

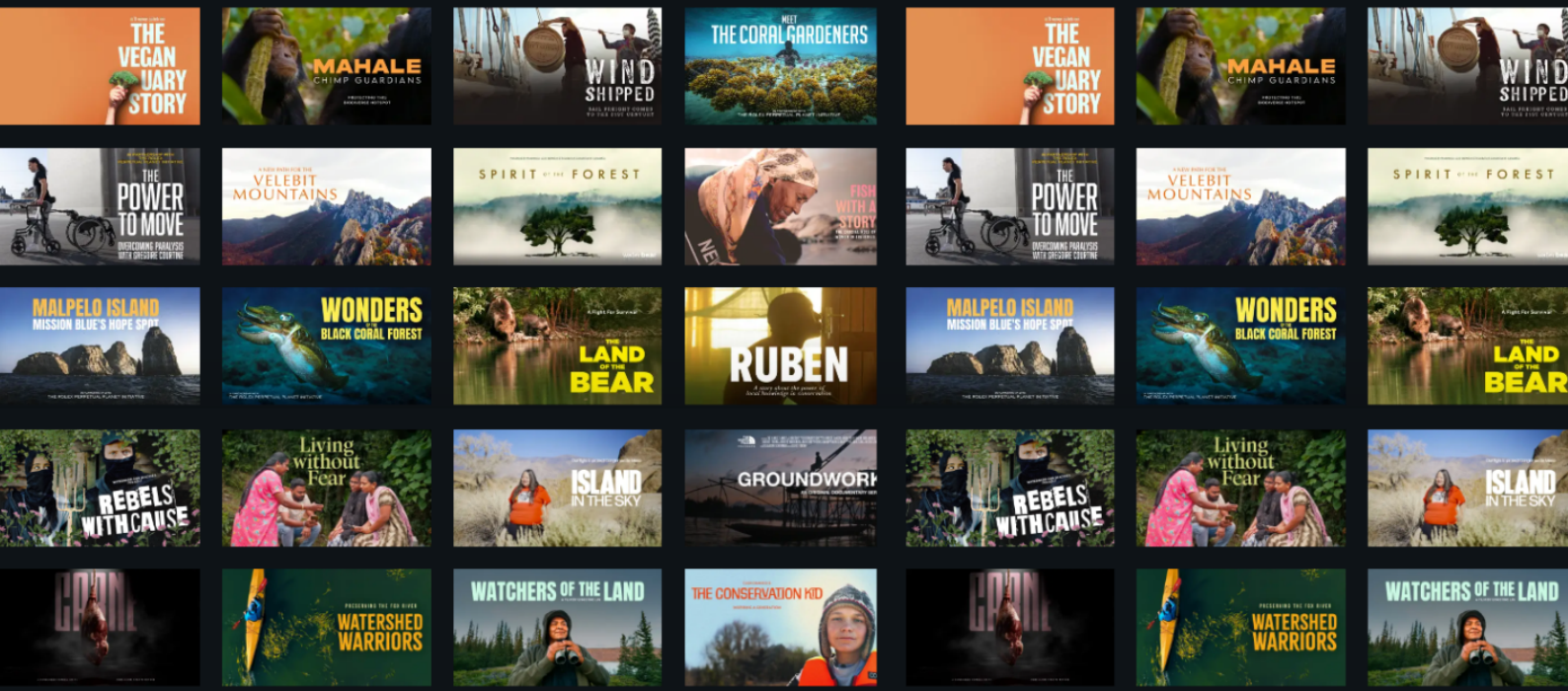
Impact Stories for Societal Change

The Transparency in Hybrid Organizations' Partnerships for Legitimacy



RESILIENT

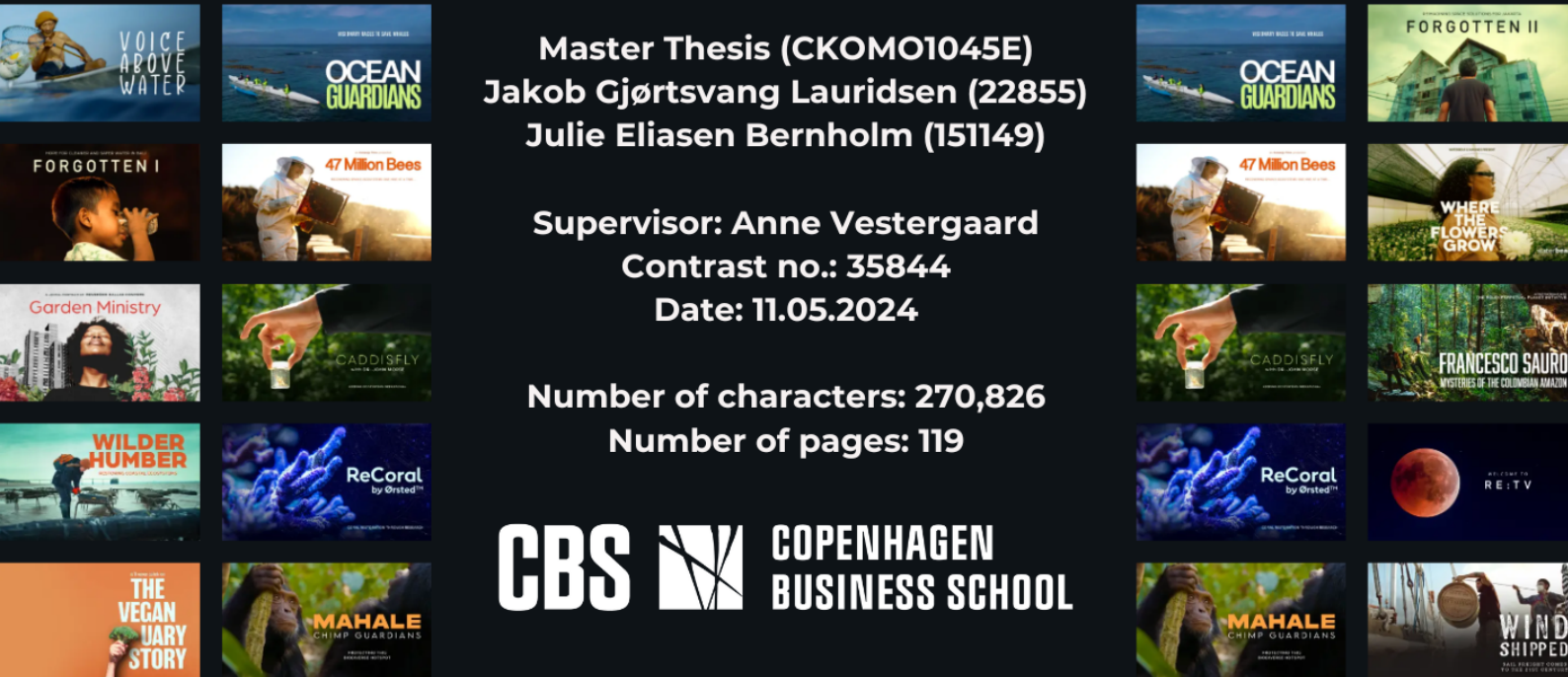
Danish Title: Narrativer for forandring - Hybride organisationers brug af transparens i partnerskaber for legitimitet



Master Thesis (CKOMO1045E)
 Jakob Gjørtsvang Lauridsen (22855)
 Julie Eliassen Bernholm (151149)

Supervisor: Anne Vestergaard
 Contrast no.: 35844
 Date: 11.05.2024

Number of characters: 270,826
 Number of pages: 119



Resumé

Denne afhandling undersøger hvordan hybride organisationer bruger tværsektorielle partnerskaber til at opnå legitimitet i håndteringen af komplekse samfundsmæssige problemer, med særligt fokus på transparensen i CSR-kommunikation. I afhandlingen anvendes non-profit organisationen Resilient Foundation og deres søsterorganisation for-profit streaming platformen WaterBear Network til at undersøge forholdet mellem transparens og legitimitet. De anvender storytelling gennem dokumentarer som et strategisk CSR-kommunikationsværktøj for at påvirke den globale diskurs om komplekse samfundsproblemer såsom klimaforandringer.

Den anvendte metode er en kvalitativ dataindsamling bestående af 10 interviews med udvalgte medarbejdere, partnere og eksperter. Først analyserer vi de komplekse rammer, hvori Resilient Foundation og WaterBear Networks partnerskaber finder sted. Vi undersøger, hvordan organisationerne forsøger at påvirke den offentlige mening om samfundsmæssige problemer i samarbejde med deres partnere. Derefter analyserer vi de forskellige institutionelle logikker som Resilient Foundation og WaterBear Network selektivt kobler, og som bliver konstituerende for deres mange identiteter, samt deres måde at kommunikere som hybride organisationer. Afslutningsvis dykker vi dybere ned i kommunikationsaspekterne af Resilient Foundation og WaterBear Networks partnerskaber, hvor vi udfordrer deres strategiske anvendelse af transparens for øget legitimitet. Vores undersøgelse viser, at mere transparens ikke nødvendigvis fører til øget legitimitet, som det ellers førhen er blevet antaget. I resultaterne fremhæver vi kompleksiteten i partnerskabernes transparens og bidrager med en dybere forståelse af, hvordan hybride organisationer navigerer spændingerne i legitimitet inden for rammerne af CSR.

Nøgleord: Hybride organisationer, tværsektorielle partnerskaber, transparens, legitimitet, netværkssamfund, wicked problems, storytelling, CSR kommunikation

Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Sub-Questions	3
1.2 Presentation of Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network	4
1.3 Limitations.....	5
1.4 Structure of the Study.....	6
2. Literature Review	7
2.1 Addressing Societal Issues Through Partnerships.....	8
2.1.1 Wicked Problems	8
2.1.2 Wicked Problems Governed in the Eye of the Public.....	9
2.1.3 Partnerships Across Sectors.....	12
2.2 Organizational Legitimacy Through Hybridity.....	15
2.2.1 Legitimacy: The License to Operate.....	15
2.2.2 Hybridity & Hybrid Organizations	17
2.2.3 Legitimacy: The Greatest Struggle for Hybrid Organizations.....	20
2.3 Strategic Transparency in CSR	23
2.3.1 CSR Communication & Transparency	23
2.3.2 Transparency & Accountability for Legitimacy	25
2.4 Theoretical Summary	27
3. Methodology	29
3.1 Philosophy of Science	29
3.1.1 Ontological Assumptions.....	30
3.1.2 Epistemological Assumptions.....	30
3.1.3 Axiological Assumptions.....	31
3.2 Research Approaches	31
3.3 Research Design.....	32
3.3.1 Single Case Study	33
3.4 Data Collection.....	34

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews.....	34
Sampling & Informants	36
Interview Guides.....	37
3.4.2 Desk Research.....	37
3.5 Data Analysis	38
3.5.1 Qualitative Content Analysis	38
3.6 Quality criteria.....	40
3.6.1 Validity.....	40
3.6.2 Reliability.....	40
3.6.3 Generalizability and Recognizability	41
3.7 Method of Analysis	41
4. Analysis.....	43
4.1 Resilient and WaterBear’s Partnerships for Societal Change	43
4.1.1 Resilient and WaterBear & the Global Narrative of Wicked Problems	43
Resilient and WaterBear’s Influence & the Public.....	45
Resilient and WaterBear’s Aim to Set the Agenda in Society	47
4.1.2 Leveraging Partnerships for Change.....	49
4.1.3 Motivations to Partner with Resilient and WaterBear	50
VÅR Ventures & WaterBear.....	52
Imagine5 & WaterBear.....	53
Ørsted & WaterBear	55
Rolex & WaterBear	56
WWF & Resilient & WaterBear.....	58
Findings from Partnerships.....	59
4.2 Resilient & WaterBear Gain Legitimacy Through Hybridity	61
4.2.1 The Hybridity of Resilient and WaterBear	61
4.2.2 Lens 1: The Dimensions of Hybridity.....	64
Mixed Ownership	64
Multiplicity of Funding Arrangements.....	65
Goal Incongruence & Competing Institutional Logics.....	67
Public and Private Form of Social and Institutional Control.....	77
Findings from Lens 1.....	78
4.2.3 Lens 2: Value Creation Mechanisms	79

Mixing Values	80
Compromising on Values	81
Legitimizing Values.....	82
Findings from Lens 2.....	82
Unexpected Finding: The Exchange of Legitimacy between Resilient & WaterBear	83
4.2.4 Findings of Resilient and WaterBear’s Hybridity for Legitimacy.....	84
4.3 Strategic Transparency: Navigating Legitimacy in CSR Partnerships	85
4.3.1 The Transparency of Resilient and WaterBear’s Partnerships	85
4.3.2 Transparency as a Threat to the Legitimacy of Resilient and WaterBear	87
Concept 1: Purposefulness Presented in Vision and Mission Statements	88
Concept 2: Transparency Through Explaining, Justifying and Elaborating Strategic Intentions	89
Concept 3: Participation Through In/External Stakeholder Engagement and Dialogue	91
Findings from Concepts 1, 2 & 3	92
4.3.3 Partners’ Assessment of WaterBear’s Transparency	93
5. Discussion and Theoretical Contribution	97
5.1 The Explored Relationship between Transparency and Legitimacy.....	98
5.2 The Borders of Advertising in Societal Change.....	101
5.3 “There is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch”	103
6. Conclusion	105
7. References.....	108

Table of Appendices and Figures

Appx. 1: Sam Sutaria – WaterBear Network

Appx. 2: Poppy Mason-Watts – WaterBear Network

Appx. 3: Adrian Kawaley-Lathan – Resilient Foundation

Appx. 4: Charlotte Day-Lewin – Rolex, Twin London

Appx. 5: Anne-Louise Thon – VÅR Ventures

Appx. 6: Caroline Petit – United Nations (UN)

Appx. 7: Interviewee Ø – Ørsted

Appx. 8: Francois Botha – Simple

Appx. 9: Mie Dahlquist – Imagine5

Appx. 10: Tobias Høgsberg – World Wildlife Foundation (WWF)

Appx. 11: Interview Guides

Appx. 12: Resilient Network Partners 2024

Appx. 13: Resilient Production Slates 2024

Appx. 14: The Documentaries & Partners list

Appx. 15: Figure 2: Hybrid Governance and Value-creation Mechanisms

Appx. 16: Figure 3: Dimensions of Strategic Communication in Context of High Sustainability Pressure framework

Appx. 17: NVivo Coding of Interviews

Appx. 18: Resilient and WaterBear – Unearth Untold Stories

Figure 1: Cross-sector partnership structures and aims. Source: Vestergaard et al., 2020.

Figure 4: Research process (Researchers' own production, 2024).

1. Introduction

What happens when influential organizations engage in partnerships to impose agendas on society through multiple voices and identities? Is our trust in these hybrid organizations challenged when the proclaimed messages of “doing good in society” are polluted by self-serving motives applied from a CSR communications strategy? What if this pollution is not visible to the public? How does the transparency of such messages and partnerships come into question when organizations govern wicked problems for the public good, but also for organizational legitimacy?

Private organizations are increasingly faced with external pressure to govern wicked problems, like climate change, in society (Banerjee, 2008). Globalization and global communications technologies have fostered the discussions of global governance of wicked problems in a global network society. The network society has shifted our idea of identity and brought attention to the prevalence of a global public sphere (Castell, 2008) characterized by diversity rather than sameness (Castells, 2001 in Volkmer, 2003). As the complexities of the interconnected society unfolds in the discussions between societal actors with diverse agendas, the narrative around these societal issues become highly influenced by the political and institutional actors as well (Volkmer, 2003). Due to the high sustainability pressure on organizations, the organizations reconstruct themselves as hybrid organizations. These organizations communicate through multiple identities in order to maintain their legitimacy amongst diverse stakeholder demands, as they take on the role to tackle wicked problems in society. As wicked problems cannot be solved by the same tools and processes that are complicit in creating it (Brown et al., 2010), collaborative societal efforts among actors from various sectors arise. Cross-sector partnerships to solve social issues have become an important strategy to encompass the interests and efforts of various actors within society (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Waddock, 1991 in Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). Based on the idea of mutually beneficial partnerships, we argue that the various agendas in these partnerships challenge the transparency of hybrids in their CSR communication.

In this study, we will investigate transparency as a key element of CSR communication through the lens of building legitimacy in the governance of wicked problems. Broadly accepted interpretations argue that more transparency leads to more legitimacy (Curtin & Meijer, 2006;

Christensen, 2021). However, in reality, the relationship between transparency and legitimacy is, in fact, in-transparent (Fox, 2007). We will investigate how hybrid organizations balance transparency and legitimacy under high sustainability pressure. This dynamic is explored through the case organizations, non-profit Resilient Foundation, and their sister organization for-profit, yet free, streaming platform WaterBear Network. They employ storytelling as a CSR communications tool to raise awareness about societal issues through documentaries and, by this, aim to influence the global discourse on how society must act on the wicked climate problems. This is done through cross-sector partnerships with high-esteemed private companies, philanthropists, media, and NGOs such as WWF, Rolex, Nikon, Ørsted, CondéNast (WaterBear Network, n.d. c), and even the Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry (Pratty, 2023). Through interviews with employees, partnering brands and experts, the complexities of these partnerships and the attitudes towards transparency unfold.

We are intrigued by Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network's ability to attract such legitimate actors despite their low transparency about how these partnerships take shape. The foundation and streaming platform's websites display logos and descriptions of the partners but show very little information of how these partnerships take shape in the sense of processes, division of roles, decision-making, financial incentives, mutual benefits, and motivations. And even more interesting, how these big brands potentially influence the storytelling of the documentaries. As storytelling is a vital part of Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network's communications strategy, this denotes high accountability to how these stories about complex societal issues are created. Consequently, we question how legitimacy is obtained, when Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network try to balance transparency in their partnerships. Can more transparency about their partnerships eventually pose a threat to their legitimacy as hybrids and end up defeating Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network's societal purpose? Ultimately, this is why we aim to answer the research question:

How do hybrid organizations leverage cross-sector partnerships to gain legitimacy within the arena of wicked problems, and how does this affect the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in CSR communication?

The research will be based on the case organizations, non-profit Resilient Foundation, and the for-profit streaming platform WaterBear Network.

1.1 Sub-Questions

- How do Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network leverage partnerships addressing wicked problems to influence public opinion and foster societal change?
- How do Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network gain legitimacy through their hybrid identity?
- When does transparency in partnerships help to gain legitimacy, and to what extent does it challenge the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in CSR?

This research is motivated by our critical assessment of Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network's dissemination of climate change and their transparency, as the streaming platform is in potential danger of becoming an advertising billboard for their partners. At first, we explore the complex societal settings in which their cross-sector partnerships take place. Through theoretical perspectives on the Network Society by Castells (2008), we analyze how Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network leverage partnerships to influence the public opinion of wicked problems. The concept of storytelling is employed as a social construction that shapes society's image of itself. Furthermore, storytelling is applied to show how it can strategically be used to influence the public sphere through agenda setting.

Their cross-sector partnerships are addressed to describe how Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network must communicate through various institutional logics to meet the diverse stakeholder demands, and subsequently, how they obtain legitimacy as hybrid organizations. Following Suchman (1995), legitimacy is vastly employed as a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, belief, and definitions. The research will analyze how Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network aim to obtain legitimacy through the dimensions of their hybridity and value-creations mechanisms which builds on Vakkuri et al.'s (2020) framework about hybrid governance.

Finally, we analyze the strategic use of transparency in order to answer if and how low transparency can assist to gain legitimacy. We will challenge previous CSR interpretations of the terms' interconnected relationship. Transparency is an evaluation and socially constructed entity (Fox, 2007), which we emphasize is an ambiguous strategic CSR communications tool to shine light on something specific, that results in degrees of non-transparency and secrecy.

Finally, the relation between transparency and legitimacy is analyzed and discussed in the setting of hybrid organizations' cross-sector partnerships to answer how this specific setting challenges the predominant understanding that more transparency leads to more legitimacy.

1.2 Presentation of Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network

Resilient Foundation (hereinafter 'Resilient') is a non-profit and public charity based in the Netherlands, that facilitates the funding and production of documentaries on environmentalism (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b). Resilient focuses on so-called 'impact campaigns', which consists of everything from multimedia experiences to public events and panel discussions. According to their website, Resilient convenes and activates key stakeholders to amplify crucial stories, foster dialogue and drive collective action" (Resilient Foundation, n.d. c). Resilient describes the organization with the mission statement to: "bring about targeted, measurable and scalable change towards a just and resilient world using film, narrative storytelling and arts activism as transformational tools" (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b). In 2022 Resilient teamed up with the Windward Fund, and co-created the 'Resilient Fund' project, which acquired them with the '501(c)(3) tax-exempt status', opening the access to US funding (Resilient Foundation, n.d. g). The Windward Fund is a US-based 501(c)(3) public charity, managed by the for-profit consulting company Arabella Advisors, that advises left-leaning donors and nonprofits about where to donate money and serves as the hub of a politically liberal "dark money" network in the United States (Massoglia, 2021).

Both Resilient and WaterBear Network (hereinafter 'WaterBear') were founded in 2020 by a predominantly same group of founders. WaterBear is a for-profit, free, interactive, streaming platform (WaterBear Network, n.d. d). The platform is responsible for producing and distributing the documentary films funded by Resilient and related partners. Resilient and WaterBear's operations and goals are deeply intertwined and to a large degree dependent on each other:

Together, we reimagined the impact media space and challenged the norms of documentary by using storytelling as a concrete vehicle for tangible impact. Thanks to our shared vision and highly collaborative ways of working, we

ensured that Resilient stories were seen and had impact at its core (Resilient Foundation, n.d. g).

One of the founders of WaterBear is Ellen Windemuth, the Oscar-winning producer of the 2020 Netflix Original documentary, “My Octopus Teacher” (Mandel, 2022). According to WaterBear, it is both a streaming service, digital media publisher, distributor, impact platform, campaigner, and film enthusiast, and is the first purpose-driven interactive streaming platform using storytelling to drive global impact (WaterBear Network, n.d. d). WaterBear has previously dubbed themselves: “If Netflix and National Geographic had a love child, that’s kind of what we are” (Pratty, 2023). On the streaming platform, WaterBear showcases award-winning documentaries as well as original content – spanning biodiversity, community, climate action and sustainable fashion and more. WaterBear is dedicated to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which, according to Windemuth, is done through “(...) inspirational content, cutting-edge technology that facilitates action, and through its global network of partners. It uniquely empowers the viewer to take direct instant action to support NGOs around the world and shape a better future for our fragile planet” (Mandel, 2022). In its first year, WaterBear built a network of over 140 NGOs and partners, produced 36 impact films and 20 WaterBear Original Productions, and curated over 1000 award-winning documentaries on the platform (Mandel, 2022). In 2022 WaterBear became a certified B Corporation, which, they say, is an attest to their ability to “meet the highest standards or verified social and environmental performance, public transparency and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose” (WaterBear Network, n.d. f; B Corporation, n.d.).

1.3 Limitations

The purpose of this section is to provide transparency about some of the boundaries and constraints of the research. The limitations of this research are both theoretical and empirical.

We will integrate the concepts of ‘impact storytelling’ and ‘documentaries’ as they are fundamental to both Resilient and WaterBear’s business models. However, the analysis will refrain from exploring the rhetorical narrative aspect of storytelling, focusing instead on the techniques and methods employed in conveying the narrative, as opposed to the specific content of the narrative itself. We do not analyze the actual contents of the documentaries and

how “change” is defined through the narratives on WaterBear’s streaming platform and in Resilient’s funded films.

The informant selection criteria were limited concerning Resilient’s partnerships, relying solely on the interview conducted with WWF for access to their partnerships. However, this limitation did not alter our scope, given that WaterBear is the one of the two organizations, with the most partnerships. We acknowledge that the data collection represents a relatively focused field, which adds to the discussion of generalizability in a single case study. This thesis is based on a single case study of Resilient and WaterBear in order to analyze their ability, as hybrid organizations, to leverage cross-sector partnerships to gain legitimacy. The use of a single case study is a limitation as it presents a detailed perspective from only one actor. However, generalizability is thought to not be a criterion within social constructivism, which is why we have selected a more focused field of collected data.

Finally, we limited the scope of the data collection to not look into Resilient and WaterBear’s social media presence on Instagram and LinkedIn. This would require a netnographic approach, which is a specific type of qualitative social media research. Due to the comprehensive aspect of this method, we chose not to include this in the study. Moreover, it would make the analysis of Resilient and WaterBear transition into a media-centric analysis.

1.4 Structure of the Study

This section, as part of the “Introduction”, provides a structure of this study. Furthermore, the “Introduction” highlights the motivation and limitations for the study, why Resilient and WaterBear are found relevant to research and the research questions.

In the following section “Literature Review”, the literature and the theoretical frameworks used in this study is presented and reviewed in three sections: (1) “Addressing Societal Issues Through Partnerships”, (2) “Organizational Legitimacy Through Hybridity” and (3) “Strategic Transparency in CSR”. In this section, when first referring to a term, concept, or framework, it will be *italicized*.

In the next section “Methodology” the considerations of the methodology and applied methods in the study are explained. The section will explain the methodological approach and how the

data collection will be processed. The section also includes a description of the guidelines for analyzing the collected data.

In the section “Analysis” the findings of the study will be presented. In the analysis, we will cite quotes from the interviews. Our referencing format will mirror this model: For instance, to cite a quote occurring at the 01:14 timestamp in Sam Sutaria’s transcription, CEO of WaterBear, we would use: (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 01:14).

The analysis will lead to the “Discussion and Theoretical Contribution”, which delves into the explored relationship between transparency and legitimacy from the analysis, in the setting of hybrid organizations, such as Resilient and WaterBear, engaging in cross-sector partnerships to address social issues (CSSPs).

In the last and final section, “Conclusion”, the conclusive findings of the study are presented.

2. Literature Review

The following literature review aims to position this study in relation to existing literature and the theories supporting the research questions. This literature review has three sections. Firstly, the section on “Addressing Societal Issues Through Partnerships” will cover wicked problems, how they are governed in the eye of the public, and partnerships across sectors to help answer the first sub-research question: “How do Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network leverage partnerships addressing wicked problems to influence public opinion and foster societal change?”. Secondly, in “Organizational Legitimacy Through Hybridity” the theoretical focus is on legitimacy and hybrid organizations. This section sets the background for answering the second sub-research question: “How do Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network gain legitimacy through their hybrid identity?”. In the last section “Strategic Transparency in CSR”, the terms transparency, legitimacy, and accountability in relation to CSR communication, will help to answer the third and last sub-research question: “When does transparency in partnerships help to gain legitimacy, and to what extent does it challenge the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in CSR?”.

The purpose of the literature review is to help answer the research question: “How do hybrid organizations leverage cross-sector partnerships to gain legitimacy within the arena of wicked

problems, and how does this affect the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in CSR communication?” The interplay between pre-existing literature leads us to investigate the research gap on the subject of the relationship between transparency and legitimacy.

2.1 Addressing Societal Issues Through Partnerships

2.1.1 Wicked Problems

Often referred to as “the problem of problems”, ‘*wicked problems*’ are just that, large uncontrollable problems. A wicked problem is not just complicated, it is complex, and cannot be removed from its environment, solved, and returned without affecting the environment. Furthermore, there is no clear relationship between cause and effect (Brookes & Grint, 2010). Wicked problems will not be solved by the same tools and processes that are complicit in creating them (Brown, Harris & Russell, 2010), since the majority of wicked problems are connected to, or are symptoms of, other problems (Batie, 2008). Consequently, no one can agree upon the precise nature of the problem. Therefore, it is difficult to solve wicked problems, due to their intricate interdependencies, instead, they become better or worse (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Defined by Rittel and Webber (1973), the conservation of endangered species, the conservation of forests, and climate change are all examples of wicked problems. Roe (1998) calls such problems “truly complex” or “complex all the way down”. Further, Funtowicz and Ravetz (1991) and Funtowicz, Martinez-Alier, Munda and Ravetz (1999) call these problems post-normal, characterized by radical uncertainty and/or a plurality of legitimate perspectives.

Wicked problems are strongly stakeholder dependent, often with little consensus about what the problem is, let alone how to resolve it (Rittel & Webber, 1973; Henriques, 2018). This means that tackling one, often leads to unintended consequences of generating new sets of problems (Ritchey, 2011). Since wicked problems are inherently complex in terms of their scale of uncertainty and their technical and social nature, they are best addressed by interdisciplinary approaches, participatory processes, and flexible governance (FitzGibbon & Mensah, 2012). Detoni, Bitzer and Schouten (2018) suggests that partnerships can address these complex societal problems by triggering or contributing to systemic change. They underscore the complexity inherent in addressing wicked problems, emphasizing the need for collaborative and multifaceted approaches.

In the forthcoming section, we will explore these complex issues from the viewpoint of the public. Since wicked problems do not adhere to a linear progression or fixed solution path, understanding their governance becomes particularly intricate.

2.1.2 Wicked Problems Governed in the Eye of the Public

Public discourses concerning societal matters, e.g., wicked problems, are given meaning in what sociologist Habermas (1962) defines with his bourgeois-inspired term the *public sphere*; A social realm with unlimited access for all citizens in which public opinion is shaped and formed by citizens' political opinions and their freedom of speech without the constraints of state bureaucracy (Habermas, Lennox & Lennox, 1964). Habermas' term mirrors the ideal of "mass democracy" (Habermas et al., 1964) in which citizens gather in 'public spaces' to find meaning in society (Habermas, 1991; Gripsrud et al., 2010). While the state is often referred to as "public" authority, it is not part of the public sphere, but represents instead the 'political public sphere'. The fundamental duty of state authority is to care for the welfare of citizens and highlights why the state must act upon public opinions formed by the public sphere (Habermas et al., 1964). *Public opinion* encompasses the tasks of criticism and control followed through by a public group of citizens, both informally during daily discussion and formally during periodic elections (Habermas et al., 1964). According to Habermas, societal structures challenge the relevance of the public sphere in the power relations between the welfare state, organizations, and citizens. Habermas emphasizes that the social welfare mass democracy is facing the risk of breaking down, as social organizations seek to exclude the public sphere to influence the political public sphere and policy making in the state (Habermas et al., 1964).

Since 1962, Habermas' founding term *public sphere* has been further developed by various scholars with a vast emphasis on the influence of globalization, modern organizations, and media. According to Calhoun (2011), the public sphere has developed alongside the powerful modern state, capitalist economy and the rise of new media. This has reinforced the public sphere's ability to make greater collective choices through more guidance, but this has also created more inequality. While the idea of the public sphere holds that citizens speak as equals (Habermas, 1962), the reality is that inequality and new power structures constantly distort collective communication today (Calhoun, 2011). Originally, the public sphere was connected to civil society and state through the principle that public understanding could democratically shape the administration of state institutions to serve the public interest (Calhoun, 2011). Public

sphere is inseparable from two key dimensions of the institutional construction of modern societies: civil society and state. It is through the public sphere that inclusive forms of civil society enact the public debate and influence the decisions of the state (Castells, 2008).

