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Brand Hostage

How NGOs achieve their Strategic Goals on a Reputational Battlefield

by

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Abstract

Title:	Brand Hostage - How NGOs achieve their Strategic Goals on a Reputational Battlefield
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Purpose:	The purpose of the study is to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, with the aim to develop a framework and a definition for a deeper understanding of its modus operandi.
Relevance:	Over the past two decades, disruptive and successful NGO campaigns have increasingly targeted corporations, which makes the topic a major concern for managers. Nevertheless, both from an academic and practitioner's perspective the phenomenon remains elusive and neither well understood nor described in theory or practice.
Methodology:	A qualitative multiple-case study with a constructionist and interpretivist stance has been chosen to follow the inductive approach. For the data collection and analysis of that data, a grounded theory approach was applied. The selected NGO cases encompass three Greenpeace campaigns as well as one campaign each from the Organic Consumer Association against Starbucks and Green America against General Mills.
Findings:	The research findings indicate that the phenomenon of brand hostage is significantly more complex than stated in current literature, as demonstrated in the developed NGO brand hostage framework resulting from the case analyses. Furthermore, there exists the possibility of a continuing partnership after the resolution.
Contributions:	The research contributes to NGO, reputation management and crisis communication theory by providing a framework and definition of the brand hostage phenomenon. These insights can be of relevance for managers who either aim to manage or prevent a brand hostage, as well as for NGOs for their future campaign planning.

Keywords: Brand hostage, reputation, reputational battle, NGO, NGO campaigns

Abbreviations

APP	Asia Pulp and Paper
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
IT	Information Technology
MNE	Multi-national Enterprise
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OCA	Organic Consumers Association
rBGH	recombinant bovine growth hormone
SAS	Scandinavian Airlines System
SCCT	Situational Crisis Communication Theory
SEC	Security and Exchange Commission
SPF	Svensk Pilotförening

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1 Introduction

The first section will begin with the introduction of Greenpeace's LEGO campaign as a brand hostage example. Furthermore, it will provide an overview of the research area surrounding the brand hostage phenomenon in the context of anti-brand activism, while being put into relation with further brand hostage campaigns of the past decades. In addition, the relevance of reputation management surrounding the phenomenon will be emphasised. Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, along with the development a framework and definition which will allow for a deeper understanding of its modus operandi. The research questions will be presented and will function as a guidance throughout the study.

Everything is NOT awesome - with 7,999,629 views (23.05.2017) making it the most viral video in the history of Greenpeace (Reestorff, 2015). The video, which uses various memes and the theme song of the LEGO MOVIE, shows the Arctic landscape with its human and animal inhabitants built from LEGO bricks floating in a sea of dark oil and slowly sinking. At this point it became clear that the video referred to to possible spill accidents during oil drilling activities. The video description in YouTube claimed:

We love LEGO. You love LEGO. Everyone loves LEGO. But when LEGO's halo effect is being used to sell propaganda to children, especially by an unethical corporation who are busy destroying the natural world our children will inherit, we have to do something. (GreenpeaceVideo, 2014, n.p.).

According to the Non-governmental-organisation (NGO), LEGO was found guilty by their association with Shell, the British-Dutch multinational oil and gas company. In 2012, Greenpeace began their "Save the Arctic" campaign with the goal of securing protection of the Arctic by safeguarding the wildlife and stopping big oil companies to drill in the polar region. Shell was identified as the primary target for the campaign because of the company's impending plans of drilling in the Arctic. Greenpeace's aim was, therefore, to prevent Shell from continuing its plans in the Arctic - by any means necessary. A key strategy used was the public campaigning targeted at Shell partner LEGO. The NGO created their infamous Everything is NOT awesome campaign with the goal of ending a fifty-year-old partnership between LEGO and Shell. However, a secondary objective of the campaign was to put pressure on Shell and raise the public awareness of the company's activities in order to prevent Shell's plans of drilling in the arctic.

Although the LEGO case gained considerable media attention and was regarded as a highly successful campaign (Buckingham, 2014). NGO campaigning is nothing new and has in the past been associated with anti-brand activism. Typically, anti-brand activists defined themselves as the “opposition to ‘the evil of greedy corporations’ and to ‘the selfish, greedy consumer consciousness’ that hegemonic corporations create” (Hollenbeck & Zinkhan, 2010, p.328). In this case, however, the NGO did not primarily fight as unprincipled racketeers, but rather concretely demanded action from the company. These claims appear to function as a form of “ultimatum” if the corporation wishes the NGO to stop their campaign. Hence, NGO’s driving force is less general rejection, hate or reluctance towards the brand, but more about putting pressure towards a behavioural change in the attacked companies. Although the LEGO case can be allocated in the broad field of anti-brand activism, due to the reasons mentioned above, we classify the case as a representation of the recently appearing phenomenon we term as a “brand hostage”.

It is possible to identify multiple NGO campaigns over the past decades which can be classified as brand hostages. The introduced illustration of Greenpeace taking LEGO’s brand as a hostage is one, Greenpeace’s controversial KitKat campaign against Nestlé, where communication material showed orangutan fingers instead of the chocolate bar in the KitKat packaging is another, and Oxfam’s behind-the-brand campaign targeting major food corporations is arguably another such case (Armstrong, 2010; Buckingham, 2014). Cervellon (2012) argues that brand hostage campaigns appear on a regular basis to raise public awareness towards socially or environmentally irresponsible behaviour of corporations, damaging the reputations of corporations, while obliging managers to devote specific attention to their company’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and performance. In this context, corporate reputation management plays an increasingly important role for companies, as brands have gained more and more influence on stakeholder expectations, enabling firms to use reputation as a form of differentiation and/or competitive advantage (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004; Kapferer, 2012; Melin, 2002). The impact of stakeholders’ perceptions on corporate reputation is, therefore, of high importance for managers. Any form of attack on the brand including NGO campaigns, can have a negative impact on stakeholder perception and subsequently impacting reputation. Thus, NGO campaigns are increasingly becoming a concern for managers (Wartick, 1992).

One might wonder where this phenomenon of brand hostage arose. Assuredly, the development of a new digital communication environment has enabled the rise of social media tools, creating new possibilities for marketers to reach their target groups. NGOs have been known to be early adopters of digital communication tools and have rapidly adopted these tools, as part of their public communication efforts including campaigns (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009). As a result, an increasing evolvement of social media campaigns against corporations has been observed. Nevertheless, the success of brand hostage campaigns, how they unfold and what the underlying motivations are, remains elusive and not examined in great depth.

1.1 Research Aim

In the past two decades, high-profile corporations have increasingly been targeted by NGOs, holding their brands as a hostage with the use of media campaigns aimed at forcing behavioural changes in the targeted company (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Jean, 2011; Molina-Gallart, 2014; Spencer, 2008). For instance, Greenpeace versus LEGO, Greenpeace versus Mattel and Amnesty International versus the Chinese Government to name a few ranked among the most prominent cases (Greenpeace, 2014a; Spencer, 2008). However, current literature shows a lack in explaining and defining the phenomenon of brand hostage, while there also exists no complete understanding of the modus operandi of a brand hostage between an NGO and corporation. Although current literature addresses matter such as NGOs' increasing power in society, NGO accountability towards stakeholders and the growing importance of reputation and corporate social responsibility (CSR), there have been few efforts in attempting to explain the motivations behind NGOs targeting corporations, how such a media campaign unfolds and what determines the success of these campaigns, which leads us to the purpose of the study.

> *The purpose of the study is to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, with the aim to develop a framework and a definition for a deeper understanding of its modus operandi.*

The study aims to explore the phenomenon of what we term as "brand hostage" within the context of NGOs and corporations. Furthermore, another aim of the research is to develop a framework allowing for a deeper understanding of the modus operandi of a brand hostage. Understanding the modus operandi will allow us to evolve towards a definition, which is of importance to establish the phenomenon and its relevance in academics and management. To fulfil this aim, the study will explore current literature surrounding the topics of NGOs, reputation and crisis communication. Based on the theoretical findings, a conceptual framework will be developed and applied to five example cases to demonstrate different brand hostages. From the resulting case analysis, a more advanced framework can emerge, which may encompass any additional elements or factors missed in the initial framework. The deriving conclusion, as well as the theoretical and managerial implications, will round off the study.

1.2 Research Questions

First and foremost, we aim for a coherent definition and characterisation of the brand hostage phenomenon, which reflects a descriptive aspect. However, we subsequently investigate the relationship between NGO and hostage company, which overall refers to an explanatory research purpose. As reported by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009), the combination of these two research natures are better known as descripto-explanatory studies.

The purpose of the study is to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage and to develop a comprehensive framework, which allows for a definition of the phenomenon and a deeper understanding of its modus operandi.

The following research questions will guide us throughout the research:

1. *What is a brand hostage phenomenon and why does it occur?*
2. *How is the modus operandi of a brand hostage phenomenon?*
3. *How do NGOs and corporations interact in a brand hostage?*

1.3 Delimitations

The delimitations of a study concern the choice of any self-set boundaries to keep the scope and aim of the research achievable. The research objective of the study relates to brand hostage initiated by NGOs. Even though, brand hostage examples appear in other contexts, we decided to focus this study on non-profit organisations primarily. A preliminary research showed that NGOs use brand hostage campaigns strategically, however, as NGOs are known to strive for a greater good with their activities, a hostage approach seemed controversial and worth discussing. Lastly, a previous study by Cervellon (2012) confirmed an increase of the phenomenon, which finally justified our decision.

Another delimitation of the paper is that by using a multiple-case study, we are only able to compare a selected handful of cases, thus the research sample remained rather small making it impossible to fully generalise the outcomes. Nevertheless, we argue, in alignment with Bryman and Bell (2011), that a case study analysis allows to take the context into account. After all, "it is the quality of the theoretical inferences that are made out of qualitative data that is crucial to the assessment of generalization." (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.409).

Another delimitation derives from our case selection, which predominantly involved Greenpeace, an NGO with a high international profile. Although the organisation remains a highly visible and outspoken NGO, which allowed access to a vast and rich amount of accessible data, thus highly relevant, one cannot neglect the fact that three of the five case evaluations fall back on the same NGO (Greenpeace). This is of course another delimitation as we evaluated the dominant Greenpeace cases to a higher extent, due to the availability of rich data, which kept the case analyses of the smaller NGOs (Organic Consumer Association and Green America) relatively less in depth, due to the lack of accessible data. Although, the case analyses remain less in depth compared to the Greenpeace cases, we argue for their relevance in terms of establishing that other NGOs, besides Greenpeace, are engaging in brand hostages. This might further imply that smaller and lesser known NGOs may have different patterns or methods compared to Greenpeace, as the power balance between them and a corporation may put them in a more disadvantageous position, compared to a major international NGO such as Greenpeace. Nevertheless, research involving whether the process and patterns remain the same or appear differently between lesser known and high profile NGOs goes beyond the scope of this study.

Thirdly, the examined cases of Greenpeace are done retrospectively, as the cases have already concluded and have reached a resolution, which leads us to another delimitation of our research. Obviously, only successfully and completed brand hostage campaigns allow an investigation of the phenomenon from start to end, thus help to answer the research questions. It is conceivable that there exist ongoing campaigns or even concluded campaigns which were deemed less successful by the NGO, although it would make sense why these campaigns are not published or readily available for the public, as no organisation (profit or non-profit) are willing to “air out their dirty laundry” so to speak. Nevertheless, there are several reasons for why we decided on these cases. First and foremost, to our knowledge, failed brand hostages can be seen as unsuccessful campaigns, thus will most likely not be publicised which would hamper the access to valuable data. Second, NGOs are willing to continue campaigning until the demand is met, even if it takes five years as with Kimberly-Clark (Skar, 2014). Thus, studying an ongoing campaign may not lead to any conclusive findings. In addition, it could also be interesting to explore cases of failed brand hostage campaigns, as the evaluation could provide supplementary insights to the modus operandi of brand hostages, such as what factors determine the success of the campaigns. However, due to the aforementioned arguments these cases are not included within this study.

2 Literature Review

The following section will reflect upon current literature directions which are relevant to understand the origin and surroundings of brand hostage phenomenon. Thereby, connections to theory of traditional hostage literature, scapegoating, culture jamming, and to occurring hostage situations will be drawn. The examination of further literature concerning NGO legitimacy and accountability, NGO-corporate engagement and reputation management will be examined and underlie a developed conceptual framework. Thereof, this preliminary framework will be introduced serving as a guidance through the literature analysis to provide a better and clearer understanding of each brand hostage element and its interlinks to the others. The literature review will conclude with the positioning of the research study.

2.1 The Phenomenon of Brand Hostage

Traditional hostage literature originates from legal and criminological psychology literature with a prevailing research focus on police hostage and barricade crisis negotiation (Beauregard & Michaud, 2015; Young, 2016). In these hostage cases a criminal usually takes one or more human beings as hostage and threatens to harm them if his demands are not met. One of the best-known hostage criminal hostage cases is the Munich massacre, when Palestinian terrorists took Israeli athletes and officials hostage during the Olympic Summer Games in Munich 1972. The hostage takers demanded the release of several hundred Palestinian captives imprisoned in Israel (Toohey & Taylor, 2008). Thus, a vast amount of psychological studies deal with the high-risk hostage circumstances covering police negotiations (Beauregard & Michaud, 2015; Young, 2016), perpetrator behaviour and consequences for the victims.

However, even though hostage situations are weighed down with negative connotations, they do not necessarily occur in a criminal context. When reviewing the encyclopaedia Merriam-Webster, a hostage was defined as:

> a) a person held by one party in a conflict as a pledge pending the fulfilment of an agreement
> b) a person taken by force to secure the taker's demands
> c) one that is involuntarily controlled by an outside influence
> (Merriam-Webster.com, 2017a, n.p.).

Current academic literature touched upon hostage in the context of brand hostages. Thereby, the phenomenon describes certain situations or campaigns of a brand being taken as a hostage, but fails to adequately discuss or define the notion and construct of the whole brand hostage. Cervellon (2012, p.133) for instance claimed that:

> Not-for-profit (NFP) campaigns regularly take brands hostage. These shock tactics are meant to bring publicity to targeted companies' practices that are deemed socially and environmentally irresponsible. The aim is to coerce such firms into complying with NFPs' demands, for fear of consumers' backlash.

However, Cervellon (2012) did not illustrate in detail how and why brand hostages occur, rather examined how consumers react to these messages and whether their behaviour is impacted through these situations. We, therefore, found it necessary to explore the origin of the phenomenon and started to broadly investigate literature, in order to identify examples which may be of similarity or may be constituted as a brand hostage. As the term already implies, the hostage metaphor is of central importance.

2.1.1 Scapegoating

One concept found that assumed resemblance to the brand hostage phenomenon was "scapegoating". Due to the shared element of publicly accusing an organisation or person for misconduct, scapegoating could, arguably, be associated with a hostage metaphor. Scapegoating occurs when a problem that concerns several people, is reduced to a single person which gets effectively blamed for the wrongdoing (Gangloff, Connelly & Shook, 2014). Theorised by various researchers (Boeker, 1992; Gangloff, Connelly & Shook, 2014; Wilson, 1993), scapegoating is a behavioural pattern that predominantly appears on the top management level of corporations during underperformance. Thereby, two scapegoating situations would be conceivable: the dismissal of one or more top managers while the CEO remains in the company (Boeker, 1992) or the dismissal of the chief executive himself due to organisational misconduct (Gangloff, Connelly & Shook, 2014). The reasons for scapegoating in business are diverse and reach from signaling investors either an intention for internal change or allay them by removing the problem and continuing smoothly (Gangloff, Connelly & Shook, 2014).

