the situation
	21	Expressing hope	Not yet feeling despair, thinking that there is still hope
	22	Acknowledging inequality	Acknowledging the power distance that caused the negative experience of the case
	88	Identifying cultural issues	Specifically relating the incident to cultural roots
	89	Feeling shameful that as a result of damaging national pride	Feeling that the incident is causing damage to his/her social identity, specifically his/her national pride
Questioning	23	Questioning the case	About case details of the case that took place
	24	Requesting information from victim's associate	Needs additional information to make decision
	25	Questioning the cause of victim's death	Not believing in the said cause
	26	Questioning ethics	questions how this may have impacted on the situation/people
	27	Questioning the evidence	Questioning supporting evidence to make a stance
	28	Questioning mainstream media	Sceptical about the mainstream media's action/inaction
	29	Questioning victim's associate	Sceptical about the victim's associate's action/inaction
	30	Suggesting other similar cases as references	Suggesting to look for similar case to draw reference in order to build credibility <i>etc.</i>
	31	Suggesting other avenues to obtain evidence	Suggesting other ways to obtain more information in order to build credibility <i>etc.</i>
	32	Suggesting responsibility to other stakeholders	Suggesting that other people should involve to address the current issue
	33	Seeking for update on case	after new information/progress on the case
	34	Questioning status quo	Questioning the power distance with the status quo and its impact on the situation
	35	Suggesting public awareness	Suggesting that the general public should know about the incident
	36	Seeking the truth	After what really happened
80	Being sceptical in a sarcastic way	Questioning the case with a pinch of salt	

	83	Questioning the intention/motive of behaviour	Sceptical about the behaviour of certain people involving in the incident, direct or indirect
	90	Seeking advice on participation	Seeking advice from others in the same space about their involvement, <i>e.g.</i> , problem with signing online petition
	93	Criticising the delivery of contention	Agreeing with the message but not the mode of delivery
Expressing Support	37	Taking side	Displaying the 'us' vs. 'them' mentality
	38	Discrediting predator and/or associates	Does not trust predator and/or associates
	39	Cursing the opposition	Expressing anger and frustration <i>e.g.</i> , swearing
	40	Justifying the behaviour of predator and/or associates	Showing understanding to justify their negative behaviour
	41	Discrediting victim's associate	Does not trust the victim's associate(s)
	42	Aligning personal values	Supporting because of personal values
	43	Quoting victim's associate's words to show respect	Emphasising on the victim's associate's words to show respect
	44	Empathising based on social identity	Mentioning go social identity in order to feel empathetic
	45	Concerning for victim and/or victim's associate	Concerning for their safety since they spoke out
	46	Expressing respect	Showing they respect the victim and/or associate's actions
	47	Praising victim's associate	Praising victim's associate, could be about their looks or their behaviour
	48	Supporting based on social identity	Supporting based on aligned social identity <i>e.g.</i> , women, mother, nationality <i>etc.</i>
	49	Demanding scientific evidence	Demanding evidence from involved parties
	50	Demanding responsibility	Demanding liability from involved parties
	51	Providing further information to enhance credibility	additional information provided <i>e.g.</i> , links of websites <i>etc.</i>
	52	Elaborating ideas associated with credibility	Suggesting alternative ways to enhance credibility
	53	Disapproving predator and/or associates	Disapproving the actions of the predator and/or associates
54	Disapproving of victim's associate	Disapproving the actions of the victim's associate	

	55	Approving of victim's associate	Agreeing with the victim's associate
	56	Demanding the truth	Demanding the truth from involved parties
	57	Expressing engagement via mainstream media	Indicating that he/she is following the case with mainstream media
	58	Supporting the truth while disapproving of victim's associate	Indicating that victim's associate contradicts the truth
	59	Supporting victim while disapproving of victim's associate	Indicating that victim's associate contradicts with the victim
	60	Advocating support	Advocating support for victim, direct with words or action
	79	Relating to specific underlying issues	Discussing other social issues in relation to the current power abuse, <i>e.g.</i> , gender inequality
	92	Providing update/case progression	Providing additional information to inform others about the progress of the case
Exemplifying Collective Action	61	Identifying systemic issue	Emphasising that the case is more of a systemic issue not just personal
	62	Identifying censorship	Identifying that information is being censored
	63	Warning others about censorship	Telling others about how the information is being censored
	64	Ignoring censorship	Acknowledging censorship but not letting it stop his/her actions to support
	65	Seeking loopholes in censorship	Proactively looking for ways to bypass censorship
	66	Disapproving censorship	Disapproving the actions of information being censored
	67	Advocating for freedom of speech	Supporting free speech
	68	Advocating for subway safety/school safety/public safety	Supporting safety in shared environment
	69	Advocating human right issue	Supporting human right
	70	Discrediting current legal system	Not believing in the current legal system
	71	Discrediting authorities	Not believing in authorities
	72	Resisting censorship	Support/continue with action to support because he/she sees this as a way to resist censorship imposed by a higher power
	73	Calling for public awareness	Calling for others in the same space to follow the case

	74	Calling for collective action	Calling for others in the same space to take actions/speak out for the victim
	81	Calling for personal actions to defend ethical stance	Sensing that their ethical stance is being threatened and standing up to defend it
	84	Explaining the significance of collective action	Elaborating as to why collective action needs to be taken and how it is important to do so
	87	Indicating real-life actions/intention to support	Demonstrating the he/she acts beyond the online environment
Stating Random Comments	75	Introducing abstract idea	Confusing message that is difficult to decipher
	76	Introducing religion	Linking religion to the current situation in a good or bad way
	77	Aligning value with communist party	Random comments about the communist party
	78	Believe in karma	Introducing the idea of karma (sort of passive, like karma will get the perpetrator so no actions need to be taken)
	82	Insulting with sarcasm and/or personal attacks	Mocking comments directed at the incident or other people and/or verbally (virtually) attacking another online user
	85	Identifying “(paid) trolls”	Identifying other online users who intentionally leaving trolling comments to distract others
	86	Replying to an argument (to an alleged paid troll)	Responding to another online user (usually whom he/she identified as an alleged troll)

Appendix 3: Progression of the Corruption Context



Appendix 3. Progression of the Corruption Context in the Current Study

Appendix 4: Publications and Awards Received

Conference Papers:

Wang, P., Bedggood, R & Le, V 2015, "What Rocks Your Boat? When 'Attraction' meets 'Social Identity' to Achieve Behavioural Change", World Social Marketing Conference, 19-21 April 2015, Rydges World Square, Sydney.

Wang, P., Bedggood, R & Le, V 2014, 'Same-Same but Different? Exploring the Similarities and Differences between Corruption and Workplace Bullying', World Business and Social Science Research Conference, 14-16 April 2014, Hotel Crowne Plaza Republique, Paris, France.

Wang, P., Bedggood, R & Le, V 2014, 'Identifying the roles of those involved in addressing corruption via social media: The listening recipient', International Social Marketing Conference, 17-18 July, 2014, Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

Rajkhowa, A & Wang, P 2014, 'Re-gendering the public sphere in China and India: online anti-sexual violence discourses and public protests', The Australian and New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA) Conference, 9-11 July 2014, Swinburne University of Technology, Victoria, Australia.

Awards:

'Using Negative Publicity via Social Media to Reduce Power Distance: Giving Victims of Corruption a Proactive Voice', Three Minute Thesis Competition Final, 2nd Place Winner, Swinburne University of Technology, 2013