Civil society is a collective term that consists of non-governmental organizations (NGO's), activists and civil groups in society (Vestergaard et al., 2020), which is separated analytically and empirically from political, financial, family bound and religious layers in society (Alexander, 2006). Calhoun (2011) defines civil society and its relationship with the public sphere through five characteristics; (1) Civil society viewed as a result of social urbanism with autonomy of informal self-governance and self-organization in relationships with interactions and exchange of goods and ideas. (2) As markets develop from physical spaces of direct interaction to large-scale systems of exchanges, the idea of "the collective good" in civil society has multiplied yet is still catalyzed by personal convictions. (3) Civil society is the freedom to make collective choices by people in groups and associations such as charitables, voluntary associations and social movements, and distinguishes them from governments as there is no master plan. (4) The state gave society its form, but civil society produced the internal web of relationships in the public sphere and this web works best without state interference. (5) Culture plays a big role in facilitating the collective good as it links members and fosters participation in the public sphere interactions by citizens with diverse backgrounds (Calhoun, 2011). Alexander (2006) regards civil society as a solidary subsystem that navigates through collective binary codes of *pure* and *impure*. Over time, civil society has *purified* motives, relationships, and institutions, leading to their widespread acceptance and inclusion into what is perceived as part of the collective good in the civil (public) sphere (Alexander, 2006). This is evaluated for its rationality, inclusion and regulating sanity (Egholm, 2020) and because of this, also faces the risk of being polluted and scrutinized as impure and non-civil (Alexander, 2006). In today's globalized society, these evaluations also take place in digital and/or social media that offer citizens to participate in public hegemonic discursive battles without the limitations of time and space (Gripsrud et al., 2010) thus assumed limited by access to the internet mainly in developing countries.

The process of globalization has shifted the public national debates to discussions of global governance (Castells, 2008) in the public sphere within the international arena and is highly influenced by the political and institutional spaces (Volkmer, 2003). Media is a sphere in itself that can be regarded as the social gatekeeper that manages the interactions between elites and

the broader public (Bennett et al., 2004). As international news agencies e.g. Reuters and CNNI started to report on ‘internationalized’ news from outside of the nation-centered public sphere (Volkmer, 2003), the idea of a global *network society* of international mass communication was developed (Castells, 1996 in Volkmer, 2003). Castells (2008) defines the network society as a social structure characterized by the prevalence of flexible and adaptable networks powered by global communication technologies, especially the internet, that connects individuals, organizations, and societies globally. The interconnectedness of the network society allows rapid flow of information and influences how humans interact, form communities, and construct their sense of self. The prevalence of digital networks is essentially shifting the dynamic of power, economy, and culture in the global society, and consequently, positions the public sphere as catalyzer to how the state must act (Castells, 2008).

Castells’ term “the network society” has redefined our idea of identity along the lines of new cultural and political parameters and the term represents a new paradigm of the globalization process and of global communication (Volkmer, 2003). These developments have established a new transnational political news sphere which transformed conventional notions of the public sphere to a *global public sphere* that is not characterized by *sameness* but rather by global diversity and new global networked individualism (Castells, 2001 in Volkmer, 2003). Today the media has increasingly become a big component of the public sphere – analytically and practically (Castells, 2008; Tremayne, 2007), and ignited the concept of plural public spheres (Dahlgren, 2005). In the realm of mediated public spheres, universal discourses are not always forged, as citizens have varied access to media and may perceive topics differently based on their social circumstances and identity (Bennett et al., 2004). The international quality of the global public sphere is constantly being transformed by new “differentiated” segmented “microspheres”. These operate differently in times of peace and times of political crisis and are bound to diversified news that connect or disconnect with our perceived identity in society (Volkmer, 2003). The internet not only extends and pluralizes the public sphere, but it also contributes to the destabilization of political communication in the public sphere and challenges the open deliberative democracy that Habermas’ was inspired by. Destabilization of deliberate democracy is however not solely perceived as a negative effect of the internet. As online political communication is powered by the participation of its societal actors; media, organizations, state, and citizens, it can therefore challenge old systems to positively affect the public discourse in public spheres and in society (Dahlgren, 2005). Civil society and their enactment on the public sphere have become an important societal global actor to catalyze and

legitimize states' and modern organizations' governance of societal issues (Held, 2004; Calhoun, 2011).

The increased institutional establishment of international NGO's, often founded on universal human rights as the common determinant. The rise of global movements constitutes the idea of a *global* civil society (Castells, 2008). There is an important dynamic in the idea of global civil society: the movement of public opinion. Digital and social media have organizing qualities that can mobilize people but are determined by the social movement's ability to efficiently create debate in the global public sphere (Castells, 2008). Discourses in civil society have the ability to counteract existing discourses in society, which can influence what media institutions publish and potentially shift public opinion in the public sphere (Illia et al., 2021). This dynamic poses a challenge for organizations. Consequently, the most important task for powerful organizations today is to respond to the demands of civil society rather than state institutions in order to prevent scrutiny (Calhoun, 2011).

Organizations' desire to become part of the public sphere, and hereby, influence it. When organizations engage in wicked problems in society, for the common good and on behalf of civil society (Alexander, 2006), the borders between sectors, public and private, are washed away. The (corporate) term *civic action* describes how organizations deliberately aim to break down barriers between corporate environments, sectors, and civil society (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014; Lichtermann, 2020). The term focuses on the processes and patterns of working for the common good, and not on the involved actors. However, it is notably important to realize that organizations can only act on what they perceive as the common good. They evaluate the wickedness of the current issue pursuant to their own convictions. Essentially, the term civic action helps to redefine modern organizations' role in society as they tackle big societal issues under the surveillance of the public sphere (Lichterman, 2020).

The following part will shed light on the theoretical concepts of organizational partnerships with e.g., civil society in organizations' quest to meet the demands of the public.

2.1.3 Partnerships Across Sectors

Austin and Seitanidi (2012a) argue that a shift is happening in business and nonprofit sectors towards embracing collaboration for addressing complex social issues (e.g., wicked problems).

Referring back to Austin (2010), Austin and Seitanidi's starting premise is that creating value is the central justification for cross-sector partnering. As per Austin and Seitanidi, a significant reason for the focus on collaborations is the accelerated growth of non-profit organizations: "Businesses and nonprofit organizations can and do create economic and social value on their own, cross-sector collaboration is the organizational vehicle of choice for both businesses and nonprofits to create more value together than they could have done separately" (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a, p. 734). In order to create the value necessary to meet their missions, non-profits have realized that collaborating with businesses is a vital strategy (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a). Partnerships are built based on their likelihood of producing collective strength and legitimacy, the degree of interdependence, and low potential for conflict (Haigh, Kennedy & Walker, 2015). There are numerous reasons that motivate organizations to engage in partnerships; build long-term competitive advantage (Zadek, 2004), develop new skills and competencies (Carroll, 1991) or create a continuous learning environment (Nijhof, de Bruijn & Honders, 2008). All of these objectives are becoming increasingly important for partnerships in the arena of complex issues and wicked problems.

The type of partnership that this study dives further into are *cross-sector partnerships* (CSP). Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2015) define CSPs as the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors – public, private and third – to jointly achieve an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately (Bryson, Crosby & Stone, 2006, p. 44 in Bryson et al., 2015). Going from a "collaboration" to a "partnership" often means that the partners formally agree to leverage their resources and funding to work toward shared, measurable goals (Bryson et al., 2015). A CSP is a voluntary collaboration "between actors from organizations in two or more economic sectors in a forum in which they cooperatively attempt to solve a problem or issue of mutual concern that is in some way identified with a public policy agenda item" (Waddock, 1991, p. 481-482 in Vestergaard et al., 2020). CSPs share the overall objective of contributing to societal betterment, but they differ in terms of the nature and scope of the issue they aim to contribute to and the means by which they do so (Vestergaard et al., 2020). Austin (2000a) has labeled CSPs as the collaboration paradigm of the 21st century, needed to solve increasingly complex challenges which exceed the capabilities of any single sector. In order to specify the research area of CSPs, Selsky and Parker (2005) examine project-based *cross-sector partnerships to address social issues* (CSSPs). CSSPs are defined as cross-sector projects formed explicitly to address social issues and causes that actively engage the partners on an ongoing basis – either

as transactional, integrative, or developmental (Selsky & Parker, 2005). These CSSPs often address complex social issues, such as wicked problems (Babiak & Thibault, 2009; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Waddock, 1991 in Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). A CSSP is a voluntary collaboration between organizations from more than one sector to address a mutually prioritized social issue. CSSPs can be divided into two categories: large and small. Small CSSPs only have two or three partners from two or three of the different sectors (business, public, or civil society), whereas large CSSPs, also known as multi-stakeholder partnerships, have multiple partners from all three sectors (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). Partners in small CSSPs typically benefit from legitimacy gains, access to unique networks, and specialized expertise (Yaziji, 2004).

There are different ways to differentiate between cross-sector partnerships. Vestergaard et al. presents the following: configuration of the partnership, the degree and type of collaboration, the issue and aim, the scope (micro, meso and macro) and the function it is pursued through (Vestergaard et al., 2020). This figure will be used in the findings section from the partnerships as a way to provide an overview of the partnerships.

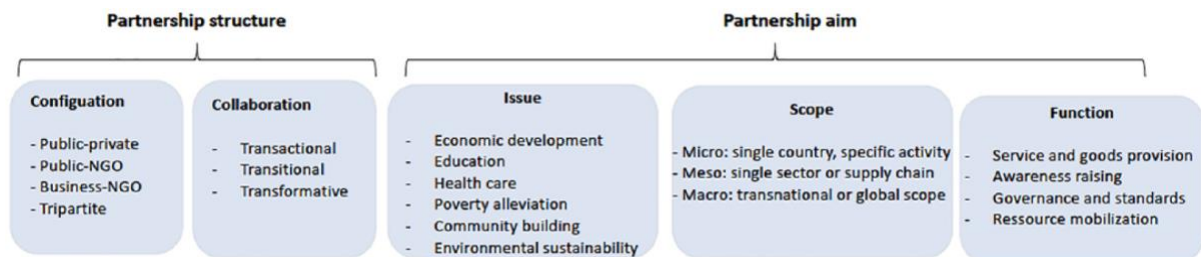


Figure 1. Cross-sector partnership structures and aims. Source: Vestergaard et al., 2020.

A *corporate–non-profit partnership* (CNP) is a particular type of CSP. This type of partnership has become one of the most common and rapidly expanding forms of CSPs in recent decades, but boundary conditions and stakeholder perceptions are yet unexplored (Maktoufi, O’Connor & Shumate, 2020). CNP’s are collaborations between two fundamentally different types of organizations – corporations and non-profit entities – with the aim of advancing each partner’s strategic goals and interests. Common forms of these partnerships include co-branding and sponsorship (Maktoufi et al., 2020). Asking if the CSR message matters, Maktoufi et al. conclude that *created fit messages* (messages aimed to articulate shared values, goals, or missions between the partners to stakeholders) generally lead to more favorable perceptions of partnership fit, indicating the importance of strategic messaging in CSR activities.

Communicating the fit of CNP's is crucial for making legitimacy claims and establishing transparent relationships with stakeholders, thereby managing perceptions and evaluations effectively (Maktoufi et al., 2020).

2.2 Organizational Legitimacy Through Hybridity

2.2.1 Legitimacy: The License to Operate

Research on legitimacy shows that it is hard to define what legitimacy is without addressing why it is relevant (Suchman, 1995). As a result of transnational value chains in a globalized world, organizations experience an increased moral pressure from its surrounding stakeholders to handle societal issues that stretch far beyond the organization's ability and purpose to make profits (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011). In the changing institutional context of global governance, corporations have to find new ways to legitimize their licenses to operate (Scherer & Palazzo, 2011; Suchman, 1995).

Legitimacy stems from the Latin *legitimare* and refers to the state or the quality of being rightful and justifiable (Cheney, Morsing & Christensen, 2008). Suchman broadly defines legitimacy as a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, belief, and definitions (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Suchman further distinguishes between three types of legitimacy: *pragmatic*, *moral* (or normative) and *cognitive* legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). (1) Pragmatic legitimacy is prescribed to organizations as long as the organizational behaviors work in favor of the individual and its self-interest. Suchman further breaks this type down in three variants; (1a) *exchange*: the need for public support; (1b) *influence*: responsiveness to public interests, and (1c) *dispositional*: the organization is personified and can be held accountable as a solid entity (Suchman, 1995, p. 578). (2) Moral legitimacy is based on moral judgements and arguments of whether an organization seeks to fulfill broad societal values or not. Suchman defines this through four characteristics; (2a) *consequential*: judged on the basis of accomplishments, (2b) *procedural*: judged on the morality in the processes employed while producing socially valued outcomes, (2c) *structural legitimacy*; judged by the organization's overall capacity and consistency in its organizational (legal) structure and, finally, (2d) *personal legitimacy*: judged by the charisma of the organization's leader (Suchman, 1995, p. 580). (3) Cognitive legitimacy takes for granted that institutions have legitimacy simply by the

fact their behaviors are perceived as inevitable and necessary and therefore the organization is legitimate (Suchman, 1995, p. 583).

One common notable dimension of Suchman's definitions is that legitimacy is employed objectively in the broad social construction, but is created subjectively (Suchman, 1995). This is done in a network of multiple stakeholders with shared processes of moral sensemaking that constitutes generally accepted corporate standards (Calton & Payne, 2003). As one of the first scholars to actively define the term legitimacy, much research has since been built on Suchman's definition and arguments on why legitimacy is relevant.

Legitimacy stems from cultural values in society and suggests that organizations operate under a mandate that can be withdrawn by the public if the organization fails to work towards public good (Woodward, Edwards & Birkin, 1996). Legitimacy is a socially constructed set of assumptions of the socially accepted ways to operate and has a direct impact on the survival of an organization (Cheney et al., 2008). The only way for it to survive is in fact to obtain legitimacy (Kratz & Block, 2008; Díez-De-Castro & Peris-Ortiz, 2018). Today's complex expansion of corporate communications (a joint term for messages, images, functions and personnel) challenges organizations' ability to successfully integrate in society, and consequently affects how they can obtain social legitimacy (Cheney et al., 2008). Legitimacy is constructed and determined by the organization's ability to constantly negotiate and adjust prevailing institutional logics while adapting to changes in the institutional environment (Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012). *Institutional isomorphism* can improve legitimacy by latching onto dominant models of organizing, processes, and practices (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Deephouse & Carter, 2005). Mayntz (2010) introduced the idea of *input* and *output* legitimacy. This is further developed by Rasche et al. (2023) to describe the legitimization of organizations in today's organizational governance of societal issues and the decision making for corporate standards this entails, as a result of lacking democratic participation. Input legitimacy refers to the belief that decisions are made according to the preferences of the population through stakeholder involvement. Output legitimacy refers to decision makers' ability to actively constitute a set of rules to effectively solve collective issues that meet the expectations of the population (Rasche et al., 2023). Expectations in moral legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) lead to the similarities of organizational reputation and legitimacy, as they are both a result of social construction processes from stakeholder evaluations but are still to be considered different (Deephouse & Carter, 2005).

The following sections will further investigate the term legitimacy and dive deeper into existing research on how legitimacy is obtained when the structure and identity of modern organizations are multiplied in order to meet the diverse demands of their changing surroundings. We will employ definitions of the characteristics of hybrid organizations, then revert back to the term legitimacy in studies on how these organizations seek to obtain legitimacy.

2.2.2 Hybridity & Hybrid Organizations

Hybrids are complex organizations. They are multi-sector phenomena with unclear sector accountability that often engenders unease and distrust. *Hybrid organizations* are considered as organizations that possess ‘significant’ characteristics of more than one sector (Billis, 2010). Organizational hybridity is not just any mixture of features from different sectors but is about fundamental and distinctly different governance and operational principles (Billis, 2010).

In their research, Battilana and Lee (2014) analyze *social enterprises*, which combine economic, social and environmental goals and the organizational forms of both charity and business, as an ideal type of hybrid organization (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Ebrahim, Battilana & Mair, 2014). Social enterprises illustrate the fusion of third/public and private sector values (Billis, 2010, p. 13). The increased popularity of social enterprises has resulted in regulatory activity aimed at supporting the development of a social enterprise field. For example, the practice of *impact investing*, which refers to investment that is made with the intention of generating positive social impact as well as financial returns (Battilana & Lee, 2014).

When Billis’ book was published in 2010, the terms hybrid and *hybridization* did not have a common and widespread definition, although several were proposed (Powell, 1987; Brandsen, van de Donk & Putters, 2005; Evers, 2005). With the rise to prominence of social enterprises, Billis addresses that the “blurring sector-problem” is reminding us that hybrids are not on a continuum or working as a separate sector, but sometimes integrated in all three sectors. Furthermore, a paradox remains. Despite the blurring and apparent diminution of boundaries, sector identity remains powerful and important. Sectors are treated as collections of non-hybrid organizations. It is suggested that (a) all organizations have broad generic structural features or elements (such as the need for resources) but that (b) their nature and logic or principles are distinctly different in each sector (Billis, 2010).

According to Billis, essential to studying hybrid organizations is establishing the nature of the “non-hybrid” state of the phenomenon (Billis, 2010). He proposes using levels in understanding the *hybrid organizational type*. These levels consist of: (a) the level of hybridity (shallow vs. entrenched) and (b) the degree of willingness in adopting the hybrid form (organic vs. enacted). A *shallow hybrid* exhibits minimal or superficial hybridization, while an *entrenched hybrid* deeply integrates hybridity into both the governance and operational levels of the organization. Regarding the act of founding the organization, an *organic hybrid* starts as a single-sector entity and gradually adopts hybrid characteristics. In contrast, an *enacted hybrid* is an organization that from the beginning is established as a hybrid. Among the numerous collaborative mechanisms existing across sectors, such as partnerships, networks, and joint ventures, an enacted hybrid is commonly recognized as an independent, often legal, structure (Billis, 2010).

As stated, Billis (2010) argued that hybrid organizations blur the boundaries of the three traditional distinct sectors. Furthermore, it is possible to define hybrid organizations as organizations that combine two or more institutional logics (Jay, 2013; Pache & Santos, 2013; Zollo et al., 2023). *Institutional logics* are here defined as overarching principles, values, beliefs, and assumptions that prescribe what is legitimate and meaningful within different realms of an organization’s social and economic life (Mongelli, Rullani & Versari 2017), with multiple organizational forms to cope with pressures coming from internal and external stakeholders (Jay, 2013). Hybrid organizations combine competing logics by selectively coupling intact elements drawn from each logic at organizational level. *Selective coupling* allows hybrids to manage the incompatibility between logics and thus reduce the risks and costs of alternative practice-level strategies, such as *decoupling* (Pache & Santos, 2013). *Decoupling* is defined as endorsing practices prescribed by an external at-play logic, while at the same time doing practices promoted by in-use logic (Tilcsik, 2010 in Saetre, 2023). Since hybrid organizations do not belong to any one of the three traditional sectors (public, private and third) completely, they can simultaneously cope with challenges coming from different environments (Haigh et al., 2015). Zollo et al. (2023) emphasize the significance of combining multiple identities as a critical element for hybrid organizations. However, the above is also the reason scholars have defined hybrid organizations as “fragile organizations” that are in the risk of failure due to their need of effectively balancing a social mission and fulfilling the business required by stakeholders (Santos, Pache & Birkholz, 2015).

Since hybrid organizations are complex and ambitious, scholars often work with ideal types of hybrids. Ebrahim et al. (2014) conceptualize two key governance challenges organizations face: accountability for dual performance objectives and accountability to multiple principal stakeholders (Ebrahim et al. 2014). On a larger scheme Battilana, Walker, and Dorsey (2012) works with the *hybrid ideal*. This hypothetical organization is fully integrated and everything it does produces both social value and commercial revenue. This vision means that there is no choice between mission and profit because these aims are integrated in the same strategy. Further, the integration of social and commercial value creation enables a virtuous cycle of profit and reinvestment in the social mission that builds large-scale solutions to social problems.

Lee and Jay (2015) showed how hybrids can serve as allies to established companies in the conduct of their sustainability strategies. However, as Lee and Jay present, potential challenges may arise for a hybrid relating to the authenticity of its values, organizational identity, and culture. Hybrids must balance these challenges with the potential for upscaling impact and positive network effects often achieved by collaborating with larger corporations (Lee & Jay, 2015 in Haigh, Walker, Bacq & Kickul, 2015).

Through their framework, Vakkuri, Johanson, Feng, and Giordano (2021) present how hybrid organizations can be conceptualized through two types of lenses: (1) the dimensions of hybridity (ownership, institutional logics, funding and control) and (2) their approaches to value creation (mixing, compromising and legitimizing) (Vakkuri et al., 2021). They argue that hybrids not only combine a variety of institutions, but also a variety of value creation processes (Vakkuri et al., 2021). The first lens identifies the structural and operational dimensions of hybrids; mixed ownership, goal incongruence, coupling of institutional logics, funding arrangements and forms of control. The second lens focuses on the dynamic processes through which these structures enact value creation. This lens looks at how hybrids operationalize their structural complexities into actual practices that mix, compromise, and legitimize different values to achieve organizational goals and maintain legitimacy (Vakkuri et al., 2021). Moreover, legitimizing value; justifying value-creation activities and creating value through legitimizations, is also about recognizing that value is created through the processes of legitimization (Vakkuri et al., 2021). According to Vakkuri et al. (2021), hybrids combine a variety of institutions and value creation processes, because they operate across different

sectors and institutional contexts, each with its own norms, logics, and value systems.

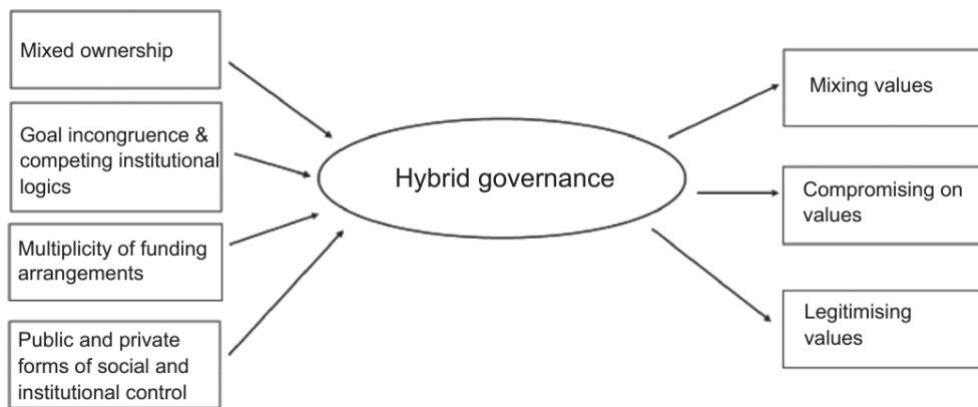


Figure 2. Hybrid Governance and Value-creation Mechanisms (Vakkuri & Johanson 2020 in Vakkuri et al., 2021; Appx. 15).

Hybrid organizations must constantly develop strategies to combine institutional logics and sustain their hybrid forms. While conflicting institutional logics seem to be an immediate threat in obtaining legitimacy, hybrids think otherwise (Siwale et al., 2021). The process of gaining legitimacy in modern society is in fact the very fundamental idea of the hybrid organization (Huybrechts et al., 2020). Hybridity is a process of legitimacy, not an end station. Legitimacy is in itself a hybrid phenomenon in modern shifting institutional demands (Jenco, 2016).

2.2.3 Legitimacy: The Greatest Struggle for Hybrid Organizations

Legitimacy tensions are inherent in hybrid organizations (Gauthier, Kappen & Zhang, 2024). Legitimacy is traditionally granted to organizations that fit institutionalized expectations (Suchman, 1995). Hybrid organizations, whose business models necessitate the management of competing institutional logics, struggle to gain legitimacy (Pache & Santos, 2013). They are constantly held accountable for multiple institutional demands by internal and external stakeholders, society, and media (Vakkuri et al., 2021) who have different and possibly contradictory legitimation criteria (Kraatz & Block, 2008; Huybrechts et al., 2020). Changing internal and external stakeholder demands who struggle to understand and accept these new organizations pose a big legitimacy challenge for hybrids (Battilana et al., 2015; Zollo et al., 2022; Turner et al., 2023). In order to develop and maintain legitimacy, hybrids must appeal to the multiple audiences of the business sector and the social sector, respectively (Battilana & Lee, 2014). However, hybrid organizations cannot deviate from their multiple or potentially

conflicting stakeholder pressures, because the support of one stakeholder group risks being secured at the expense of another stakeholder's loss of support, making the maintenance of legitimacy more complex. Hybrids seek agency in the midst of institutional logics as they believe that they can solve complex issues through several logics (Pache & Santos, 2010). Aiming for one thing or one goal is perceived by hybrids to be at the expense of the hybrid ideal (Battilana et al., 2012). Because of this, hybrids face the risk of generating ambiguity about whether certain organizational outcomes represent success or failure, which represents a paradox for hybrids (Jay, 2013). However, ambiguity is also a potential tool to meet stakeholder credibility (Vaara et al., 2004). Stakeholders that assume that the organization pursues commercial activities rather than their social mission may cause a deviation from recognizable aspects of the social mission and vice versa (Battilana et al., 2012).

Legitimacy is hybrids' biggest challenge, but also constitutive of their flexible form and reality. Hybrids desire their flexibility, because they do not see their (legal) structure as fixed, so it can shift to better serve the mission and gain legitimacy (Haigh et al., 2015) and simultaneously, because of this, also increase their effectiveness (He, 2021). Hybrids have an eagerness and a "need to be understood" (Haigh et al., 2015), a need to "fit in" to appear stable within their emerging fields but at the same time address change and growth, "to stand out", to be profitable or keep their social mission alive (Granados & Rosli, 2020). As mentioned, several scholars have challenged hybrid organizations' mix of decoupling and selective coupling of institutional logics in response to their stakeholder demands (Saetre, 2023), that make them constantly and strategically switch to or within a for-profit "category" to obtain legitimacy (Battilana & Lee, 2014). When lacking legitimacy in a given field, hybrids may manipulate the "templates" provided by the multiple institutional logics to gain acceptance (Pache & Santos, 2013). Once these forms are widely adopted by organizations, they gain social (*normative*) legitimacy and become institutionalized; in other terms, the patterns of organizing they prescribe become "taken-for-granted" within this field of activity (Battilana & Lee, 2014, Haigh et al., 2015) and this is a significant element for their long-term survival (Zollo et al., 2022). Some hybrids may even adapt to a very large part of the predominant logic to gain legitimacy. To retain their hybridity and to survive in the long run, hybrids need to create and sustain organizational legitimacy by establishing congruence with values from these different spheres (Gulbrandsen, 2011).

Gaining legitimacy in validity is important for hybrids near stakeholders (He, 2021). By combining the goals and logics of different institutional categories, hybrids bridge existing categories in unprecedented ways and in so doing they create categorical confusion (Huybrechts et al., 2020). Hybrids are very alert of their impression management as it serves as self-assuring and a legitimacy building exercise from the inside-out (Granados & Rosli, 2020). The role of the organizational identity has been challenged by various scholars, as incongruities between these identities negatively impacts both internal commitment to the mission and organizational legitimacy from the outside (Moss et al., 2011). Balancing several identities to gain legitimacy can result in affecting the organizational structure, which ends up being a compromise to keep all stakeholders satisfied (Zollo et al., 2022). Granados and Rosli's study (2020) concluded that the hybrid's identity must be collectively shared to build the image of the organization that serves as means to gaining legitimacy. Simultaneously, legitimacy is obtained through a support system of resources and business advantages that mirrors the hybrid's economic logics and ability to grow financially (Granados & Rosli, 2020).

The mix of stakeholder demands not only describes identity challenges – hybrids turn to a more optimistic point-of-view and see it as a way of choosing distinctiveness that results in a unique identity that positively influences their communication strategy (Gauthier et al., 2024). Social enterprise hybrids may use their mission statements as means to gain legitimacy, but not organizational performance if this mission statement characterizes high-performing (e.g., financial) ventures, because it will deflect attention from the social mission (Moss et al., 2011).

A recent study by Gauthier et al. (2024) identifies four legitimacy-building discourses and communication tactics by hybrids: critiquing, proposing, advocating and communicating. Furthermore, the study also shows that storytelling is a key tool in sensemaking and sensegiving in legitimacy. The legitimacy-building tactic “communicating” refers to sharing information (Gauthier et al., (2024). The competing institutional logics, the various yet distinct identities and external pressures affect the communication of hybrids and challenge the practice of communicating authentically. The complexities of multiple organizational identities from a communications point-of-view motivates us to take a closer look at previous research regarding CSR communication, especially the CSR term transparency and its relationship with legitimacy. The following part will address studies that challenge and describe the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in organizations that address wicked problems in their CSR.

2.3 Strategic Transparency in CSR

2.3.1 CSR Communication & Transparency

Matten and Moon (2008) claim that there are three reasons why *corporate social responsibility* (CSR) is difficult to define: (1) CSR is an appraised and complex term that is simple to use; (2) CSR is a broad term that covers many different perceptions, norms and perspectives; and (3) CSR is a dynamic phenomenon that is always evolving. Though Matten and Moon note the difficulty of defining CSR, they argue that at its core CSR reflects the social imperatives and the social consequences of a business success. Therefore, CSR consists of the policies and practices of businesses that reflect their social responsibility (Matten & Moon, 2008). According to Christensen, Morsing and Thyssen (2013), legislators, businesses, and other agenda-setters form CSR through interpretations, enactments, and negotiations. Because of CSR's ongoing development, it turns into "an unstable arena of exploration" (Christensen et al., 2013, p. 1-2). As a result, ideals, standards, and goals are constantly growing and changing in this so-called arena (Christensen et al., 2013; Scherer and Palazzo, 2011).

When studying CSR, it is unavoidable to include theory of *CSR communication* as the two concepts are closely interlinked – and in some ways the same (Schultz, Castelló & Morsing, 2013). Greenwashing, pinkwashing and bluewashing are terms that have gained popularity in recent years and refer to the relationship between CSR communications and practices. They are used towards organizations accused of having a mismatch between their CSR practices and CSR communications, the difference between their "CSR talking" and their "CSR walking" (Schoeneborn, Morsing & Crane, 2020).

The term CSR is described by Scherer and Palazzo (2011) as an umbrella term to refer to the debate surrounding the role of business in society and its responsibilities. They contend that businesses have become "politicized" and significant political players in the global society as a result of globalization. Further, they dispute that businesses are not only financially motivated, but view legitimacy as a crucial motivational factor. In a similar vein, Matten and Moon argue that it is critical to comprehend the drivers and motivations behind explicit CSR, such as stakeholder pressure, legitimacy, and reputation, as these can influence the viability and efficacy of CSR initiatives (Matten & Moon, 2008).