Besides the occurrence in business, scapegoating is also found in family therapy, politics and sports (Wilson, 1993). The case of Lance Armstrong can be considered as one of the biggest scapegoating examples in sports (Reuters, 2015). Since almost all professional cyclists during his time were accused and found of doping, Armstrong was made thus the primary target and scapegoat by the media. The American was stripped of all his titles, deleted from the records books and the only cyclist who received a lifelong ban (Reuters, 2015).

Similarities can be found between scapegoating and brand hostages, as in most cases NGOs attack large and well-known companies and use the campaigns as illustrations or warnings to other multinational enterprises (MNEs). Hence, both scapegoating and brand hostage have an element of making an example out of individuals or organisations, which have displayed unacceptable behaviour. Although the context of setting-an-example traditionally refers to a good behaviour that other people should strive for and copy (Merriam-Webster.com, 2017b), yet in legal cases for instance, judges might condemn certain cases in the strongest possible terms to discourage fellow perpetrators.

2.1.2 Culture Jamming

Further investigation regarding theory showing similarity to a brand hostage phenomenon led to the concept of culture jamming, found in the broader research field of guerilla communication (Dery, 2010). According to Dery (2010), and comparable with the phenomena of brand hostage and scapegoating, culture jamming techniques can be used “with the intent of exposing institutional or corporate wrongdoing” (Dery, 2010, n.p.), thus should be taken into consideration. The concept of culture jamming was first theorised and published in the New York Times in 1990 by Mark Dery, who got inspired by the audio-collage band Negativland which used the term concerning “billboard alteration and other forms of media sabotage” (Dery, 2010, n.p.). The concept was later defined as “an organized, social activist effort that aims to counter the bombardment of consumption-oriented messages in the mass media” (Handelman & Kozinets, 2004 cited in Carducci, 2006, p.116). Nowadays, culture jamming appears in multiple contexts, namely political culture jamming, as a form of media activism as strategy of rhetorical protest, regarded from a sociological perspective, or as a part of anti-consumerism activities (Carducci, 2006; Dery, 2010; Harold, 2004; Warner, 2007). However, what all culture jammers have in common is that they transmit their message through parodic humorous communication material by imitating and satirising their matters in order to raise the critical attention to their matters (Carducci, 2006). Today’s most famous culture jamming headman is Kalle Lasn, founder and editor of Adbusters, a Canadian anti-consumerism magazine and website (www.adbusters.org) (Carducci, 2006). He publicly targeted to “reverse, subvert, and reclaim our identity as brand trusting pawns of consumer capitalism” (Warner, 2007, p.21), by running various anti-brand campaigns against massively branded MNEs, using traditional campaigning techniques (boycotts, petitions) as well as subvertisements (using look and feel of the targeted ad equipping them with alternative messages) (Warner, 2007). Therefore, he can arguably be seen as one of the most influential representatives of the brand jamming movement.

Despite some similarities in the techniques of approaching the targeted companies (parodies and humorous campaigns) between culture or brand jamming and brand hostages, it has to be noticed that in culture jamming the criticism of consumer capitalism is central (Warner, 2007). Culture jammer’s primarily goal is to publicly challenge powerful corporations and to sabotage their image aiming for brand and reputation equally (Harold, 2004). However, in the brand hostage context, based on fundamental goals, NGOs demand a specific action from their hostage promising the end of the campaign once the demand is met. Thus, brand hostages, other than culture jamming, have a concrete start and end point.

2.2 Examples of Hostage Situations

Besides the concept of scapegoating, literature also provides further cases of hostage situations beyond the area of criminal hostage. Below three different hostage setups will briefly be introduced and related to the overall phenomenon of brand hostage.

2.2.1 Hostage in Retail

Brand hostage in the retail context relates to the dominant power of retailers in the retailer-supplier relationship (Hogarth-Scott, 1999; Marketing News, 1987). Because an appropriate product placement in store is essential for good sales and a big market share, retailers misuse their power pressuring manufacturers to "pay the ransom" in form of trade promotion dollars in exchange for valuable in-store placement of their products. Despite Hogarth-Scott's (1999) assertion that "hostages usually escape at the first opportunity" (Hogarth-Scott, 1999, p.681), the consequence of ignoring the retailers' demands jeopardises the brand's death (Marketing News, 1987). Furthermore, consumers' preference for one-stop-shopping strengthens the imbalance of power in the supplier-retailer relationship, where small owned brand suppliers have the highest risk in being subjected to such a hostage situation (Hogarth-Scott, 1999). The brand hostage situation found in the retail-supplier relationship bares resemblance to the brand hostage found between NGOs and corporations. However, a significant difference is that a retail-supplier hostage situation primarily deals with business-to-business relationships, while the hostage scenario typically plays out behind closed doors and not in the public eye. Furthermore, the supplier has the option to pull out of the situation without any immediate damage on the brand or reputation.

2.2.1 Hostage in Franchising Business

Franchising is a business format, "where an independent businessperson, the franchisee, is granted the right to market the goods and services of another, the franchisor" (Emerson & Parnell, 2014, p.355) and can therefore be seen as an equalised partnership between both parties. As this partnership is coated underneath the same brand, it is impossible for customers to differentiate between franchisee and franchisor. Consequently, any kind of political, religious or otherwise debatable statements of the franchisee's official key managers impact the entire business chain and its brand (Emerson & Parnell, 2014). Therefore, franchisees can find themselves held hostage of critical announcements of their franchisors, as the public will relate the given information to the brand, rather than distinguish between business chain owner and local business (Emerson & Parnell, 2014). Similarities in franchise and brand hostages might be less obvious, nevertheless, both hostage patterns share the loss of control in public. Both the franchisee hostage as well as the brand which is taken hostage, have little power to free themselves unharmed from the situation.

2.2.2 Ransomware

Ransomware is another form of a hostage situation - usually found in the information technology (IT) business. Ransomware consists of a digital form of blackmail, which embraces the broad variety of malicious types of software and hacker attacks, where the malware enters a computer system, and encrypts sensitive data files (Brewer, 2016; Mansfield-Devine, 2016; Werner, 2016). To decrypt the data files, the ransomware demands a ransom payment (usually in form of the virtual currency bitcoins), threatening the victim with a permanent data loss (Mansfield-Devine, 2016; Werner, 2016). In recent years, organisations became lucrative hostage targets as downtimes of their IT systems have far-reaching consequences for their businesses, which increases the willingness to pay a higher ransom. The Federal Bureau of Investigation predicted that more than one billion dollar losses in 2016 fall back to ransomware attacks (Brewer, 2016).

The main difference between ransomware and a brand hostage situation is that ransomware is an illegal activity and primarily conducted by hacker groups. Thus, due to its illegal nature, the activity itself may probably not be supported or legitimised by the public, unlike a brand hostage situation where an NGO receives a form of social legitimation by the public. This enables an NGO to act without concerns over public backlash. Furthermore, a brand hostage situation usually aims for a change in behaviour or policy in a corporation, while ransomware is focused on monetary ransom. Finally, ransomware primarily deals with hacking into data systems and using a company's data as blackmail, while a brand hostage does not necessarily involve digital data or hacking.

2.3 Preliminary Framework

From the broad demonstration of previously studied hostage situations, we now approach a preliminary framework of a brand hostage. Research covers closely related topics and influencing aspects to a brand hostage, which were tied together and portrayed in a framework. Thus, the below shown scheme *figure 2.1* represents the phenomenon of brand hostage based on connections and ideas of existing literature.

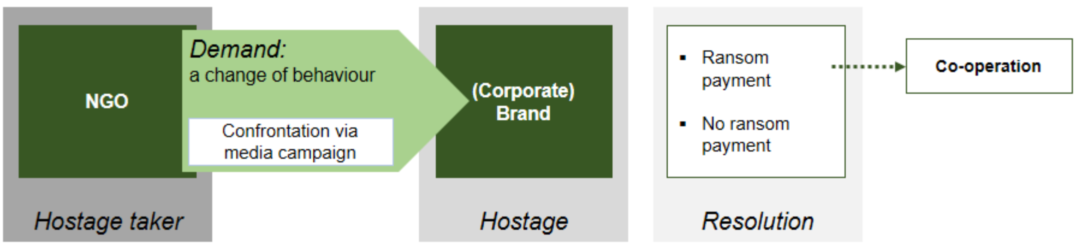

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework of a brand hostage

2.3.1 Derivation of Framework Components

As previously explained, in the following section we will evaluate the individual elements of the conceptual framework and argue for their position in the framework. Each element will be deduced and explained through concepts derived from literature. Reviewing the literature by following the elements of the conceptual framework serves as a method to allow for a better understanding of the theoretical foundations and modus operandi of a brand hostage. The framework consists of four main parts - hostage taker, demand, hostage, and resolution, which are positioned consecutively.

2.3.2 Hostage Taker

The hostage taker decides whom and how to attack the hostage and is often seen as the initiator of a brand hostage. According to literature, the hostage taker in brand hostage circumstances mostly happens to be an NGO (Baur & Palazzo, 2011; Cervellon, 2012). An NGO has become a generic term in today’s society and literature, describing various organisations, like activist groups, charities, special interest groups, social movement organisations and protest groups (Fassin, 2009). Thrandardottir (2015), identified a frequently used definition with two different connotations which cover all NGO types and refer to:

> (a) organisations whose purpose is for the public good, but not governmental or profitable in nature and (b) that these organisations fulfil the minimum legal requirements of the regulatory regimes they comply with
> (Thrandardottir, 2015, p.108).

Thus, in the paper any use of NGO is based on this definition. Besides that, it is necessary to address the motivating factors that influence NGOs’ public appearance as well as their campaigning approaches and behaviour towards companies. The reason why NGOs are often found to be a hostage taker and particularly matching for this role according to literature is due to its ties to its motivational factors and reasons for being. When reviewing literature we found several factors which arguably influence why and how an NGO behaves. We consider these factors as motivational factors which involve concerns over legitimacy, accountability, funding and reputation. These factors play a key role in why NGO are featured to regularly as a hostage taker. The following sections will look into these factors in more detail.

2.3.2.1 NGO Legitimacy

Fassin (2009) states that NGOs perform for more than “only” good purposes, such as fighting for human rights, labour conditions, the environment, or ethical principles to make the world a better place, so to speak. However, even though NGOs claim to be do-gooders, one should look at their activities regarding moral and ethics. The position as a social watchdog enables NGOs to fight social and economic injustices by corporations publicly, while demanding changes in corporate behaviour. By raising public awareness towards environmental issues or other critical topics, NGOs are able to influence the public’s opinion about these issues. Once they have secured society’s support, NGOs gain a form of social legitimacy for their campaigning and may avoid public backlash from more controversial methods (Baur & Palazzo, 2011; Burchell & Cook, 2013).

Baur and Palazzo (2011) evaluate three legitimation strategies (pragmatic, cognitive and moral) for an NGO's legitimacy, presenting moral legitimacy as the most relevant one. Adopting Suchman's (1995) interpretation, moral legitimacy is defined as:

> a positive normative evaluation of the organization and its activities (…) - it rests on judgements about whether a given activity benefits the evaluator, but rather on judgments about whether the activity is 'the right thing to do.' (Suchman, 1995, p.579).

According to Baur and Palazzo (2011), NGOs purposely seek the public discussion as they gain their influential power via public support. However, since NGOs have multiple communication strategy options, they sometimes fall back on morally arguable tactics of disruption, which can endanger their positioning of acting for the greater good (Baur & Palazzo, 2011). In agreement, Fassin (2009) supports that the variety of questionable practices of activist groups includes unfair communication and methods, distorted information and hidden agendas, abuse of power, arbitrary, selective choices, conflict of interests and even fraud. Particularly controversial are campaigns which either lack scientific arguments, manipulate stakeholders or media to influence the attacked company, or criticise firms based on the behaviour of their suppliers or partners (Fassin, 2009).

However, NGOs have the possibility, for instance, to launch controversial campaigns against corporations that refuse to take up contact with them, even without losing their moral legitimacy as long as they have the public backing (Baur & Palazzo, 2011). For companies caught in the crossfire and publicly attacked, nonetheless, it is almost impossible to avoid adverse effects on their reputation. Additionally, untrue statements spread in the media are difficult to prove wrong retrospectively. Hence, the victims remain unable to defend themselves (Fassin, 2009).

Finally, the ethical motivation background of NGOs seems indisputable. However, Fassin (2009) notes that some organisations fail to live up to their principles and even though, NGOs can be seen as representatives of the common good, one should not neglect the fine lines between them and similar actors claiming comparable aims but not being able to fulfil them according to the concept of moral legitimacy according to Baur & Palazzo (2011). After all, it is impossible to draw a universal conclusion how NGOs gain their legitimacy. As reported by Fassin (2009), in the end, it is society which provides NGOs with credibility and legitimacy. This legitimacy is leveraged through the NGOs' reputation based on their performance.

2.3.2.2 NGO Accountability

Concerns over NGO accountability have been raised by several scholars (Cernea, 1988; Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Kramer, 1981; Tendler, 1982). In general terms, the concerns raise the question of whom should NGOS be accountable to? Their board members, the government, their donors, their staff, or even project partners (Clark, 1991). While the question of accountability has manifested into various matters regarding legitimacy, representativeness and democracy, these issues have proven to be a major source of vulnerability for NGOs, as they have resulted in outside criticism and internal inefficiencies according to several authors (Cernea, 1988; Kramer, 1981; Tendler, 1982). Nevertheless, NGO accountability has been a dominant research theme within recent literature (Mercer, 2002).

According to Mercer (2002), there has been an increase in financial support towards NGOs, which has promoted the proliferation of particular types of NGOs. For example, it has been pointed out that NGOs in Eastern and Southern Africa are staffed by urban, educated, middle-class elites with no substantive roots in the disadvantaged groups they represent, which raises concerns over their ability to help the marginalised groups they represent. The increase of funding to NGOs play a fundamental role in this development, as these groups are better equipped to take advantage of the funding trend (Fowler, 1991; Mercer, 2002). Therefore, questions of competence arise, are these NGOs effective and do they make a difference for the groups they represent? Where are the tangible goals and what makes an NGO competent? According to Boulding (2009), identifying a competent NGO can be a challenging task. Major NGOs have realised the issue and have decided to invest heavily into creating and joining voluntary accountability and standard setting programmes (Gugerty, 2009; Reinhardt, 2009). NGOs often continue to adopt practices to promote their competence, and as a method to visibly show their accountability toward donors. These methods can manifest into several media outlets such as published performance reports, organised reports to recognised authorities and performance measurement tools. As such, it seems that a major concern for NGOs is to find ways to demonstrate their effectiveness and competence to various stakeholders.