Transparency is a foundational principle in CSR communication. It involves openness, clarity, and honesty in how organizations communicate their CSR efforts, impacts, and outcomes to various stakeholders (Kim, & Lee, 2018). Kim and Lee view *transparency* as a necessary condition for strategic communication of genuine CSR motives in relation to stakeholders' trust (Kim & Lee, 2018). Christensen (2021) defines transparency as insight, knowledge and understanding, which he argues is often invoked or taken for granted in many corporate ideals and practices. Rawlins (2009) imagines that transparency practices will contribute to “enhance the reasoning ability of publics and holding organizations accountable for their actions, policies, and practices” (Rawlins, 2009, p. 75). Similarly, Christensen sees transparency as a tool for reducing information asymmetry and fostering a sense of credibility in corporate communication (Christensen, 2021; Christensen & Cheney, 2015). Hansen and Weiskopf (2020) explore how transparency is achieved through various modalities, emphasizing that it is not a singular but a heterogeneous and dynamic concept. Therefore, they suggest that the concept of “transparency matrices” suggests that we speak of transparency in the plural (*transparencies*), rather than in the singular, and, by implication, that we should study multiple modalities. An underlying belief is that transparency, as insight, means access to the *truth* (Oliver, 2004). However, this presumption begs the question about how truth is perceived (Christensen, 2021). Truth may be construed as correspondence, consistency, consensus, or construction (Henriques, 2007 in Christensen, 2021). In order to compose a parsimonious definition of transparency, Schnackenberg and Tomlinson (2016) performed a large synthesizing of existing literature in the field of organizational transparency. Based on their research, they offered a definition of transparency: “Transparency is the perceived quality of intentionally shared information from a sender” (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016, p. 1788). Rawlins presents high standards for organizational transparency, what could almost be called the “transparency ideal”: “To be transparent, organizations should voluntarily share information that is inclusive, auditable (verifiable), complete, relevant, accurate, neutral, comparable, clear, timely, accessible, reliable, honest, and holds the organization accountable” (Rawlins, 2009, p. 79). Christensen and Cheney showed how the host has an influence on the opacity. Meaning that transparency comes with manipulation and ambiguity. Fundamentally, transparency is ambiguous as a source of clarity and opacity, light, and darkness (Christensen & Cheney, 2015). As Christensen (2021) points out, there is a fundamental problem with transparency: “No matter how truth is constructed, transparency understood as insight is always by proxy, that is, through something else” (Christensen, 2021, p. 3). This means that associated terms such as credibility, authenticity and accountability have often become stand-ins. Birchall

(2011) argues another problem with transparency “(...) while it attempts to promote trust, we still have to trust in the procedures and promise of transparency” (Birchall, 2011, p. 14). This brings us to the apparent antonym to transparency: secrecy. From a social standpoint, the increasing importance of transparency in politics and culture has led to a negative view of secrecy. Yet, the discourse that criticizes secrecy and praises transparency might lead to the misunderstanding of the interconnected relationship between these two concepts. Instead of treating transparency and “secrecy” as an either-or choice, Birchall argues for finding new ways to navigate the complexity of transparency-as-secrecy and secrecy-as-transparency (Birchall, 2011).

Given the central role of *trustworthiness* perceptions in determining trust, Schnackenberg and Tomlinson (2016) argue that *transparency perceptions* is an evaluation of the quality of information provided by the organization (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Pirson and Malhotra assume transparency to be a dimension of trustworthiness. However, their findings show that transparency is not actually related to trust and is therefore inaccurately specified as a dimension of trustworthiness. Schnackenberg and Tomlinson argue that transparency is actually a precursor, rather than a dimension, of trustworthiness (Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016).

2.3.2 Transparency & Accountability for Legitimacy

The complex expansion of corporate communications employs legitimacy in everything because this “total communication” reflects everything that the organization does (Cheney et al., 2008). Habermas argued that the belief in legitimacy depends on claims that must be considered as truth, but the truth-claims became increasingly precarious; his analysis of legitimacy is essentially a crisis of culture and a question of who is watching (Habermas, 1973 in Mayntz, 2010). As mentioned above, other terms came to replace, or in some cases, enhance the promise of transparency; credibility, authenticity, and accountability (Christensen, 2021). Within the notion of *accountability*, it is assumed that social actors (persons, organizations, institutions, etc.) are “accessible”; that is, visible and capable of being described accurately in a language that can be meaningfully and socially shared. Accountability, in this matter, assumes a high degree of (*self*)-*transparency* and is, in practice, often operationalized as such (Cheney et al., 2008). While accountability is often considered a result of transparency, the opposite dimension is also often assumed. The relationship between accountability and transparency

remains unclear (Fox, 2007). Accountability essentially suggests an ability to account for something, for example one's policies, decisions, actions and it involves the skill of mastering an acceptable and persuasive language but does not represent the organization as it "is" entirely (Christensen, 2021). It conveys an image of transparency and trustworthiness (Bovens, 2007).

Scholarly studies in transparency's effects on legitimacy and vice-versa often becomes a contest of existing normative assumptions, as transparency is socially a rather unpredictable phenomena (De Fine Licht et al., 2014). Transparency is traditionally assumed to enhance legitimacy and enhance public acceptance of institutional structures (Curtin & Meijer, 2006; Christensen, 2021), but organizations do not need to operate in a crystal clear "fishbowl" (De Fine Licht et al., 2014) but can choose a fuzzy "opaque" transparency with selected access to information (Fox, 2007). Legitimacy effects of transparency can only be realized if the public recognizes the difference between what is transparent and what is non-transparent (De Fine Licht et al., 2014). The question remains to what degree transparency is expected to legitimize an organization in modern society. Given a recent increase in societal pressure on organizations and their CSR efforts, it may be argued that transparency is becoming one of the most important "account technologies" of our times (Christensen & Cheney, 2009 in Christensen et al., 2010). Under these circumstances, accountability and transparency is increasingly becoming a synonym for CSR (Christensen, 2021). Public expectations change over time, and in the information age, transparency is being increasingly demanded (Lyon et al., 2018).

The internet plays a vital role in sharing information and increasing transparency in the process of legitimizing organizations (Curtin & Meijer, 2006; Huybrechts et al., 2020). While legitimacy and CSR has a positive relationship, transparency can potentially pose a threat to legitimacy (Solano et al., 2018). Frustration and disappointment, as a result of public access to unacceptable information, may contribute to a negative impact of transparency on legitimacy. Transparency can also challenge legitimacy at a later point and therefore, the organization faces the risk of manipulation because the process of the previous policy making is open to all (De Fine Licht et al., 2014). A study by Curtin and Meijer (2006) in policymaking in the EU found that putting more information on websites will only have importance for people who are actively searching for it. Finally, transparency can result in NGO and media scrutiny (Curtin & Meijer, 2006). One person's transparency is another's surveillance. One person's accountability is another's persecution (Fox, 2007).

A recent study by Aggerholm & Thomsen (2024) in strategic communication in high sustainability pressure suggests a new model to map the relationships between transparency and legitimacy on the basis of accountability. Building on Holtzhausen and Zerfass' definition of *strategic communication* (Holtzhausen and Zerfass, 2013 in Aggerholm & Thomsen, 2024, p. 3), Aggerholm & Thomsen's study concludes that strategic communicative action demands open discourse, wholesome participation, transparency and accountability. Aggerholm & Thomsen argue that the communication needs to encompass three concepts to gain organizational legitimacy; (1) *Purposefulness*; presenting strategic intentions, often vision/mission statements, (2) *Transparency*; Explaining, justifying, and elaborating strategic intentions, and (3) *Participation*; In/external stakeholder engagement and dialogue. According to Figure 3 (Appx. 16) by Aggerholm & Thomsen the goal of these three resources is to create accountability in the public sphere that ultimately evolves into legitimacy on the basis of all three communicative actions. In other words, the study and its framework conclude that accountability is something you argue for, legitimacy is something you (eventually) earn (Aggerholm & Thomsen, 2024).

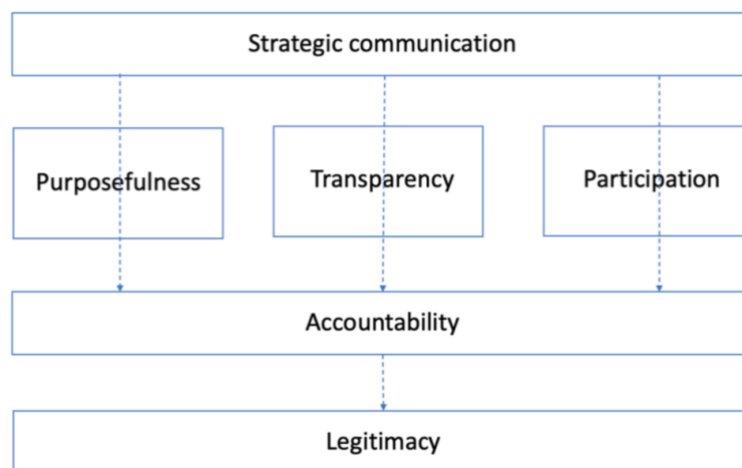


Figure 3. Dimensions of Strategic Communication in Context of High Sustainability Pressure framework (Aggerholm & Thomsen, 2024, p. 4; Appx. 16).

2.4 Theoretical Summary

According to Habermas, societal structures challenge the relevance of the public sphere in the power relations between the welfare state, organizations, and citizens (Habermas et al., 1964). While the idea of the public sphere holds that citizens speak as equals (Habermas, 1962), the reality is that inequality and new power structures constantly distort collective communication today (Calhoun, 2011). Conventional notions of the public sphere have become transformed to

a global public sphere that is not characterized by *sameness* but rather by global diversity and new global networked individualism (Castells, 2001 in Volkmer, 2003). Organizations desire to become part of the public sphere and hereby influence it. When organizations engage in wicked problems in society for the common good and on behalf of civil society (Alexander, 2006), the borders between sectors, public and private, are washed away. Known as “the problem of problems”, wicked problems are unique and defies classification (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Henriques (2018) argues that potential solutions to wicked problems are based on the judgments of multiple stakeholders, and that no single actor can solve the problem. Austin and Seitanidi argue that a shift is happening in business and non-profit sectors towards embracing collaboration for addressing complex social issues (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012a; 2012b). Partnerships are built based on their likelihood of producing collective strength and legitimacy, the degree of interdependence, and low potential for conflict (Haigh, Kennedy & Walker, 2015). Austin (2000a) has labeled CSPs as the collaboration paradigm of the 21st century, needed to solve increasingly complex challenges that exceed the capabilities of any single sector.

When the structure and identity of modern hybrid organizations are multiplied in order to meet the diverse demands of the public sphere to address wicked problems, hybrid organizations must constantly develop strategies to combine institutional logics and sustain their hybrid forms (Siwale et al., 2021). The process of gaining legitimacy in modern society is the very fundamental idea of the hybrid organization (Huybrechts et al., 2020). Hybridity is a process of legitimacy, not an end station. Legitimacy is in itself a hybrid phenomenon in modern shifting institutional demands (Jenco, 2016). As well as legitimacy, transparency is a foundational principle in CSR communication for organizations addressing wicked problems. Transparency is a tool for reducing information asymmetry and fostering a sense of credibility in corporate communication (Christensen, 2021; Christensen & Cheney, 2015). An underlying belief is that transparency, as insight, means access to the truth (Oliver, 2004) however, transparency comes with manipulation and ambiguity by the host (Christensen & Cheney, 2015). Therefore, a question remains; to what degree transparency is expected to legitimize an organization in modern society? (Christensen & Cheney, 2009 in Christensen et al., 2010).

3. Methodology

The following section outlines the methodological framework of this study. Firstly, the section will explain the philosophy of science in order to understand the underlying assumptions leading to our research approach. Secondly, the research approaches, methodological choices and subsequent data analysis is detailed. Lastly, a description of the method of analysis, and a review and reflection of how the chosen methodology affects the validity, reliability, and generalizability.

3.1 Philosophy of Science

Underlying presumptions and convictions influence the production of knowledge during any research process. Our standpoint in philosophy of science reflects how findings and conclusions of this study are interpreted. Ontological-, epistemological- and axiological assumptions make up the philosophy of science which allows us as researchers to interpret the research in an essential manner (Saunders et al., 2012).

The philosophy of science applied in this research is social constructivism that acts under the assumption that reality is socially constructed and is influenced by the ways individuals perceive and interpret their surroundings. By this, constructivist ontology rejects the scientific assertion that the world exists independently from human cognitive apparatus (Collin, 2003). Such a view-of-world is consistent with our research approach based on a case study where data is analyzed on the basis of socially formed attitudes obtained through semi-structured interviews and our interpretations of the empirical data. This allows us to address the social reality of organizations and their surroundings as social processes, where individual and collective sensemaking construct the perceived reality at a certain time in a certain space (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The transparency of partnerships in hybrid organizations and its effect on the organization's legitimacy is assumed as a reality constructed through social interactions. Applied concepts e.g., public sphere, institutional logics, transparency, legitimacy, CSPs, network society etc. are all applied as terms that stem from a socially constructed reality. One common notable dimension of the legitimacy definitions is that legitimacy is employed objectively in the broad social construction, but is created subjectively (Suchman, 1995) in a network of multiple

stakeholders with shared processes of moral sensemaking that constitutes generally accepted corporate standards (Calton & Payne, 2003). As another example, according to Fox (2007), transparency is an evaluation by the observer; what is transparent and what is not, is a socially constructed entity. Because of this, our findings do not reflect a definitive reality, but as a possible explanation to an observed phenomenon under the specific social circumstances of which the research is done.

3.1.1 Ontological Assumptions

Ontological beliefs and assumptions challenge the nature of reality and how it is explored (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Collin, 2003). These assumptions help us to address the fundamental nature of the phenomena of transparency's relationship with legitimacy when hybrid organizations make partnerships to tackle wicked problems, as well as the extent to which we can make broader notions about the 'reality' constructed in this study. The ontological assumption of social constructivism prescribes a reality that is collectively constructed by our surroundings in society, meaning that individual interpretations shape the nature of 'reality', yet it is still a perceived or an individual reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Collin, 2003). The notion of reality is dependent on the actors that are involved to construct it (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991), which is why we collect data from both members of Resilient and WaterBear, and representatives from collaborating partners. We argue that social constructivism is an imminent aspect of our research design as it is based upon preliminary interpretations of and meanings to collected data. They shape our understanding of how hybrid organizations can legitimize themselves through partnerships and how this might affect understandings of the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in CSR communication.

3.1.2 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology is concerned with what knowledge *is* and how it is produced. Knowledge is subjective and because of this, we as researchers must focus on understanding the meanings that people attach to their experiences (Saunders et al., 2012; Collin, 2003). This is rooted in our use of qualitative content analysis, where we examine the meaning construction of our interviewees of what e.g., is transparent and what is not. These assumptions make it possible for us as researchers to determine the optimal strategy for our data collection and research design. We argue that our interviews in the data collection, our theoretical structure and

empirical data collection are based upon the social constructivist ‘nature of reality’, which strongly connects to our notions above on how legitimacy is socially constructed as a set of assumptions. According to Gibbons (1987), the interpretivist research aims to understand the intersubjective meanings on the basis of social structures to explain why social beings act the way they do (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). With a social constructivist approach, this research aims to understand the sensemaking in legitimizing Resilient and WaterBear through partnerships by our interpretations of the actors’ motivations to engage in partnerships that are constructed between the parties.

3.1.3 Axiological Assumptions

Axiology accounts for our subjective values and biases that potentially influence the research process and how we interpret data (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill, 2012). As human beings in a given social structure doing research in a social reality, researchers must acknowledge how their pre-existing values and beliefs may influence the research process and the interpretations made throughout (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Collin, 2003). We account for this by being aware of our predispositions. We keep an inductive approach towards contradicting data that are not necessarily in line with our predispositions. As a vast amount of our interviewees are drawn from our personal and professional networks, we set the following guideline that an interviewee could not be interviewed by the researcher in their network in order to prevent potential predispositions. Due to past knowledge of Resilient and WaterBear and initial research in the early stages of this study, we are aware that assumptions in our own sensemaking can influence the objectivity of the research design, as the questions in our interview guides quickly can become polluted by pre-existing knowledge.

3.2 Research Approaches

Research encompasses a wide range of techniques for gathering and interpreting data and can take many different forms. Describing one’s research approach means clearly describing the conduct as it impacts on the design and construction of the study (Saunders et al., 2016). Our study primarily employs a deductive research approach, with certain elements demonstrating an inclination toward an inductive approach. In the following the two approaches will be described and subsequently related to the specific approach used in the study.

Deduction emphasizes the move from theory to data, where the researcher is looking to explain causal relationships between variables. The data collection is used to evaluate propositions related to an existing theory (Saunders et al., 2016). The deductive field is often criticized for not including alternative solutions or explanations. As an alternative, the inductive approach emphasizes explaining gaps and observations through the development and creation of theories and frameworks. The data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns, and create a conceptual framework (Saunders et al., 2016).

Generally, if the research involves an issue or area where there already exists a lot of theory, research will often take a deductive approach whereas research into a new, undiscovered topic will often become more inductive (Saunders et al., 2016). The study will use a combination of research approaches, since it revolves around both contemporary concepts, such as CSR communication, partnerships for societal change and hybrid organizations, and more established theories such as transparency and legitimacy. Challenging the connection between transparency and legitimacy brings us to new territories and therefore demands a more inductive approach.

This study can be described as a deductive theoretical study motivated by an empirical case that led us to investigate the relationship between transparency and legitimacy further. We aim to contribute to the theoretical field by applying the findings of how an observed reality challenges the theoretical relationship between transparency and legitimacy as described in pre-existing theory. The assumptions that this study is working from both stem from an empirical and theoretical standpoint, since there was both an initial motivation from what we observed in the real world, but also what is known from theories.

The following section elaborates on the research design of this thesis and the use of a single case study.

3.3 Research Design

The three types of research design; exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive all connect to different methodologies (Robson, 2002). Our research with a social constructivist approach is based on the exploratory design which follows that our criteria of success is not to provide a definite truth as such, but instead present emerging perspectives on the relationship between

transparency and legitimacy when hybrid organizations seek to obtain legitimacy on their quest to address wicked problems through partnerships.

3.3.1 Single Case Study

Our data collection relies on a qualitative method consisting of semi-structured interviews, and secondary desk research in the form of internal documents and external websites.

This research is based on a single case study, which is an exploration of a particular phenomenon in a specific context (Bryman, 2016). By exploring Resilient and WaterBear solely, this study can be regarded as a single case study, however, we choose to obtain data from individuals who are also outside of the organizations to obtain a wide understanding of the arena in which Resilient and WaterBear operates. According to Yin (2014), single case studies offer the potential to examine in-depth and contextualized insight in one or more complex social phenomena of potential relevance for other organizations. The importance of single case studies exists in their ability to contribute to the development of theory, now and in the future (Yin, 2014). Following Eisenhardt (1989), theory-building begins with presenting a theoretical framework, as demonstrated in the above literature review, and then followed by a selection of scenarios that can potentially challenge, discuss, and in some cases, extend previous theoretical contributions. Finally, the obtained data of the empirical research is examined for possible patterns and relationships (Eisenhardt, 1989). We address the empirical data with the concepts found in the theoretical framework.

The methodical approach for this research follows Saunders et al.'s (2012) theoretical framework regarded as 'the research onion'. The framework provides us a step-by-step guide on how to design the research to address the given problem statement. It is essential to ensure that the study is carried out in a process that ensures validity and reliability (Saunders et al., 2012). To ensure a constructive and systematic research process, we offer a visual flowchart of our process (Figure 4) alongside our research design. It is an overview that encompasses the essential steps and their inter-relationships. It also mirrors our objectives in the research design and its essential steps in the examination of our collected data. The analysis is structured into three overarching analytical subsections; (1) Resilient & WaterBear's Partnerships for Societal Change, (2) Resilient & WaterBear gain legitimacy through Hybridity, and (3) Strategic Transparency: Navigating Legitimacy in CSR Partnerships. This provides an overview that can

contribute to highlighting necessary corrections, adjustments, and improvements (Buckley & Waring, 2013).



Figure 4: Research process (Researchers' own production, 2024).

3.4 Data Collection

The data consists of 10 semi-structured interviews and desk research. In the following, the sampling, interview approach and desk research will be elaborated.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Our social constructivist approach aligns with our reason to conduct semi-structured interviews, wherein knowledge is viewed as actively constructed through social interactions. Whereas the desk research presents a narrow focus on the organizations with first handwritten knowledge.

The 10 informants are categorized in three categories: employees from Resilient and WaterBear, partners, and two experts on partnerships. One of the experts, Botha, specializes in impact investment and partnerships, while the other, Petit, specializes in storytelling and partnerships. Petit is responsible for the UN's documentary concept Ciné-ONU, which screens documentaries concerning the SDGs. There are a lot of similarities between Ciné-ONU and WaterBear, since WaterBear also works with SDGs and is a free platform. Botha and Petit have no relationship with Resilient and WaterBear and are therefore merely acting as experts in their field. All interviewees are also considered experts in their field, and have been asked questions regarding tendencies, characteristics and patterns within their field of expertise.

See the table below for an overview of the interviewees.

Reference in thesis	Name	Title	Organization	Expertise	Associated with Resilient / WaterBear		
					WaterBear	Date	Method
Thon	Anne-Louise Thon	General partner	V&A Ventures	Sustainability, partnerships and impact investment	Yes. Investor in WaterBear	March 12th 2024	Semi-structured in-person interview
Interviewee Ø	Anonymous	Creative Producer. External consultant at Ørsted, but fully retained in their in-house agency	Ørsted	Filmmaking, documentaries, branding, strategy and storytelling.	Yes. Through partnership with WaterBear	March 13th 2024	Semi-structured in-person interview
Sutaria	Sam Sutaria	CEO	WaterBear Network	Strategy, partnerships, documentaries	Yes. Employee	March 14th 2024	Semi-structured in-person interview
Petit	Caroline Petit	Deputy Director & Officer in Charge	United Nations Regional Information Center, UNRIC	Storytelling, partnerships, media	No	March 15th 2024	Semi-structured interview on Teams
Botha	Francois Botha	Founder & CEO	Simple	Impact investing, philanthropy, partnerships	No	March 19th 2024	Semi-structured in-person interview
Mason-Watts	Poppy	Chief Growth Officer	WaterBear Network	Investor relations, partnerships, media, communication, marketing, campaigns	Yes. Employee	March 19th 2024	Semi-structured interview on Teams
Dahlquist	Mie Dahlquist	CEO	Imagine5	Storytelling, partnerships, media	Yes. Through partnership with WaterBear	March 21th 2024	Semi-structured in-person interview
Høgsberg	Tobias Høgsberg	Communication, Marketing & Fundraising Director	WWF Denmark	Communication, marketing, fundraising, sustainability	No. However, WWF has a partnership with Resilient	March 22nd 2024	Semi-structured in-person interview
Kawaley-Lathan	Adrian Kawaley-Lathan	Executive Director	Resilient Foundation	Impact storytelling, media, communication, partnerships	Yes. Employee	March 25th 2024	Semi-structured interview on Teams
Day-Lewin	Charlotte Day-Lewin	Founder	Twin London	Marketing, global strategy, partnerships	Yes. Through partnership with WaterBear	March 27th 2024	Semi-structured interview on Teams

Stated in the table above, Tobias Høgsberg from WWF is neither associated with Resilient or WaterBear. The reason for this is that Høgsberg is not the WWF representative in charge of WWF's partnership with Resilient and WaterBear. We could not get an interview with the person in charge. Nevertheless, Høgsberg still represents the NGO side of their partnerships, as he is familiar with WWF's way of partnering and could answer those questions. Furthermore, Charlotte Day-Lewin is associated with Rolex, since her company, Twin London, is the global strategic consultancy for Rolex globally. Day-Lewin is Rolex's representative and is their person in charge of this particular partnership.

In the qualitative method, the interview is considered the most commonly used method for collecting empirical data due to its flexibility (Bryman, 2016). There are different forms of interviews, among which we have utilized the semi-structured interview format. What characterizes the semi-structured interview is the degree of flexibility during the interview since it is seen as an open interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. From a social constructivist perspective, flexibility in approach is essential. This allows for organic

exploration of topics and themes, enabling the interviewer to adapt the conversation based on the interviewee's responses, rather than rigidly adhering to predefined questions. Semi-structured interviews invite the informants to co-create the meaning and understanding of the subject (Kvale, 1996). An interview guide is provided along with the questions the interviewer wants to ask, but during the interview, there can be openings for other directions from the participant or the interviewer, which may deviate (Bryman, 2016). This provides the chance to elicit more detail from the interviewee by asking follow-up questions that are not included in the interview guides (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2020). The meaning of the "semi" in semi-structured is that not everything is of interest. Therefore, the interview guide is a framework, not a dictate (Kvale, 1996).

Sampling & Informants

In our qualitative sampling, we employed purposive sampling to deliberately select individuals who have relevance to our research questions. This sampling technique prescribes how researchers seek in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon by selecting participants who can provide substantial and diverse insights (Bryman, 2016).

In the sampling process, the most important aspect was to cover the four types of partners Resilient and WaterBear have: investors, corporations, NGOs/NPOs and media. VÅR Ventures (a tech and impact VC fund, that invests in technology-based startups with a sustainable footprint) is an investor in WaterBear. Ørsted (Danish for-profit multinational energy company) is a corporation. Rolex (Swiss watch designer and manufacturer) is both a non-profit and a corporation. World Wildlife Fund (WWF, an international non-profit, non-governmental organization who works to preserve nature and the environment) is a NGO and NPO. Imagine5 (an international impact non-profit media foundation telling stories at the intersection of culture and climate) is both a NPO and media foundation. The informants from the partners were found through LinkedIn, internet searches and our professional network.

The selection of informants within our research paradigm is inherently intertwined with our research questions. In order to understand and analyze the complex dynamics of partnerships, both within the confines of Resilient and WaterBear and within the broader societal framework, it became imperative to engage with individuals possessing expertise and direct involvement in the domain of partnerships. Thus, the strategic choice of informants is pivotal, as it ensures that our investigation is enriched by insights derived from seasoned practitioners rooted in the

field of partnerships. The informants were chosen either for their professional background, their knowledge of the partnership their organization has with Resilient and/or WaterBear or their ability and expertise in one of the fields our research questions cover.

The interviews have been collected in March 2024. All interviews have been recorded and transcribed (Appx. 1-10).

Interview Guides

As mentioned, interview guides are a tool that can be more or less controlling for the interview (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020). In the interview guide, our starting point is that the questions should be open and general. These questions can be classified as initial open-ended questions and intermediate questions, as they lead to longer and more in-depth answers from the informant (Bryman, 2016).

Given the different backgrounds and expertise of the interviewees, we crafted four different interview guides to fit the varying professional perspectives of the informants (Appx. 11).

3.4.2 Desk Research

In this section, we will describe the documents and websites' significance in providing insights about the inner workings and strategies of Resilient and WaterBear, thus enriching our understanding of their operations and contributing to the depth and breadth of our empirical findings. From the very beginning, desk research has been the main source for our motivation to research Resilient and WaterBear. As part of our empirical investigation, we have gained access to three of Resilient and WaterBear's internal documents. Furthermore, we have looked into their websites since they are significant sources of information about their operations and strategies available to the public. Therefore, the interviews are our primary data collection, whereas the documents and websites are secondary desk research.

A document's specific purpose can be defined as an attempt to manifest a certain definition of reality (Hastrup, Rübøw & Thomsen, 2011). Based on this view, we consider the internal documents as part of the basis for our understanding of the organizational and strategic framework. According to Lynggaard (2015), the inclusion of documents is often perceived as a banal activity, which is why analysis of documents is often omitted from empirical studies. And due to the relatively modest scope of the document material, we have restricted ourselves

from carrying out and making explicit a complete document analysis. The documents are instead treated directly in the analysis through references to individual sections in them rather than the textual components, and must, in contrast to the interviews, be perceived as supplementary.

The first document titled “Resilient Production Slates 2024” (Appx. 12) is an internal strategy and funding overview document for Resilient, and the second document titled “Resilient Network Partners 2024” (Appx. 13) is a company presentation and overview of the different types of partnerships Resilient engage in. This document is sent out to potential partners and investors. The last document is an internal strategy and funding overview document for both Resilient and WaterBear (Appx. 18).

Resilient and WaterBear’s websites served as our primary source for gaining initial insights into the organizations. During the interviews, we utilized this understanding and prompted employees to provide deeper explanations and insights. Thus, the websites played a pivotal role in shaping our research approach.

3.5 Data Analysis

In our work with our analysis of the qualitative data from the interviews we used content analysis. In the following section, we will explain the method and the considerations we took.

3.5.1 Qualitative Content Analysis

In the processing of our data, we have coded using qualitative content analysis, also known as thematic coding. Qualitative content analysis is a method for systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data and provides a systematic way to identify patterns, concepts, and larger themes within the data to gain insight into the meaning and context of the content. Often, frequency is utilized to identify which concepts may warrant further exploration. However, frequency is not considered a final result, it only indicates a pattern that may deserve probing. There are three features which characterize the method: qualitative content analysis reduces data, it is systematic, and it is flexible (Flick, 2014).

During the initial open coding phase, our primary goal as researchers was to refrain from imposing pre-existing theoretical frameworks onto the emerging themes within the data.

Therefore, we had an inductive approach where codes emerged directly from the data. Although, as researchers, we cannot entirely separate ourselves from theory and our preconceptions, meaning that these preconceptions and our theoretical knowledge about the subject is influencing the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This influence is particular as our interview guides are designed to structure the data, thereby guiding both the coding process and the subsequent formation of codes. Due to this we were largely deductive in the coding process. Deductive content analysis is a top-down approach, where predefined codes are applied based on the research questions, existing theories, or frameworks. By combining the inductive and deductive approach we are able to explore relationships between concepts and also test theoretical assumptions (Flick, 2014). Following Bryman (2016), we define a code as a noteworthy utterance or observation.

The interviews are coded using the NVivo software. In step 1 we developed 3 broad codes, which were identified as being not too descriptive, yet capturing most meanings: (1) Societal Issues & Partnerships, (2) The Hybrid Organizations, and (3) CSR Communication.

In step 2, we looked for themes and patterns which were developed, organized, and separated across the three general codings from step 1. We looked for similarities and connections in the codes in order to later code in step 3. The code “Societal Issues & Partnerships” is coded with 16 codes in step 2, with the two with most codes being “Impact Investing” and “Being an Actor in a Global Network Society”. The code “The Hybrid Organizations” has 20 codes on step 2, with the two with most codes being “Motivations for Partnering with Resilient & WaterBear” and “Impact Storytelling”. The code “CSR Communication” has 9 codes on step 2, with the two with most codes being “Partners’ Evaluations of Transparency vs. Non-transparency” and “Conflicting Agendas between Storytelling in Documentaries and Transparency”.