Accountability towards Donors

While NGOs are potentially accountable towards several stakeholders, studies have found that NGOs in practice, are primarily focused on accountability towards donors, while mostly ignoring others (Ebrahim, 2003; Najam, 1996). This may be explained by the need for NGOs to secure a steady source of funding, which can shape their decision-making process (Cooley & Ron, 2002). Although NGOs are non-profit driven, they share substantive similarities to their corporate counterparts, as they respond to contractual incentives, market and organisational pressures as any other profit driven organisation. These similarities lead to a strong focus towards donor accountability, which impacts the subsequent donor-NGO relationship. The donor-NGO relationship has been identified to have similarities to a stockholder-firm relationship. While a stockholder and a corporation share a common goal of maximising profit, likewise do a donor and a NGO share a common goal, usually involving ethical or environmental issues (Johnson & Prakash, 2007). Donors are therefore concerned over the NGOs' efficient usage of resources in reaching their common goal, likewise are NGOs concerned about displaying satisfactory results to their donors - just as a traditional stockholder-firm relationship.

According to Najam (1996) and Ebrahim (2003), the focus on donor-NGO relationships may be the reason why NGOs primarily use functional mechanisms rather than strategic mechanisms as accountability measures. Functional mechanisms account for resources, resources utilisation and immediate impact, in contrast strategic mechanisms account for the effect that an NGO's activities has on other organisations' behaviour or the environment in the long-term (Ebrahim 2003; Najam 1996). In short, functional mechanisms focus more on delivering immediate short-term results while strategic mechanisms are more geared towards long-term achievables. Several authors (Ebrahim, 2003; Najam, 1996; O'Dwyer & Unerman, 2007) have found that NGOs had primarily been concentrating on functional mechanisms in their accountability towards donors. This may be explained by the similarity between the donor-NGO and stockholder-firm relationship, as firms tend to publish annual or quarterly reports on financial performance, as a way to legitimise and build trust between the company and current (potential) stockholders (Yuthas, Rogers & Dillard, 2002).

NGOs as Special Stakeholders

According to Baur & Palazzo (2011) there is strong support for NGOs acquiring an extraordinary stakeholder role in corporations as a consequence of campaigning. In line with Burchell and Cook (2013), NGOs' primary goal is to influence the globalisation processes of power holders, such as large MNEs or governments, with the support of the general public, and can therefore be considered as important key stakeholders for corporations. Doh and Teegen (2003 cited in Cullen, 2004) differentiate the stakeholder role of NGOs as stakegivers or staketakers. The stakegiver aspect reflects their potential role as a mediator in problem-solving processes, as information providers or as resources for "prestige, legitimacy, and the aura of neutrality and moral authority" (Doh & Teegen 2003, in Cullen, 2004, p.302). In contrary, the staketaker characteristic refers to the misuse of their power to damage the reputation or the core business of companies (Doh & Teegen 2003 cited in Cullen, 2004). Fassin (2009), in contrary, describes the stakeholder function of NGOs as one of stakeseekers, referring to their representative position of the civil society or local communities with the aim of being heard by corporations and taken into account in the company's decision-making processes.

Based on the literature, there seems to be a linkage between NGO accountability towards displaying competence, meeting donor expectations and funding. Donors are increasingly being managed as stockholders of the NGO and the need to show tangible goals is of importance for NGOs, as it also demonstrates competence and thus attracts more funding. This development may play a significant role in the behaviour of non-governmental organisations as the pressure of accountability may influence NGOs to focus on short-term goals in order to meet donor expectations, thus to acquire a steady stream of funding. Furthermore, as NGOs are increasingly assuming a stakeholder (stakeseeker) role in relation to corporations, the pressure on NGO accountability may very well affect how NGOs approach businesses in their role as hostage takers, as well as the following relationship after the hostage situation has been resolved.

2.3.2.3 Reputation Trap of NGOs

Linked to NGO legitimacy and accountability is the aspect of reputation, which plays a significant role as a third motivating influence for an NGO, to partake in the role as a hostage taker (Gent, Crescenzi, Menninga & Reid, 2013). The literature on reputation was first introduced by Schelling (1966) in the context of international relations. Mercer (1996) defined reputation as when an observer uses dispositional attributes such as reliability, resolve or competence to explain the future behaviours of others. Copeland (1997) expands on this by including situational factors that explain behaviour. What one actor does in a particular context, other would do as well. Although there have been debates between these two factions (dispositional versus situational) within international politics literature, Gent et al., (2013) argue for a more generalist view, where reputation can be divided into two core functions.

The first function is to build a reputation which distinguishes and differentiates an actor from others (Bercovitch & Schneider, 2000). By utilising reputation as a method to establish that they are more competent than other players, reputation becomes a communicative process for actors to signal that they are worth the investment. The second function is to use reputation as a source of information to determine the future behaviour of the actor (Walter 2003). According to Jervis (1988), the actor absorbs the information and learns from it, which indicates the ability of reputation to change future behaviours of the actor. As mentioned earlier, NGOs share substantial similarities with profit driven organisations. According to Cooley and Ron (2002), NGOs, like any other organisations responds to contractual incentives, external market, and internal organisational pressures. As NGOs do not possess an internal mechanism to fund themselves such as governmental institutions, there is a need and emphasis on securing sufficient funding in order to maintain its operations (Cooley & Ron, 2002; Gent et al., 2013). Reputation for instance, plays a key role for an NGO as it serves as a means to stand out from the crowd when competing for funding, and as a source of security for donors in which they can determine the future behaviour of the NGO.

There is, therefore, a pressure on NGOs to maintain a level of reputation that will satisfy stakeholders (donors), to enable a continuous stream of income, which has placed NGOs in a peculiar situation. According to Gent et al. (2013), NGOs are often caught in what they term as a *reputational trap*. NGOs are stuck in a loop of producing tangible results to maintain their reputation and thus acquire funding from donors. Gent et al.'s paper focuses on the relationship between NGOs and their donors, where the element of reputation is found to play a fundamental role in the decision to fund activities of an NGO. Maintaining or pursuing a good reputation is therefore imperative for NGOs, as it provides a sense of differentiation, competence and security for stakeholders, which opens up for funding (Gent et al., 2013). Reputation is thus heavily linked to the element of "competence" (Gent et al., 2013). A competent NGO uses the resources they receive from donors, to achieve real and tangible progress towards their policy goals. Success in achieving these goals leads to subsequent funding and the loop continues. While reputation is not easily measured due their intangible nature, NGOs have been moving towards more short-term and visible successes. Reporting on campaign or policy successes, even short-term ones, provide a source of meaning and signals a level of competence to potential donors. Gent et al. (2013) argue that reputation has become so necessary for the survival of an NGO that it has started to interfere with long-term policy goals of the NGO. Thus, the constant need for NGOs to maintain a certain reputation to fund its operations, may result in NGOs focusing more on short-term visible achievements, which can potentially undermine long-term central goals.

2.3.3 Demand

The demand process holds a central position in the brand hostage construct. The demand builds the connection between the hostage taking NGO and the company held hostage, thus the linkage is commonly a harmful one or even considered an attack. In general, associations and collaborations between NGOs and corporations are not unusual in the media and commercialisation environment. Nevertheless, in brand hostage situations the link between those parties differs noticeable from conventional collaborations. The consecutive paragraphs discuss how this engagement relationship has been approached in literature.

2.3.3.1 NGO-Corporate Engagement

Besides the shift to a more complex network structure, scholars (Bennett, 2003; Burchell & Cook, 2013; Molina-Gallart, 2014) observed an increasing number of relationships between NGOs and corporations, with the tendency of further growth in the future. The reasons for this trend are diverse depending on which research stance one takes - the company's or the NGO's point of view. NGO-corporate campaigns are one type of NGO-corporate engagement, which question the firm's social, societal, ethical and environmental practices, and openly represent one of the major drivers for increasing public awareness (Burchell & Cook, 2013; Molina-Gallart, 2014). Through growing public awareness towards campaigns which illustrated alleged unethical or environmentally damaging practices of MNEs, NGOs aim to change the firm's behaviour (Burchell & Cook, 2013; Molina-Gallart, 2014). Towards these campaigns, a growing number of companies have started developing their own corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies. According to Molina-Gallart (2014), these CSR strategies hold no longer a borderline position, but rather are integrated into central positions of a company's business model, which ultimately lead to greater transparency of the business activities and a rising interest in entering dialogues with NGOs (Burchell & Cook, 2013).

As previously argued and is further supported by Greenberg and MacAulay (2009), NGOs face great pressure to satisfy their legitimacy and accountability towards own stakeholders and as stakeholders of companies. Therefore, NGOs use various communication channels to please their donors and simultaneously fulfil their stakeholder duties towards corporations. New media tools, like the organisation's web page and social media technologies, like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or blogs, are increasingly recognised as the effective communication tools (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Seo, Kim & Yang, 2009; Waters et al., 2009). Arguably, the digital media environment allows for a diverse number possibilities for organisations to adequately decide when, how and what to communicate. Characteristics of social media communication that facilitated interaction with targets are, for instance, real-time dissemination and exchange of information, wide reach to existing donors and prospective stakeholders, simplifying the organisation of activism activities and receiving immediate feedback on announcements with direct conversation possibilities (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012). Additionally, the digital media landscape offers multiple possibilities for cost effective campaigning (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Seo, Kim & Yang, 2009). Even though NGOs claim to evolve social media strategies to build meaningful relationships and grow virtual communities with stakeholders, current researchers criticised that some NGOs often fail to use the full two-way communication potential social media holds. NGOs are found to rather stick to with a one-way communication channel (Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012). Based on the literature, it can be concluded that NGOs are making use of a fragmented media landscape combining traditional communication methods with digital communication strategies, which leads to a more open conversation culture towards donors, collaborators, prospect members and targeted companies (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009). Social media has become a significant communication tool for the way

NGOs are campaigning and fundraising, which has enabled them to be more effective, in terms of striving for credibility and legitimacy on a multi-channel basis.

2.3.3.2 NGO Engagement Modes

NGOs often enjoy a form of "trust premium" offered to them by the public. For example, in many public opinion surveys, NGOs have been found to be ranked among the highest of the most trusted institutions in society, particularly dominating in fields such as human rights, health and environmental issues. While trust in NGOs has been rising over the past two decades, trust in government and business has either decreased or remained low in many countries (Nelson, 2007). In a paper by Nelson (2007), four major categories of engagement modes can be identified between NGOs and corporations: *Confrontation, Communication, Consultation and Cooperation.* The different categories are not mutually exclusive and are often used in a multitude of ways by NGOs. All four modes of engagement can be relevant at the local community level, the national level or internationally, they may also be relevant for individual NGO engagement with an individual corporation, or collective types of engagement involving groups of NGOs and/or corporations. The *table 2.1* presented below exhibits the four categories of engagement, which activity types are related to the respective mode of engagement, as well as various examples.

Table 2.1 NGO Engagement Modes (Nelson, 2007)

Mode of Engagement	Types of Activity	Examples
CONFRONTATION Antagonistic relationships	Lawsuits, litigation and other legally-driven or supported actions;	Alien Tort Claims Act – besides others cases against Shell, ExxonMobil, RioTinto, Chevron
	Media and other campaigns targeted at the reputational or moral liability of companies;	No Dirty Gold; Publish What You Pay; Blood Diamond campaigns; Global Mining Campaign network
	Shareholder resolutions or campaigns targeted at major investors or bankers to disinvest from specific projects and/or companies	Growing number of cases
COMMUNICATION One way information flows	Regular reporting and/or information availability from the companies or from specific projects	Corporate sustainability reporting processes
	Site visits for NGOs and community leaders	Increasingly commonplace
	Research studies by NGOs on extractive sectors or specific projects	Oxfam 'Mining Ombudsman Project'; Over 65 NGO research reports on extractive sector projects
CONSULTATION Two-way dialogue and processes to listen to and incorporate different views and feedback into organisational decision-making and policy making	Community or project- level consultation structures	Many energy and mining projects
	Strategic, industry-wide or national consultation mechanisms	The Mining Minerals and Sustainable Development review; the World Bank's Extractive Industries Review; the ICMM Resource Endowment Initiative; Peru's Mining Roundtable; the Canadian Roundtables on the Extractive Industries; South Africa's Mining Charter; Framework for Responsible Mining project
COOPERATION Formal agreements to work together in a supportive manner	Strategic philanthropy and community investment initiatives that harness core corporate competencies and aligns with core business interests i.e. enterprise, science and technology education; environmental education; health	Many extractive companies and NGOs are creating strategic alliances – often with a focus on local economic development; education and training and environmental issues.
	Joint research projects, tools development, capacity building or training	ICMM's Resource Endowment project; UN Global Compact Policy Dialogues; International Alert's Conflict Impact Assessment Tool; NGO capacity building programs
	Global Trade Union Framework Agreements	Over 10 ICEM agreements
	Collaboration on more strategic issues, industry standards and public policy at a national, regional or industry-wide level	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative; Kimberley Process; Voluntary Principles; International Cyanide Management Code

In general, NGOs do not approach companies with "peaceful intentions" in their brand hostage campaigns, but confront companies with a certain behaviour pattern, requesting to specifically change them. Therefore, NGOs create media-effective viral campaigns to attack and pressure their targets. As evident from current NGO engagement literature, NGOs are increasingly engaging with campaigns targeted at corporations whose practices are supposedly unethical or environmentally damaging, which is leveraged through social media channels. Depending on the context, the engagement mode of an NGO varies. In the context brand hostage, these engagement modes may be considered aggressive or hostile. Nevertheless, it is possible that NGOs are engaging with corporations in one or multiple engagement modes akin to that of Nelson's (2007) Modes of Engagement.

2.3.4 Hostage

The hostage builds the third main element of the conceptual framework. When an NGO attacks a company with a brand hostage campaign, it is usually the company's brand or one of their product brands that is at the centre of communication. Thus, one should correctly state that it is the brand which is the victim of the negative connotation in the campaign. Arguably, a brand creates values, ideally even in form of financial revenues for a company, at the same time the company provides depth and humanity to the commercial brand. As a consequence, many corporations use their most successful product brands to establish a competitive advantage and to manage and defend their reputation (Kapferer, 2012; Melin, 2002).

2.3.4.1 Corporate Reputation

As argued in chapter 2.3.2, the importance of reputation for NGOs is evident. Nevertheless, it is also important to discuss the corporation's reputation. Furthermore, it is important to demonstrate the function of NGO and corporate reputation within the interaction between hostage taker, hostage and its respective stakeholders. In the past decades, corporations have increasingly been recognising the importance of corporate reputation and its ability to assist in achieving business goals and to stay competitive in the market (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). Wartick, (1992, p.34) defines corporate reputation as "the aggregation of a single stakeholder's perceptions of how well organizational responses are meeting the demands and expectations of many organizational stakeholders".