Lastly, in step 3, we grouped the themes from step 2 into 9 new categories. The difference between step 2 and 3 is that the sub-questions were catalyzing our way of categorizing the themes in step 3 and we grouped the codes from step 2 which were similar or had shared characteristics and meanings together under the 9 new umbrella-codes.

In total, 433 quotes have been coded in step 1 through the 3 broad codes. In step 2 these quotes were cut down to 268 quotes through more specific themes within the 3 broad codes. Lastly, in step 3, 9 new umbrella-codes were made. For access to all codings (steps 1, 2 and 3) and their structure in NVivo, see appendix 17.

Throughout the process we continuously refined and revised our coding structure. This involved combining and splitting codes, reorganizing categories, and refining definitions to better capture the nuances of the data.

3.6 Quality criteria

Through our qualitative methods, we navigate the complexities of research integrity and relevance. In our assessment of this study's quality, we take into account the study's context in relation to methodological choices, the philosophy of science and the research design. Validity, reliability, and generalizability are three fundamental pillars of research quality, which ensure accuracy, consistency and applicability. While generalizability will be explained, it is not regarded as a main criterion due to the constructivist philosophy of science. However, the term 'recognizability' will be added.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity delineates the degree to which the research effectively scrutinizes its intended research statement. It is a cornerstone to ensure the precision and strength of the examined subject. Validity encapsulates the alignment between observations and the particular phenomenon or variables that are of interest to the researchers (Pervin, 1984). Internal validity deals with how correctly the results of a study clarify the phenomenon being investigated. In order for the internal validity to be high, there needs to be a correlation between study's theories and empirical data. Through our data collection of interviews and desk research, we explore the dynamics of which Resilient and WaterBear gain legitimacy by employing several identities via partnerships through a shared desire to address wicked problems yet with low transparency. Acknowledging that there is a potential for biases in the individual perspectives of our informants, we adopt measures to mitigate its impact on the outcome of our study to fortify the validity of our findings.

3.6.2 Reliability

In order to ensure that the results of our study are not subjective, consistency and trustworthiness of the findings are addressed by their reliability. Reliability necessitates a critical evaluation of the data collection techniques and analytical methodologies to ensure replicable outcomes by other researchers or under other settings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

External reliability deals with whether the study is reliable and can be replicated (Bryman, 2016). In our case, external reliability is a challenge, as we have conducted interviews. However, we have met this challenge through interview guides. Semi-structured interviews leave room for the interviewer to delve deeper into answers by sub-questions to “validate” the research, however this does not mean that the informants’ statements are reliable. Which is why it may be difficult to obtain exactly the same perceptions again.

3.6.3 Generalizability and Recognizability

External validity is the generalizability of the study, where one assesses whether one’s results can be transferred to similar contexts (Bryman, 2016). Generalization is a recurrent theme in case studies as it pertains to the extent to which research findings of the particular study can be applied beyond the study’s context (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). While it may be considered that the analyzed phenomenon of this particular research may be applicable to other hybrid organizations within the realm of CSR communication, generalized theoretical contributions are not the ambition. Brinkmann and Tanggaard suggest that instead of generalizability, in a qualitative study, it can make more sense to work with the concept of ‘recognizability’ (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2020). Rather than being generalizable, we think it’s interesting that our study’s results can spur recognition in related studies within the same field of interest. This also connects to our constructivist philosophy of science, where we advocate for a nuanced understanding of contextual factors due to the subjective nature of a case study. And since we are exploring new organizational phenomena, we believe that this study still has the ability to serve as an overarching catalyst for further research in the realm of CSR governance and communication.

3.7 Method of Analysis

As mentioned, the research question and sub-questions have shaped the structure and contents of our literature review. The structure employed in the literature review have furthermore shaped the structure of the analysis. By this, the three sub-questions applied in this research shape the structure of the analysis in three overarching parts. The semi-structured interviews were, as mentioned, analyzed, and coded in order to answer the three sub-questions and the research question. The following will elaborate which of the presented theoretical concepts, frameworks and terms are employed analytically throughout the research divided into three sections.

The first part of the analysis ‘Resilient and WaterBear’s Partnerships for Societal Change’ is focused on answering the first sub-question; “How do Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network leverage partnerships addressing wicked problems to influence public opinion and foster societal change?”. Firstly, we will analyze the complex setting in which Resilient and WaterBear’s CSSPs take place. Secondly, by employing the term wicked problems in the setting of the network society, the analysis will explore how Resilient and WaterBear seek to influence public opinion when leveraging CSSPs for societal change in collaboration with partners and their diverse demands and motivations. This will provide insight into why partners engage in partnerships and what their potential agenda is by doing so.

The second part of the analysis ‘Resilient and WaterBear Gain Legitimacy Through Hybridity’ is answering the second sub-question: “How do Resilient Foundation and WaterBear Network gain legitimacy through their hybrid identity?”. We examine the various identities that characterize Resilient and WaterBear by firstly analyzing who they are as non-hybrids, which, according to Billis (2010), describes their sector-roots. We employ the Vakkuri et al. (2021) framework ‘Hybrid Governance and Value-creation Mechanisms’ which act as our overarching structure in our analysis of Resilient and WaterBear’s hybridity. Their hybrid governance is analyzed through two types of lenses; Firstly (Lens 1) the dimensions of hybridity (ownership, institutional logics, funding, and control) and, secondly (Lens 2) their approaches to value creation (mixing, compromising and legitimizing) with a focus on their partnerships (Vakkuri et al., 2021). Throughout the framework we analyze the different institutional logics selectively coupled by Resilient and WaterBear, which become constitutive of their multiple identities which also determine how they communicate as hybrids. We examine how this hybridity helps the organizations to gain legitimacy in their arena of diverse stakeholders.

The third part of the analysis ‘Strategic Transparency: Navigating Legitimacy in CSR Partnerships’ will focus on the last sub-question: “When does transparency in partnerships help to gain legitimacy, and to what extent does it challenge the relationship between transparency and legitimacy in CSR?”. We dive deeper into the communication aspects of Resilient and WaterBear’s partnerships and challenge their level of transparency when addressing societal issues through CSPs. The publicly available information on Resilient and WaterBear’s websites is included to show the degree of transparency in their partnerships. Through the framework “Dimensions of strategic communication in contexts of high sustainability pressure

framework” (Aggerholm & Thomsen, 2024), we assess transparency as a potential threat to legitimacy in our efforts to explain the relationship between purposefulness, transparency, and participation. The prevalence of all three should lead to accountability and finally, legitimacy. The findings of the framework are followed by the transparency assessments from their partners to finally conclude on how strategic transparency is employed. We challenge previous understandings of the relationship between transparency and legitimacy and ask when opaque transparency in partnerships becomes a strategic tool to gain legitimacy.

4. Analysis

4.1 Resilient and WaterBear’s Partnerships for Societal Change

In this first part of the analysis, we examine the setting in which Resilient and WaterBear’s partnerships operate. We focus on how the two organizations use storytelling to influence public opinion on wicked problems e.g. climate change, fostering collective action through their partnerships in a networked society. Furthermore, in order to better understand how Resilient Foundation (hereinafter ‘Resilient’) and WaterBear Network (hereinafter ‘WaterBear’) leverage their partnerships, we look at their partnerships with Ørsted, Rolex, Imagine5, WWF, and VÅR Ventures and their motivations for engaging in cross-sector partnerships to address social issues (hereinafter ‘CSSPs’).

4.1.1 Resilient and WaterBear & the Global Narrative of Wicked Problems

The non-profit organization Resilient and their sister for-profit streaming platform WaterBear want to make a positive change in society. This is aimed through their joint efforts in creating documentaries about societal issues with a focus on climate change. Many of Resilient and WaterBear’s stakeholders are shared, but the two organizations differ on whom they work with, as a result of their organizational structures. According to Executive Director Adrian Kawaley-Lathan from Resilient, they are: “facilitating a network of impact funders, philanthropic individuals, other foundations, award-winning storytellers and grassroots storytellers, change makers, activists, and distribution networks” (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 04:47). While WaterBear shares many of the same stakeholders as Resilient, WaterBear is even more stakeholder heavy than Resilient, said founding WaterBear partner and investor from VÅR Ventures, Anne-Louise Thon,:

WaterBear's stakeholders would be anything from their clients to their consumers, and people watching the movies on their platform, to the film creation in the Resilient Foundation, and the film industry. So, they have a lot of stakeholders. In fact, it's a very, very stakeholder focused business (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 06:20).

The reason for this is that WaterBear must provide a return on investment, while making a positive change in society. Despite their different stakeholders, both Resilient and WaterBear employ storytelling as the common determinant. Impact storytelling becomes the element that connects their stakeholders as a group: "There's this whole network of people we bring together using narrative as the hub that connects these and using change as the key intervention" (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 04:47). According to Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient contributes to society by aiming to reshape the global narrative about wicked problems through impact storytelling in documentaries. Narratives are impactful but can also be *impacted*. Sam Sutaria, CEO of WaterBear explained:

(...) climate change is about politics. But I think it's very hard not to be political these days. I just want to make sure that we are not seen as a tool for driving political agendas (...) It [climate change] should be something that is apolitical because it's something that really transcends party politics (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 10:04).

Both Resilient and WaterBear have expressed that they have no political agenda. However, on one hand, it is arguably hard not to be political as an advocate for change. On the other hand, Resilient and WaterBear testify that they are politically impartial as "it is not about political parties but the health of the planet" (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 13:15).

(...) we're looking to be the facilitator conduit through which all of these different players can come together and present really complex ideas often in really dial back understandable ways that people can take action on, at a corporate level, governmental level, and of course in people's individual lives (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 09:34).

Using the word “conduit”, meaning pipe or channel, shows signs of Resilient’s potential influence on the “understandable ways” of how wicked problems are shaped and formed in the public opinion. This can be interpreted as Resilient’s wish to de-complex wicked problems, making it a curation of an accessible storyline. De-complexing does not entail that the issues become less complex, but rather that the stories become more understandable and relevant for the viewer. Essentially, this process describes Resilient and WaterBear’s understanding of wicked problems, and that the discourse is aimed to be produced in collaboration with their partners. Kawaley-Lathan explained how three strategic lenses are employed to select and curate the films they support, where the first lens is about decoding complexity to make stories more relatable (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 55:31). Furthermore, Resilient, being a “conduit”, can also be seen as their power to curate and select what ‘change’ means to Resilient. And therefore, they can potentially influence the way society describes what the collective good is.

Resilient and WaterBear’s Influence & the Public

Resilient and WaterBear are founded on the idea of being the voice of global change makers and specialists by making complex issues more accessible to the public (Resilient Foundation, n.d. a). Sutaria explained: “Our [Resilient and WaterBear] global theory of change is how do we educate, inform, inspire, and build agency collectively, to enable communities to play a systemic level role in society to really shift global policy to create global impact” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 02:41). The quote shows Resilient and WaterBear’s aim to influence the public sphere by collectively building agency for systemic change in society. According to Castells (2008), the network society has shifted the power dynamics in society where actors have unequal capabilities to influence public debate. Through their collective agency with diverse partners in society, Resilient and WaterBear represent an actor that can potentially influence other actors in society:

That holistic impact campaigning through the documentary lens is one of the greatest tools we have to shift hearts and minds and shift behavior and drive change (...) big, powerful films can actually really start to capture the hearts and minds of the right audiences and really audiences are critical (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 04:19)

Their “holistic impact” is Resilient and WaterBear’s way to create a joint effort across the actors in the network society to enforce their ability to influence public opinion. And, according to the above quote from Sutaria, the best way to accelerate change is through documentaries that have the potential to influence the public. However, according to Castells (2001 in Volkmer, 2003), the growing individualism and diversity that characterizes the global public sphere, makes it challenging to encompass everyone in society. Therefore, the messages of the stories cannot be considered a direct transfer of information but is a matter of shaping the strongest discourse: “(...) It’s all a narrative game, everything on this planet is fiction,” said Kawaley-Lathan from Resilient (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 35:02). Winning “the hearts and minds of citizens in society”, essentially, becomes a battle of who has the ability to socially construct the strongest narrative that shapes public opinion. Resilient and WaterBear’s aim to influence the public through partnerships with private actors, philanthropists and NGOs distorts Habermas’ idea of how the ideal democracy works. If Resilient and WaterBear are successful in influencing the public to act in a certain way when addressing climate issues, then the public sphere can consequently influence how wicked problems are governed by the state. Sutaria explains why they must influence the public through communication about wicked problems and climate change:

The climate crisis and the polycrisis that we face as a society really are a crisis of communications. We need to reframe the global narrative to enable audiences around the world to envision a brighter and better future and really, we need better high-quality storytelling to do that (...) investments into communication are so critical for shaping society’s vision of itself (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 02:41).

According to Resilient and WaterBear, the meaning of the collective good is up for negotiation and can be influenced. According to Dahlgren (2005), alongside the rise of plural public spheres, as a result of globalization, the meanings of collective good in civil society has multiplied but is still catalyzed by peoples’ personal convictions. This makes it hard to find a solution to climate change, as the meanings of climate change are not homogenous. Storytelling, as Resilient and WaterBear’s strategic tool to overcome the ‘communications crisis’, becomes their means to make people act on the climate crisis. According to Bruner (1991), humans construct their own reality through narratives as they ‘grasp the real world’. Storytelling plays an essential role in shaping our understanding of the world, a world that is

our subjective idea of what the world is (Bruner, 1991). However, the success of shaping or influencing these narratives, and by this, influencing society's vision of itself, depends on Resilient and WaterBear's ability to make actions and create stories that will be legitimized by the public. According to Alexander (2006), society must purify organizations for their motives and regulating sanity before they can become part of the collective good. Through this lens, Resilient and WaterBear's have to be accepted for their act on wicked problems before they can gain impact. According to Gripsrud et al. (2010), negotiations of public acceptance and public opinion take place on a global scale through digital media that offer unconditional participation at all times. The diversity of the global public sphere makes it a complex task for Resilient and WaterBear to legitimize their cause and actions in society. This is because the multiplied public spheres create meaning about society in different ways with different attitudes.

Resilient and WaterBear's Aim to Set the Agenda in Society

Realizing that stories have power to influence public opinion, can be troubling if the agenda behind the stories do not serve the collective good. Deputy Director at United Nations Regional Informations Center (UNRIC) and responsible for the UN SDG documentary public screening concept Ciné-ONU (United Nations), Caroline Petit, commented on the powers of storytelling, and what societal dangers these might entail, when commercial companies try to shape society's self-image. "SDG washing, which exists in the film industry, is something to watch out for" (Appx. 6, Petit, UNRIC, 41:42) said Petit, when asked about general attitudes towards who is behind the film and what their underlying agenda is. "The word intention is important" she emphasized and explained that if the intentions are to bring a human point of view to issues and potential solutions, then stories may inspire and lead audiences to actually act upon it (Appx. 6, Petit, UNRIC, 19:49). Emphasizing the human lead story as a powerful tool to create change, Kawaley-Lathan states that Resilient's second strategic lens is focused on curating storytelling around changemakers and protagonists: "(...) we are showing people innovative and new ways of doing things and being examples, that other people can replicate in their own lives or support them in their journey [towards a sustainable life]" (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 15:35). Stories cannot make these big global issues less complex, but, according to Petit, stories can make them more understandable (Appx. 6, Petit, UNRIC, 22:34). Sutaria agrees that stories cannot solve the climate problem: "There is no one film that is gonna save the world, as much as I wish there was," said Sutaria (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 06:58). Storytelling becomes a tool to potentially make the communicative wickedness of the issues

less wicked, but storytelling cannot solve the issues. According to Scherer & Palazzo (2011), businesses have become “politicized” and significant political players in global society who have the potential to become beneficial societal actors. As WaterBear works with other commercial companies, this sets high demands for intensive due diligence of the potential underlying agendas behind these documentaries. When we asked about Resilient and WaterBear’s agenda in society, Sutaria explained:

We often make films for one person. If the *right* [emphasis added] policymaker sees the right film (...) then we can start to influence the change we need to see at the highest level. So, documentaries allow both a bottom-up and top-down approach to driving levers of change that can really shift society (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 04:19).

The quote demonstrates Resilient and WaterBear’s ideas of the public sphere, in the sense that policymakers are both approached on a grassroots and a legislative level. According to Sutaria, communication plays a big role in shaping today’s politics and shaping society (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear 09:34). This implies that there is in fact a political message to be conveyed. For some, the word ‘agenda’, especially in a political sphere, might imply ulterior motives that are kept hidden. Sutaria comments on the presence of an implied agenda: “(...) it’s not for us to set the agenda. I think it’s for us to accelerate the agenda [action on climate issues], through our platform, work, and storytelling (...)” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 07:50).

It has become evident that Resilient and WaterBear curates and selects the stories, but the question remains; who owns the agenda? There is an agenda, but WaterBear refuses to take ownership of it. Thon from VÅR Ventures made a comparison to WaterBear’s potential influence that speaks to their agenda: “If we say that Twitter is the political microphone for politics, then WaterBear could be the microphone for sustainability” (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 18:57). As Thon is a founding investor in WaterBear, this is an interesting comparison, as sustainability and politics are not each other’s opposites. As climate change is about politics, it is undeniable that WaterBear also represents a political agenda in society despite their impartial political stance. Furthermore, the comparison presents another dynamic to the media aspect of WaterBear. Like Twitter, WaterBear is a free access platform. “We wanted WaterBear to be a free place for anyone, whoever you are, wherever you’re from, to be able to learn, become inspired and engage with these movements” (Appx. 1, Sutaria,

WaterBear, 32:10). On the one hand, the platform's free pricing strategy can be interpreted as WaterBear's democratic way to counteract the growing inequality and diversity that, according to Calhoun (2011), characterizes the internal dynamics of the global public sphere. On the other hand, this can also be seen as a way to attract audiences, to get more viewers and to further their agenda and desired impact.

In the above analysis we have shown how Resilient and WaterBear try to shape global narratives on complex issues like climate change through storytelling. Resilient and WaterBear aim to influence the public by collectively building agency for systemic change in society. Through impact documentaries and storytelling, their strategic agenda is to target actors from society of all layers, from legislators to grassroots to citizens. Resilient and WaterBear aim to create a joint effort across diverse actors in the network society to enforce their ability to influence public opinion. Therefore, storytelling becomes their means to make people act on the climate crisis.

In the following section we will take a closer look at how Resilient and WaterBear actively try to leverage CSSPs to influence public opinion for societal change.

4.1.2 Leveraging Partnerships for Change

Cross-sector partnerships to address social issues (CSSPs) are essential when working with wicked problems. Since, as mentioned, wicked problems are never entirely resolved – at best they are only re-solved, over and over again – the most practical and effective method for making progress is through collaboration (Rittel & Webber, 1973; FitzGibbon & Mensah, 2012; Henriques, 2018).

Resilient and WaterBear define themselves as facilitators of collaboration: “A big part of what we [Resilient] started doing now, is that we are funding capacity building projects, capacity on the ground, particularly around filmmakers who are filmmaking around climate change and grassroots storytelling,” said Kawaley-Lathan (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 09:34). According to Clarke and MacDonald (2019), partners in CSSPs aim to navigate the complexities of social change while remaining accountable for their actions. Therefore, partnerships become a lever for change with a shared purpose. “Collective action is a big piece of the puzzle of what we are aiming to achieve,” said Kawaley-Lathan (Appx. 3, Kawaley-

Lathan, Resilient, 04:47). According to Kawaley-Lathan, there is a growing tendency towards more participatory forms of governance, where decision-making power is distributed among a diverse array of actors (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 22:24). Resilient and WaterBear and their partners are trying to create impact campaigns to shift the narrative on climate change: “From multimedia experiences to public events and panel discussions, Resilient convenes and activates key stakeholders to amplify crucial stories, foster dialogue and drive collective action” (Resilient Foundation, n.d. c). Kawaley-Lathan explains that in the impact campaigns “there is a WaterBear-partnership for the film distribution, but then the Resilient-partnership comes in around the impact campaign” (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 52:44). Resilient makes physical events, panel discussions and film screenings in order to engage with key stakeholders and the public: “(...) we empower individuals as audiences to take action in some way towards a specific social, cultural, behavioral, or legislative change” (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 04:47). In this way, Resilient takes charge of how this specific problem should be perceived and what individual change is needed for the problems to be solved.

In the following section we further broaden the analytical spectrum of Resilient and WaterBear’s partnerships in the creation and distribution of films and impact campaigns and analyze the motivations to why their partners want to engage in CSSPs with them.

4.1.3 Motivations to Partner with Resilient and WaterBear

According to WaterBear’s website, they have over 100 corporate, brand and NGO partners (WaterBear, n.d. a). Examples of these are CondéNast, Jack Wolfskin, UN Women, The Rainforest Alliance, and The Jane Goodall Institute (WaterBear, n.d. c). WaterBear engages in three types of partnerships: story, anchor and guardian. The type of partnership depends on the amount of funding the partner provides which determines the level of engagement and control (Appx. 18, p. 12). On Resilient’s website it is stated that they work with so-called “story partners”, which, among others, include WWF, Ellen Macarthur Foundation and Connect4Climate (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b; Appx. 12). Kawaley-Lathan addressed the difference to how Resilient and WaterBear work with partners:

They’re [WaterBear] doing a lot of licensing agreements and they’re doing a lot of brand partnerships (...) either making films for those brands or those brands supporting the films that they’re working on. Currently, Resilient does not work

with any brands or have any funding coming from the corporate space at all (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 29:47).

Furthermore, Kawaley-Lathan explained that Resilient is looking into working with corporations, like WaterBear does. WaterBear's Chief Growth Officer, Poppy Mason-Watts spoke on WaterBear's motivations to do partnerships and traced it back to SDG no. 17:

We can't do this alone (...) And I don't think without partnerships, it's gonna be possible to challenge the status quo. We're only going to be as noisy as all of our partners can be together. So, we partner with filmmakers, brands, foundations, NGOs, we partner with a number of different stakeholders to further the mission and to make as much noise as possible (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 06:22).

By leveraging partnerships with diverse stakeholders, the quote suggests that WaterBear aims to amplify its advocacy and outreach efforts for more impact. Additionally, the metaphor of noise emphasizes the idea that the collective voice and actions of their partners are necessary in order to generate attention and effect change on a larger societal scale.

Due to the differences in their services provided, Resilient and WaterBear bring different aspects to their partnerships, and they differ from each other in terms of who they do partnerships with and how they do these partnerships. Despite their young age, Resilient and WaterBear have partnered with some key figures in both the private and third sector. We acknowledge that there are also sectors within the public, private and third sectors. For example, both WaterBear and Ørsted are in the private sector. However, WaterBear is part of the media sector, and Ørsted is part of the energy sector. Therefore, we argue that the partnership between the two can still be considered a CSP. This will be further described in the findings.

The interviews conducted with informants from Ørsted, Rolex, WWF, VÅR Ventures and Imagine5 serve as a glimpse into the array of partnerships Resilient and WaterBear have. In the efforts of simplifying the structure of how Resilient and WaterBear's CSSPs take form, the below section offers an overview of the partnerships divided by partner and whether their partnership is with Resilient and/or WaterBear. Notably, it has been challenging to gather

information about and access to Resilient’s partnerships. Thus, the only partner with Resilient is WWF, where the others are WaterBear partners.

VÅR Ventures & WaterBear

VÅR Ventures is a tech and impact VC fund that invests in technology-based startups with a sustainable footprint. VÅR ventures is a founding WaterBear partner and investor motivated by ROIs and positive societal impact. Thon from VÅR Ventures describes the idea behind the investment: “It’s important for us [VÅR Ventures], with our money, to solve societal issues, but I also think that those are the future winners” (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 00:25). When examining the investment side of Resilient and WaterBear’s partnerships, we understand impact investments as a specific form of CSSPs. Impact investments, like CSSPs, often involve collaboration between diverse stakeholders such as investors, nonprofits and corporations. Additionally, they share a common goal of achieving a positive societal impact alongside financial returns. Thon highlights the value that such investments bring beyond just financial returns:

(...) if you have VÅR Ventures as an investor, you are now an impact investment (...) that creates different value than if you’re just a normal investment (...) you attract different people, different investors, different partners, because you are now an organization which we say will drive change (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 02:15).

Therefore, by partnering with VÅR Ventures, Thon said that WaterBear not only gains financial support but also access to a network of like-minded individuals and other potential partners. Thon mentions that VÅR Ventures owns 10% of WaterBear (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 20:00), which speaks to their influence, as they are a founding partner. Sutaria from WaterBear comments on how WaterBear’s relationship with their investors, such as VÅR Ventures, is set up: “(...) one of our [stakeholder] groups being our investors (...) I think they are investing for a return. And so that is the reciprocity in the relationship (...) they’re not just wanting a financial return. It’s an impact return (...) I think, as they say, smart money. It’s a partnership” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 14:00).

On a societal scale, the growth of impact investing has been aided by e.g., the emergence and rising popularity of social enterprises like Resilient and WaterBear. Due to the unique

ownership characteristic of this specific partnership with VÅR Ventures, this analysis offers insights from Francois Botha, CEO of Simple, a leading expert in the private wealth space, with over 20 years of experience within the impact investing sector. Botha states that a pivotal shift is happening in the impact investing space: “(...) these [impact investing] frameworks are increasingly moving closer to the philanthropic space again” (Appx. 8, Botha, Simple, 07:13) and “(...) there’s a similar ecosystem for philanthropy and for impact [investing]” (Appx. 8, Botha, Simple, 19:21). Impact investing and philanthropic are traditionally two distinct spheres. However, Botha’s observations reaffirm a significant blur of boundaries between the two.

According to Thon, there are essential flaws in WaterBear’s business model: “What I disagree with in their strategy is that I think they should go for commercials and not partnerships” (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 08:08). Commercial partners could offer more opportunities. However, with the goal of financial return in mind, the quote invites the question of to which extent companies can deviate from their economic agendas in pursuit of social or environmental objectives. “I want people to invest in sustainability because it’s really urgent” (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 24:22). It is clear that VÅR Ventures partnership with WaterBear is motivated by their sense of urgency and a pressing need for action in the climate change arena.

Imagine5 & WaterBear

Imagine5 is an international impact non-profit media foundation telling stories at the intersection of culture and climate. Imagine5 is another founding partner of WaterBear engaging in a corporate–non-profit partnership (CNP). The media partnership between Imagine5 and WaterBear consists of co-creating documentaries. CEO of Imagine5 and founding partner of WaterBear, Mie Dahlquist describes the partnership as a co-branding exercise for Imagine, because if it was not: “what would we gain from it?” (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 19:20). The partnership between Imagine5 and WaterBear is rooted in their shared mission: “They [WaterBear] are storytellers like we are, so in that case, it’s very much a co-creation when it comes to the production [of the films]” (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 01:40). The partnership is a traditional marketing partnership. Since Imagine5 is a founding partner, Dahlquist stated that Imagine5 have had:

(...) a huge influence. And I think it's probably also because we are a partner who is strong in storytelling as well. We had really specific requirements, and what we thought was on brand and part of our storytelling universe and what was not (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 29:26).

This could imply that Imagine5 has played a pivotal role in shaping certain aspects of the partnership. Impact storytelling through documentaries is at the core of the partnership. Dahlquist described it as: "(...) another way to inspire people and create those visions and emotions that are so crucial for people to change. You can convey a message in many different ways (...) but if people don't feel it, they won't change" (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 17:06). Imagine5 specializes in telling impact stories that support sustainability driven initiatives (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 01:40).

A common ground for this mutually beneficial partnership is the audience: "I think both of us are targeting what we call the light green audience; people in the very beginning of their eco journey who don't necessarily live and breathe sustainability every day" (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 01:40). The goal for Imagine5 is to gain access to a new audience and awareness of their brand. However, according to Dahlquist, WaterBear was not particularly interested in sharing credits: "There's a little bit of a struggle about who is the sender, the logos, and those kinds of things. [We asked ourselves] does this make sense? Are we gaining anything from this or is WaterBear only gaining from this?" (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 09:44). Imagine5 wants to obtain brand visibility. Despite the fact that Imagine5 is a so-called 'risk free' partner, they are not obtaining the desired brand visibility:

I think we have to reinvent the partnership entirely, if we're continuing with WaterBear (...) I can see they are in a dilemma [about how to scale WaterBear] (...) I think we are probably one of the good partners because we don't have any commercial interests. So it's not so risky for them to put our logo on whatever they do (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 21:18).

Dahlquist assumes that it is tricky for WaterBear to plaster everything they do with commercial logos. It would feel like what they are doing is branded entertainment.

Ørsted & WaterBear

Ørsted is a Danish for-profit multinational energy company. The partnership is centered around the distribution of Ørsted's documentary "ReCoral" on the WaterBear streaming platform. The interesting part of WaterBear's partnership with Ørsted is that it differs from the rest of WaterBear's partnership in the sense that no money was exchanged: "(...) we didn't exchange any money or anything like that" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 14:52). Creative Producer, Interviewee Ø from Ørsted even reveals that they struggle defining the partnership as a partnership:

I've never really thought, well maybe I did think of it as a partnership, but I actually thought more of it as reaching a specific community. So [to Ørsted] it's a successful partnership when it's a relevant community that we are reaching (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 07:41).

The quote illustrates the dynamics of the partnership between WaterBear and Ørsted, particularly the access to WaterBear's audience. We argue that WaterBear gets legitimacy from Ørsted's brand in exchange for access to their audience. Interviewee Ø said that when WaterBear was founded they had a list over 20 clients that they wanted to work with, and Ørsted was one of them: "Ørsted had been one of the sorts of core examples of a client that they would like [to work with]" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 14:52). This reflects the importance of legitimacy and credibility in the realm of sustainability and shows how partnerships with reputable organizations such as Ørsted have the potential to enhance the perceived value of a company's – in this case WaterBear – legitimacy. From the outside, it is impossible to know that Ørsted did not pay any money to have their content featured on WaterBear. However, it can attract other big paying partners to WaterBear. Interviewee Ø describes how Ørsted seeks to obtain the legitimacy in association with WaterBear's partners, and is a motivating factor:

(...) the clients that they [WaterBear] have are good. I mean, it's good brands that I resonate with, so you [Ørsted] want to be a part of that. We [Ørsted and WaterBear] also talked about that when figuring out a partnership. You're like okay, I can see myself amongst Nikon and Patagonia etc. (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 18:01).

It was a definitive selling point from WaterBear's side that Ørsted would be amongst other brands like them with a high sustainability and influential score. Yet, WaterBear is not the only one who has something to gain from this partnership. By associating Ørsted with a streaming platform dedicated to environmental documentaries, we argue that it is likely that Ørsted seeks to strengthen its image as a leader in the corporate sustainability field:

It's [Ørsted's documentaries on the WaterBear streaming platform] great proof of concept and it's walking the talk (...) looking at it from a more business hardcore perspective, it's a differentiator. It's the reason you should choose Ørsted (...) so I think it's just a differentiator to be honest (...) We [Ørsted] constantly need to prove that it's not just empty postulates (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 11:30; 12:44).

Interviewee Ø revealed that in the end, the partnership is another differentiator from the competitors that Ørsted can strategically use to sell products. And as the only one of the interviewees, Interviewee Ø commented on trustworthiness:

And I think it's more trustworthy when someone else [like WaterBear] (...) says, "this is a company that is doing something great and that's why we're showing it". I think that's much more powerful than Ørsted saying: "this is something we do and that's why we are great"" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 06:04).

Interviewee Ø highlights the importance of third-party validation in building trust, especially from the public, and emphasizes the credibility gained through external recognition. Leveraging these partnerships in order to communicate Ørsted's efforts and impacts can effectively be a strategic approach. However, while partnerships with WaterBear can enhance credibility, they also raise the question if organizations like Ørsted can be trusted to tell stories about societal issues.

Rolex & WaterBear

Rolex is a Swiss watch designer and manufacturer, but is in its essence a foundation with both for-profit and non-profit activities. In 2019, Rolex launched a non-profit initiative titled the Rolex Perpetual Planet Initiative, for which WaterBear produces documentaries for: "It's

distribution, it's film distribution and promotion (...) It's very much a long-term partnership," said Strategic Board Advisor for Rolex, Charlotte Day-Lewin (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 23:30). The initiative by Rolex focuses on supporting individuals and organizations, who act on climate challenges. However, even though the Perpetual Planet Initiative has a more philanthropic agenda, it became clear in the interview, that there will always be the underlying drivers of selling a product: "(...) maybe the divers [in the documentary] are wearing a Rolex. There is so little mention of Rolex in that, but 75% of people who watched it understood that Rolex was involved, and they felt more positively towards us" (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 29:06). This underscores that there will always be a degree of commercial interest involved, when WaterBear engages in partnerships with large for-profit companies like Rolex for societal change. To this, Day-Lewin also touches upon the exchange of legitimacy between Rolex and WaterBear:

[The exchange of legitimacy] works both ways. For WaterBear to have Rolex it's a marquee brand [commercial brand that has a high level of public awareness], and it will bring in others and we do that knowingly. And with intention, they're almost a laureate. We're giving them our money, but with hope that they succeed, and that is the investment (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 39:37).

According to Rolex, they are a legitimate brand that will help WaterBear on their path to attract similar partners. In order to enhance WaterBear's brand, Rolex 'lends' their brand along with its reputation. If WaterBear succeeds then the partnership will provide Rolex with legitimacy in their social causes. Day-Lewin explained the duality of such partnerships by an example of Nike's donations of soccer fields: "(...) the driver of that is to sell their products, but you can't deny that the impact of that is a positive societal action. And to me, that's a win win" (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 15:52). Day-Lewin recognizes the role that corporations play in driving positive societal actions, but emphasizes that these companies' main goal is still to make money. This implies a more diverted approach where societal benefits are seen as byproducts of profit-driven activities. However, Day-Lewin also states that "(...) there is an expectation from consumers that brands have a positive role in society. I think that there is a trend and desire for good global citizenship" (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 02:08). Nevertheless, the game is still to promote the product and, like Interviewee Ø from Ørsted, Day-Lewin knows what the game is really about: "I think that we would be naive for a moment to forget that

marketing, in the broadest sense, is to promote the first choice for your product” (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 19:55). These ‘borders of advertising’ denote a balance that WaterBear must master in order not to be associated with greenwashing proclaims.

WWF & Resilient & WaterBear

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization who works to preserve nature and the environment. WWF is partnered with both Resilient and WaterBear, and since WWF is both an NGO and NPO, it is possible to see WaterBear’s partnership with WWF as a corporate–non-profit partnership (CNP). The partnership between WWF and Resilient is about knowledge sharing, co-creating campaigns and documentaries with the hope of long term societal transformation. The partnership with WWF and WaterBear is in collaboration with WWF-Türkiye on a more national scale. Whereas the ‘8billion’ project with both Resilient and WaterBear is in partnership with WWF International. As mentioned, this is the only Resilient partnership that we could gain access to.

To begin with, Sutaria goes into detail describing the several ways in which WaterBear works with NGOs: (1) WaterBear shares the NGOs stories and amplifies their voices, (2) WaterBear builds coalitions by tapping into the NGOs expertise who advise WaterBear in campaigns. This involves everything from knowledge sharing to skills transfer, and lastly (3) commercial partnerships, where NGOs pay WaterBear to produce content or amplify their campaigns (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 19:01). The partnership with WWF could fall under all three ways. WWF works with WaterBear on campaigns, storytelling and producing content. At Resilient, WWF is a story partner (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b), which means that Resilient is sharing WWF’s stories and amplifying their voice through their platform and in their network. Furthermore, WWF works with both Resilient and WaterBear on their ‘8billion’ project (Resilient Foundation, n.d. d). According to Resilient, 8billion is a grassroots storytelling movement, inspiring the next generation of storytellers and climate innovators (Resilient Foundation, n.d. d). About the project, Allard Stapel, Chief of External Affairs at WWF Netherlands, said:

“For 60 years WWF has strived for a world where people live in harmony with nature (...) WWF has often shown examples of this but rarely asked people to tell these stories themselves. With ‘8billion’ we hope to provide a platform

where communities all over the world can share their stories and can be heard”
(Brzoznowski, 2021).

The 8billion project demonstrates the co-branding and transformative character that the partnership has. Communication, Marketing and Fundraising Director at WWF Denmark, Tobias Høgsberg speaks to the credibility and legitimacy effects of working with WWF:

From what I’m seeing it’s the partners that legitimize themselves with the use of our logo. This [pointing to the panda logo] is worth money. And being with the panda signals that you’re doing something good. So that’s what they [the partners] get. What we get is the credibility (Appx. 10, Høgsberg, WWF, 08:40).






Resilient and WaterBear are legitimized by WWF. WWF sees the partnership as validation of their work, which amplifies the voice of the NGO, which potentially leads to credibility of their activism. Høgsberg emphasized reputation as an intangible value or a liability in a partnership. He emphasized how much more crucial this becomes in the context of a corporate partnership: “So for us [WWF], it’s all about reputation. We live by our reputation and our credibility. So, whenever we do a corporate partnership, we’re very careful about it” (Appx. 10, Høgsberg, WWF, 08:18). Since WWF guards its brand so fiercely, it gives WaterBear even more legitimacy. The assumed high entry barriers to partnerships with WWF, assigns trust to WaterBear which could give other partners the incentive to collaborate with the platform.

Findings from Partnerships

In the above analysis, we have shown how Resilient and WaterBear aim to leverage CSSPs in order to influence the global narrative of wicked problems. We analyzed their four types of partners: investors, corporations (for-profits) and NGO/NPOs and media. This was done through interviews with the partners VÅR Ventures, Imagine5, Ørsted, Rolex and WWF. Through these brand partnerships with such multinational corporations, NGOs, and media entities, Resilient and WaterBear sees the potential to build coalitions through shared values using storytelling strategically as the common determinant across various stakeholders. Resilient and WaterBear engage with these actors in society to gain legitimacy through partnerships which can allow them to influence public opinion and drive societal change. This entails that Resilient and WaterBear must respond to various stakeholders from different

sectors. Their aim to jointly drive action in society, demands Resilient and WaterBear to act and communicate through different institutional logics.

The analysis showed that each partner’s motivation differs. Therefore, it is possible to differentiate between the five CSPs. Through Vestergaard et al.’s (2020) figure 1, we present the following overview of each partnership:

Partner	Configuration	Collaboration	Issue	Scope	Function
	Business-Business: Sectors involved: For-profit Investment fund (VÅR Ventures) & for-profit media (WaterBear)	Transactional / Transformative: Investment of funds for ROI with aim to solve societal issues	Environmental sustainability	Macro	Resource mobilization: Raised funds through VÅR Ventures in exchange of co-ownership
	NGO-Business: Sectors involved: Non-profit media (Imagine5) & for-profit media (WaterBear)	Transformative: Aims to shape narratives of sustainability and create awareness in society	Environmental sustainability	Macro	Awareness raising: Advocacy for and awareness of sustainability in society
	Business-Business: Sectors involved: For-profit energy (Ørsted) & for-profit media (WaterBear)	Transactional: Exchange of service; the distribution of Ørsted’s documentary	Environmental sustainability	Macro	Service and good provision: Operational partnership with distribution of documentary
	NGO-Business: Sectors involved: Non-profit foundation (Rolex) & for-profit media (WaterBear)	Transactional / Transitional: Exchange of service; the distribution of documentaries & promoting the Rolex brand in a sustainable direction	Environmental sustainability	Macro	Service and good provision / Awareness raising: Operational partnership with co-creation and distribution of documentary & Advocacy of the Rolex brand
	NGO/NPO-NGO-Business: Sectors involved: Non-profit NGO (WWF) & non-profit foundation (Resilient) & for-profit media (WaterBear)	Transformative: Exchange of knowledge, and co-creating campaigns and stories for awareness.	Environmental sustainability	Macro / Micro: WWF world wide and WWF Türkiye	Awareness raising / Governance and standards: Policy partnership through projects like ‘8billion’ & creating awareness for the WWF brand

Based on Vestergaard et al.’s (2020) figure 1, our overview shows how the motivations and structure of partnership differ from partner to partner; especially in the Configuration, Collaboration and Function.

As the section on partnerships and overview shows, Resilient and WaterBear works with partners from different sectors. We assume that the different sectors vary in stakeholder demands, which contributes to Resilient and WaterBear’s desire to be hybrids. In the following section we will dive deeper into how Resilient and WaterBear socially construct themselves through multiple identities and stakeholder demands.

4.2 Resilient & WaterBear Gain Legitimacy Through Hybridity

In this second part of the analysis, we examine the complex organizational nature of Resilient and WaterBear, exploring how they gain legitimacy through their hybrid identity in their partnership arena with diverse stakeholder demands across sectors.

4.2.1 The Hybridity of Resilient and WaterBear

According to Billis (2010), the study of hybrid organizations firstly prescribes a description of the organizations as non-hybrids. The task of addressing Resilient and WaterBear as non-hybrids is challenging. Firstly, because they are deeply intertwined in their organizational structure and serve a great deal of shared stakeholders with diverse demands. Secondly, Resilient and WaterBear are built upon the idea of working towards a bigger purpose rather than simply making a profit. Descriptions of Resilient and WaterBear as non-hybrids quickly become hostages in superficial observations and first impressions. As non-hybrids, they can be described as: WaterBear is an “interactive streaming platform” (WaterBear, n.d. a) and part of the private media and entertainment industry sector that works to create a profit for its shareholders. “Resilient Foundation is a non-profit” who’s foundation has the primary goal of distributing funds or resources to support various charitable causes within the media industry (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b). This analysis does not rest on these non-hybrid descriptions. They serve as a starting point to describe how their identities are multiplied to encompass the many stakeholder demands as social enterprises. Furthermore, the non-hybrid descriptions mirror Resilient and WaterBear’s fundamental roots and their primary adherence to distinctive principles of their sector. According to Billis (2010) this potentially limits the organizations to authentically mix any set of features they see fit. “(...) we’re always going to be in the media space,” said Kawaley-Lathan, describing how their roots are planted in the media sector (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 35:02).

The reasons why it is hard to define both organizations in their non-hybrid state, can be explained through Billis’ framework, the ‘Hybrid Organizational Type’. Resilient and WaterBear show degrees of entrenched hybridity, as both organizations are founded on the idea of driving societal impact. When we asked Mason-Watts from WaterBear to describe Resilient and WaterBear as organizations, she answered:

It's content production (...) impact is at the core of everything we do. It's distribution. (...) We're a B2B2C organization, because we have a business to business, which is the brand and partnership side, but we're ultimately talking to the consumer, the end consumer (...) We have WaterBear and then we have the Resilient Foundation and we set them both up at the same time. So while we are kind of legally separate, we also work with one another, to help the industry move forward. So I guess we call ourselves a kind of hybrid organization (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, 07:57).

This description of the organizations mirrors their ability to combine business with social impact under the umbrella of being social enterprises. This is combined to become the ideal hybrid: a social enterprise that combines economic, social and environmental goals in both charity and business (Battilana & Lee, 2014; Ebrahim et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, the word “facilitator” was brought up numerous times in our interviews. But what does “facilitator” really mean? According to Billis (2010), social enterprises cling to vague descriptions of their hybridity and blur the boundaries between sectors by being present in all three main sectors: public, private, and third (Billis, 2010). Whether a facilitator is a ‘vague’ description depends on how it is perceived. No doubt that the ambiguity of the broad definition of Resilient serves a strategic purpose to potentialize the positioning of the foundation to comprehend several demands in their stakeholder network. Staying in the mindset of hybridity, this is not a symptom of not knowing who they are, but rather an attitude of “we can be all of this” that makes them unique and distinct. Furthermore, the non-profit philanthropic quality of Resilient and their broad self-descriptions can be argued to show higher degrees of entrenched hybridity than WaterBear. As WaterBear has a service to sell, they are expected to specifically define who they are in order to make the profits that are expected by them. Therefore, WaterBear needs to employ degrees of shallow hybridity to meet specific demands by specific stakeholders. This adds an extra dimension to Billis’ variables of shallow and entrenched hybridity, as we argue, that organizations need to employ degrees of both shallow and entrenched hybridity depending on in what setting they describe themselves.

The data analysis shows that both Resilient and WaterBear show a high willingness to adopt the hybrid form, as it is an enactment that constitutes both organizations of how they find meaning as organizations and find both pragmatic and moral legitimacy in society. Mason-Watts comments on this observation: “When we launched, everyone was like, “Oh, it's like

Netflix for nature. It's a streaming platform. I get it". That was cool at the time, but now we're like, Oh, that is really annoying because it really pigeonholes us" (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 11:07). Resilient and WaterBear refuse to be put in a box, or to be seen as a non-hybrid, because it limits their business opportunities, and by this, also potentially limits their societal impact. Aiming for one thing or one goal is perceived by hybrids to be at the expense of the hybrid ideal (Battilana et al., 2012). The aim to construct themselves according to the un-constitutive fluid hybrid ideal to meet the demands of diverse stakeholders is deeply enacted in how Resilient and WaterBear perceive the world.

Through Billis' framework on hybrid organizations, we have analyzed the challenges and opportunities in Resilient and WaterBear's organizational structures. Both organizations operate as social enterprises, and resist categorization to maximize their societal influence through strategic ambiguous self-descriptions. To this, we have argued that Resilient and WaterBear both show high willingness to adopt the hybrid form and refuse to be defined only as their non-hybrid definitions. Furthermore, our analysis showed that they will need to employ degrees of both shallow and entrenched hybridity depending on in what setting they describe themselves.

Circling back to a previous mentioned quote by WaterBear's CEO but seen with the lens of enacted hybridity, Sutaria said: "(...) we educate, inform, inspire, and build agency collectively (...) to really shift global policy to create global impact" (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 02:41). This quote shows signs of selective coupling between different institutional logics deeply employed to foster collective action. According to Pache & Santos (2010), hybrids seek agency in the midst of institutional logics as they believe that they can solve complex issues through several logics, which makes the maintenance of legitimacy more complex. Resilient and WaterBear couple logics within education (*educate*), media (*inform*), culture (*inspire*) and politics (*build agency*), as they believe, this is the way they can ignite systemic change in society.

The following we will further investigate Resilient and WaterBear as hybrids through Vakkuri et al.'s (2021) framework 'Hybrid Governance and Value-creation Mechanisms' (Figure 2, Appx. 15). Resilient and WaterBear and their hybrid governance is analyzed through two types of lenses. Firstly (Lens 1) the dimensions of hybridity (ownership, institutional logics, funding,

and control) and, in the following section, secondly (Lens 2) their approaches to value creation (mixing, compromising and legitimizing) (Vakkuri et al., 2021).

4.2.2 Lens 1: The Dimensions of Hybridity

Mixed Ownership

Resilient has a board of six members, who all come from different industries with different ties to private companies, NGOs, media, and politics (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b). The high-esteemed quality of the board members and their personal brands is a way to legitimize Resilient.

I'd say our board members actually give a lot of legitimacy. That's important and I'm expanding the board this year as well, to include more folks or more regions, because board members make a huge difference (...) And it is a lot about relationships and who you know and who you have access to. A lot of legitimacy comes from who's on your board (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 43:44).

An important part of Resilient's access to society is their high-esteemed board members that give Resilient personal legitimacy based on their professional profiles. Therefore, the effect of having the right mix of ownership becomes a vital part of the legitimacy which flickers down the organization to essentially bring more funds to the foundation. As Resilient and WaterBear are deeply intertwined because much of the funding of WaterBear comes through Resilient, it is expected this legitimacy also rubs off on WaterBear.

To further add to their mixed ownerships, Resilient is a project by the US based non-profit foundation Windward Fund (Windward Fund, n.d.). Windward Fund was founded in Washington D.C in 2015 with a startup funding of \$5.25 million from an unknown source and is owned by the for-profit philanthropy consultancy Arabella Advisors that was founded by former Bill Clinton admin-alumni, Eric Miller (Windward Fund, n.d.). Through Resilient's partnership with the Windward Fund, Resilient obtains the 501(e)(3) tax-exempt status. This is done in a project called 'The Resilient Fund', which registers Resilient a US-based public charity (Resilient Foundation, n.d. e). The mix of ownership now stretches to the US, and the project with Windward Fund is established to further legitimize them with American stakeholders, but at the potential expense of existing European investors. As this money is

expected to influence the finances of WaterBear as well, Thon explained that the “game has changed a little” as the American investors heightens the fear of potential risks such as money laundering (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 16:03). The complexities of this highly mixed ownership will be further analyzed in the following part describing their multiplicity funding arrangements.

Multiplicity of Funding Arrangements

Resilient receives funding from both philanthropic private funders and foundations (Appx 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 04:47). Furthermore, Resilient receives donations through the Windward Fund and Arabella Advisors. Windward Fund operates with ‘dark money’ which is untraceable money. “Dark pools of money (...) these donations, especially in something like the US can be used to create a lot of influence,” said Botha when asked about this term and what the potential complications this type of money might have. The Windward Fund receives funding from private philanthropists and family offices. The untraceability raises the question of who is funding, and what potential agenda these funders might have when they choose to invest in the Windward Fund and Resilient. This is a question that will remain unanswered, but Kawaley-Lathan explains that is normal practice: “(...) sometimes there are some philanthropists who wish to be unnamed. I can’t think of any who are funding any of our projects at the moment” (Appx 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 46:13). However, it multiplies Resilient’s funding arrangement substantially, as they expand their hybridity with diverse funding streams, known and unknown.

We question if secrecy around funding can be a potential threat to Resilient’s authenticity and legitimacy as they aim to address complex, and political, societal issues like climate change. This becomes a paradox that Resilient must find ways to prevent in order to uphold legitimacy – a legitimacy that also affects WaterBear. Furthermore, Resilient cannot accept money from corporations. However, some of these corporations are so big they have foundations connected to their businesses. Kawaley-Lathan spoke to another paradox characterized by hypocrisy related to the strict division between sources of funding:

We don’t actually have any funding coming from the corporate space at all. The funding that I’m looking to explore from the corporate space is coming from their [corporations] CSR and ESG budgets, because (...) those funds can’t go to a for-profit, those could not go to WaterBear but they can come to

a nonprofit; Resilient Foundation. So I have a whole database of corporates and B-corps (...) I do want to be working with them through their environmental and social governance (Appx 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 29:47).

As mentioned, according to Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient is not accepting funding from corporations. However, Kawaley aims to address corporations' ESG and CSR divisions. The strict division between the funds from non-profits and for-profits is not a straight line. While big corporations are obliged by law to live up to international regulations, CSR is still a strategic tool for corporations to differentiate and further their business interests (Christensen et al., 2013; Scherer and Palazzo, 2011). This blurs the lines between which sectors Resilient wants to approach. It can be seen as a way for them to further the hybrid ideal for hybrid governance. Kawaley-Lathan further explained with a concrete example from their previous funding attempts with Coca-Cola, where Resilient cannot accept money from the for-profit but they can accept money from their foundation:

Coca-Cola, when it comes to plastics, is one of the biggest plastics polluters in the world. But they also have a Coca-Cola foundation, and the foundation is like, "Oh, we'd love to give you money for your [Resilient] plastics campaign". Is that hypocrisy? Yes (...) and then me and my intervention brain goes: "How can I convince Coca-Cola to stop using plastic altogether? (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 46:49).

According to Resilient, taking money from the Coca-Cola Foundation, whose money is expected to come from one of the worlds' biggest plastic polluters, is accepted if the money can be used to foster organizational change. Some of Resilient's stakeholders might not be comfortable to be associated with the Coca-Cola Foundation. This resistance could counteract the hybrid ideal, as they have to align values with their other stakeholders to prevent accusations of hypocrisy.

As mentioned, WaterBear receives a big part of their funding from Resilient: "We raise philanthropic funds through Resilient and we have a plug-in distribution and production partner in WaterBear. They [Resilient] don't always work with us. So it's not guaranteed" said Mason-Watts (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 10:19). Besides philanthropic funds from Resilient,

WaterBear also enters paid partnerships with corporations, NGOs and media as previously described. However, the multiplicity of different funding arrangements put their organizational form to the test. It demands WaterBear to be agile in shifting between different institutional logics when speaking to their partners to meet the diverse demands. Sutaria spoke to this potential risk that may be at their risk of losing legitimacy:

The danger there is we are forced or try to be used as a mouthpiece for greenwashing or whatever it might be. And that's very, very important to us that that doesn't happen. So we have a very stringent partnership and vetting criteria of who we work with and how we work with them. And there's a lot of due diligence done. But it's certainly more authentic to work with partners like us (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 22:31).

As previously mentioned, the motivations to engage in CSSPs with WaterBear differ. WaterBear must be very careful when receiving funds from private actors as they face the risk of conforming to their partners' potential strategic agenda that may not only serve the planet, but also further the profit mechanisms of the corporations in their CSR work.

Goal Incongruence & Competing Institutional Logics

The goals and institutional logics analyzed are based on data with identity self-descriptions by Resilient and WaterBear and with the descriptions of their goals and identity(-ies) by their partners. Partners' evaluations of Resilient and WaterBear mirror the partners' own perceptions and, consequently, speak to the image of the organizations. However, as social constructivists, we argue that meaning about certain topics in society are socially constructed. Therefore, it can be challenged who and what constitutes the organization's identity(-ies). The term identity is therefore employed as a social construction.

As previously examined, we argue that Resilient is a foundation and WaterBear is a streaming platform in their non-hybrid forms. In the following we will further investigate which institutional logics are coupled to constitute different identities to meet the demands of the diverse stakeholders and break down barriers between sectors. Resilient and WaterBear are regarded as one social enterprise, one hybrid.

The NGO

Resilient and WaterBear partners with several big international NGOs, such as WWF, Greenpeace, Rainforest Alliance (Resilient Foundation, n.d. f; WaterBear Network n.d. c). These big NGOs are often founded on universal human rights. According to Castells (2008), NGOs and global movements have the power to influence the public opinion about certain topics or actors. Coupling institutional logics from the NGO sector is a powerful tool for Resilient and WaterBear to impose their agendas onto society and gain legitimacy in civil society. “A lot of people assume we’re an NGO. We want to keep the platform free forever” said Mason-Watts when asked if the public could think WaterBear is an NGO (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, 11:48). WaterBear was founded to be a free place “to learn, become inspired and engage with these movements” said Sutaria, and spoken like a true NGO, he continued: “We feel that it [free streaming] is a basic human” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 32:10). Mason-Watts’s emphasis on WaterBear’s free subscription model speaks to institutional logics found in civil society which is often synonymous with free labor, volunteering, and an activist approach to societal change. Another significant characteristic of the WaterBear streaming platform is the public’s access to donation sites on the website, and sometimes WaterBear tries to encourage people to sign petitions. Mason-Watts explains why:

(...) If we’re trying to change a viewpoint around politics (...) or if we’re trying to encourage people to sign a petition, or if we are encouraging people to change behaviors, it has to start with the story and then you can build a story around what you want to achieve and you can set the agenda through that story (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 05:06).

Donation and petition features are regarded as institutional logics that stem from the activists’ ways of gaining influence and legitimacy in society. Sutaria emphasized that these features combined with a mixed media strategy is all about creating “a wall of noise” and creating “a movement” that generates momentum (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 06:58). These civil society institutional logics are, according to Sutaria, coupled to push global brands to transform: “(...) We need to help accelerate these big multinationals on their journey towards net zero and 2030 targets and only through collaboration and only through authentic storytelling, which includes what’s going right and also what’s going wrong” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 32:10). The goal of NGO’s and grassroots movements is to catalyze the actions of

modern organizations (Calhoun, 2011). Catalyzing what is “right and wrong” is regarded as an institutional logic that WaterBear wishes to employ to meet the demands and goals of civil society.

A common characteristic of the expectations of NGOs are, according to Høgsberg, that “you’re trusted to do good with your money, and to have an impact with the money that you’re given” (Appx. 10, Høgsberg, WWF, 29:55). Given Resilient’s non-profit organizational structure, it is evident that it is expected that the funds they are given becomes a source for good which is regarded as a shared goal between NGOs and Resilient.

They’ve [the public] seen a film that we’re doing an impact campaign for, and they go, “Wow, this film changed my life. Now, what?” And we go: “Oh, here’s a toolbox and event, a link to a WaterBear call-to-action campaign page, where I [the individual] have a whole bunch of options to click from (...) we’re ready with all the tools they need to become change agents in their own world (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 31:48).

Resilient’s impact campaigns with toolboxes and their intervention-first approach show signs of activist NGO institutional logics. These are coupled by Resilient to hopefully attract funds from NGO partners, such as WWF. Finally, defining what is right and what is wrong eventually becomes a political question. Therefore, the following will address the identity of the organizations through some of the institutional logics employed as a lobbyist for legislative change.

The Lobbyist

As previously argued, wicked problems concerning climate change are political. Setting the agenda and aiming to shape the public discourse about climate change is political. In 2023 Resilient joined an event to engage with legislators in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting (INC-3) hosted by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was held to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 09:34; UNEP, n.d.). When Kawaley-Lathan was asked about their motivations to join this meeting, he said: “In this particular instance legislative changes are our agenda” (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 13:15). A growing interest in impacting legislative change has made Resilient incorporate an “entire approach” to

event hosting, where political actors and private companies can join to get enlightened through film and science:

We've created an entire approach (...) we hope to hold a whole immersive event about a space that delegates from the UN can just pass through that gives you insights and information into the people affected by plastics, [and] the new science that is out (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 09:34).

Resilient aims to embed philanthropic funded political events in their services. The goal is to affect the political sphere, which makes Resilient selectively couple institutional logics from lobbying with philanthropy. When Resilient engages in political events, they try to break down barriers between sectors to influence the actors of that political sphere. Additionally, employing “new science” as the backdrop to the documentary screenings is Resilient’s attempt to account for what is shown in the documentaries. In this way the events become Resilient’s way of legitimizing their foundation as an influential lobbyist for legislative change. Previous examples from WaterBear also show that communication is seen as a key driver to influence political decision making (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 09:34). According to Sutaria, all of WaterBear’s films undergo a mapping exercise where it is tailored to a specific audience: “Every campaign has a different stakeholder mapping exercise, a different impact campaigning objective. Sometimes it can be really tailoring the film to a policy level audience” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 05:43). Both Resilient and WaterBear are campaigning for specific topics to specific audiences. They show signs of coupled logics in lobbying where campaigning for a specific cause is directed at policy makers for legislative change. When Thon was asked if WaterBear could potentially take on the role as lobbyist, she answered:

Yes, I'd like to see that, because I think that's driving more change, and I think that they would get a lot more supporters (...) I think they could play a very important role, but they would have to have critical mass and being the voice of 2.5 million, it's not the same as being a voice of 50 million. So they would have to get some numbers in (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 21:22).

This statement is interesting from various perspectives. As an investor, Thon said that WaterBear would gain more impact if they succeeded in coupling more institutional logics from lobbying. Furthermore, Thon speaks of lobbying as NGO lobbying where activism and

collective movements are the key drivers to political change. This could potentially signal that Thon already sees that the goals of WaterBear live up to some of the movement goals in civil society. According to Thon, this is where they should drive impact and gain legitimacy as lobbyists. Finally, the quote can also be interpreted as WaterBear's inability to decouple from their non-hybrid roots in the media sector entirely, as their impact, according to Thon, only stretches as far as their reach and number of viewers, which is currently 2.5 million. According to Thon, they will need to build a bigger community to gain more impact. A strategy that both Resilient and WaterBear are currently pursuing.

The Community

During the collection of data, it became clear that interviewees from Resilient and WaterBear showed an eagerness to make the platforms more of a community. This seems to have been part of the strategy for Resilient since the beginning, through the Resilient Network, that brings people together with narrative as the shared hub (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 04:47). "The word that sits at the heart of WaterBear is a community. We are a global community," said Sutaria from WaterBear (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 14:47). It has become clear that WaterBear is trying to selectively couple the logics of a community by bringing people together in a shared mission through the streaming platform: "Many people that are using the platform and generally in the world of sustainability feel really isolated and alone. And ultimately, we want to build a community around making change," said Mason-Watts (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, 11:48). This is interpreted as WaterBear's aim to widen and enact their hybridity even further. However, it could also be a testament to how confusing it is to operate across various sectors with different institutional logics and diverse stakeholder demands. Sutaria emphasized that "(...) it's hard to work with demographics in the impact space (...) we need to think about mindset" (Appx. 3, Sutaria, WaterBear, 05:43).

According to WaterBear, a global community is a strategic advantage that will naturally create more collaboration, and by this, more impact (Appx. 3, Sutaria, WaterBear, 14:47). However, due to the diversity of plural spheres in today's network society, members of this community shape meaning individually and in sub-networks. The question is, if such a big community can share a mindset? An identity based on community logic also poses a potential threat to their business. The diversity of the group can potentially foster goal incongruence between what the goal of WaterBear is, which can make it harder for them to employ new partners. Potential

partners will have to assess if their own values and goals will align with WaterBear's and its community.

The Production Company (WaterBear only)

Besides the distribution of documentaries, WaterBear also produces documentaries in collaboration with partners. When Sutaria was asked if WaterBear is an agenda setter, his answer shows a special dynamic in the production of content for the platform: "It's a very interesting question. It links to the conversation around: are we a platform or are we a publisher?" (Appx. 3, Sutaria, WaterBear, 07:38). It becomes a conversation about WaterBear's ability to both distribute and edit content at the same time as a 'platisher', a platform-publisher hybrid. In the realm of streaming platforms, this is nothing new. Netflix produces much of their own content. However, the ethics of this can be challenged. When Interviewee Ø was asked to describe WaterBear, they said: "They [WaterBear] are a production company set out to make a profit" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 32:27). The data collection shows great acceptance of this business model among the partners. "By being sort of the trendsetter (...) I think WaterBear is setting the best practice now of what future production companies should look like" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 32:46). The acceptance of this dynamic in WaterBear comes as no surprise, as these partners are not only given the opportunity to co-create but also to showcase their content to a wider audience. WaterBear's distribution gives their co-created content more legitimacy than if these partners were sending out the message themselves: "It's the stamp of approval, sort of a filter," said Interviewee Ø (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 06:51).