Therefore, stakeholder expectations and how well these expectations are met will determine a corporation's reputation. In addition, Fombrun (2005) points out that CSR policies have increasingly become an important element of stakeholder expectations. Stakeholders are increasingly expecting that corporations are implementing CSR policies into their practices. Failing to meet those expectations presents a reputational risk for corporations and stakeholder backlash (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). Coombs & Holladay (2012) point out that due to the growing importance of corporate reputation and corporate social responsibility. NGOs have been able to leverage the development to partake a more prominent role in a corporation's managerial decision making process. According to Coombs & Holladay (2012), NGOs can leverage the importance of corporate reputation, to achieve their goal of changing a corporation's behaviour or policies, by exposing unsatisfying CSR activities through media coverage as negative media coverage may impact the attitudes of a corporation's stakeholders and subsequently the corporation's reputation.

When discussing corporate reputation, it is inevitable to consider the link between the corporate brand and the corporate reputation. While the connection between the corporate brand and corporate reputation seems obscure in literature, scholars agree upon the existence of a relationship between both, being primarily influenced by stakeholders' expectations and evaluations (Roper & Fill, 2012). Not only in Kapferer's (2012) brand identity prism relationships hold an essential role, also de Chernatony & Harris affirm that "a brand's reputation will be more favourable, the more congruent the brand's identity is with the self-image of stakeholders" (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000 cited in Roper & Fill, 2012, p.117). Consequently, even though researchers are ambiguous about whether branding is part of the reputation or the other way around, there is an agreement that both the brand perception and the reputation are strongly influenced by multiple stakeholders' expectations (Roper & Fill, 2012). Therefore, any attack against the corporate brand of a company, will impact stakeholders' evaluations of the company and its brands and thus affect the reputation of the company.

2.3.4.2 Situational Crisis Communication Theory

When aiming to understand a corporation's behaviour during a brand hostage, one can draw from crisis communication theory. Arguably, a brand hostage is similar to a crisis, or can potentially develop into one. Thus, it is conceivable that a corporation responds in a similar manner to a crisis when being in a brand hostage situation. Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) is a widely-used framework in determining appropriate responses for organisations during a crisis. According to Coombs (2007), a corporation's reputation can impact the response to a crisis and whether the response corresponds with the type of crisis the corporation is facing. The SCCT consists of two main elements, which are (1) the crisis situation and (2) the crisis response strategies. The main goal of SCCT is to determine the level of reputational threat in order to understand how to protect one's reputation during a crisis. From that knowledge, a suitable communication strategy is developed (Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

The first step of SCCT is to understand the crisis. To understand the crisis at hand, SCCT suggests assessing the level of reputational threat by considering three factors, which shape the reputational threat: (1) initial crisis responsibility, (2) crisis history and (3) prior relational reputation. A way to assess this is by understanding how media and stakeholders are perceiving and defining the crisis. The crisis manager can then determine the type of crisis the organisation is facing by categorising its type and assessing the reputational threat the crisis poses. By identifying the crisis type, crisis managers can predict how much responsibility stakeholders attribute to the organisation and develop appropriate response strategies. SCCT (Coombs, 2007) categorises crises into three main clusters, known as victim crisis, accident crises and preventable crisis. The following *table 2.2* illustrates the crisis types associated with each cluster, as well as a description for every crisis type and the corresponding level of reputational threat deriving from the crisis.

Table 2.2 SCCT: Categorisation of crisis types (Coombs, 2007)

Crisis Cluster	Crisis Type	Description	Reputational Threat of Crisis
Victim cluster	Natural disaster	Acts of nature damage an organization	Minimal attributions of crisis responsibility and requires a minor reputational threat
	Rumor	False and damaging information about an organisation is being circulated	
	Workplace violance	current of former employee attacks current employees onsite	
	Product Tampering	External agent causes damage to an organization	
Accident cluster	Challenges	Stakeholders claim an organization is operating in an inappropriate manner	Moderate attribution of crisis responsibility and require a moderate reputational threat
	Technical-error accident	A technology or equipment failure causes an industrial accident	
	Technical-error product harm	A technology or equipment failure causes a product to be recalled	
Preventable cluster	Human-error accident	Human error causes an industrial accident	Strong attribution of crisis responsibility and require a severe reputational threat
	Human-error product harm	Human error causes a product to be recalled	
	Organizational misdeed with no injuries	Stakeholders are deceived without injury	
	Organizational misdeed with management	Laws or regulations are violated by management	
	Organizational misdeed with injuries	Stakeholders are placed at risk by management and injuries occur	

The second step of SCCT is developing an appropriate response strategy to repair and reduce the negative effects of the crisis of an organisation. The SCCT uses attribution theory to develop a theoretical link between crisis situation and crisis response (Coombs & Holladay, 2002). According to attribution theory, people constantly search for causes or make attributions for events. During negative or unexpected events, people tend to react emotionally and will, especially under such circumstances aim to attribute responsibility to a perceived “guilty party”. In terms of corporations, attribution of causality elicits negative emotional responses from stakeholders, which impact the interaction between stakeholders and the corporation. Coombs (2007) uses attribution theory as a base to predict the severity of a potential reputational crisis or threat, which can guide communication responses that may minimise reputational damage. The below shown *table 2.3* displays different primary and secondary crisis response strategies and the possible tactics of each strategy. The accompanying description stresses the differences of each tactic.

Table 2.3 SCCT: Crisis response strategies (Coombs, 2007)

Type of Crisis Response Strategy	Strategy	Tactics	Description
Primary crisis response strategy	Deny	Attack the accuser	Where the crisis managers oppose or confront the people or group who claim a crisis exists
		Denial	When the crisis managers deny the existance of a crisis or claim that there is no crisis exist
		Scapegoat	When crisis managers blame to other people from the external of the organization
	Diminish	Excuse	When crisis managers aim to reduce the organization's responsibility for the crisis and justification defined as the crisis managers aim to reduce the preceived damage
		Justice	When crisis managers aim to reduce the perceived damage
	Rebuild	Compensation	When crisis managers aim to compensate the victims by offering money or other material things (i.e. gifts)
		Apology	When crisis managers publicly confess blame and accept responsibility by apologizing to the stakeholders
Secondary crisis response strategy	Bolstering	Reminder	The organization tells the stakeholders about ist past good works
		Ingratiation	When the organization parises stakeholders
		Victimage	When the organization explains to the stakeholder if they were a victim too during the crisis occurs

Deny strategies seek to remove any connection between the organisation and the crisis. If the organisation is not involved in the crisis, no reputational damage would be suffered by the event. If the organisation can convince stakeholders, including news media, to accept the “no crisis” frame of denial, the organisation is safe from reputational damage. The diminish strategy aims to argue that the crisis is not as bad as it is made out to be. If an organisation is successful in lessening the connection between the organisation and the crisis, it may reduce the negative effects of the crisis. However, this method requires crisis managers to have solid evidence to support their claims, and even in such a case, they may still fail. Failure occurs when stakeholders reject the frame presented by the crisis manager while adopting a different competing frame which they deem as the most credible. A rebuild strategy aims to develop new reputational assets to improve the organisation’s reputation by offering materials or symbolic forms of aid to victims. A crisis manager may communicate and act for the benefit of stakeholders and via their positive actions offset the crisis. A rebuild strategy is often used when the reputational threat is regarded as severe or when the organisation has an unfavourable crisis history or reputation. Finally, the bolstering strategy draws on the goodwill of stakeholders to protect the organisations reputation and should only be used as a supplementary strategy to the three primary strategies.

2.3.5 Resolution

The fourth element of the conceptual framework is the resolution. A resolution indicates that an action or process is being solved or terminated. To overcome the conflict of interest in a brand hostage situation, NGOs and targeted companies engage in negotiation processes. In negotiation theory, bargaining is seen as a measure of decision-making to overcome inter alia conflicts of interests (Johansson et al., 2010). As a rule, negotiation processes aim to end hostage situations between hostage taker and hostage peacefully (Young, 2016).

The type of negotiation between NGOs and targeted companies resembles a bargaining process (Johansson et al., 2010). Negotiation literature provides multiple theoretical models and discusses that there are various factors influencing the outcome of a negotiation process (Johansson et al., 2010). In a brand hostage context, where an NGO bargains with a company about the scope of the policy change, particular theoretical aspects are of importance. In this context, Johansson et al. (2010) introduce three theoretical approaches as a basis in their negotiation study. The main influencing factor for the negotiation behaviour and the result is the power balance of both parties (power approach). Furthermore, organisational culture and capacity of both negotiation partners impacts the bargaining (organisational approach), as well as the knowledge about the overall context (contextual approach). One, furthermore, needs to take into consideration that the NGO is - as mentioned before - in the dilemma of being responsive and accountable to their donors, while at the same prove their influential power to maintain their reputation. Nevertheless, although it might seem paradoxical at first sight, the asymmetry in (bargaining) power is mostly to the NGO's advantage (Johansson et al., 2010), as they can rely more often on the support of the public.

Considering hostage situations, ransomware literature shows that there are two solutions possible: First, the hostage refuses to pay the demanded ransom, thus the hostage continues or second, the hostage pays the ransom, and consequently the hostage ends and the victim gets "released" (Mansfield-Devine, 2016). Applied to brand hostage negotiations, one could argue for these two possible outcomes: in the case that the hostage negotiations fail, the attacked company would refuse to "pay" the demanded "ransom", thus the NGO campaign would be considered as inconclusive or would continue. On the other hand, if the negotiations proceed successfully from the NGO's point of view, the company would "pay the ransom" and adapt its corporate behaviour accordingly to the NGO's demand. Simultaneously, the NGO would stop the harmful campaign against the company.

Molina-Gallart (2014) argued that once a demand was met, it may not necessarily end the relationship between the NGO and the company, claiming that it could possibly lead into a partnership. These partnerships then often deal with the issue that had been raised in the NGO campaign. NGOs continue in their role as supervising social watchdogs, legitimising companies' "good" and responsible corporate behaviour. In fact, non-profit organisations have even published "apology" campaigns, pointing out to the sudden awareness of the company and the ensuing partnership between both parties (Greenpeace USA, 2009). Since the subsequent partnership is not generally valid for every brand hostage resolution, it is displayed with a dotted arrow in the conceptual framework. It cannot be excluded that there exist further resolution possibilities, nevertheless, the ones pointed out have been discussed in literature.

Existing research in the broader area of brand hostage allowed us to conceptualise, illustrate and conclude the findings in a conceptual framework- The framework consists of the four main elements: *hostage taker, demand, hostage,* and *resolution*. The framework allows us to visualise the modus operandi of a brand hostage, providing the foundations for the positioning of the study, a guidance for the case analysis, which can lead to a precise definition of the phenomenon.

2.4 Positioning

Aligned with the purpose of the study to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, an extensive analysis of current literature shows that concepts like scapegoating, culture jamming, hostages in retail or franchising businesses and ransomware, which seem similar to a brand hostage have been investigated. Although the phenomenon have been vaguely touched upon in research (Cervellon, 2012), we, nevertheless, found the subject to be elusive and lacking in terms of definition, description and understanding. While NGOs campaigning against companies is not a new phenomenon (Molina-Gallart, 2014), we can however, more recently observe that NGOs are holding a corporate and/or product brand as hostage via their media campaigns. Furthermore, once the demands of the campaign have been met, an NGO would remarkably cease all campaign activities and attempt to reconcile with the targeted company, which is evident in their post-campaign communication materials (Bennett, 2003; Fleischer, 2009; Greenpeace, 2014b).

Furthermore, several scholars have mentioned the rise of new, disruptive and successful NGO engagement strategies based on digital media communication (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Seo, Kim & Yang, 2009; Waters et al., 2009). The use of digital communication tools, such as social media, have enabled NGOs to create and distribute creative and damaging content targeted at corporations, which represents a reputational threat to a corporation's reputation. Consequently, it has been argued by Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) that the field of reputation management is growing in importance, as maintaining a good reputation is essential to remain competitive in the business world. Therefore, the emergence of NGO campaigns fuelled by the rise of digital communication tools should be considered as warning signs and an increasing concern for managers.

Nevertheless, to our knowledge, no research provides an in-depth understanding of a brand hostage, nor defines the phenomenon. Therefore, the study aims to reduce the knowledge gap by contributing with a definition of the brand hostage phenomenon and the development of a framework which enables for an in depth understanding of the modus operandi of a brand hostage. Based on the research purpose of the paper and the conceptual framework grounded on existing literature, we position the study, deriving from traditional hostage literature, as a part of NGO literature (including NGO activism and NGO engagement), reputation management research, and Situational Crisis Communication Theory. The variety of research areas indicates that the study of the brand hostage phenomenon is highly relevant on both an academic and practical point of view.

3 Methodology

In this section, will begin with the determination of philosophical assumptions that have guided and shaped the study. We argue for a constructivist paradigm and an interpretivist philosophy for the study due to the nature and aim of the research, while arguments for an inductive research approach consisting of a qualitative research strategy following a multiple-case study design will also be presented. We address our motivations for case selections based on accessibility and availability of data, which in turn leads us to choosing three main Greenpeace cases and two smaller NGO cases. Furthermore, we discuss the study's choice of data collection method which exclusively uses secondary data due to limitations in accessibility. While a grounded theory approach is chosen for the analysis of the data, as it is deemed suitable for aim of this study. Finally, the section will reflect upon the credibility of the research findings and biases.

3.1 Research Philosophy

In the following section, the research philosophy which has guided and shaped our study will be determined. It is important to determine the research philosophy as it can enhance the quality of the research, as each plausible research process begins with the determination of the philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 2007; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015).

The ontology builds the essence of philosophical assumptions and relates to the aspect of the "nature of reality" (Creswell, 2007; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Central to this view is the question how social entities are considered - as objective or socially constructed (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We agree with this philosophical assumption and furthermore, we argue that investigating the phenomenon of brand hostage, where the phenomenon occurs in different settings involving dissimilar parties, can be arguably categorised as a social construct created through social interactions. This paper, therefore, adopts an ontological stance of constructionism (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2007). Constructionism is defined by Bryman and Bell (2011, p.22) as:

> an ontological position (often also referred to as constructivism) which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision.