As previously mentioned in the descriptions of funding arrangement above, WaterBear mostly receives funds to make films for their partners and distribute them. This is done with due diligence by WaterBear and by the production partners to secure that WaterBear sustains their authenticity and legitimacy. Mason-Watts elaborated on how this works and why this is:

Everything we do is rooted in due diligence (...) We're about telling the right story to create the right impact with a production team that does their due diligence (...) If we work with a brand partner and they want editorial control and they want to shoot something we say no to that (...). We've got a credibility and an authenticity when it comes to the WaterBear brand and ecosystem. We don't want to mess that up (...) Because if we make a mistake,

it could really harm us because of what we stand for (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 13:10).

Mason-Watts spoke to the dynamics of both being the film producer and the film distributor in partnerships. In the process of making films, WaterBear must couple institutional logics in film production of documentaries to share valid and credible information in order to sustain their legitimacy as both film distributor and film producer. However, the type of partners varies, and it has been discovered that depending on the partner, their editorial rights differ. Dahlquist said: “We’re paying for nice production. We are helping with the narrative, shaping the story” (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 19:27). This shows signs of selective coupling between different logics depending on who the production partner is. As Imagine5 is a non-profit, Imagine5 can strategically couple the institutional logics of civil society as being more trustworthy to influence the storyline compared to for-profit influence. However, it can be challenged if the commercial interests are decoupled, as this partnership will still give exposure to the Imagine5 brand. This is argued to be a potential threat to WaterBear and other partners. When WaterBear couples the institutional logics of a production company, some partners might not accept that WaterBear accepts influence from specific partners. It essentially becomes a question of authenticity that can have a spillover effect on how the new partners perceive WaterBear’s authenticity and legitimacy.

The Marketing Company

As previously discovered, paid partnerships play a fundamental role in how Resilient and WaterBear are funded; The funding from Resilient to WaterBear, the impact campaigns Resilient created through philanthropic partners, and finally WaterBear’s paid partnerships with corporations and NGOs. Resilient’s impact campaigns are marketing related because Resilient actively communicates about the partners involved. Furthermore, the WaterBear platform can serve as a marketing channel for corporations and NGOs to tell their stories and market their brands in the arena of societal issues. The data analysis shows several signs of how the institutional logics of a marketing company are coupled. Interviewee Ø said:

We do a lot at events, summits, conferences. For instance, with the New York Times where we did this front-page takeover. And also, for instance, with WaterBear, just to make sure that we reach the right audience and also

communicate. I think there's sort of like a PR angle to it (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 01:44).

Interviewee Ø compares the logic behind Ørsted's WaterBear partnership to the logic employed when Ørsted once bought the cover of newspaper The New York Times as an ad. It becomes a matter of reaching a specific segmented audience, which is viewed as an institutional logic within marketing. Interviewee Ø elaborated: "I think it's more trustworthy when you're reaching your audience and it's more relevant (...) you get more qualitative leads" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 05:01). Lead generation is one of the main drivers behind digital marketing efforts to collect data on end-consumers. However, it is uncertain how this is done in their partnership with WaterBear. As mentioned, Imagine5 directly classifies their partnership with WaterBear as: "The partnership (...) is like a traditional marketing partnership," said Dahlquist (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine 5, 34:41). This regards WaterBear as a company that also does marketing for brands. But according to Dahlquist, this is an institutional logic that needs to be coupled by WaterBear if they want to come across with their messages:

I think they [WaterBear] are using a lot of marketing agency mechanics and tactics, and I think that's fair (...) So it's just about saying: "Okay, how can we use that [marketing logic] for the greater good?" Wrapping the stories in nice imagery or making it look like an attractive thing that you want to be a part of (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine 5, 26:50).

This quote is interesting from several angles. While Dahlquist approves of WaterBear's marketing model, she speaks to existing institutional logics that marketing tactics can be manipulative. WaterBear must couple the institutional logics of marketing, but they have to selectively couple the logics to make them a force for good. Mason-Watts explained about WaterBear's selective coupling of marketing logics in their partnership with outdoor brand Jack Wolfskin:

(...) you can encourage them to spend their money on the right kind of stories. Jack Wolfskin (...) puts loads of their investment, their marketing budget into telling stories about rewilding because they really believe in that as a mission. And, sure, in a way you're lending the [WaterBear] brand by investing in

purpose [which] is building on their authenticity and credibility. But we're in a consumer world (...) if they can do it in a good way, rather than trying to sell mass products, then I think we're onto something (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 16:33)

WaterBear's selective coupling of marketing logics in their partnership with outdoor brand Jack Wolfskin is, according to WaterBear, a way for WaterBear to transform these big brands that shifts their focus from selling products to doing good in society. However, telling the "right kind of stories" does not necessarily mean that Jack Wolfskin products are sustainable, nor does it prevent them from selling the products. On the contrary we argue that WaterBear's legitimacy of Jack Wolfskin can potentially result in higher sales for the brand. The above quote shows how WaterBear tries to decouple the commercial sales incentives that are deeply embedded in the institutional logics of marketing, as they believe that marketing can be used to do solely good in society. Mason-Watts explains why the marketing of such big brands plays a pivotal role in making positive change in society:

We're a free platform, we want to remain free. But also we believe that brands have power, right? If Nike tells you to buy a shoe, you buy a shoe. And if we could harness that power, that collective fan base for good, we think we could achieve something really great (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 15:24).

It is clear that WaterBear aims to harvest the power of big global brands to make positive change. However, we argue that the branded content acts as a marketing effort to eventually sell more products. When Jack Wolfskin "tells" the viewer to act on rewilding, that is not necessarily what is going to happen. But the documentary can legitimize Jack Wolfskin which potentially makes the viewer buy their products. The above quote is also an example of how WaterBear selectively couples logics found in the streaming industry with the logics in marketing. Circling back to the institutional logics of streaming platforms, where streaming platforms cost something, these costs have to be covered by partners through marketing projects. As WaterBear is involved in producing these marketing messages, WaterBear employs the identity of a marketing company. Their advertisement model employed through partnerships shows signs of WaterBear's inability to decouple from their roots in media and for-profit streaming. They have to find ways of funding the streaming: "If we sign a partnership agreement with a partner, there's a you scratch our back, we'll scratch your back kind of cross

promotion and cross marketing conversation” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 11:26). We argue that the advertisement model potentially comes with an unprecedented expense for its community as these partners are imposing specific agendas on WaterBear’s community. And an unprecedented cost of WaterBear’s moral legitimacy.

The EdTech Company

Throughout the data collection with interviewees from Resilient and WaterBear, the word “educate” was brought up several times. As previously mentioned, Sutaria said: “(...) we educate, inform, inspire, and build agency collectively (...)” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 02:41). Building on the toolboxes by Resilient, and the intentional educational purpose of the films, both organizations show signs of coupling institutional logics as educational institutions. Investor Thon confirms this observation when explaining how VÅR Ventures identify WaterBear: “We have put WaterBear under the umbrella of EdTech [Education technology] (...) if the world was educated, we’d have a perfect world” (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 02:15). Thon couples the institutional logics from education, where knowledge is power, and assigns them to WaterBear. It is uncertain how deeply these values and beliefs are embedded in WaterBear. ‘Educate’ could be synonymous with ‘enlightenment’. However, this is particularly interesting when emphasizing the marketing characteristics of Resilient and WaterBear. Interviewee Ø argued that you can educate people through branded content: “I want my audience to be fooled a little bit, right, because they should feel entertained and educated. And then towards the end, they’re like, “Oh, yeah, I was actually watching an ad” (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 29:34). According to Interviewee Ø, WaterBear is able to produce educational content while still engaging in branded content. However, this raises ethical questions of transparency and authenticity for educational purposes.

In the above examples, we have examined how Resilient and WaterBear are selectively coupling diverse sets of goals and institutional logics in their hybrid governance of societal issues to gain stakeholder legitimacy. They constitute themselves as an NGO, a lobbyist, a community, a production company, a marketing company and an EdTech. The following will shortly analyze what controls the decision making in Resilient and WaterBear before the findings of Lens 1 are summed up for further exploration.

Public and Private Form of Social and Institutional Control

This particular element of Vakkuri et al. (2021) framework is not entirely applicable as it is designed to analyze the decision-making of municipally owned corporations. Despite this, we argue that some of the concepts can be applied to for-profit and non-profits.

The institutional logics described above are social constructions embedded within sectors that socially control the decision making of Resilient and WaterBear when they answer to diverse stakeholder demands. Resilient and WaterBear have strict guidelines to due diligence of partners and the content of the films. This is a type of mixed input-output control, as they are aware that in order to find trust among partners, their film production must be authentic. Furthermore, the content WaterBear distributes must account for this credibility and is key to their legitimacy as they are ‘watched’ by other actors in society. These social enterprises must balance control mechanisms to ensure accountability and performance. Sutaria explains:

We’re very true to our values, we’re very true to our way of operating and it doesn’t matter how much you’re wanting to influence us. And we say no to plenty of partners who want to come with big money, big checks and try to influence us and it’s not how we want to run our business (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 17:40).

Resilient and WaterBear have values they must comply with and can be seen as a social control that influences their decision-making when vetting partners. Furthermore, investor Thon described VÅR Ventures’ little interest in controlling, which is a form of input-dominated control as a board member of WaterBear that is accelerated by high levels of trust: “So we have influence but I think we’re quite founder friendly. I think when you invest in people you have to feel that they know how to run their business and not to interfere too much,” said Thon (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 20:00). This is regarded as a symptom of how hybrid organizations cannot answer to diverse, and sometimes competing demands, if they are bound by input-dominated control in their forms of ownership. The social and institutional form of control will not be further analyzed due to lack of relevance.

Findings from Lens 1

Part of Lens 1 was to analyze the funding arrangements in Resilient and WaterBear. In the analysis we have shown that Resilient's diverse philanthropic funding channels expand their reach but creates paradoxes of who they take money from and how traceable these funds are. A lot of Resilient's funding goes to WaterBear, which means that the funding risks Resilient faces also potentially affect WaterBear. However, unlike Resilient, WaterBear's for-profit business model allows them to engage in paid partnerships with corporations and NGOs. Managing the diverse multiplicity of funds demands agility and careful navigation to avoid being used for greenwashing and profit-driven agendas.

During the interviews it became clear that Resilient and WaterBear try to take on several identities to legitimize their hybrid governance of societal issues. The above close examination shows that Resilient and WaterBear are selectively coupling diverse sets of goals and institutional logics to gain legitimacy as an NGO, a lobbyist, a community, a production company (WaterBear only), a marketing company and an EdTech.

However, selective coupling is not without risk. We examined that Resilient and WaterBear wish to start a global movement by coupling institutional logics from civil society. They try to legitimize themselves in civil society as they want to catalyze what is the "right and wrong" way to act on societal issues through WaterBear's free streaming platform. As these issues are highly political, Resilient and WaterBear's influence on the stories show signs of how they also couple institutional logics in lobbyism in their hybrid governance of societal issues. They take on the task of influencing global legislative change through documentaries and events targeted at policy makers. We challenge if the films can change legislation, but Resilient and WaterBear believe that they are able to start the conversation around it. As Resilient and WaterBear couple marketing logics that give exposure and legitimacy to their partners through branded content, it is a conversation that is influenced by their partners. This for-profit business dynamic can become a threat to their moral legitimacy.

Furthermore, we discovered that institutional logics are unequally and selectively coupled depending on who the partner is. Non-profit partners are shown to be trusted to influence the shaping of narrative to a higher degree than other partners, as they represent civil society. WaterBear's aim is to decouple their for-profit partners' commercial incentives in marketing

logic to show that doing good in society should not always be motivated by profitable business. However, Resilient and WaterBear still want to harness the power of these big brands to obtain legitimacy and to convey their message. According to Jay (2013), hybrids face the risk of generating ambiguity about whether certain organizational outcomes represent success or failure. As WaterBear must create a profit, this is a potential paradox of ambiguity on this rise within Resilient and WaterBear. Furthermore, we question if WaterBear can successfully, authentically, and ethically couple institutional logics from education, if the content they distribute are influenced by partners' marketing incentives.

Finally, Resilient and WaterBear's aim to start a global movement also show signs of a community in the making to bridge the potential of collective action. We analyze this as their organizational strategy to further enact their entrenched hybridity. However, characterizing the organizations as a community through coalitions building between different actors can potentially have unprecedented consequences. The diversity of public spheres potentially prevents them from creating a shared discourse with a shared goal. It can prevent them from shaping the global narrative, foster collective action and have a negative impact on their legitimacy.

All these different institutional logics that are selectively coupled to find legitimacy among their diverse stakeholders makes the decision-making of Resilient and WaterBear a complex interplay of social- and institutional control. They navigate a mixed input-output control due their dual role as film producers and film distributor that set high demands for due diligence and authenticity in order to gain legitimacy. Furthermore, they must make decisions according to their own values in order to not compromise their authenticity, as they are faced with partners that are ready to exchange big sums of money for high narrative influence.

The following section will further analyze Resilient and WaterBear's hybrid governance through Lens 2 of Vakkuri et al.'s (2021) framework, which analyzes the social enterprises' approach to value creation (Figure 2, Appx. 15).

4.2.3 Lens 2: Value Creation Mechanisms

Following the above examination of Lens 1, this section will investigate the second part of the lens. In this lens the focus is on the dynamic processes through which Resilient and

WaterBear's hybrid structures enact certain value creation mechanisms. The emphasis will be on partnerships as their primary means of creating value. We will examine how Resilient and WaterBear manage to create value through the processes of mixing, compromising, and legitimizing values.

Mixing Values

Social enterprises, like Resilient and WaterBear, frequently combine or mix existing value categories into new ones in order to gain legitimacy and meet stakeholder demands (Vakkuri et al., 2021).

Partnerships with other actors enable Resilient and WaterBear to blend diverse values and objectives from different sectors to e.g., gain legitimacy. Since different sectors have different value systems (Vakkuri et al., 2021), the reason why Resilient and WaterBear's partnerships are interesting is their potential ability to mix these values into new ones, and presumably strengthen their hybridity. In the above analysis on partnerships, we showed how Resilient and WaterBear work with partners from both the private and third sector. The value categories that Resilient and WaterBear are blending through these partnerships are economic efficiency, social impact, and environmental sustainability: "(...) people shouldn't have to pay to engage with NGOs or do good. So to try and keep that free, we obviously have to have to find some money somewhere. So WaterBear is a for-profit" (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 11:48)

Dahlquist from Imagine5 commented on the tensions between driving impact while still accounting for your business in a corporate-non-profit partnership: "(...) [WaterBear is] trying to see how and if they can actually make a business out of this way of pursuing impact" (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 45:37). The above quotes from Mason-Watts and Dahlquist illustrate how the blending of economic goals and societal impact is a sought-after synergy. They also illustrate the values are mixed which make them strategically ambiguous. Therefore, making this synergy tricky since it could allow Resilient and WaterBear to respond more effectively to urgent needs by leveraging the strengths and resources of various sectors. In doing so, they not only enhance their impact but also reinforce their legitimacy and strengthen their hybridity. This also refers back to their social enterprise identity, which means that Resilient and WaterBear's core organizational values are already mixed, thus reaffirming their hybridity.

Compromising on Values

For the compromising of values, Resilient and WaterBear navigate the trade-offs when blending their core organizational values with partner values from different sectors. According to Vakkuri et al. (2021), this aspect is critical since hybrid organizations often have to find a middle ground between conflicting objectives and expectations.

As Resilient and WaterBear engage in partnerships with actors from different sectors than their own, they are positioned at the intersection of diverse sectoral values. According to Vakkuri et al. (2021) hybrid organizations are incentivized. Sometimes, they are institutionally forced to reconcile competing value creation logics by reaching compromises between different value propositions, owners, actors and even measurements (Vakkuri et al., 2021). For Resilient and WaterBear this involves finding a balance between the value creation logics: balancing financial performance with social impact and public accountability. It is worth noticing that since Resilient and WaterBear fundamentally have different business models, their way of composing on values is different. This also creates a paradox, where Resilient and WaterBear face the risk of generating ambiguity about whether certain organizational outcomes represent success or failure. For instance, when WaterBear generates a profit, it might be positive for impact investors and their ROIs. However, it could be seen as a negative outcome for philanthropists or NGOs, as they must expect that their funds go to charitable causes, not WaterBear's revenue. Ambiguity is a potential tool to meet stakeholder credibility and could mean that WaterBear becomes less stringent. Sutaria comments that in order for WaterBear to succeed, they need to modify their business model: "(...) a lot more flexibility [in the partnership contracts], a lot less restriction" (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 11:26). Since their partnerships revolve around everything from film projects to impact campaigns, Resilient and WaterBear's value compromises will differ from partnership to partnership.

An example of the different values that Resilient and WaterBear's partners focus on is shown in the following quotes from WWF and Rolex: "I think for an NGO [like WWF], you're trusted to do good with the money, and to have an impact with the money that you're given" (Appx. 10, Høgsberg, WWF, 29:55), and "I think that we would be naive for a moment to forget that marketing, in the broadest sense, is to promote the first choice for your product" (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 19:55). The most significant value compromising here is social impact vs. profitability. Being hybrids, Resilient and WaterBear need to find a balance between being

financially sustainable (a priority in the private sector) and achieving their social or environmental missions (a priority in the third sector). Resilient and WaterBear will have to compromise on the different value propositions.

Legitimizing Values

In the last mechanism we focus on understanding how Resilient and WaterBear gain and maintain legitimacy for their activities and roles in society. Most of this we have already been covered in the above sections, but seen with a partnership and values lens, what becomes clear is that the values that ultimately provide Resilient and WaterBear with social and in-put legitimacy are created through their CSSPs with actors from other sectors.

The partnerships are used for justifying Resilient and WaterBear's value creation activities across sectors. It is also argued that these partnerships are legitimizing activities which provide Resilient and WaterBear with opportunities to justify their institutional niche in relation to other organizational forms. According to Vakkuri et al. (2021), legitimacy is a crucial concern for hybrid organizations, and the legitimacy of hybrid organizations also depends on their ability to adapt to the norms and values of different sectors. Their partnerships have the potential to significantly enhance both Resilient and WaterBear's social, output and input legitimacy. When they demonstrate collaborative and impactful efforts, there is also a risk that Resilient and WaterBear may prioritize partnerships that offer the most PR-value to their organization rather than the partnerships that could lead to the most substantial impact. Since legitimacy through partnerships often relies heavily on external validation from respected partners (Vakkuri et al., 2021), this can create a dependency where Resilient and WaterBear might compromise on their values to maintain crucial partnerships.

Findings from Lens 2

Resilient and WaterBear's partnerships and their value creation are interesting, since they contribute to the establishment of Resilient and WaterBear. Fundamentally, the partnerships underscore Resilient and WaterBear's hybrid nature, and the fact that they can engage in partnerships with such diverse partners demonstrates that both Resilient and WaterBear are highly hybrid as they show degrees of incentivized value creation based on the demands of their stakeholders. This can entail value compromises. Their value creation is mixed between economic logic and social impact, making it difficult for Resilient and WaterBear to compromise on these, since they have a diverse stakeholder group. Furthermore, it creates

ambiguity in their business model, and whether there needs to be more flexibility and less restrictions to create value. In order to legitimize the values, partnerships are employed to justify Resilient and WaterBear's value creation activities across sectors. Legitimizing values in the context of hybrid organizations such as Resilient and WaterBear involves a complex interplay of aligning with stakeholder expectations, demonstrating impact, adapting to industry norms, and enhancing brand perception.

Unexpected Finding: The Exchange of Legitimacy between Resilient & WaterBear

An unexpected finding from the data analysis is the internal interpretation of WaterBear as a partner to Resilient rather than addressing both organizations as one organization, which we argue for. As mentioned, Resilient and WaterBear are independent, legally separate organizations. However, there are numerous ways in which they are intertwined: "We have a for-profit with WaterBear and not-for-profit with Resilient, and we raise philanthropic funds through Resilient and we have a plug-in distribution and production partner in WaterBear" (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 10:19) said Mason-Watts from WaterBear. Consequently, the blurred relationship between Resilient and WaterBear becomes difficult to define.

The intertwined relationship between the organizations can be explained strategically through legitimacy. The difference between the Resilient and WaterBear is found in the exchange of legitimacy between both parties. "I don't really believe in philanthropy (...) It really wasn't designed to last the way it was. So I think that it does need to be constantly reinvented or reimagined for the world that we're in now," said Kawaley-Lathan (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 28:31). It's interesting to note that the Executive Director of the foundation does not believe in the very fundamental financial model Resilient is built upon. Given that most of the funds from Resilient go to WaterBear, we argue that Resilient is using WaterBear to gain accountability by showing that philanthropic funds have impact and that the funds drive impact in society through their media outlet. Essentially, the documentaries become Resilient's way to account for their actions and gain accountability with existing investors and, long-term, legitimacy for future investors. The non-profit structure of Resilient is strategically beneficial to WaterBear's legitimacy, and this non-profit charitable quality of Resilient positions them as an actor in civil society. WaterBear's relationship with Resilient not only provides the streaming platform with philanthropic funds, but it also helps to morally accept their motives and actions in society by having a non-profit to legitimize them. Resilient's legitimization of WaterBear is a strategically advancing tool for WaterBear to gain credibility and attract profits

in their for-profit business. The exchange of legitimacy in their relationship essentially becomes a way to which the two organizations strategically and socially vouch for each other in society and in business.

4.2.4 Findings of Resilient and WaterBear's Hybridity for Legitimacy

The above framework has dived deep into the hybridity of Resilient and WaterBear, and the paradoxes that are embedded herein as they tackle societal issues. In the following, we sum-up our findings on how their dimensions of hybridity and value creation are employed to gain legitimacy with a focus on specific types of legitimacy they seek to obtain. Furthermore, we sum up our findings with a notion of what challenges their hybridity seems to entail. This section is further elaborated in order to effectively explore the relationship between transparency and legitimacy.

The analysis demonstrates that Resilient and WaterBear couple institutional logics from various sectors, shaping their various identities. To maintain their legitimacy – both pragmatic and moral – among stakeholders and broader society, they must navigate complex demands. These coupled logics set high demands on their decision-making, as they must balance more interests at all times. It becomes a complex interplay of social- and institutional control inside Resilient and WaterBear. Their entrenched and intertwined hybridity shows that they are set out to face multiple diverse stakeholder demands from their founding with high personal legitimacy obtained through board members. Furthermore, we argue that the non-profit quality of Resilient gives WaterBear credibility through their partnership, as, according to Castells (2008), actors in civil society are more trusted to do good. It becomes not only an exchange of legitimacy between them and their partners, but also between Resilient and WaterBear.

Their aim to make a good business while pursuing impact through diverse funding channels is an example of them mixing values to constitute their hybrid form. It is an important value dynamic that we argue must be present if Resilient and WaterBear want to address societal issues from both top-down and bottom-up levels in the B2B2C-business. In order to live up to stakeholder expectations, Resilient and WaterBear must constantly exchange legitimacy with partners. This involves a constant tension between who Resilient and WaterBear are and what they want to become. This is why Resilient and WaterBear are looking for more flexibility and less restrictions when it comes to dealing with partners. It will be a way for them to make less

incentivized compromises for specific partners. Their value-compromises also make Resilient and WaterBear potentially fragile. When or if their identities are challenged, it may affect the rest of the organizations and their other stakeholders. Resilient and WaterBear's diverse stakeholders become means for creating identities to match their values and goals. And, as mentioned, value-creation through partnerships is a vital part of their operations.

Our analysis further revealed that partnerships do not just enable value creation; they are essential for these organizations to embody hybrid identities that combine non-profit motivations with business methods. We argue that partnerships are constitutive for their motivations to be hybrid organizations. And it became clear how Resilient and WaterBear find input legitimacy among their many partners, who give them output legitimacy and access to parts of the network society.

As transparency is an effective tool to gain legitimacy, in the following section we will dive deeper into the transparency applied in Resilient and WaterBear's CSR communication strategy when they communicate about their partnerships.

4.3 Strategic Transparency: Navigating Legitimacy in CSR Partnerships

In order to navigate the complex arena of gaining legitimacy, we will in this part of the analysis dive into Resilient and WaterBear's attitude towards transparency when communicating on their partnerships. After this, we apply the framework "Dimensions of strategic communication in contexts of high sustainability pressure framework" by Aggerholm and Thomsen in order to analyze their transparency as a strategic choice as a means to gain legitimacy. Finally, since we view transparency as a social construct, we analyze the partner's evaluations in order to assess the transparency of the partnerships.

4.3.1 The Transparency of Resilient and WaterBear's Partnerships

"I think we keep it all transparent (...)" (Appx. 3, Kawaley-Lathan, Resilient, 50:34).

"I would say WaterBear is a transparent organization (...) from how we communicate with our stakeholders to our transparency around data to sharing information (...)" (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 30:57).

Resilient's website shows less information about their partnerships than WaterBear's. They only show the logos of their 'story partners' (Resilient Foundation, n.d. f) and on their project '8billion' (Resilient Foundation, n.d. d). Resilient accounts for their impact through WaterBear by showing what comes out of the philanthropic funding. It is argued that Resilient uses WaterBear and the documentaries to account for their output legitimacy. An example of this is seen on through project '8billion', where Resilient link-builds to WaterBear documentaries as a result of the ongoing project (Resilient Foundation, n.d. d).

While WaterBear's website contains information about who their partners are, no information is found about how these partnerships are formed, the processes nor how the partners influence the documentation. The screenshots in appendix 14 show the available information on the documentaries made in partnership with Rolex, Ørsted, WWF and Imagine5.

The available information varies from partnership to partnership. Rolex is mentioned by their logo in the cover photo, and in the trailer, but not in the documentary description (Appx. 14; WaterBear Network Streaming, n.d. b). Ørsted is mentioned by their logo in the cover photo and in the description, and, as mentioned by Interviewee Ø, there is a link to the campaign on Ørsted's page (Appx. 14; WaterBear Network Streaming, n.d. c). Even though the Ørsted documentary is highly branded with Ørsted's logo, there is no credits list in the documentary. Therefore, it is not clear who has produced the film. Interestingly, Ørsted is not listed in the partners list (WaterBear Network, n.d. c). With WWF it was only possible to find out that they have partnered on the documentary in WaterBear's partners list and in the credit list in the documentary. Neither WWF's logo nor name are in the documentary description (Appx. 14; WaterBear Network, n.d. c; WaterBear Network Streaming, n.d. d). Imagine5's logo is in the cover photo, their name is in the documentary description, and there is a link to their website (Appx. 14; WaterBear Network Streaming, n.d. a).

When WaterBear mentions its partners, it is primarily to enhance its credibility through the associations and descriptions of the partner, rather than focusing on the joint actions they undertake. We analyze this as an opaque type of transparency. On the streaming platform there is little to no information on the processes of the partnership. However, they have a 'partners list' which is full of their partner's logos (WaterBear Network, n.d. c). With the minimal information in the processes of their partnerships, one might speculate if WaterBear is the

sender, with the societal actions depicted as theirs. However, the presence of various logos complicates this interpretation. It casts doubt on who is involved and what their exact role is in the partnership. Yet, still, Resilient and WaterBear gain legitimacy through their partnerships. Since transparency is often the means to legitimacy, it is interesting that their transparency is opaque, but they still manage to appear legitimate and be involved with so many high-esteemed partners. Their partnerships could also be labeled as co-branding, since Resilient and WaterBear are essentially feeding off the legitimacy of the high-profiled brands they partner with. If WaterBear begins to describe how x, y, z has paid for this and that documentary and have been part of shaping the narrative, then someone in civil society might become alert and that could affect their legitimacy negatively. This could jeopardize WaterBear's business and their desired societal impact. Some question remains: what does WaterBear gain strategically from their lack of transparency? And is the opaque transparency a strategic tool to stay legitimate? Is transparency a threat for Resilient and WaterBear?

4.3.2 Transparency as a Threat to the Legitimacy of Resilient and WaterBear

In the previous section, we focused on analyzing how Resilient and WaterBear strategically employ an opaque or low transparency to legitimize themselves. In this section, this opaque transparency is analyzed as a strategic choice. Our argument behind this section is that more transparency could potentially become a means to challenge their legitimacy, and therefore they employ an opaque transparency strategy.

I don't think more transparency could be a threat to legitimacy (...) I think transparency is key. But your legitimacy doesn't necessarily come from transparency. It comes from being authentic and walking the walk and talking the talk and showing what you're doing. It doesn't necessarily need to come from kind of transparency statements or diving deep into why you do what you do. I think it comes from how you behave and the impression you give (Appx. 2, Mason-Watts, WaterBear, 17:49).

The quote from Mason-Watts from WaterBear presents a subtle tension between the necessity of transparency and the assertion that it alone does not result in legitimacy. It posits that the multifaceted nature of legitimacy is derived not only from transparency but also from

authenticity, consistency, and the overall behavior of the organization. The following will dive deeper into why transparency can pose a threat to the legitimacy of Resilient and WaterBear.

With a top-down approach to the “Dimensions of strategic communication in contexts of high sustainability pressure framework” by Aggerholm and Thomsen (2024), the framework is applied to show the presence of the concepts (1) Purposefulness, (2) Transparency and (3) Participation in Resilient and WaterBear’s strategic communication available to the public on their websites. We further analyze the interdependence of the three concepts to show that their presence is not enough, as the degree to which they are applied in strategic communication affects the accountability as well (Figure 3, Appx. 16).