As the research questions point to the exploration of the how and why, as well as the interaction and reaction to a brand hostage, it, therefore, would in our view be difficult to argue for an objectivist assumption, which considers social entities and their meanings being constructed independently of the participating social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

The epistemological assumption describes the relationship between the scholar and the item being researched throughout the study (Creswell, 2007). According to Bryman and Bell (2011, p.15) epistemological presumptions can be referred to as:

> 'the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge' and 'whether or not the social world can and should be studied accordingly to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural science'

Our study does not concern natural science, but rather concentrates on the composition, interlinks, and reasons for the brand hostage phenomenon itself and its surroundings. As this phenomenon has not been researched in detail, we have been cautious to apply existing scientific models, but instead designed our own conceptual framework, which was influenced by various literature streams. In accordance with the research questions, we aim to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and therefore, spend considerable time with field work to gather relevant and insightful data. As the major players in brand hostages are NGOs and corporations, both constituting groups of individuals, the research predominantly investigates the differences of people in their role as social actors. Subsequently, different corporations with different employees may act divergently in the same brand hostage situation. This in turn strongly supports the reasoning for our choice of an interpretivist philosophy of epistemology (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

In the course of a study with an interpretivist philosophy, scholars usually reduce the distance between the researched object and themselves as far as possible and, thus, "transform" to potential experts in the research area (Creswell, 2007). This is a process, which we could relate to throughout the ongoing development of the research. Although we discuss the research method in detail later on, one can already detect that such a process will further highlight the differences between human as social actors, thus underlining the interpretivist orientation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). We understand that as a consequence of the necessary empathic stance and close (knowledge) integration of ourselves in the study, it is impossible to fully isolate our personal inherent values and biases at all stages of the data collection process. Therefore, we discuss our own biases thoroughly later. However, according to Bryman and Bell (2011) this procedure is typical for interpretivism.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach describes how theory and research are related to each other (Bryman & Bell, 2011), following the presentation of our final choices and why we find them to be the most suitable for the study. The most commonly used approaches in business research are the deductive and the inductive approach. Deduction emphasises theory testing for scientific research that aims to provide generalisable conclusions, while induction focuses on detailed understanding of meanings related to humans, as well as the context of the events happening (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

With regard to the study which intends to explore the origin, the context, and the consequences of brand hostage, both approaches would be conceivable. However, several reasons indicate that an inductive approach is more suitable as the study attempts to expose, besides the reasons and circumstances in which brand hostage situations occur, also the interaction between the affected parties. Moreover, an inductive approach signifies that scholars build theory based on the results of their data analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) which is in alignment with the analytical section deriving from a comprehensive case evaluation. After examining different cases we revised the previous framework and adapted it according to our findings. Thus, the research approach naturally covered elements of an inductive direction (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009):

1) It allowed to develop understanding, enabling to take alternative explanations into account.
2) Studies following an inductive approach generally take circumstances in which the event happens into account, leading to the use of qualitative data and smaller subject samples.
3) Due to the more flexible structure focus changes throughout the research progress are possible.

Nevertheless, we are aware that this approach also incorporates disadvantages. First and foremost, the generalisability of the research is limited as the study is only based on a small data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). However, various characteristics of inductive research approaches fit the research purpose to gather different views on the brand hostage phenomenon.

3.3 Research Strategy

Besides clarifying the research philosophy that guides the study, scholars also need to regard the most appropriate research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell, 2007; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The choice of research strategy is independent from the type of research result, meaning whether the study is exploratory, descriptive or explanatory. However, some research strategies appear more preferable with an inductive research approach than others, particularly grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). In line with the research aim and research questions, this study have opted for a qualitative research strategy which consists of a multiple case study.

Qualitative research typically encompasses multiple data sources like field studies, interviews and conversations, observations, and documents, rather than relying solely on one (Creswell, 2007). The centre of the study is to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage by identifying certain patterns in various cases. Therefore, we, firstly reviewed secondary data that could provide useful insights concerning the circumstances of brand hostage or similar concepts. Thereof, we developed a conceptual framework as a basis for the definition approach. Next, we analysed well-chosen cases and extracted patterns and findings that helped to answer the research questions. For these reasons, we believe that the choice of a qualitative research strategy is appropriate for the study. Based on the research purpose and approach, we see a case study research as the most applicable research strategy. Creswell (2007, p.74) argues that "a case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases".

As mentioned before, the analytical part of this paper will be based on a multiple case study analysis. We expect that the results enable us to revise the conceptual framework which allows us to draw significant conclusions for theory and practice.

3.4 Research Design

Besides research philosophy, strategy, and approach, it is also important to pay attention to the research design, which determines the data collection and analysis and demonstrates which aspects we prioritised in the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The research questions of the study are complex and multi-layered. Besides investigating the circumstances (how and why) of brand hostage, we are further interested in the interplay between the NGO and the targeted company. Therefore, it is of particular importance to convey the connections between the involved parties and understand their behaviour and its meaning in its concrete context (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Bryman and Bell (2011), our study entails various elements that could either be researched in a cross-sectional or a multiple-case study design. While the multiple-case study design focuses on the contrasting and unique findings resulting of a comparison of various cases, the emphasis remains on the individual cases. In contrast, the key concept of a cross-sectional design is defined as:

> the collection of data on more than one case (usually quite a lot more than one) and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantitative or quantifiable data in connection with two or more variables (usually many more than two), which are then examined to detect patterns of association (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p.53).

The authors further argue that it is important to be clear about the objective. If the unique context of the cases is of particular prominence, a multiple case study should be applied. However, a cross-sectional approach is appropriate, if the priority lies on the outcome of general conclusions, because it allows to disregard the unique case contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, taking the research aim along with the choices of research philosophy, approach, and strategy into consideration, we will apply a multiple-case study. We argue that to fully understand and later define the phenomenon of brand hostage, it is necessary to evaluate the individual contents of our exemplary cases to encounter identical patterns which enable the development of a framework.

3.4.1 Multiple-Case Study

In the study, we have chosen a multiple-case study as the method to fulfil the research aim. According to Yin (2003), the case study method is suitable when attempting to answer questions such as 'how' and 'why'. The use of real-life case examples is, therefore, an appropriate approach when the phenomenon and its boundaries are less clear. Based on the literature review, the phenomenon of brand hostage is suitable for a multiple-case study approach, as the boundaries surrounding the phenomenon are unclear, involving a complex network of relations between different actors.

In line with one of the research aims, case studies are deemed appropriate when the aim of research is to acquire a deep understanding of a phenomenon. Although a single case study provides an in-depth and rich understanding of the phenomenon, a multiple-case study approach provides a much stronger foundation for supporting a conceptual framework (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) as it enables scholars to compare individual cases, extract similarities, contrasts, and unique aspects and ultimately identify characteristic patterns (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Creswell (2007), a maximum of four to five cases is advisable in a qualitative case study research, thus we investigated three Greenpeace cases comprehensively and further two NGO cases (Organic Consumer Association and Green America). As one of the aims of the study is to gain a deeper understanding of the brand hostage phenomenon and a theoretical framework as a basis for further discussion from both a theoretical and managerial perspective, a multiple-case study approach is deemed appropriate.

3.4.2 Argumentation for the Case Selection

One of the biggest challenges of using a multiple-case study design is the choice of cases used (Creswell, 2007), whereby the boundaries between the researched phenomenon and the overall context can seem blurry (Yin, 2003 cited in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2011) refer to Stake (1995) and argue that scholars should predicate their case choice on the condition of greatest learning opportunities. Thereby, it is first and foremost important to pick those cases that provide significant and accessible information in order answer the research questions. Thus, random sampling is by no means a considerable option, but rather strategic sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Due to several reasons, three main Greenpeace cases were chosen which involved LEGO, Mattel and Kimberly-Clark as counterparties. The reason for this choice was that Greenpeace is considered to be a powerful and leading NGO, campaigning for environmental issues. Greenpeace is, furthermore, the largest and most influential NGO in its field and also found to be particularly active in terms of targeting corporations with highly publicised campaigns on an international level (Activist Facts, 2017). The choice of Greenpeace is, therefore, relevant and meaningful both from an academic and managerial perspective.

Firstly, the LEGO case functions as the flagship case and the initial inspiration for studying this phenomenon. Not only has this case been the most publicly prominent, but also one of the biggest Greenpeace campaigns regarding viral success. As a consequence, we found a significant amount of information and insight about this case, which allowed for in-depth analysis. Secondly, the Mattel case was also a highly publicised case, but differed from the LEGO case, because Greenpeace primarily attacked the brand "Barbie", the more well-known product brand of Mattel, instead of the corporate brand. In addition, the case also provides a rich amount of data which enables in-depth analysis. Thirdly, the campaign targeting Kimberly-Clark was of significance for several reasons. Not only started the campaign in 2004 - long before social media campaigning was established, it also lasted for five years. Hence, there was lot of information available. Furthermore, the case was particularly valuable as it proceeded in a partnership after the resolution of the brand hostage situation. These differences to Mattel and LEGO allowed us to take various brand hostage set-ups into consideration when creating the framework. Lastly, we also decided to include two less prominent cases which consist of the Organic Consumer Association (OCA) against Starbucks and Green America against General Mills. The reason for choosing two smaller cases is to illustrate that the phenomenon also occurs in other NGO campaigns than Greenpeace.

It might be questioned why the selection contains that three Greenpeace case examples. This is due to the fact that Greenpeace is seen as the pioneer of successful NGO campaigning, holding an above-average level of negotiation power against corporations. While other smaller or more local NGOs have applied similar campaign strategies, the campaigns may not have been implemented well enough to gain a huge success. Furthermore, smaller NGO cases are less publicised and therefore provide less data to analyse. In contrast, Greenpeace, deliberately publishes and showcases past successes to the public, which leads to a rich amount of data.

3.4.3 Data Collection

When conducting a study involving case studies there are multiple methods to collect data (Yin, 2003). This research combines secondary sources such as cases, articles, journals, reports, and websites. Having multiple sources will assist in ensuring the reliability of data and minimise the risks of misinterpretations (Yin, 2003). Due to the lack of access to any of the case companies, this study will primarily be based on secondary data sources.

Secondary Data

Using secondary data has the following advantages; it is both cost and time efficient and can present the researcher with high-quality data. It also gives more time for data analysis and re-analysis, thus deemed ideal when the research project is small in scope (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Our research is focused on the deeper understanding and definition of a brand hostage and, as argued above the evaluation of real-case examples is known as an appropriate approach for this research aim. This approach primarily consists of secondary data gathered as part of the empirical part of the study and based on documentary and area-based multiple sources (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). To ensure a comprehensive analysis covering different viewpoints of several involved parties, the collection of the secondary data consisted of previous case studies, information on websites, reports, journal articles, and the evaluation of campaign activities.

In terms of developing our conceptual framework and in alignment with the inductive research approach, we adopted a grounded theory approach for both generation and analysis of data. Grounded theory originates from theoretical sampling, one of the main methods of purposive sampling and is defined as an alternative: “Theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categories and their properties and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory. “ (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p.62). Thereby, the sampling is not limited to people, but also includes settings and events. Grounded theory proposes a data collection process with respect to relevance and informative value for the study, continuing as far as to the point of theoretical saturation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By that, theoretical saturation refers to different data saturation possibilities of one category, demanding to move on with the next category. After all, we identified the theoretical sampling method as appropriate for the data collection of a multiple-case study design, as it enables us to undertake a deep and thorough evaluation from various angles on the phenomenon of interest.

3.4.4 Data Analysis

This section outlines the guiding structure for the qualitative data analysis of the study. The format consists of strategies concerning an inductive research approach as the study embraces the evaluation of secondary data in the form of a multiple-case study. As the research aim is to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, while constructing a framework to gain a deeper understanding of its modus operandi, a grounded theory approach has been adopted. A grounded theory approach is a systematic methodology which involves the construction of theory through the analysis of collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Martin & Turner, 1986). As we aim to establish the phenomenon and its relevance in academics, through the development of a theoretical framework, a grounded theory approach is deemed suitable. In order to conduct a grounded theory approach, Goulding (2000) proposes a grounded theory approach to follow a four-step process.

The first step involves the identification of an area of interest and data collection. In this step, the researcher starts by finding an area of interest which they intend to explore further. Researchers often adopt a grounded theory when the topic of interest has been little discussed by current literature. Furthermore, once an area of interest has been found, the researcher is encouraged to collect data in whatever form is deemed appropriate (Goulding, 2000). For our research, we selected the area of NGOs campaigning against corporations as an area of interest. Throughout further research and data collection, we found that literature was lacking in terms of explaining or defining the occurring phenomenon of brand hostage. Therefore, we deem adopting a grounded theory approach to be suitable for this research.

The second step is the interpretation of data. In this research paper, we made use of coding to analyse our collected data; the underlying coding practice of grounded theory is axial coding which is also referred to as open coding. Open coding describes the method of “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.61). This process is associated with early concept development. In this research paper, the data collected was broken down into identifiable data chunks, which would be associated with respective categories or elements of the brand hostage phenomenon, to develop a conceptual framework.

The third step involves the element of theoretical sampling. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), theoretical sampling is suitable for a qualitative study in contrast to purposive sampling due to its reliance on statistical rather than theoretical criteria. Theoretical sampling is a fundamental feature of Grounded Theory and is the application of the “constant” comparative method. Furthermore, it serves for the process of collecting data for generating theory, where the researcher collects, codes and analyses the data, and further decides where to further collect data, in order to develop the theory as it reaches a theoretical saturation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Sampling in this case is not determined to be the first step to begin with, but is directed by the emerging theory. The researcher will initially go to the most obvious places to seek data. With the evolvement of concepts, the researcher may need to incorporate additional data in order to strengthen the findings (Goulding, 2000). Once the conceptual framework was developed, we decided to collect additional data in order to test and compare whether the conceptual framework would fit the real-life examples. Therefore, we decided to conduct a multiple-case study with five cases involving NGOs and corporations, in order to determine the strength of our conceptual framework.

The fourth and final step consists of concept and category development. Here concepts are identified, and their attributes analysed to finally be submitted into a core category which the researcher needs to justify as the basis for an emergent theory. The theory will be considered valid once the researcher has reached the point of theoretical saturation, which means no new evidence emerges from the data (Goulding, 2000). This process enabled us to critically reflect on the findings of the multiple case analyses. As we modified the framework and definition of the phenomenon, new aspects emerged, which were comprehensively analysed and developed in order to be incorporated into the advanced framework.

3.4.5 Credibility and Validity

Valuable business research requires a reflection upon important criteria for the evaluation of the study, namely *reliability*, *replication,* and *validity* (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Reliability concerns the scope to which the chosen data collection and data analysis tools result in consistent findings. Four threats can endanger the reliability of a study: subject or participant error, subject or participant bias, observer error, or observer bias (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The capability of replication refers to the replicability of the study, which involves a detailed description of the scholar’s research procedures to enable subsequent researchers to replicate the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Nonetheless, according to Bryman and Bell (2011), neither reliability nor replication play a significant role in qualitative research, but instead is commonly disregarded. However, validity, which points to the integrity of the study findings, hence whether they are about what they were supposed to be about, is of greater importance for qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

The concept of validity is distinguished into different forms of validity. We will consecutively discuss and connect those concepts relevant to our research. For instance, measurement validity refers to the way survey questions are formulated, while internal validity concerns causality which is examined in form of independent and dependent variables (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Both validity types are strongly connected to quantitative research, thus neglected in this paper.

This is not the case for external validity, also referred to as generalisability. The key component is thereby whether the results are equally applicable to other research environments and to which extent the conclusions can be generalised (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Multiple researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) emphasise their concerns towards this aspect in conjunction with case study research: "How can a single case possibly be representative so that it might yield findings that can be applied more generally to other cases?" (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 61). As researchers, we do not dare to claim that our findings are universally true, nevertheless by conducting a multiple-case study we are able to acquire a deep understanding of the phenomenon and a strong foundation for the support of a theoretical framework (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). After all, the research aims to establish the phenomenon of brand hostage in theory and provides a conceptual framework which maps the modus operandi of a brand hostage. Thus, we argue that for the specific objectives of our study the chosen research design provides sufficient generalisability to contribute valuable conclusions. Nevertheless, we must admit that future research can potentially aid in strengthening our framework and case findings.

The matter of ecological validity belongs to the nature of the research strategy and design and the resulting outcomes. More specifically it is of importance, whether the study is conducted in a natural social scientific setting or whether the researched subjects had to interact in an unnatural surrounding (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We argue that the case evaluation of the study owns ecological validity, as we examined secondary data, without any possibility to intervene in the event itself.

Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) discuss the issue of validity in connection to constructionist designs, thereby referring to authenticity, plausibility and criticality as the key criteria. We demonstrate authenticity in the research via the path of argumentation as a red line of the paper: First, we extract components of brand hostage from existing literature and build a conceptual framework. Second, we underline and strengthen this framework with a multiple-case study, evaluating three Greenpeace cases in detail and two further NGO cases to prove that our findings are not exclusive to Greenpeace. Third, we revise, hone, establish and define the phenomenon of brand hostage in theory and practice.

The criterion of plausibility has been explained extensively in the literature review of the paper. We claim that this section which guided along the conceptual framework, argues successively for the constitution of brand hostages. By then evaluating various cases along the framework, we extend the existing knowledge plausibly.

Criticality concerns our critical view towards own biases and taken-for granted assumptions (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015), which we consider several times throughout the present research paper (research philosophy, limitations). While we already reflected critically on the research philosophy, research design and data collection, we dedicate the next chapter to a comprehensive contemplation of the methodological limitations. Additionally, we summarised the content-related limitations in the last section of the paper connecting them to further research recommendations.

3.4.6 Biases

We understand that bias is an important factor to consider in any research project. There are multiple possible sources of bias among the authors.

The majority of the cases displayed have resulted in success stories for NGOs. As most of the cases are termed as victories and promoted on the NGOs respective website and reports, we as authors understand that the selection of cases might seem to be biased as it portrays NGOs as being more successful than they might actually be. However, as cases which are deemed unsuccessful are either hidden away from public or termed as "an on-going fight", we were, therefore, compelled to select cases which have some form of resolution to them.

In alignment with the interpretivist philosophy we chose to take in our study, we are, furthermore, aware that the more in-depth research we conducted and evaluated, the more expertise we gained, but consequently also got more biased (Creswell, 2007). Throughout our study we mutually called attention to each other's biases regarding the knowledge. To present one example, during the process of developing the conceptual framework we caught ourselves integrating elements that were part of a hostage situation, however, did not derive from current literature. But since we had already read more about our cases, we tried to integrate more than was logic at that stage. Therefore, we had to step back, reflect and objectively adjust the model to the information given in current literature.

4 NGO Case Analysis

The elaboration of the NGO case analysis and the respective results will be the purpose of this section. The analysis of the cases will reflect whether the conceptual framework deriving from the literature review remains valid after the application to NGO campaign cases. The procedure will consist of three main cases involving Greenpeace and their respective campaigns against LEGO, Mattel and Kimberly-Clark. Additionally, two smaller NGO cases will be evaluated to demonstrate that brand hostage campaigns are not an exclusive occurrence in Greenpeace campaigns. For each campaign, extensive background information will be provided, before the conceptual framework will be applied. Next, the differences between the conceptual framework and the cases will be extracted and discussed, building the foundation for the construction of an advanced brand hostage framework. A table will present an overview of the cases and their differing elements in regard to the advanced framework. Lastly, a definition for the phenomenon of brand hostage will be provided.

4.1 LEGO

The Greenpeace-LEGO case serves as the flagship case for the research. Not only has this campaign made us wonder about the brand hostage phenomenon at first, it also inspired us to further research in this area. Our choice for this case was further strengthened by the great availability of information as well as the characteristic composition of a brand hostage.

4.1.1 Background

The giant oil and gas corporation Royal Dutch Shell and the Danish toymaker LEGO had a partnership rooting back to the 60ies appearing in different forms during the past years. In 1966, the first Shell branded gas station sets were released in Europe. In the following years, further co-promotional LEGO sets came onto the market, for instance a Shell branded service station, car wash, tank trucks, or tanker wagons with Shell logos. Even though the first sets for promotional purpose were already used in 1986, from 2012 onwards Shell released multiple promo vehicle sets featuring Ferrari. The exclusive LEGO sets were usually sold at Shell petrol stations.

Figure 4.1 LEGO Shell Service Station from 1966 (Brickipedia, n.d.)

In early 2013 Shell announced to pause their oil drilling plans for an indefinite period, but at least until the end of 2013. This announcement arose from the damages, Kulluk, one of Shell's drill rigs, sustained during an incident in 2012. On New Year's Eve that year, due to icy heavy weather Kulluk drifted aground from Sitkalidak Island in the Gulf of Alaska and floated around for several days. In a dramatic rescue mission with more than 700 people involved, all workers got safely off the vessel. The damage caused on the oil rig forced Shell to interrupt their drilling activities, and, even though, no oil product or diesel fuel spilled into the sea, Shell reviewed their current drilling season, concluding in the mentioned halt (Lavelle, 2013). As offshore oil drilling is highly risky for the environment, Shell has always been a thorn in the flesh for Greenpeace, which ran several campaigns against Shell before - often in sensational manner as in the Brent spar case to only name one of the most popular ones.

July, 2014 – Greenpeace initiated a campaign against the popular toy producer LEGO. The intention behind the campaign was to *"stop the social license to drill that LEGO gave Shell"* (Reestorff, 2015, p.39), thus to pressure LEGO to end their £68m-worthy partnership with Shell (Hobbs, 2016). In Greenpeace's opinion, the strategic co-operation between LEGO and Shell was a strategic move to "buy friends who can make its controversial arctic drilling look acceptable" (Greenpeace, 2014 cited in Freisleben, 2015), thus to greenwash the reputation of a corporation known for harming the ecosystem.

July 1, 2014 – On day one of the campaign, Greenpeace publicly accused LEGO for their partnership with Shell in an official Greenpeace report distributed via a blog post and a press release. Even though the LEGO group was taken by surprise, they issued a counter press release the same day only shortly after being attacked. In this rather defensive press release, LEGO group's CEO Jørgen Vig Knudstorp made clear that the actual dispute concerned Greenpeace and Shell, hence LEGO would stay out of the discussion (LEGO, 2014a) and continue the partnership with Shell. Certainly, this statement did not satisfy Greenpeace's communicated demand (Schulz, 2016), which led to the continuation of their campaign.

July 8, 2014 – Greenpeace published the *LEGO: Everything is NOT awesome* video on YouTube (available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhbliUq0_r4) (GreenpeaceVideo, 2014). The video combined various popular themes like Santa Claus, Harry Potter of Game of Thrones and integrated them in an LEGO bricks built Arctic scenery drowning in oil. Merging theses memes with the environmental issue of Arctic oil drilling guaranteed that the video drew attention to a larger audience (Reestorff, 2015, p.27).

July 10, 2014 – The first campaign reactions occurred: Shell's PR company took out a promotional video about the cooperation with LEGO. Similarly, Warner Bros, the producer of the actual LEGO MOVIE, prompted a deletion of the Greenpeace's parody video on YouTube due to copyright violations. Nonetheless, Greenpeace was prepared for a ban and reacted immediately by posting their video on Vimeo and extensively promoting it on other social media channels like Facebook and Twitter.

July 11, 2014 – People's complaints caused a reaction and Warner Bros dropped its oppositions and only shortly after the Greenpeace video reappeared on YouTube (Child, 2014).

July, 2014 – Greenpeace continued their campaign with various activities. First, around 50 children were engaged in a playful protest building Arctic animals and landscapes out of LEGO bricks in front of Shell's HQ in London. Second, the NGO approached #Tweetspill to motivate people to use this hashtag for any tweets regarding the Save the Arctic topic. Third, another video got released: "*LEGO: Help children Save the Arctic*", specifically entailing kids' imagination of the polar region and how they dreamt about the icy landscape.

With additional activist engagement from all over the world, the campaign reached another dimension. During the LEGOlution protests, for instance, activists dressed up as LEGO figures and protested at well-known monuments or memorials against the faulty partnership. Another example was the installation of tiny LEGO climbers holding a protest sign against the Arctic oil drilling at a Shell gas station in Legoland Billund in Denmark.

In parallel, one million people signed the petition against the LEGO Shell partnership and sent emails to the LEGO group HQ demanding the termination of the connection. Not to neglect is all the media attention each single activism measure caught, as well as the heavy people engagement on social media platforms (Greenpeace, 2014b).

October 8, 2014 – The negative attention and pressure made LEGO give in - exactly three months after the launch of Greenpeace's *Everything is NOT awesome* campaign video and around one month after Shell had submitted their plans for offshore exploratory drilling in the Alaskan Arctic. Jørgen Vig Knudstorp confirmed in a second press release that LEGO will not renew the partnership contract with Shell once it has ended in 2016 (LEGO, 2014b).

Figure 4.2 Greenpeace ad for LEGO campaign resolution (Greenpeace, 2014b)

4.1.2 Framework Application

In the following section, we will apply the conceptual framework to the LEGO case. By applying a real-life case example, we aim to identify whether changes within the framework are necessary, as brand hostage cases might appear differently than presented in literature as of today. As previously discussed, three Greenpeace and two smaller NGO cases are chosen for the evaluation. Therefore, the role of Greenpeace as a hostage taker is examined only once, as arguably the motivational and influencing factors remain similar if not the same for all three cases. Any deviations from the following hostage taker description will be mentioned in an introductory section of the Mattel and Kimberly-Clark case.

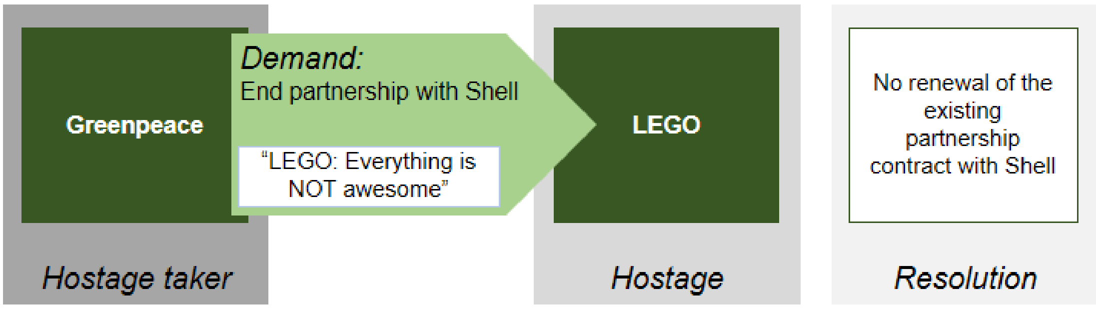

Figure 4.3 Application of conceptual framework to LEGO case

4.1.2.1 Hostage Taker

In this section, we will apply the conceptual framework (shown in *figure 4.3*) and tackle the first element *Hostage Taker*. Greenpeace's role as a hostage taker has various driving forces and motivators which influence their position. At the core of these factors is the mission statement of the corporation. On their web page Greenpeace formulates their mission in the following way:

> Greenpeace is an independent campaigning organisation, which uses non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future (Greenpeace, 2016a, n.p.)

They further admit that their operations aim to "change attitudes and behavior, to protect and conserve the environment and to promote peace" (Greenpeace, 2016b, n.p.). Thus, it can be argued that it is in Greenpeace's nature to publish campaigns that are controversial and attract attention concerning the creation of a sustainable world (Reestorff, 2015).

Nevertheless, according to Kapferer (2012) these values need to be consistently proven and lived up by, as in any other organisation. The justification of their core values and activities provides another reason for constantly testing the boundaries through bold campaigning. Greenpeace argue that they aim for massive industry-wide changes, which require a substantial (and often difficult) transformations. Therefore, the NGO targets major international corporation's due to their significant influence in their respective industries. Furthermore, these corporations often hold a strong reputation such as LEGO, Mattel and Kimberly-Clark, where they own either one or multiple popular consumer brands, which are attractive targets of their campaigns (Reestorff, 2015).

Apart from that, strong campaigns must provide easily accessible possibilities for people to engage with (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009; Waters et al., 2009). In the LEGO campaign, interested parties could show their participation through social media channels, donate online, take part in protest in various countries and sign the petition (online) to tell LEGO to cut ties with Shell (Reestorff, 2015). Likewise, in the Mattel case, people were able to follow the Ken-Barbie conversation on Twitter and even interact. As a result, Greenpeace gained 10.000 additional Twitter followers during the interaction of the two play dolls (Sullivan, 2012). When Greenpeace started its Kimberly-Clark campaign in 2004, social media was still in its infancy (Facebook was founded in February 2004); thus, it was mainly focused on extraordinary on-site protests and blockading. Supporters would have to participate as active activists or sign petitions. Even though Birgitte Lesanner, a Greenpeace campaign manager of Greenpeace Denmark, claimed that any type of endeavours to encourage people to support the campaign, is only motivated by the fact that people 'WANT' to take action, she also admitted that multiple of these tactics can be seen as a form "brand bashing" (Reestorff, 2015). The NGO internally uses the terminology of brand bashing relating to the concept of culture jamming (Reestorff, 2015; Warner, 2007), which was also supported by literature that has shown that by all means there are more selfish purposes (maintaining reputation, satisfying stakeholders, pleasing donors for funding) behind campaign activities as well (Baur & Palazzo, 2011; Fassin, 2009; Mercer, 2002).

As shown in the literature review section of this paper, NGOs gain and keep their legitimisation through continuous activism achievements, which then needs to be acknowledged by society (Baur & Palazzo, 2011; Burchell & Cook, 2013; Fassin, 2009). Successful results further ensure regular donations, which is necessary to fund ensuing campaign activities and NGO operations. Therefore, every campaign is not only connected to a lot of previous research effort, but also carries a relevant amount of success pressure. Moreover, all of the three Greenpeace cases demonstrate the dilemma of NGO's reputational trap. In its mission statement, Greenpeace purely focused on activities to make the world a better place; on the other hand, however, they must at the same time satisfy their own stakeholders and donors.

4.1.2.2 Demand

The demand in a brand hostage is an important element of the framework, as without a demand, there would be no brand hostage or at least no way to resolve it. The hostage taker's demand impacts the length of the brand hostage, the depth of reputational damage on the hostage's brand and the width, meaning how broad the topic is spread in media, thus the general public.

Greenpeace usually communicates their concerns directly to the company in a meeting or via an investigation report, before launching a targeted media campaign. However, compared to other NGOs like WWF, they keep the number of meetings very limited as their experience have shown that publicly forcing a corporate behaviour or policy change is more effective (Reestorff, 2015). This strategy has been adopted prosperously in the LEGO case, as LEGO did not recognise their misconduct of having a partnership with Shell, Greenpeace launched their video *Everything is NOT awesome*, publicly pillorying LEGO for their Shell branded brick sets. In their communication, Greenpeace formulated their demand clearly, "to end the partnership with Shell" (Vaughan, 2014, n.p.). Nevertheless, looking closer at Greenpeace's goals, it becomes clear that the overarching goal is a different one from the campaign demands.