Concept 1: Purposefulness Presented in Vision and Mission Statements

The vision and mission statements available on Resilient and WaterBear websites show their strategic intentions behind the social enterprises. Resilient states: “Our mission is to bring about targeted, measurable and scalable change towards a just and resilient world using film, narrative storytelling and arts activism as transformational tools” (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b). Their mission statement mirrors Resilient’s aim to create accountability through measurable transformative change. “Measurable and scalable change” is written as their way of incorporating logic and language from impact investing, where ROIs are measured, to gain accountability. Furthermore, it speaks to legislative change in a “just resilient world” with an activist approach that is ignited through storytelling. This encompasses some of the institutional logics they are constantly trying to couple from NGOs and lobbyism to liaise with their diverse stakeholders. Resilient’s vision statement is: “Our vision is to activate and unite humanity to build a thriving, resilient planet” (Resilient Foundation, n.d. b). This human-led vision statement could in essence be applied to many other organizations, especially other NGOs, and is a sign of their broad definitions that are often found in hybrids to account for their various actions and stakeholder demands. WaterBear’s purposefulness is structured quite differently. It is a list of questions that describes their mission, which is embedded in their vision and vice versa:

What if we could make documentaries into popcorn worthy entertainment? Turn people from passive viewers into active doers? Invite everyone to go from doomerism to domoreism? Transform brand partners into planet savers? Filmmakers into changemakers? And ultimately move from collecting awards to

measuring impact? Imagine if you could go from watching heroes like Greta to being one? Switch from mindless scrolling to meaningful content? Flip the tipping point from hopelessness to a brighter future? Can we jump head first from apathy to optimism? Swim with a black mermaid? Float like a butterfly? Sing with the bees? Go from fearing what's ahead to excitedly writing new narratives? Learn not just how to survive but thrive amidst uncertainty? Can we enjoy the act of saving our planet? Not feel guilty about bingeing TV? But sign up for real change? Wouldn't that be good? That would be WaterBear (WaterBear Network, n.d. d).

The long description of WaterBear's mission/vision statement(s) is interpreted as a way to spark inspiration and action but can also be interpreted as a diversion to actually communicating what their purpose *really* is. Their strategic deployment of story-like communication makes it difficult for their stakeholders to know how to interpret their impact and hold them accountable for their actions. Consequently, it could leave the stakeholders in doubt about what change WaterBear is looking to obtain. Furthermore, the vast emphasis on making a change through the viewers, "viewers becoming their own Greta Thunberg", could also be seen as a way to divert WaterBear's accountability to only account for the viewers' own actions. On the other hand, according to Gauthier et. al (2004), storytelling is a legitimacy-building tactic that fosters sensemaking and sensegiving of the organization. The long vision/mission statement could also be interpreted as a brand exercise that positions WaterBear as a strong storyteller that wishes to inspire and create change through captivating and emotional documentaries.

Concept 2: Transparency Through Explaining, Justifying and Elaborating Strategic Intentions

Resilient and WaterBear's accountability through transparency is interpreted by their way of explaining, justifying, and elaborating their strategic visions and missions. Resilient elaborates why their mission and vision are needed: "Many changemakers and experts with innovative solutions remain unheard or operate in silos" (Resilient Foundation, n.d. a) and further explains why:

Resilient actively collaborates with local communities and experts, fostering strategic coalitions to provide specialized contextual tools that make the

complexities of these challenges accessible. It leverages the transformative power of storytelling to bridge knowledge, empathy, and action gaps (Resilient Foundation, n.d. a).

In Resilient's efforts to make their actions and potential impact more concrete and transparent, they state that they can provide the "specialized contextual tools" to make societal challenges more accessible through storytelling. While it is not obvious what these tools entail, it evidently sets high demands for their accountability and their output legitimacy. Because, if these tools are to be interpreted as storytelling through documentaries, WaterBear becomes Resilient's way of accounting to what comes out of their philanthropic donations; the films (alongside their impact campaigns) become Resilient's way of justifying that the funds are well spent. While this belief potentially stems from the ideas of how communication is an act in itself, it is still hard to pin-point what accountable impact Resilient has on society.

WaterBear seek to explain and justify their vision/mission statement through how they work with partnerships for societal change:

A free platform that brings inspiration and action together through award-winning, certified films and documentaries (...) Working alongside hundreds of planet partners, both brands & NGOs to produce original content that entertains people into action by making it effortlessly easy. It is all of us, and the planet, together (WaterBear Network, n.d. d)

According to WaterBear, their mission/vision comes alive through "award-winning, certified films" that fosters societal participation by their viewers. It is elaborated to be "effortlessly easy" to act on societal change. "Their award-winning, certified films" are stated to reassure and account for WaterBear input legitimacy that testify that WaterBear can be trusted and held accountable. With the previous discovery of how an opaque transparency is applied despite their high standards of due diligence, the above statement WaterBear shows the same tendencies. "Working alongside" planet partners do not come close to explaining how their purposefulness is acted upon and leaves very little room for WaterBear to account for their input legitimacy.

Concept 3: Participation Through In/External Stakeholder Engagement and Dialogue

Throughout the analysis, we have mentioned some statements from Kawaley-Lathan about Resilient's three lenses they employ in their partnership to frame narratives. The three lenses shape the narratives around (1): Decoding complexities with the Resilient Network, (2) Changemakers and innovative leaders and (3): Visionary futures. Furthermore, they have six impact first-led selection criteria about e.g., urgency, quality of film, social impact returns etc. And finally, they mention WaterBear as a key partner "to ensure that our stories are seen and can have impact" (Resilient Foundation, n.d. a). The lenses imply that the societal topics are seen through Resilient's lens, which shows accountability for their in- and external stakeholders. The transparency of process is not expected to encompass all elements of how their philanthropic funds and partnerships are employed, however it denotes that Resilient accounts for the selection criteria when creating stories. This also means that external stakeholders have the ability to address and challenge these lenses, which shows Resilient's wish to account for their stories, and consequently, their potential impact. Furthermore, as previously discovered, their relationship with sister company WaterBear becomes a tool for them to show society that the funds become of something, and the documentaries are there to drive societal impact.

WaterBear is aware that their free platform might make their stakeholders question how the platform is funded. They justify their mission through partner funding like this:

WaterBear enables brand partners to share their 'sustainability story' through content, projects and initiatives, engaging new audiences and driving global impact. This strategy allows us to deliver WaterBear to the world - for free - with no traditional advertising or subscription; it aligns our business model with our vision and values (...)" (WaterBear Network, n.d. e)

This statement is used to justify that viewers will find logos and partner descriptions on the platform. However, as mentioned above, it says very little about the processes of the partnerships, nor how the partners impact the stories. Ultimately, it could be interpreted as mere distribution of partner's 'sustainability stories'. As previously discovered, distribution-only is not the case. WaterBear further elaborates their strategic intentions by answering: "A streaming service? A publisher? A distributor? An impact platform? A campaigner? A film enthusiast?"

Yes” (WaterBear Network, n.d. d). This is intended to elaborate the hybridity of WaterBear to explain how they make their mission/vision come alive. Sutaria said: “(...) it may be in some ways an advertising model, but it’s also done in a way that is trying to shift an industry to do better and to change and I think that’s how we certainly wanted it to position” (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 32:10). To shift an industry through partners means restrategizing. Notably, the above description of their identities does not account for WaterBear’s desired ability to impact the strategy of those partners as a “corporate CSR strategist”. Being more transparent about this business venture could potentially threaten the legitimacy of WaterBear, as it is to be expected that WaterBear is constantly under surveillance by external stakeholders that could potentially scrutinize them for being a mouthpiece for greenwashing brands.

Findings from Concepts 1, 2 & 3

The above elements in the “Dimensions of Strategic Communication in Contexts of High Sustainability Pressure Framework” (Appx. 16) have shown that Resilient and WaterBear show low degrees in their effort to account for their impact in society. While there are many overlaps between the two social enterprises, Resilient shows a higher degree of accountability for their impact through more concrete, transparent descriptions of how their narratives are shaped and how the stories are distributed. Furthermore, while it is not entirely clear what their mission and vision actually entail, the statements are there and can be contested in the acts by something that contradicts them. WaterBear becomes a tool for Resilient to account for their philanthropic funds and the documentaries they help to create, however WaterBear’s accountability ends here. WaterBear shows a tendency to divert accountability onto its stakeholders by letting them be the change under vague mission/vision storytelling-led aspirations. Being more transparent about their partnerships, how they are formed, and what impact they have on the stories, could be a potential threat to their legitimacy. It could leave the viewer to think “Am I watching a documentary or an ad?”. Despite the inherent “good” intentions behind WaterBear and the interviewees explanations of high due diligence, the viewer is still potentially left behind in doubt of how these partnerships influence WaterBear.

Prior to the above section, we have argued that Resilient and WaterBear still remain legitimate despite their opaque transparency. The legitimacy is obtained through partnerships. But transparency could be of relevance to Resilient and WaterBear’s partners. Therefore, in the following we will take a closer look at the partner’s assessment of WaterBear level of transparency. Since WaterBear is regarded as Resilient’s accountability mechanism, we will

concentrate on WaterBear's platform, as this is where the change, according to both social enterprises, is shared with society at large.

4.3.3 Partners' Assessment of WaterBear's Transparency

In this section, we will analyze how WaterBear's partners perceive the transparency of their partnerships. This is interesting because, according to De Fine Licht et al. (2014), legitimacy effects of transparency can only be realized if the public recognizes the difference between what is transparent and what is non-transparent. We have previously explored the potential underlying agendas in WaterBear's content, examining the impact of involving brands and influential partners in producing documentaries on societal issues. However, the transparency of such agendas is not always clear, as explained by Day-Lewin from Rolex:

If we [Rolex] shout about it, people won't care. It's almost like it's a nice thing to discover. The mindset is: "if you know, you know, and that means more". Because if you do look, you can find it. It's just that it's not the first thing we say because at the same time we sell 50,000, 100,000-pound watches. Does that really hold to the general public? Because everyone knows Rolex, right? It's totally ubiquitous (...) but we don't need to lead with "we're saving the world". Because I think that's slightly incongruous to the item that you're [Rolex] actually selling (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 05:25).

Day-Lewin argues that corporations today, such as Rolex, might not always be interested in being upfront about their CSR efforts, and choose to be strategically silent. Furthermore, she recognizes that the fact that Rolex sells premium watches is conflicting with the idea of them "saving the world". This leads Rolex to take a subtle approach to the CSR communication, and also their communication about their partnership with WaterBear. Without defining the validity of their efforts, we suggest that Rolex's strategic silence is emblematic of a broader trend of companies. They prefer a strategy where they do not aggressively promote or 'shout' about their initiatives, in order to not be subject to claims of greenwashing. It is difficult to argue if Rolex even accounts for their actions through their partnership with WaterBear. However, on the other hand, Rolex's approach could be seen not as a lack of commitment, but as a different form of conveying their values, which ensures that their sustainability actions are perceived as genuine and not merely a marketing-imposed strategy.

When Interviewee Ø was asked if they know why it is difficult to find concrete information about Ørsted's partnership with WaterBear they said: "No, I don't. I know that they have a call to action that leads to Ørsted (...) but I was surprised to see that they actually don't have credits really on anything on their website" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 24:56). The concept of credibility is closely related to the term 'credits', reflecting their shared roots. On WaterBear's website it is communicated through logos and sometimes short descriptions if there is a partner involved. However, facts about the partnership and Ørsted's specific contribution are not stated. Interviewee Ø asked: "Would it hurt WaterBear to have the credits on that [the documentaries]?" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 29:34). To this, the answer might be found from Thon: "I think primarily, their partners use them as a sort of a platform to communicate their good stuff (...) and I think the fact that they're [WaterBear] being paid for it, maybe it's not necessarily something they [WaterBear] need to communicate about" (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 23:50). The statement suggests that the bigger societal purpose and sustainability message wins over the question of transparency. It could also suggest that WaterBear would be subject to scrutiny from the public. People would potentially question their legitimacy if they knew more about how much their partners influence the content made, and that they are paying WaterBear to be on their platform showcasing their good work. To this, Sutaria from WaterBear takes the criticism that WaterBear's business model is similar to advertisement: "I accept the criticism in the sense that I think it is in some ways an advertising-based business model, but I think it needs to be" (Appx. 1, Sutaria, WaterBear, 32:10).

Related to Sutaria and Thon's statements, Interviewee Ø from Ørsted also argued for 'the cause is bigger than the issue of credit and transparency': "And in the end, I don't care that they didn't credit Ørsted because I'm only interested in people seeing more of Roy [the protagonist in the documentary 'ReCoral']" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 39:05). Later in the interview, Interviewee Ø even questions whether it is relevant to be transparent in Ørsted's partnership with WaterBear: "And maybe it's not relevant to even be that transparent on this" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 50:04). Before this, Interviewee Ø made an interesting comparison between social network TikTok and WaterBear: "It's promotion [of brands], just under another banner (...) the difference is that on TikTok, you actually see who's uploaded it [the video]. I think that would be a good feature [on WaterBear's streaming platform]" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 35:31). The above quotes mirror the balance between relevance of transparency versus knowing who is behind could enhance trust. Interviewee Ø highlights a critical aspect

of digital transparency. While clear brand promotion should be prevalent across platforms, the clarity of content origins is not only a matter of transparency but also of authenticity. To this, Interviewee Ø emphasized the importance of the public in this calculation:

But it's [the partnership] not transparent. I mean, WaterBear is basically just saying that this is what Ørsted is doing. But they're not saying: "this is the video that Ørsted has produced, and we like it because of this and that, which is why we're having it on our website". So it's not really transparent because no one knows why it's there. It resonates with the rest of the content, so that's why it makes sense to people. But despite that, people don't really know why it's there (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 49:22).

Based on this, we argue that WaterBear focuses more on showing what partners they have, but not how they are partnering with them. This little focus on procedural legitimacy could be a problem because it can cast doubt on whether the documentaries are essentially advertisements. Whether or not WaterBear is strategically non-transparent about the processes of their partnerships is unclear. As previously analyzed, these high-profile brands can create legitimacy for WaterBear despite their low transparency, which could explain this chosen strategy. However, WaterBear forgets that civil society is critical. Dahlquist from Imagine5 is concerned: "I think that the fact that there's a commercial brand and goal would for some people question "What is this content? Is it brand content? Is it something I can trust?" (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 24:16). Questions like these could harm WaterBear and their ability to remain legitimate in the eyes of both the public and potential partners. Dahlquist also comments on the challenges WaterBear faces in identifying sustainable revenue drivers for impact:

I think it's really tricky to find sustainable revenue drivers if you're seeking impact, and you don't have a major sponsor (...) And with the whole greenwashing and greenhushing, it's tricky to know (...) when this is a commercial partner who really is in it for the cause. Or if they're trying to reshape their image a little bit by adding some green credentials (Appx. 9, Dahlquist, Imagine5, 26:50).

Partnering with commercial partners has its risks, but as Dahlquist points out, these partners are necessary, since they are the ones with the funds that enables WaterBear to keep their

platform free. WaterBear is reliant on their “major sponsors” to further their cause but is faced with the risks of partners who are only in it to further their own image. As Dahlquist puts it, add “some green credentials”. It is an inherent paradox in WaterBear’s business model, that they must balance in order to remain credible. WaterBear is willing to compromise their transparency on the mission to inspire and educate the public about societal issues.

Throughout the above assessments, it has become clear that the partners question the transparency of WaterBear. However, notably, none of the partners are questioning WaterBear’s legitimacy. The complexity of working with wicked problems makes the inherent relationship between transparency and legitimacy distorted in favor of the change maker’s societal goal. It seems that the demand for transparency is neglected in exchange for actions towards ‘the greater good’: “I don’t care if they [WaterBear’s partnerships] are paid because I really need the world to know more about sustainability”, said Thon (Appx. 5, Thon, VÅR Ventures, 24:22). Thon from VÅR Ventures gives a cynical answer to the potential dangers of letting big corporations control how the narrative of climate issues is communicated through media. The quote underscores the sentiment that as long as the partnerships deliver the “right” value, it does not matter if a corporation, NGO, or media is behind. Governing big societal issues in partnership with corporations, NGOs, and philanthropists, Høgsberg, from WWF, commented on the intricate relationship between transparency and legitimacy, and whether transparency remains necessary when an organization already possesses legitimacy:

(...) But I think if you have the legitimacy, if no one questions your legitimacy, then, is there a need for transparency? Because it’s the legitimacy you want, right? So you can say, legitimacy is the state and transparency is a means. Legitimacy is the end and transparency is the means to the end (Appx. 10, Høgsberg, WWF, 19:19).

Høgsberg’s quote leads to the question of how little transparency is necessary in order to not be questioned about one’s legitimacy. If Resilient and WaterBear were more transparent about the various processes in the partnerships, how much influence the partners potentially have and their intentions behind, then the public could start to question the narratives in the documentaries and potentially Resilient and WaterBear’s credibility as film producers and distributors. Hybrids are fragile organizations and critical questions are at the risk of not only affecting themselves, but also their various stakeholders. However, the above analysis shows

very little partner skepticism to Resilient and WaterBear's methods of governing big societal issues and the potential corporate influence on the public opinion about climate change. This sets the analysis off to a discussion on what we call, 'the borders of advertising'. Are we letting these big brands tell society how to act on wicked problems? Are Resilient and WaterBear 'just' a good business covered in green messages that harvests off a global trend and global demands of green governance?

We have now explored the partner's perceptions of transparency in their partnership with WaterBear, highlighting a strategic silence among the partners. WaterBear focuses more on showing what partners they have, but not how they are partnering with them to obtain procedural legitimacy. We argue that this little focus on procedural legitimacy could be a problem because it can cast public doubt on whether the documentaries are essentially advertisements and lead to potential scrutiny by civil society. Despite this, what we found interesting is that mostly, the partners do not question WaterBear's legitimacy, which we argued suggests a complex interplay between level of transparency and achieving societal goals. WaterBear's streaming platform and the hundreds of high-esteemed partners is a testimonial to the fact that WaterBear gained legitimacy despite their low transparency. The focus remains on impact over transparency, with some suggesting that the demand for transparency can be overlooked if the actions contribute to the greater good.

In the following discussion, we will further look into how the interplay between transparency for legitimacy becomes in-transparent when it is challenged by the hybridity motivated by partnerships.

5. Discussion and Theoretical Contribution

This discussion delves into the explored relationship between transparency and legitimacy in the setting of hybrid organizations engaging in CSSPs. We explore the intricate balance between transparency and legitimacy on the borders of advertising and its potential impact on organizational legitimacy. We discuss the potential dangers of balancing for-profit business ventures with the governance of societal issues. This leads to a discussion of the dual role of storytelling as a strategic tool in shaping public discourse while serving corporate interests.

5.1 The Explored Relationship between Transparency and Legitimacy

Relying on their many identities as hybrids, Resilient and WaterBear navigate a multifaceted landscape where the boundaries between sectors are blurred. Within this setting, Billis' (2010) hypothesis becomes particularly relevant to evaluate: despite the blurring and apparent diminution of boundaries, sector roots remain powerful and important. With this, Billis underscores the enduring significance of sector roots – even in contexts characterized by hybridity. In this intricate landscape, the intertwined different sectors create a dynamic where traditional notions of transparency are not as relevant as they might be in singular-sector organizations. This is where we argue that the very essence of hybridity and its qualities come into play. As argued, Resilient and WaterBear are strategically embodying multiple identities through various ways of communicating in order to leverage their hybrid nature as a pillar of their legitimacy. Therefore, the relationship between transparency and legitimacy changes, because Resilient and WaterBear's legitimacy can be seen as potentially non-dependent on their transparency.

In addition to Billis' theory on hybrid organizations, we question whether it is even possible for Resilient and WaterBear to engage in civic action, since, according to Billis, it is not possible to completely break down sector barriers. Civic action describes how organizations deliberately aim to break down sector barriers (Lichterman & Eliasoph, 2014; Lichtermann, 2020) with a clear focus on processes, not the actors involved (Lichtermann, 2020). While the blurring of sectors in hybrid organizations share many of the ideologies embedded in the term civic action, our above analysis has shown that Resilient and WaterBear take a different approach. Their lack of accounting of the processes in partnerships, their procedural legitimacy, and their vast focus on communicating which high-esteemed brands are involved for the benefit of their own legitimacy, makes us question if their transformative 'collective action' ever really can become civic action.

Additionally, we have argued that since Resilient and WaterBear gain legitimacy through their hybridity and the partners they work with, the demands for transparency are lowered. This leads us to test the premises of our suggested thesis with the question: Would the demands for transparency be higher if Resilient and WaterBear only engaged in partnerships within their own, non-hybrid, sector? When operating as a non-hybrid, the need for transparency may become a more pressing issue as a means of building stakeholder credibility and trust. In a

dichotomous view, regardless of hybridity or CSPs, we argue that as long as the legitimacy, credibility and accountability of the organization is high, then the need for transparency is lowered. Similarly, Resilient and WaterBear's legitimacy may reduce the demands for transparency, as stakeholders may already perceive these organizations as inherently trustworthy due to their large pool of partners. And since hybrid organizations, unlike singular-sector organizations, may have more flexibility in transparency requirements, hybrids can leverage their diverse stakeholders to "fulfill" transparency demands in ways that suit their unique organizational structure. The relationship between transparency and legitimacy undergoes a nuanced shift in this context. Although transparency is still necessary to promote trust and accountability, CSPs bring in a new dynamic where legitimacy is developed through these partner's efforts as opposed to more unilateral transparency initiatives. Thus, in the context of hybrid organizations engaging in CSPs, the conventional idea that transparency is needed to gain legitimacy has changed. In this process, hybrid organizations redefine the boundaries and opportunities of organizational legitimacy by focusing less on transparency standards and more on impact across sectors.

As we have stated in the analysis, Resilient accounts for their actions through their documentaries on WaterBear's streaming platform and the available information on their website. This is to show their stakeholders the tangible outcomes from their investments. According to Fox (2007), the relationship between accountability and transparency remains unclear. To this, Bovens' (2007) argument that accountability conveys an image of transparency and trustworthiness. In relation to these arguments, we suggest that when Resilient argues for their accountability, this does not necessarily mean that they are transparent in doing so. And since transparency is increasingly employed as an "account technology" (Christensen & Cheney, 2009 in Christensen et al., 2010), this questions when transparency becomes too complex to comprehend. Since transparency is a strategic communications tool, which can be more or less ambiguous, what happens when Resilient argues for their accountability through an opaque transparency? Transparency is ambiguous, but so are hybrids. The hybridity becomes constitutive of how they communicate. Since hybrids communicate across institutional logics, the relationship to transparency becomes rather complex. Broad self-descriptions, such as 'facilitator', are employed in order to create strategic ambiguity. While the public may think WaterBear is an NGO or a streaming platform, this is, according to WaterBear, not in their favor if they want to obtain the ideologies of the ideal hybrid.

Fundamentally, transparency is ambiguous as a source of clarity and opacity, light and darkness (Christensen & Cheney, 2015). This ambiguous character of transparency connects to the fact that their partners come from different sectors and therefore have different institutional logics. We must also assume that these logics also affect the degree of transparency, in relation to who the sender is and who the message is directed to. An example from the interviews is seen in WaterBear's partnership with Ørsted. One of the other WaterBear partners, Imagine5, was also offered to distribute the documentary from Ørsted, since Imagine5 is also a media platform. However, unlike WaterBear, Imagine5 is non-profit. When Ørsted first approached Imagine5 with the idea of them distributing Ørsted's documentary, they thought that: "(...) it was too Ørsted, too much Ørsted and too branded" (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 14:52). This example illustrates the difference between a corporation partnering with a non-profit or with another for-profit like themselves. WaterBear, unlike Imagine5, wants to "wear" Ørsted's brand to gain legitimacy, by showing logos, brand texts etc. We show this example to illustrate different transparency demands and needs in partnerships with a non-profit like Imagine5 and in partnerships with a for-profit like WaterBear.

As mentioned, the intricate relationship between transparency and legitimacy is influenced by Resilient and WaterBear's hybridity. We assume that this relationship between transparency and legitimacy would be different if the Resilient and WaterBear were non-hybrids, single-sector organizations. We consider a hypothetical scenario wherein three private for-profit organizations collaborate in a partnership aimed at resolving or addressing a specific social issue. In such a context, it is relevant to explore the demands and expectations regarding transparency from outside stakeholders, civil society, and the public in order to prevent getting scrutinized and accused of greenwashing. The dynamics of transparency and legitimacy change in this situation because it is presumed that their incentives for such a partnership is financial. Without the hybridity we see in Resilient and WaterBear and without the presence of civil society actors, these private organizations will likely operate with a more conventional understanding of transparency, its boundaries, and opportunities. They may also have more traditional accountability pathways. In this scenario, the expectations surrounding transparency may stem from established norms within their sectors. However, the moment these private organizations form a partnership, the expectations shift. Suddenly, a higher degree of transparency would be demanded by the public and other stakeholders. Why? Because the partnership itself becomes a focal point of scrutiny and attention. Questions such as: "Who

benefits from the partnership?” and “What are the shared goals, and how are they being pursued?” could arise.

Furthermore, transparency becomes not just a matter of maintaining trust, but each organization must now navigate not only its own transparency standards but also those of its partners. In this example, the relationship between transparency and legitimacy remains pivotal, and the absence of hybridity in the organizations could be detrimental to their ability to effectively address the social issue at hand. By embracing hybridity, and the ambiguity it entails, organizations can navigate the evolving landscape of expectations and demands for transparency while maintaining the legitimacy necessary to drive meaningful change. Our thesis is therefore: The relationship between transparency and legitimacy changes in the context of hybrids that engage in CSPs. Due to the legitimacy obtained through their hybridity and the legitimacy obtained through partnerships, fewer demands of transparency are placed on hybrids. Furthermore, choosing an opaque transparency becomes the hybrids’ method to engage with partners with diverse motivations.

5.2 The Borders of Advertising in Societal Change

We argue that challenging the relationship between transparency and legitimacy is not complete without a discussion of what potential consequences and risks this explored relationship might entail for the organizations, their stakeholders and finally, for society at large. Transparency is traditionally assumed to enhance legitimacy and enhance public acceptance of institutional structures (Curtin & Meijer, 2006; Christensen, 2021). It would be naive to think that Resilient and WaterBear’s partners do not have any demands for the transparency of the partnerships. These partners have their own respective brands to account for and face the same critical actors in society as Resilient and WaterBear. Contemporary organizations also live under the fear of being accused of greenwashing (Schoeneborn, Morsing & Crane, 2020). Failing to share information about how partnerships are formed and how these partners influence the messaging could be at the risk of the partners’ own credibility and legitimacy as well. The level of transparency becomes a negotiated balance as hybrid organizations must encompass several interests of other partners too while preventing accusations of greenwashing. On the other hand, Resilient and WaterBear must balance how much info they share in order not to scare off partners from other sectors with other potential motivations to engage in a partnership. According to Solano et al., (2018), CSR and legitimacy

have a positive relationship, but transparency can pose a threat to legitimacy. Frustration and disappointment among the public may rise if they learn that organizations, they believe are doing good, are “caught” doing the opposite. This may contribute to a negative impact on the organization’s legitimacy (De Fine Licht et al., 2014). If Resilient and WaterBear can be accused of hypocrisy mounted on their inherent ambiguous communication; Are Resilient and WaterBear just a good business idea wrapped in green stories about shared societal action for their own profits? Their entrenched hybridity and their willingness to adopt the hybrid form for societal good tells us otherwise. However, it is a risk they must be aware of as they balance a social mission and a for-profit business. They could be perceived as a mouthpiece for these big brands and their sustainability stories. ‘Cancel culture’, as a social phenomenon in society that scrutinizes actors in society for immoral actions, is a concern that organizations must pay attention to due to society’s connectivity. Resilient and WaterBear’s lack of partnership information might refrain other partners from collaborating with them, which challenges our thesis of a potential ‘transparency free-pass’ for hybrids. However, the legitimacy they gain from other partners are also visible to prospect partners. This seems to give Resilient and WaterBear enough legitimacy to attract new partners. So why is this?

Resilient and WaterBear have mastered the art of gathering big societal actors across sectors on the same platform which, we argue, gives them high credibility, and leads to their gain of legitimacy. In this manner, ‘the collective action’ they seek to obtain can be argued as the hybrids’ way of creating new power structures in society in order to better influence the public sphere. Their obtained legitimacy can be explained by the imbalanced set of rules that the global public sphere plays by. The partnerships that Resilient and WaterBear take part in, are aimed to create an imbalance in the sensemaking of the mass democracy. This speaks to the power of movements and communities in the networked society. Destabilization of mass democracy fosters political participation, and this is powered by societal actors: media, organizations, state and citizens. It can therefore challenge old systems to positively affect the public discourse (Dahlgren, 2005). In this setting, we argue that Resilient and WaterBear aim to challenge old systems for the greater good of society and foster a new discourse about societal issues e.g., climate change.

We live in an age of big awareness of mis- and disinformation in the media. The above analysis has examined how Resilient and WaterBear try to balance on the borders of advertising in their partnerships. When is it a commercial? When is it a documentary about societal change? These

are the questions that could affect their legitimacy. According to De Fine Licht et al. (2014), legitimacy effects of transparency can only be realized if the public recognizes the difference between what is transparent and what is non-transparent. This means that whether people question how these brands interfere in the documentaries will vary. One common notable dimension of legitimacy is that legitimacy is employed objectively in the broad social construction, but is created subjectively (Suchman, 1995) in a network of multiple stakeholders with shared processes of moral sensemaking that constitutes generally accepted corporate standards (Calton & Payne, 2003). In essence, we challenge two terms, transparency, and legitimacy, that are employed as social constructions on the borders of advertising. Also, since wicked problems are evaluated in society, we argue that it makes the wickedness of these issues a complex CSR communication issue as well. In order to foster societal change, organizations must communicate in a transparent manner that makes sense to the public. However, it can be questioned if this is possible when our evaluations and ideas about such issues are subjective.

5.3 “There is No Such Thing as a Free Lunch”

As their partners have been shown to influence the narrative and production of documentaries to various degrees, Resilient and WaterBear aim to become agenda setters in collaboration with their partners. It has become clear that Resilient and WaterBear employ storytelling as means to captivate an audience, catalyze action, and empower individuals to recognize their agency as citizens. The notion of storytelling, as a strategic tool, has been present in every interview with Resilient and WaterBear’s partners. Most of them commented on the fact that stories can both power change and elevate brands, or that storytelling and the emotive response can hold people’s attention. According to Day-Lewin, brands can trade off stories and exchange them for “social currency” (Appx. 4, Day-Lewin, Rolex, 25:00). The potential emotional connection employed through storytelling becomes a means to gain social legitimacy. Returning to storytelling as a method to effectively convey a message, Interviewee Ø spoke to how Ørsted’s partnership with WaterBear serves as more than a business venture. To Ørsted, it’s a narrative of collective responsibility: “In the end, it’s people [we are targeting] and they consume a hamburger the same way as they make a decision about how to run a government or a business. No one makes decisions without emotions (...) mix of emotions and facts” (Appx. 7, Interviewee Ø, Ørsted, 16:47).

Throughout this study, it has become clear that the documentaries are strategically used in order to start a specific societal debate, which we argue makes the agendas and intentions behind important for society at large. Trying to convey a message through emotional connection, are in the danger of being polluted by corporate incentives:

(...) when people are philanthropic, do I think there's more to it than just charity?
Yes. (...) no one just writes a check because they just want to give some money to protect nature (...) there's definitely that aspect of you wanting something in return (...) to legitimize yourself. I don't think there's many people who just give money "for nogens blå øjnes skyld" (Appx. 10, Høgsberg, WWF, 26:38).