We found that the actual or intended target was Shell. In the LEGO campaign, Greenpeace referred to Shell's arctic oil drilling attempts in the past, which did not happen without critical incidents. The extreme conditions in the Arctic environment makes offshore drilling between the icebergs a risky venture, potentially endangering the unique landscape and wildlife there (Booth, 2014). As mentioned in the case description, Shell has had major trouble with their offshore oil rigs in the Arctic climate before for example the Kulluk vessel in 2012. In Greenpeace's point of view, it seemed unacceptable that a climate-harming company like Shell engaged in a co-promotion contract with LEGO, whose policies claim to tackle climate change, increase the use of renewable energy, and aim to make the "planet a better place for our children" (Duff, 2014). The NGO argued that Shell used the beloved LEGO brand as a social license to drill (Reestorff, 2015) and alleged:

> by backing an Arctic oil giant like Shell, LEGO has let itself down. Shells ethos is totally at odds with LEGOs own positive nature and the high standards the company sets for itself (Duff, 2014, n.p.).

Here again, evidence for the reputational trap of NGOs is displayed. Greenpeace on the one hand, urgently demanded an immediate change from LEGO to drop the partnership with Shell, and used social media channels and its vast network to garner attention and help achieve its campaign demands. A public display of success, such as the LEGO case, undoubtedly satisfied their donors' and stakeholders' expectations. On the other hand, their overarching goal of stopping Shell from drilling oil in the Arctic cannot be realised within such short time span. Nevertheless, winning the battle against LEGO would be a step towards stopping Shell, and if the NGO becomes successful in this. It would be another campaign success which would positively impact their reputation, hence strengthen their position as social watchdogs and special stakeholders. In the end, by exploiting the reputational risk of a rather uninvolved brand (LEGO), Greenpeace accomplished a double effect: the short-term achievements pleased their own stakeholders, but at the same time they moved one step closer to their fundamental goal, thereby bolstered their position as stakeholders towards corporations.

4.1.2.3 Hostage

When applying the conceptual framework to the case, we identified the corporate brand of LEGO as the hostage. Unlike other companies which adopt an umbrella approach with multiple product brands, all the services and products of the company bears the same corporate name LEGO. Hence, any reputational attack aimed at any products or services of LEGO would impact the corporate brand overall. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the corporation's behaviour to a hostage situation is influenced by the corporation's desire of meeting stakeholders' expectations. This is important due to a corporation's goal of protecting and maintaining their corporate reputation, as well as the growing importance of CSR initiatives among stakeholders (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004; Coombs & Holladay 2012; Fombrun, 2005).

Over the past decade, LEGO has become one of the most recognised brands in the world, overtaking brands such as Ferrari in rankings (Brand Finance, 2015). This has manifested itself in the creation and popularity of the LEGO MOVIE, where the songs, characters, themes, and narrative are associated to the company, as well as the company being associated to the movie (Brand Finance, 2015). According to LEGO (2017), the LEGO brand is more than a simple family logo. It represents the expectations of stakeholders towards its products and services, and the accountability that the LEGO group feels toward the world around it. The brand values of LEGO consist of imagination, creativity, fun, learning, caring, and quality. Thus, it highlights the importance for LEGO to meet its stakeholder expectations while also playing an important role in society.

When Greenpeace announced its new campaign against LEGO, Greenpeace initiated the campaign by accusing LEGO of putting sales above its commitment to the environment and children's future. Greenpeace staged a protest at LEGOLAND amusement park in England, which was followed by several mini-protest and anti-LEGO communication on social media. LEGO responded with its first public statement after the initial attack by Greenpeace's campaign:

> We are determined to leave a positive impact on society and the planet that children will inherit. [...] We welcome and are inspired by all relevant input we receive from fans, children, parents, NGOs and other stakeholders. They have high expectations to the way we operate. So do we.
>
> The Greenpeace campaign focuses on how Shell operates in a specific part of the world. We firmly believe that this matter must be handled between Shell and Greenpeace. We are saddened when the LEGO brand is used as a tool in any dispute between organisations.
>
> We expect that Shell lives up to their responsibilities wherever they operate and take appropriate action to any potential claims should this not be the case. I would like to clarify that we intend to live up to the long term contract with Shell, which we entered into in 2011. [...]
>
> Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, President and Chief Executive Officer of the LEGO Group (LEGO, 2014a, n.p.)

It seems clear that LEGO was aware of meeting expectations of stakeholders as well as fulfilling their role in society, although LEGO includes stakeholders such as customers, children, fans, Shell, and even Greenpeace for that matter. LEGO was convinced that the problem between Greenpeace and its partner Shell did not concern them; accordingly, LEGO decided not to fulfil the demands of Greenpeace and remain silent about the campaign. Nevertheless, Greenpeace escalated their campaign and released the infamous *Everything is NOT awesome* video, which went viral. After continuous pressure from Greenpeace and its supporters, LEGO succumbed to the pressure and announced it would end its partnership with Shell, after the expiration of their current contract.

> [...] The LEGO brand, and everyone who enjoys creative play, should never have become part of Greenpeace's dispute with Shell.
>
> Our stakeholders have high expectations to the way we operate. So do we. We do not agree with the tactics used by Greenpeace that may have created misunderstandings among our stakeholders about the way we operate; and we want to ensure that our attention is not diverted from our commitment to delivering creative and inspiring play experiences.
>
> The long-term co-promotion contract we entered with Shell in 2011 delivers on the objective of bringing LEGO bricks into the hands of many children, and we will honour it – as we would with any contract we enter.
>
> We continuously consider many different ways of how to deliver on our promise of bringing creative play to more children. We want to clarify that as things currently stand we will not renew the co-promotion contract with Shell when the present contract ends.

> We do not want to be part of Greenpeace's campaign and we will not comment any further on the campaign. [...]
>
> Jørgen Vig Knudstorp, President and Chief Executive Officer of the LEGO Group (LEGO, 2014b, n.p.)

It can be argued that LEGO's decision to end the partnership was due to the threat the Greenpeace campaign posed to their corporate reputation. LEGO did not react much after the first public statement, which may be due to LEGO not perceiving the campaign as an immediate threat to its reputation, as they stated the Arctic oil drilling was a not an issue which concerned them. However, since the release of the *Everything is NOT awesome* video went viral, the resulting pressure on LEGO from Greenpeace, and conceivably their own stakeholders, forced LEGO to act. As begrudgingly acknowledged by LEGO themselves, Greenpeace's campaign may have created confusion and misunderstandings among their stakeholders about the way they operated (LEGO, 2013a, 2013b, 2014b). Indeed, it can be argued that Greenpeace's campaign was successful in affecting the perceptions of LEGO's stakeholders which created a mismatch between LEGO's brand values and the partnership with Shell. LEGO's response to the Greenpeace campaign can be akin to that of a "Diminish Crisis Response Strategy" (Coombs, 2007). In their two public statements, LEGO continuously attempted to diminish its responsibility in the crisis by highlighting the dispute was between Greenpeace and Shell. The goal of the strategy was pursued in order to maintain a positive stakeholder perception. However, due to the result of the case, Greenpeace succeeded in convincing LEGO's stakeholders to adopt their frame of LEGO being responsible and going against their own brand values. This was enabled through the effective campaigning in new media and the viral video.

Consequently, the defeat in convincing stakeholders forced LEGO to meet the demands of Greenpeace, in order to reduce the reputational damage inflicted and protect their corporate reputation. We can, therefore, establish a clear link between how a corporation behaves during a brand hostage (crisis), the corporation's reputation and stakeholder perception. Stakeholder perception plays a key role especially in LEGO's behaviour to whether to meet the demand or not. It can be argued that if LEGO had been successful in convincing its stakeholders of its frame, of not being accountable for the crisis, LEGO might have been in a stronger negotiating position when dealing with Greenpeace. In addition, it is important to highlight that the battle between Greenpeace and LEGO appeared to unfold on a reputational level, as both parties had a reputation to maintain towards their stakeholders. It seems that the deciding factor to who wins the battle, is who manages to convince the involved stakeholders of their frame, as the defeated party would be the recipient of reputational damage.

Furthermore, in terms of CSR, it can also be noted that since LEGO adopted CSR-like statements in its brand values, proclaimed to be an ethical company for years, and released yearly responsibility reports concerning CSR topics (LEGO, 2013b). Arguably, if CSR type of values or policies are adopted by a corporation, and an NGO can convince or present evidence which convinces stakeholders of a breach in these values, this may increase the reputational threat and damage the crisis may inflict upon the corporation. This could have been the case of LEGO, as they might had determined that this was an unwinnable battle, once Greenpeace managed to convince stakeholders of their frame. Thus, resulting in LEGO meeting the demands as an attempt to reduce any reputational damage inflicted.

4.1.2.4 Resolution

As already evident in the case of LEGO, the brand hostage reached a resolution by LEGO giving in to demands of Greenpeace. It is clear from the case that this decision was made rather unwillingly by LEGO. Their initial response was to criticise the tactics used by Greenpeace. In addition, LEGO attempted to communicate their innocence by proclaiming the dispute was between Greenpeace and Shell. However, this response did not satisfy the NGO and they escalated the campaign against LEGO resulting in the viral video. The following pressure forced LEGO's hand in meeting the demands of Greenpeace, while LEGO acknowledged that Greenpeace's campaign might have succeeded in confusing its stakeholders.

Although this case ended in a resolution when LEGO met the demands of Greenpeace, LEGO was less than impressed with Greenpeace's "guerrilla tactics", and throughout the campaign highlighted its innocence in the crisis. Arguably, Greenpeace's campaigning and the resulting pressure from LEGO's stakeholders played a key role in forcing LEGO's hand. It is perhaps also for this very reason that LEGO did not engage in any partnership with Greenpeace afterwards, as they may have felt unfairly treated by Greenpeace. It is worth mentioning that prior to this case, LEGO was the first company which complied with Greenpeace demands during the deforestation campaign, which featured several major corporations such as Mattel, Disney and Hasbro (Greenpeace, 2011a). During this event, LEGO was not the primary focus but Mattel was. Arguably, not being "put to the sword" by Greenpeace encouraged LEGO promptly meet the demands of Greenpeace, which in this case did not happen.

Furthermore, although the brand hostage goal was to get LEGO to end its contract with Shell, the ultimate goal of Greenpeace was to prevent Shell from drilling in the Arctic. LEGO was in way "a means to an end" in hurting Shell. Undoubtedly, portraying LEGO's linkage to Shell in such a negative campaign hurt not only the reputation of LEGO, but also Shell's, as Greenpeace during the whole campaign have termed Shell as "the bad guys". We are, therefore, seeing a "bigger picture goal" at play, where LEGO is seen as a stepping stone towards stopping Shell.

Therefore, it is important to pay attention to Shell as so-called third party and intended target of the Greenpeace campaign. As during the ongoing campaign, a Shell spokesperson commented on the partnership between LEGO and Shell, calling the relationship between LEGO and Shell "successful and productive". Even though the oil giant, just as LEGO, did not comment on the discussions about the renewal during the campaign, later Shell commented on the campaign:

> We respect the right of individuals and organisations to engage in a free and frank exchange of views about meeting the world's growing needs. Recognising the right of individuals to express their point of view, we only ask they do so in a manner that is lawful and does not place their safety or the safety of others at risk (Vaughan, 2014, n.p.).

However, it is of even bigger interest to emphasise the Arctic oil drilling activities of Shell post-campaign. After Shell had submitted their further spilling plans to the US government in Autumn 2014 (Greenpeace, 2014b), they announced one year later, that regardless of them spending $7 billion to explore drilling opportunities, Shell ceased all offshore exploration in the Arctic (Barrett, 2015). Obviously, it must be admitted it would that this decision did not solely fall back on Greenpeace's LEGO campaign; but much more on factors (mistaken geology, unstable oil prices expectations, regulatory restrictions, and consolidated environmental pressure) that influenced Shell in their decision (Barrett, 2015). Nevertheless, Shell has not committed to entirely stop any oil drilling, thus the battle between Greenpeace and Shell will most likely continue. Concluding, one can, however, clearly identify the reputational battle between the three corporations (Greenpeace, LEGO and Shell), as they all engage with each other on a reputational level, with the aims of convincing stakeholders of their frames, or to maintain and protect their respective reputations.

4.2 Mattel

In line with the aim of the study, we will now tackle another highly-publicised case between Mattel and Greenpeace. What was unique about this case is that Greenpeace targeted Barbie, a product brand which was owned by Mattel, compared to the corporate brand found in the LEGO case.

4.2.1 Background

In 2003, Indonesia's rainforest was rapidly disappearing. The rate of its disappearance was considerably higher than any other forests on the globe. Hundreds and thousands of acres of forest were burning as palm oil companies cleared the way for vast mono-crop plantations, displacing local people and destroying the habitats of the Sumatran tigers and orangutans. At the end of 2002, Greenpeace launched a major investigation aided by forest communities and individuals within Indonesia's Forestry Ministry, which uncovered a major scale of illegal loggings of the Indonesian rainforest (Greenpeace, 2013a).

Figure 4.4 Exemplary communication material from Greenpeace's Mattel campaign (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2011; Ken Dumps Barbie: Latest Greenpeace Action.,2011)

According to Greenpeace (2013a), one of the focus areas for the NGO was the pulp and paper sector, which was dominated by Asia Pulp & Paper (APP) a subsidiary of the Sinar Mas group. Greenpeace report found evidence that APP was pulping Indonesia's rainforests including endangered tree species which were protected under international law. Furthermore, the report revealed that major international corporations such as Mattel, Hasbro, Disney and LEGO were connected to APP, as their cheap toy packaging contained mixed tropical hardwood and fibres from the Indonesian rainforest trees.

June, 2011 – Greenpeace launched a media campaign against the toy companies where the primary target was Mattel and their product brand "Barbie". The goal according to Greenpeace was "cleaning up the trade" by cancelling contracts with companies engaged in deforestation and peatland degradation. Greenpeace, therefore, demanded Mattel to review its supply chains by committing to removing pulp products that come from deforestation. Greenpeace created a micro-site including a parody video which was released on Youtube featuring Ken, Barbie's boyfriend, hearing about the rainforest deforestation caused by Barbie. The video was designed to attack Mattel's choice of packaging its products and the video was translated in 18 languages, distributed through social media, and Greenpeace's global network (Greenpeace, 2013a).

Furthermore, Greenpeace activists were dressed as Ken while abseiling off the side of Mattel's headquarters in Los Angeles, in order to set up a massive poster of Ken expressing that he dumped Barbie as part of their media campaign against the company. The NGO also utilised Twitter by creating a spoof @ken_talks account to further raise awareness of the campaign, which resulted in a fan made @Barbie handle. The interaction between the two accounts gained more than 10.000 followers during this period (Sullivan, 2012).

June 9, 2011 – Mattel announced they would investigate the sources of its packaging material following the Greenpeace campaign. Greenpeace applauded the move but said Mattel needs to do more to ensure its products do not contribute to the deforestation of the Indonesian rainforest.

> 'It's good that Mattel has realized it has a major deforestation problem, but it's still missing a comprehensive policy to deal with this issue,' said Greenpeace Senior Forest Campaigner Rolf Skar. 'The world's biggest toy company seems to be saying it isn't to blame for the actions of its suppliers. Greenpeace believes Mattel should take responsibility for the environmental impact of its products by removing APP and Sinar Mas from its supply chain, as well as giving clear timelines about when this will happen.' (Butler, 2011, n.p.).

In the meantime, APP supported Mattel's actions:

> We very much applaud Mattel for not succumbing to pressure from environmental groups like Greenpeace, but instead choosing to conduct their own investigation into these baseless allegations. We are confident Mattel's investigation will show that our packaging materials are more than 95% recycled paper sourced from around the world.