In the above quote, Høgsberg uses the Danish saying: "for nogens blå øjnes skyld", which in English translates to the saying "there is no such thing as a free lunch". This saying conveys the idea that people, organizations, or corporations usually act with some form of self-interest or agenda. In the context of the examined organizations, notably Resilient as a non-profit foundation, this fosters a discussion of whether foundations can authentically take part in civil society as non-profits and as gatekeepers of the public sphere, if they must answer to the agendas of their funders. Essentially, this becomes a discussion of the role of philanthropy in society and how or which agendas are imposed with what incentives for "the greater good". Even though this is an interesting observation, we will not further delve on this controversial assessment. Altogether, through documentaries, the agendas of both Resilient and WaterBear and their partner's aim to be included in the hegemonic discourse battles in society in order to create change. "(...) documentaries can be a political weapon, and some are using it extremely well" (Appx. 6, Petit, UNRIC, 26:50). If the incentives of the enclosed partners go beyond social goals but act as means to create profit or lobby for legislative change in favor of their own interests, are we then allowing these big private players to shape and form our views of society? As communication never will become a direct transfer of information but rather determined by the individual's sensemaking, this process of fostering collective action in society is far more complex and could represent a danger in society.

On WaterBear's website they state two facts, (1): "Brands are more trusted than NGOs, politicians and press", and (2): "Brands that invest in purpose see heightened relevancy and authenticity" (WaterBear Network, n.d. b). We are not saying that the above statements are true or false. However, it does challenge the credibility of the messaging when brands are

assigned the same trust and legitimacy as traditional media, politicians, and NGOs. WaterBear's partnerships with brands could be beneficial for society, but where does this partnership-media dynamic leave society's trust in media? There is nothing new about ads in media, nor embedded advertorials that serve the agendas of the paying brand. However, the strategic application of an opaque transparency to meet diverse stakeholder demands combined with the agendas of partnering brands, could distort our image of the traditional media to truthfully convey messages to the wider public. Furthermore, it distorts the social incentives embedded in CSR communication, making this type of communication even more strategic than philanthropic. However, we argue that this case represents a broader tendency of how companies employ CSR initiatives for their own strategic advantage.

In today's society, companies are expected to go beyond their financial interests and take responsibility in society. This could lead to more companies transforming themselves into hybrids. If this is the case, then we are essentially "offering" these companies to shape our idea of these complex issues, and subsequently, our image of society and sense of identity. In their effort to meet public demands, companies form alliances across sectors in their search for social legitimacy. If there is any truth to our above suggested thesis, then hybrids' 'free-pass' in transparency will essentially make it difficult for the public to realize who is behind the societal discourse. MNEs are becoming more politicized, which means they are looking to impact the public political discourse of wicked problems in a manner that benefits their objectives. A potential rise of non-transparent societal governance accelerates the wickedness of wicked problems. This is particularly dangerous as we live in a time where climate change calls for urgent action. We argue that the tendency of hybrids leveraging CSPs for legitimacy is growing. There is a risk of fragmenting our ideas of these complex issues even further, which also pluralizes potential solutions to them. It makes it difficult to pinpoint the hybrid's actual impact, and it could paralyze societal actors in their actions.

6. Conclusion

We have explored how hybrid organizations balance the intricate relationship between transparency and legitimacy when they govern wicked problems for the public good. Through our examination of how Resilient and WaterBear engage in and communicate on their CSSPs, we have underscored these partnerships' pivotal role in enhancing the legitimacy of entrenched hybrid organizations, like Resilient and WaterBear.

Both Resilient and WaterBear engage in CSSPs with partners from sectors different than their own (multinational corporations, NGOs, non-profit and media) to gain legitimacy. In the leverage of these partnerships, we suggest that Resilient and WaterBear aim to amplify their advocacy and outreach efforts in order to eventually influence public opinion. Documentaries, storytelling, and narratives are employed as strategic tools in order to captivate an audience and catalyze action. The impact of Resilient and WaterBear equals their ability to effectively create awareness of wicked problems through documentaries in partnership with “change makers”. Storytelling is applied to strategically influence the public opinion. However, it has become clear that these documentaries have an agenda that is exposed to brand incentives by their partners’ self-serving motives.

The partnerships with partners from various sectors motivate Resilient and WaterBear to construct more identities due to their diverse stakeholder demands. Resilient and WaterBear take on several identities to legitimize their hybrid governance of societal issues. Both Resilient and WaterBear show a high willingness to enact the hybrid form that constitutes how they find meaning as organizations and pragmatic and moral legitimacy in society. Resilient and WaterBear are selectively coupling diverse sets of goals and institutional logics to gain legitimacy as an NGO, a lobbyist, a community, a production company (WaterBear only), a marketing company and an EdTech. Along in the process, Resilient and WaterBear aim to legitimize their values through partnerships, which are employed to justify value-creation activities across sectors and widen their influence. The exchange of legitimacy between Resilient and WaterBear furthermore becomes a way that the two organizations strategically and socially vouch for each other in society and in business. While Resilient and WaterBear refuse to be put in a box, they still adhere to the roots of their non-hybrid forms as non-profit foundation and streaming platform.

The narratives Resilient and WaterBear co-create with their partners are exposed to potential dangers of financial incentives and underlying corporate agendas rather than just the ambition to do good in society. Their marketing business strategy represents a dynamic that can become a threat to Resilient and WaterBear’s moral legitimacy. While one might expect high degrees of transparency in Resilient and WaterBear, in order not to be accused of being a mouthpiece for their partners, a more opaque transparency is strategically applied. We have argued that this opaque transparency is a strategic choice of both organizations to meet the demands of their

diverse stakeholders and remain legitimate. This is closely related to their legitimation of their hybridity on their quest to mirror the hybrid ideal; a social enterprise that produces both social value and commercial revenue through all their actions. If Resilient and WaterBear were more transparent about what impact the partners have on the stories, this could be a threat to their legitimacy, and leave the viewer to think “Am I watching a documentary or an ad?”.

We conclude that Resilient and WaterBear gain legitimacy through their hybrid ability to engage in partnerships with diverse actors from different sectors on the same platform. They obtain sufficient legitimacy through their partners’ legitimate brands. This results in lower demands of transparency in the partnership processes and the partner’s impact on agendas. Presumably, this goes against the fact that transparency is one of the most important “account technologies” in recent times, especially in terms of organizations communicating on CSR initiatives. We have argued that higher levels of transparency pose a potential threat to hybrids when they try to meet the diverse demands of partners from different sectors, with different motivations. By this, we have explored a new relationship between transparency and legitimacy, where opaque transparency is applied to obtain legitimacy in the setting of hybrids engaging in CSSPs.

7. References

- Aggerholm, H. K., & Thomsen, C. (2024) Strategic communication in contexts of high sustainability pressure: balancing purposefulness, transparency and participation in pursuit of organizational legitimacy. *Journal of Communication Management*, 28(1), 58–73. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCOM-12-2022-0131>
- Alexander, J. C., (2006). *The Civil Sphere*. Oxford University Press. pp. 53 - 68
- Andersen, I. (2019). *Den skinbarlige virkelighed: vidensproduktion i samfundsvidenskaberne* (6. udgave.). Samfundslitteratur.
- Anguera, M. T., Blanco-Villaseñor, A., Losada, J. L., Sánchez-Algarra, P., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2018). Revisiting the difference between mixed methods and multimethods: Is it all in the name? *Quality & Quantity*, 52(6), 2757–2770. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-018-0700-2>
- Austin, J. E. (2000a). Strategic Collaboration Between Nonprofits and Businesses. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 29(1_suppl), 69–97. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764000291S004>
- Austin, J. E. (2000b). *The collaboration challenge: how nonprofits and businesses succeed through strategic alliances* (1st ed.). Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Austin, J. E. (2010). From Organization to Organization: On Creating Value. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94(Suppl 1), 13–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0787-z>
- Austin, J. E., & Seitanidi, M. M. (2012a). Collaborative Value Creation: A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses: Part I. Value Creation Spectrum and Collaboration Stages. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(5), 726–758. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012450777>
- Austin, J. E., & Seitanidi, M. M. (2012b). Collaborative Value Creation: A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses. Part 2: Partnership Processes and

- Outcomes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(6), 929–968.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012454685>
- B Corporation. (n.d.). WaterBear Network. Retrieved from <https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/find-a-b-corp/company/water-bear-network/> on April 24th 2024
- Banerjee, S. B. (2008). Corporate social responsibility: The good, the bad and the ugly. *Critical Sociology*, 34(1), 51-79.
- Batie, S. S. (2008). Wicked Problems and Applied Economics. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 90(5), 1176–1191. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8276.2008.01202.x>
- Battilana, J., & Lee, M. (2014). Advancing Research on Hybrid Organizing - Insights from the Study of Social Enterprises. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 8(1), 397–441. <https://doi.org/10.5465/19416520.2014.893615>
- Battilana, J., Lee, M., Walker, J., & Dorsey, C. (2012). In Search of the Hybrid Ideal. In *Stanford social innovation review* (Vol. 10, Issue 3, pp. 51-). Stanford Social Innovation Review, Stanford University.
- Battilana, J., Sengul, M., Pache, A.-C., & Model, J. (2015). Harnessing productive tensions in hybrid organizations: The case of work integration social enterprises. *Academy of Management Journal*, 58(6), 1658–1685. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2013.0903>
- Bennett, W. L., Pickard, V. W., Iozzi, D. P., Schroeder, C. L., Lagos, T., & Caswell, C. E. (2004). Managing the Public Sphere: Journalistic Construction of the Great Globalization Debate. *Journal of Communication*, 54(3), 437–455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2004.tb02638.x>
- Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. Open Road Integrated Media, Inc.

- Billis, D. (2010). *Hybrid Organizations and the Third Sector: Challenges for Practice, Theory and Policy*, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Birchall, C. (2011). Introduction to ‘Secrecy and Transparency’: The Politics of Opacity and Openness. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28(7–8), 7–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276411427744>
- Bovens, M. (2007). Analysing and Assessing Accountability: A Conceptual Framework. *European Law Journal : Review of European Law in Context*, 13(4), 447–468.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0386.2007.00378.x>
- Brandsen, T., van de Donk, W., & Putters, K. (2005). Griffins or Chameleons? Hybridity as a Permanent and Inevitable Characteristic of the Third Sector. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 28(9–10), 749–765. <https://doi.org/10.1081/PAD-200067320>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brinkmann, S. & Tanggaard L. (2020). *Kvalitative metoder: En grundbog*. Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Brookes, S., & Grint, K. (2010). The New Public Leadership Challenge. In *The New Public Leadership Challenge* (1st ed., pp. xxiii–xxiii). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
<https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230277953>
- Brown, V. A., Harris, J. A., & Russell, J. Y. (2010). *Tackling Wicked Problems: Through the Transdisciplinary Imagination* (1st ed.). Routledge.
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849776530>
- Brzoznowski, K. (2021). WaterBear, Off The Fence & WWF Launch Storytelling Initiative. World’s Screen. Retrieved from <https://worldscreen.com/tvreal/waterbear-off-the-fence-wwf-launch-storytelling-initiative/> on April 4th 2024.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. 5th edition. Oxford University Press.

- Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Stone, M. M. (2015). Designing and Implementing Cross-Sector Collaborations: Needed and Challenging. *Public Administration Review*, 75(5), 647–663. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12432>
- Bruner, J. (1991). The Narrative construction of reality. *Critical Inquiry*. Chicago Press. Vol 18(1). pp 1-21.
- Buckley, C. A., & Waring, M. J. (2013). Using diagrams to support the research process: examples from grounded theory. *Qualitative Research : QR*, 13(2), 148–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794112472280>
- Calhoun, C., (2011) Civil Society and the Public Sphere. In *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*. Oxford University Press, pp. 311-323. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398571.013.0025>
- Calton, J. M., & Payne, S. L. (2003). Coping with paradox. *Business & Society*, 42(1), 7-42
- Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34(4), 39–48. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0007-6813\(91\)90005-G](https://doi.org/10.1016/0007-6813(91)90005-G)
- Castells, M. (2008). The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1), 78–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311877>
- Cheney, G., Morsing, M., & Christensen, L. T. (2008). *Corporate Communications: Convention, Complexity, and Critique*. SAGE Publications, Limited). pp 1-9 + 12 - 33 <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446214466>
- Christensen, L.T. (2021). Transparency. Chapter for Podnar, K. (Ed.). *The Encyclopaedia of Corporate Communication*, Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Christensen, L. T., Morsing, M., & Thyssen, O. (2013). CSR as aspirational talk. *Organization*, 20(3), 372–393. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508413478310>
- Christensen, L. T., & Cheney, G. (2015). Peering into Transparency: Challenging Ideals, Proxies, and Organizational Practices: Peering into Transparency. *Communication Theory*, 25(1), 70–90. <https://doi.org/10.1111/comt.12052>
- Clarke, A., & MacDonald, A. (2019). Outcomes to Partners in Multi-Stakeholder Cross-Sector Partnerships: A Resource-Based View. *Business & Society*, 58(2), 298–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650316660534>
- Collin, F. (2003). *Konstruktivisme*. Samfundslitteratur, Roskilde Universitetsforlag, pp. 11–33.
- Curtin, D., & Meijer, A. J. (2006). Does transparency strengthen legitimacy? *Information Polity*, 11(2), 109–122. <https://doi.org/10.3233/ip-2006-0091>
- Dahlgren, P. (2005). The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Political Communication*, 22(2), 147–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584600590933160>
- Dart, R. (2004). The legitimacy of social enterprise. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 14(4), 411–424. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.43>
- Deephouse, D. L., & Carter, S. M. (2005). An Examination of Differences Between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational Reputation. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(2), 329–360. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00499.x>
- De Fine Licht, J., Naurin, D., Esaiasson, P., & Gilljam, M. (2014). When Does Transparency Generate Legitimacy? Experimenting on a Context-Bound Relationship. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, Wiley, 27(1), 111–134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12021>

- Dentoni, D., Bitzer, V., & Schouten, G. (2018). Harnessing Wicked Problems in Multi-stakeholder Partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 150(2), 333–356. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3858-6>
- Díez-De-Castro, E., & Peris-Ortiz, M. (2018). *Organizational Legitimacy: Challenges and Opportunities for Businesses and Institutions*. Springer International Publishing AG. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75990-6>
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), 147–160. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095101>
- Ebrahim, A., Battilana, J., & Mair, J. (2014). The governance of social enterprises: Mission drift and accountability challenges in hybrid organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 34, 81–100. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.riob.2014.09.001>
- Egholm, L. (2020). Complicated translations. Philanthropic endeavours of pollution and purification in Denmark 1920-2014. In *Civil Sphere and the Nordic countries*. Ed. Alexander, J., Voyer, A and Lund, A. Polity Press pp. 64-94
- Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building Theories from Case Study Research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 532–550. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258557>
- Evers, A. (2005). Mixed Welfare Systems and Hybrid Organizations: Changes in the Governance and Provision of Social Services. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 28(9–10), 737–748. <https://doi.org/10.1081/PAD-200067318>
- FitzGibbon, J., & Mensah, K. O. (2012). Climate Change as a Wicked Problem: An Evaluation of the Institutional Context for Rural Water Management in Ghana. *SAGE Open*, 2(2), 215824401244848-. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244012448487>
- Flick, U. (2014). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. SAGE.

- Fox, J. (2007). The uncertain relationship between transparency and accountability. *Development in Practice*, 17(4–5), 663–671. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469955>
- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Funtowicz, S., Martinez-Alier, J., Munda, G. & Ravetz, J. (1999). Information tools for environmental policy under conditions of complexity. *Environmental issues series*. European Environment Agency.
- Funtowicz, S. & Ravetz, J. R. (1991). A new scientific methodology for global environmental issues. In Costanza R, editor. *Ecological economics: the science and management of sustainability*. Columbia University Press. p 137–52
- Gauthier, J., Kappen, J. A., & Zhang, J. Z. (2024). To be more different or just the same? Means versus ends in hybrid organizational legitimacy. *Society and Business Review*, 19(1), 97–112. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SBR-03-2022-0080>
- Granados, M. L., & Rosli, A. (2020). “Fitting In” vs. “Standing Out”: How Social Enterprises Engage with Stakeholders to Legitimize their Hybrid Position. *Journal of Social Entrepreneurship*, 11(2), 155–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2019.1604405>
- Greene, J. C. (2015). Preserving Distinctions Within the Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Merger. In *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199933624.013.37>
- Gripsrud, J., Moe, H., Molander, A., & Murdock, G. (2010). *The idea of the public sphere: a reader*. The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group. Editors’ Introduction: pp. 31-36
- Gulbrandsen, M. (2011). Research institutes as hybrid organizations: central challenges to their legitimacy. *Policy Sciences*, 44(3), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11077-011-9128-4>

- Habermas, J. (1962). *The Structural Transformation of the Bourgeois Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Thomas Burger, trans. MIT Press. 1991.
- Habermas, J., Lennox, S., & Lennox, F. (1964). The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article. *New German Critique*, No. 3, pp. 49-55.
- Haigh, N., Kennedy, E. D., & Walker, J. (2015). Hybrid Organizations as Shape-Shifters: Altering Legal Structure for Strategic Gain. *California Management Review*, 57(3), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2015.57.3.59>
- Haigh, N., Walker, J., Bacq, S., & Kickul, J. (2015). Hybrid Organizations: Origins, Strategies, Impacts, and Implications. *California Management Review*, 57(3), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2015.57.3.5>
- Hansen, H. K., & Weiskopf, R. (2020). From Universalizing Transparency to the Interplay of Transparency Matrices: Critical insights from the emerging social credit system in China. *Organization Studies*, 42(1), 109–128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840619878474>
- Hastrup, A., Rübow, C., & Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, T. (2011). *Kulturanalyse: Kort fortalt. Samfundslitteratur*.
- He, L. (2021). To Gain Legitimacy in Validity: The Path Selection of Localization Development of Social Enterprises in China. *The China Nonprofit Review*, 2021, 13(1&2): 6 pp. 1-13
- Henriques, I. (2018). Addressing Wicked Problems Using New Business Models. *Economic Alternatives*, 2018, Issue 4, pp. 463-466
- Held, D., (2004) *Global covenant: The social democratic alternative to the Washington consensus*. Malden, MA: Polity.

- Huybrechts, B., Haugh, H., Rijpens, J., & Soetens, A. (2020). *Building Legitimacy for Hybrid Organisations*. In *Handbook on Hybrid Organizations*. Edgar Elgar Publishings. p 407-422.
- Illia, L., Colleoni, E., Etter, M., & Meggiorin, K. (2022). Finding the Tipping Point: When Heterogeneous Evaluations in Social Media Converge and Influence Organizational Legitimacy. *Business & Society*, 62(1), 117–150.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00076503211073516>
- Jay, J. (2013). Navigating paradox as a mechanism of change and innovation in hybrid organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 137–159.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2010.0772>
- Jenco, L. (2016). Legitimacy as a Hybrid Phenomenon. In *East Asian Perspectives on Political Legitimacy* (pp. 238–256). Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316466896.011>
- Kim, H., & Lee, T. H. (2018). Strategic CSR Communication: A Moderating Role of Transparency in Trust Building. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 12(2), 107–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1553118X.2018.1425692>
- Kraatz, M. S. & Block, E. S. (2008). Organizational implications of institutional pluralism. In Greenwood, R., Oliver, C., Lawrence, T. B., & Meyer, R. E., *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*, SAGE Publications, pp. 243–275.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526415066>
- Kostova, T., & Zaheer, S. (1999). Organizational legitimacy under conditions of complexity: The case of the multinational enterprise. *The Academy of Management Review*, 24(1), 64–81. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1999.1580441>
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Sage Publications, Inc.

- Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2015). Interview: Det kvalitative forskningsinterview som håndværk. Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Lee, M., & Jay, J. (2015). Strategic Responses to Hybrid Social Ventures. *California Management Review*, 57(3), 126–148. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cm.2015.57.3.126>
- Lichterman, P. (2020). How Civic Action Works: Fighting for housing in Los Angeles. Princeton University Press, pp. 1-37.
- Ludwig, D. (2001). Era of Management Is Over. *Ecosystems*, 4(8), 758–764. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10021-001-0044-x>
- Lynggaard, K. (2015). Dokumentanalyse. In Brinkmann, S. & Tanggaard L. *Kvalitative metoder: En grundbog*. Hans Reitzels Forlag.
- Lyon, T. P., Delmas, M. A. et al. (2018). CSR Needs CPR: Corporate Sustainability and Politics. *California Management Review*, 60(4), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125618778854>
- Maktoufi, R., O'Connor, A., & Shumate, M. (2020). Does the CSR Message Matter? Untangling the Relationship Between Corporate–Nonprofit Partnerships, Created Fit Messages, and Activist Evaluations. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 34(2), 188–212. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318919897059>
- Mandel, G. (2022). Content POV: Ellen Windemuth, CEO, WaterBear Network. New York Festivals, TV & Film Awards. Retrieved from: <https://tvfilm.newyorkfestivals.com/media/Interior/1f44f970-36f1-48a1-9c61-23a1abf9088e>, on April 28th 2024.
- Matten, D., & Moon, J. (2008). “Implicit” and “Explicit” CSR: A Conceptual Framework for a Comparative Understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility. *The Academy of Management Review*, 33(2), 404–424. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2008.31193458>

- Massoglia, A. (2021). Liberal ‘dark money’ groups’ revenue soared ahead of 2020 elections. Open Secrets. Retrieved from <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2021/12/liberal-dark-money-groups-revenue-soared-ahead-of-2020-elections/> on April 24th 2024.
- Mayntz, R. (2010). Legitimacy and compliance in transnational governance, MPIfG Working Paper, No. 10/5, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Cologne. pp. 1-20.
- Mongelli, L., Rullani, F., & Versari, P. (2017). Hybridisation of diverging institutional logics through common-note practices - an analogy with music and the case of social enterprises. *Industry and Innovation*, 24(5), 492–514. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13662716.2017.1302793>
- Moss, T. W., Short, J. C., Payne, G. T., & Lumpkin, G. T. (2011). Dual Identities in Social Ventures: An Exploratory Study. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 35(4), 805–830. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6520.2010.00372.x>
- Nijhof, A., de Bruijn, T., & Honders, H. (2008). Partnerships for corporate social responsibility: A review of concepts and strategic options. *Management Decision*, 46(1–2), 152–167. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251740810846798>
- Oliver, R. W. (2004). *What is transparency?* McGraw-Hill.
- Pache, A.-C. & Santos, F. (2010). When worlds collide: the internal dynamics of organizational responses to conflicting institutional demands. *The Academy of Management Review*, 35(3), 455–476. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2010.51142368>
- Pache, A.-C. & Santos, F. (2013). Inside the Hybrid Organization: Selective Coupling as a Response to Competing Institutional Logics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(4), 972–1001. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.0405>
- Pervin, L.A. (1984). *Personality: Theory and Research*. Wiley

- Powell, W. W. (1987). Hybrid Organizational Arrangements: New Form or Transitional Development? *California Management Review*, 30(1), 67–87.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/41165267>
- Pratty, F. (2023). The Prince Harry-approved startup building Netflix for the climate. Sifted. Retrieved from <https://sifted.eu/articles/waterbear-netflix-climate-impact> on April 24th 2024.
- Rasche, A., Morsing, M., Moon, J., & Kouroula, A. (2023). Corporate Sustainability: Managing responsible business in a globalized world. Cambridge University Press. (2) pp. 412 - 431
- Rawlins, B. (2009). Give the Emperor a Mirror: Toward Developing a Stakeholder Measurement of Organizational Transparency. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 21(1), 71–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627260802153421>
- Reliefweb. (n.d.). Sustainable Development Goals’s current status. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/sustainable-development-goals-current-status> on April 5th 2024.
- Resilient Foundation. (n.d. a). Our Approach. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/our-approach> on April 4th 2024.
- Resilient Foundation. (n.d. b). About us. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/about-us> on April 10th 2024
- Resilient Foundation. (n.d. c). Impact Campaigns. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/impact-campaigns> on April 12th 2024
- Resilient Foundation. (n.d. d). 8billion. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/8billion> on April 15th 2024
- Resilient Foundation. (n.d. e). 501c3-details. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/501c3-details> on April 14th 2024

Resilient Foundation. (n.d. f). Front page. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/> on April 23th 2024

Resilient Foundation. (n.d. g). Financial statements. Retrieved from <https://resilient.foundation/financial-statements> on April 24th 2024

Ritchey, T. (2011). *Wicked Problems - Social Messes: Decision Support Modelling with Morphological Analysis* (1. Aufl., Vol. 17). Springer Nature.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-19653-9>

Rittel, H., Webber, M. (1973). Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning. *Policy Sciences*, 4(2), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01405730>

Robson, C. (2002). Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers.

Roe, E. (1988). Taking complexity seriously. Kliwer Academic Publishers.

Saetre, H. S. (2023). How Hybrid Organizations Respond to Institutional Complexity: The Case of Norway. *Voluntas*, 34(5), 990–1001. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-022-00514-2>

Salmons, J. E. (2015). Conducting Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Online. In *The Oxford Handbook of Multimethod and Mixed Methods Research Inquiry*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199933624.013.32>

Santos, F., Pache, A.-C., & Birkholz, C. (2015). Making Hybrids Work: Aligning Business Models and Organizational Design for Social Enterprises. *California Management Review*, 57(3), 36–58. <https://doi.org/10.1525/cm.2015.57.3.36>

Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research Methods for Business Students* (6 ed.). Pearson Education.

Saunders, M., Thornhill, P., & Lewis, A. (2016). *Research Methods for Business Students* (6 ed.). Pearson Education.

Scherer, A. G., & Palazzo, G. (2011). The New Political Role of Business in a Globalized World: A Review of a New Perspective on CSR and its Implications for the Firm, Governance, and Democracy. *Journal of Management Studies*, 48(4), 899–931.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2010.00950.x>

Schnackenberg, A. K., & Tomlinson, E. C. (2016). Organizational Transparency: A New Perspective on Managing Trust in Organization-Stakeholder Relationships. *Journal of Management*, 42(7), 1784–1810. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314525202>

Schoeneborn, D., Morsing, M., & Crane, A. (2020). Formative Perspectives on the Relation Between CSR Communication and CSR Practices: Pathways for Walking, Talking, and T(w)alking. *Business & Society*, 59(1), 5–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650319845091>

Schultz, F., Castelló, I., & Morsing, M. (2013). The Construction of Corporate Social Responsibility in Network Societies: A Communication View: Special Issue on Organizing CSR. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 115(4), 681–692

Selsky, J. W., & Parker, B. (2005). Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address Social Issues: Challenges to Theory and Practice. *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 849–873.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279601>

Siwale, J., Kimmitt, J., & Amankwah-Amoah, J. (2021). The Failure of Hybrid Organizations: A Legitimation Perspective. *Management and Organization Review*, 17(3), 452–485. <https://doi.org/10.1017/mor.2020.70>

Solano, S., Figueroa, E., Montoya, D., Casado, P. (2018). The Business Legitimacy and Its Relationship with the Corporate Social Responsibility: Analysis of Mexico and Spain Through the Case Method. In *Organizational Legitimacy* (pp. 197–215). Springer International Publishing AG. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-75990-6_12

- Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *The Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 571–610. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258788>
- Suddaby, R., Bitektine, A., & Haack, P. (2017). Legitimacy. *Academy of Management Annals*. 11(1), 451–478.
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure and Process* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199601936.001.0001>
- Tremayne, M. (2007). *Blogging, Citizenship, and the Future of Media*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203944196>
- Turner, J. A., Percy, H., Hall, A., & Klerkx, L. (2023). Re-orientating agricultural research to address complex challenges: Legitimacy dynamics of a hybrid research organisation. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 103, 103137-. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2023.103137>
- UNEP. (n.d.). Third Session (INC-3). Retrieved from <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-3> on April 10th 2024.
- United Nations. (n.d.). Ciné-ONU. Retrieved from <https://unric.org/en/un-cinema-cine-onu/> on April 9th 2024.
- Vaara, E., Kleymann, B., & Seristö, H. (2004). Strategies as Discursive Constructions: The Case of Airline Alliances. *Journal of Management Studies*, 41(1), 1–35. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2004.00419.x>
- Vakkuri, J., Johanson, J.-E., Feng, N. C., & Giordano, F. (2021). Governance and accountability in hybrid organizations – past, present and future. *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting & Financial Management*, 33(3), 245–260. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBAFM-02-2021-0033>
- Vestergaard, A., Murphy, L., Morsing, M., & Langevang, T. (2020). Cross-Sector Partnerships as Capitalism’s New Development Agents: Reconceiving Impact as

Empowerment. *Business & Society*, 59(7), 1339–1376.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650319845327>

Volkmer, I. (2003). The Global Network Society and the Global Public Sphere. *Development (Society for International Development)*, 46(1), 9–16.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1011637003046001566>

WaterBear Network. (n.d. a). Home page. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/> on April 4th 2024.

WaterBear Network. (n.d. b). Work with us. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/page/work-with-us> on April 4th 2024.

WaterBear Network. (n.d. c). Partners. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/partners> on April 4th 2024.

WaterBear Network. (n.d. d). About Us. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/page/about> on April 19th 2024

WaterBear Network. (n.d. e). FAQ. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/page/faq> on April 19th 2024

WaterBear Network. (n.d. f). Sustainability Ethos. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/page/faq> on April 24th 2024

WaterBear Network Streaming. (n.d. a). Where The Flowers Grow. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/watch/where-the-flowers-grow> on April 21st 2024

WaterBear Network Streaming. (n.d. b). The Power to Move: Overcoming Paralysis with Gregoire Courtine. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/watch/the-power-to-move-overcoming-paralysis-with-gregoire-courtine> on April 21st 2024

WaterBear Network Streaming. (n.d. c). ReCoral. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/watch/recoral> on April 21st 2024

WaterBear Network Streaming. (n.d. d). Protecting What's Precious. Retrieved from <https://www.waterbear.com/watch/protecting-whats-precious> on April 21st 2024

Windward Fund. (n.d.). Project Directory. Retrieved from <https://www.windwardfund.org/project-directory/> on April 14th 2024

Woodward, D. G., Edwards, P., & Birkin, F. (1996). Organizational Legitimacy and Stakeholder Information Provision. *British Journal of Management*, 7(4), 329–347. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8551.1996.tb00123.x>

Yaziji, M. (2004). Turning gadflies into allies. In *Harvard business review* (Vol. 82, Issue 2, pp. 110–124). Harvard Business Review.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. (5th edition). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Zadek, S. (2004). The Path to Corporate Responsibility, *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 82, No. 12, pp. 125 – 132

Zollo, L., Pellegrini, M. M., Faldetta, G., & Rialti, R. (2023). How to combine multiple identities and gaining stakeholders legitimacy in hybrid organizations? An organizational design response. *Journal of Management and Governance*, 27(4), 1189–1222. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10997-022-09644-7>