Ian Lifshitz, sustainability manager for APP's American operations. (Los Angeles Times, 2011b, n.p.)

June 10, 2011 – The campaign gained so much transaction that Mattel had to temporarily close down their Facebook page, due to the increasing amount of negative comments received over the issue. At this point, Mattel remained silent while Greenpeace kept slowly escalating the campaign with a spoof Ken, calling the Mattel headquarters and ongoing posters displayed in public places, such as bus shelters in London (Greenpeace, 2013a).

October, 2011 – After five months of campaigning by Greenpeace, Mattel announced a new global policy to remove suppliers being engaged in rainforest deforestation out of its supply chain (Mattel, 2011; Greenpeace, 2013a).

February 5, 2013 – 130+ companies cancelled their contracts with Sinar Mas group subsidiary Asian Pulp & Paper (APP). APP announced their new forest conservation policy, and immediately after the announcement, Greenpeace decided to suspend all active campaigning against APP (Greenpeace, 2013a; Greenpeace, 2013b)

4.2.2 Framework Application

Following the conceptual framework will be applied to the Mattel case. With the application of another real-life case example, we expect to conduct more insights regarding necessary changes within the conceptual framework. Brand hostages might be constructed differently than presented in literature. As previously discussed, the role of Greenpeace as a hostage taker is examined only in the LEGO case, as it can be assumed that motivational and influencing factors remain similar if not the same. Therefore, the Mattel analysis will begin with the evaluation of the demand.

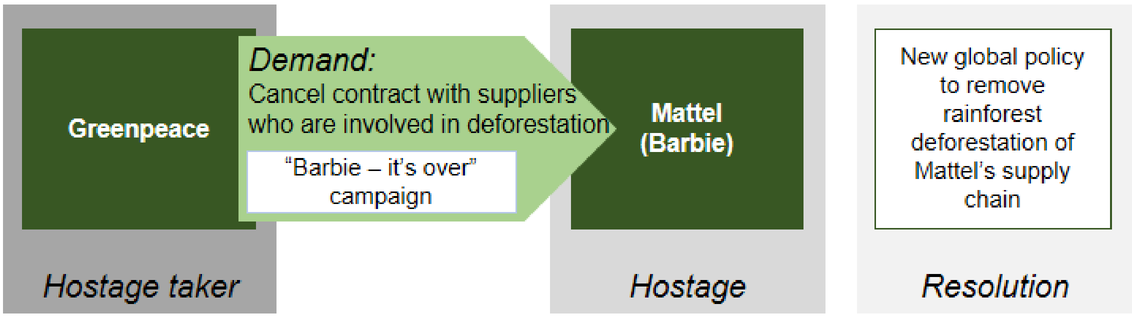

Figure 4.5 Application of conceptual framework to Mattel case

4.2.2.1 Demand

In *figure 4.5* the whole conceptual framework applied to the Mattel campaign is displayed. Similarly, to the LEGO case, Greenpeace engaged in a communicative manner when first approaching the corporation. In this case, we can see this take form as the initial deforestation report by Greenpeace, which linked APP to several major companies including Mattel. The actual target of Greenpeace was APP, the Sinar Mas subsidiary, which was linked to being a major culprit in the deforestation of Indonesian rainforests. However, as stated in Greenpeace's Down to Zero report, consumer companies such as Barbie were key to solving the deforestations crisis, as few people had heard of the pulp, paper and palm oil producers, while everyone knew about KitKat, KFC and Barbie (Greenpeace, 2013a).

After the initial report on the deforestation of the Indonesian rainforest was published by Greenpeace, which linked Mattel and several other companies to APP. Mattel responded that they would look into the matter internally. However, the response did not satisfy the NGO and kickstarted them into action. Greenpeace could not afford to remain silent, as they had a reputation to maintain to its stakeholders. Greenpeace therefore engaged in a confrontational engagement mode, by launching the infamous Barbie campaign, which took Barbie, the product brand of Mattel, as a brand hostage. The aim was to demand Mattel to put anti-deforestation policies in place and thereby hurt APP's business relationship with Mattel. There are, therefore, signs of Greenpeace being in a reputational trap as well in this case. Furthermore, it is evident from the demand and reasoning from the Down to Zero report that, although consumer companies such as Mattel were key in solving the crisis, the company was used as a means to an end to achieve a larger goal. The final goal was not just to end the cooperation between Mattel and APP, but to a larger extent, to cancel all relationships between APP and other companies. As the result would help Greenpeace end the deforestations crisis in Indonesia,

As mentioned before, the way of communication and associated material can influence a campaign's success; specifically, social media communication has been known to be effective. In the countless of posters, ads, and viral video, Greenpeace used a combination of humour and satire to target the product brand of Barbie, which was owned by Mattel. Although the campaign primarily targeted the Barbie brand, damaging its reputation, it is, however, arguable that the reputational damage also transferred to the corporate reputation of Mattel, as the communication materials such as press releases and public statements, were specifically referring to Mattel. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that the reputational damage inflicted on Mattel's biggest product brand, had a spillover effect on the corporate reputation of Mattel, or at least presents a considerable reputational threat. Which explains why Mattel, which were under pressure from Greenpeace and its stakeholders, was forced to give in to the campaign demands.

The communication techniques involving satire and humour used by Greenpeace, share a substantial likeness to the so called subvertisements used in culture jamming (Warner, 2007), and are arguably applied, to create mistrust between Mattel´s stakeholders and the corporation. It is, however, evident retrospectively that Greenpeace managed to convince enough stakeholders of their perspective or frame on the matter. As discussed previously in literature and the LEGO case, it is conceivable that Greenpeace managed to create a convincing and credible frame, by sufficiently damaging the credibility of Mattel via the attacks on the Barbie brand. Thus, any crisis response made by Mattel was deemed less credible and less convincing, enabling Greenpeace to convince a vast number of stakeholders of their frame (Coombs & Holladay, 2002).

4.2.2.2 Hostage

The hostage in this case can be identified as the “Barbie” brand, which is a product brand of Mattel, Inc. and was launched in March 1959. Ruth Handler, the co-founder of Mattel, is credited with the creation of the famous doll and Barbie has since been used as the figurehead brand of Mattel dolls and accessories. Mattel has sold over a billion Barbie dolls making it the largest and most profitable line for the company, although the doll saw a sharp decline in sales since 2014 (Ziobro, 2016).

Barbie also played a significant role in defining social values by conveying characteristics of female independence. The brand’s mission statement is based on a quote from Barbie Creator Ruth Handler saying: “My whole philosophy of Barbie was that, through the doll, the little girl could be anything she wanted to be. Barbie always represented the fact that a woman has choices.” (Barbie, 2017, n.p.). Therefore, a fundamental value for Barbie is to inspire girls everywhere to be anything they want to be. Furthermore, the Barbie brand has continued to position itself as a pioneer when it comes to addressing social perception surrounding females. In its latest attempt to brand themselves as well as taking a social stance, Barbie revamped the dolls to include different body types such as tall, petite and curvy. Furthermore, Barbie dolls now come in a variety of skin tones, hairstyles, and eye colours (Brand Channel, 2016). According to Jim Lesser, CEO of BBDO, a world-renowned advertising agency, Barbie’s 50-year accomplishment would not have been possible if Barbie had not received the backing of culture. During its 50-year reign, Barbie was considered an iconic brand in many countries, in some it even became part of the culture (Brand Channel, 2016).

During Greenpeace’s deforestation campaign, the NGO published a report highlighting links between Mattel and APP. The main goal of Greenpeace was to cancel any contracts between APP and its customers (Greenpeace, 2017b). With Mattel being the largest global toy manufacturer in the world and Barbie one of the most well-known and culturally integrated brands in the world, Greenpeace had found their ideal target and executed their plan in achieving their goal. The Greenpeace campaign did not target the inherent values behind the Barbie brand. However, it utilised Barbie’s global appeal to raise awareness on the deforestation issue, by tarnishing the reputation of Barbie with a series of protests, anti-brand materials and the infamous video of Ken breaking up with Barbie. Therefore, the campaign itself represented a considerable reputational threat on one of Mattel’s biggest and most important product brands. Mattel responded with a statement:

> We purchase packaging materials from a variety of suppliers and it is not the normal course of business to dictate where suppliers source materials. That said, we have directed our packaging suppliers to stop sourcing pulp from Sinar Mas/APP as we investigate the deforestation allegations. Additionally, we have asked our packaging suppliers to clarify how they are addressing the broader issue in their own supply chains (Butler, 2011, n.p.).

Although Greenpeace applauded the move, they were not satisfied and demanded more effort from Mattel. According to Butler (2011), Greenpeace claimed that Mattel was deflecting blame and needed to take responsibility. We find that Mattel’s response relates to Coombs’ (2007) SCCT framework, in that the organisation attempts to diminish its responsibility by deflecting it towards suppliers by stating “[...] it is not the normal course of business to dictate where suppliers source materials" (Butler, 2011, n.p.). Therefore, it can be argued that Mattel was following a Diminish Crisis Response Strategy with an Excuse Tactic according to the SCCT framework. As with any response strategy, the goal is to reduce or repair the negative effects of the crisis on an organisation's reputation. Arguably, the Barbie brand's reputation took a hit during the campaign, although to what extent is beyond this case study. Nevertheless, it is clear that Mattel responded in a manner to protect its corporate reputation, which supports the brand hostage framework's notion of corporate reputation influencing the behaviour of the hostage. Speaking to Los Angeles Times, Mattel issued a statement during the opening days of the Greenpeace campaign:

> Playing responsibly has long been an important part of Mattel's business practices. We have been in communication with Greenpeace on a variety of paper sourcing issues. We are surprised and disappointed that they have taken this inflammatory approach. We will continue to assess our paper sourcing and packaging improvements as we move forward (Los Angeles Times, 2011a, n.p.).

Although the Barbie brand does not have any environmental policies in place, Mattel does have their "playing responsibly" slogan in their CSR policies section (Mattel, 2017), together with a list of CSR goals which they have either reached, or are in progress in reaching. Additionally, the company produces progress reports for each of their environmental goals. Mattel also highlights its engagement with local foundations and charities such as Born This Way Foundation and the Adventure Project. Overall it is evident that Mattel is a CSR aware organisation and recognises the importance of fulfilling such policies in the eye of its stakeholders. When Mattel was accused of breaching its own policies and values, the overall negative impact on stakeholder perception came as no surprise. Pressure not only from Greenpeace but Mattel's own stakeholders undoubtedly played a significant role in Mattel's decision in complying with the demands of Greenpeace. Therefore, it is of increasing importance for corporations, to adopt and maintain their CSR policies in today's business environment. Failure to do so will be punished by NGOs acting as social watchdogs who have considerable influence on media and public perception, such as the case of Greenpeace.

4.2.2.3 Resolution

Five months after Greenpeace initiated their campaign against Mattel by taking the Barbie brand as hostage, Mattel announced they would meet the demands of Greenpeace. Mattel directed their printers not to contract with controversial sources, including APP.

Greenpeace carefully created a creative and provoking campaign which took one of the best-known and loved brand as hostage. Although on the surface level, Greenpeace demanded an implementation of policy rules which was against rainforest deforestation, the ultimate goal was to stop the deforestation of the Indonesian rainforest by cancelling all the contracts between companies and APP. Not only was this campaign about creating awareness of the rainforest situation, but it was also a means to cause reputational damage on APP and a profound financial loss, which losing a customer of Mattel's magnitude would surely inflict. There is, therefore, a more fundamental goal at play, when Greenpeace employs a brand hostage strategy. Mattel was just a means to an end for Greenpeace; the bigger picture was to stop the deforestation of the rainforest by harming one of the major culprits behind it.

Furthermore, as noted in Greenpeace's report, there were several major companies that were connected to APP (Greenpeace, 2013a). Companies such as Hasbro, Lego and Disney where seemingly overlooked by Greenpeace. One begs to question: what is a good brand hostage target? What characteristics should such a hostage possess? In this case, Greenpeace chose Mattel, the largest toy company in the world, and Barbie an iconic brand, one of the best-known and loved brands of all time. Thus, it suggests there is a systematic approach to choosing a brand hostage target by Greenpeace.

Finally, it is of interest to highlight what happened to APP after the Mattel campaign. Greenpeace attributes the majority of the success to effective campaigning by convincing the 130+ companies (including Mattel) to cancel their contracts with APP. We can, therefore, see evidence in how Greenpeace uses a brand hostage as a method to achieve bigger objectives. Furthermore, the case featured a very prominent third party in the form of APP that also during the course of the Mattel campaign made comments. When Mattel announced their intentions to conduct their own investigation of the deforestation allegations, APP responded by applauding Mattel's response and not giving in from the pressure of Greenpeace. This type of response by APP is clearly an attempt to maintain their reputation and relationship with Mattel, as APP during the whole deforestation campaign has come under immense public criticism (Greenpeace, 2013a). There are, therefore, clears signs of an ongoing reputational battle between the three parties and not only between the hostage taker and hostage.

4.3 Kimberly-Clark

In order to further investigate the phenomenon of brand hostage, we proceed with a case involving Kimberly-Clark, which provides another example of a brand hostage. Several reasons supported the choice of this campaign as a suitable illustration of a brand attack of this kind. First of all, likewise the LEGO and the Mattel case, also the Kimberly-Clark campaign enables us to reflectively examine the case. Secondly, due to its length of almost five years it encloses various sensational protest activities, which received substantial media attention. There is therefore a large amount of secondary data available such as blog posts, articles and press releases for the case analysis. After the final agreement and the resolution, Greenpeace and Kimberly-Clark unexpectedly continued to collaborate in the form of a partnership, showcasing an additional possibility what impact a brand hostage could have.

4.3.1 Background

The American multinational corporation Kimberly-Clark produces primarily paper-based consumer products for personal care. Kimberly-Clark's brand architecture includes several well-known product brands including Kleenex, Huggies, Cottonelle and Scott, which are sold in more than 175 countries worldwide (Kimberly-Clark, 2017). Already back in 2003 Kimberly-Clark approached an environmentally-friendly business behaviour, set-up own sustainable forestry policies and aimed for a growing use of renewable resource, according to their sustainability report 2003 (Kimberly-Clark, 2004).

Even though, Kimberly-Clark claimed to be an "environmental leader" and aim for a sustainable forestry business, Greenpeace uncovered that less than 19% of the pulp used for the production of Kimberly-Clark's disposable tissue products, such as paper towels, napkins or toilet paper, derived from recycled sources (Greenpeace, 2005). Furthermore, Greenpeace found evidence, that the rest of the pulp is inter alia extracted from intact woodland in the Canadian Boreal. To Greenpeace this is particularly critical, because in the Canadian Boreal forest grow trees that are up to 180 years old and further, provides habitat to rare animal species such as grizzly and black bears, wolves, caribous, and bald eagles.

To inhibit these logging activities in the Boreal forest, Greenpeace launched a campaign which demanded several behavioural changes of the corporation regarding their pulp supply (switching from alleged ecological fibre suppliers like the Sustainable Forestry Initiative to providers whose activities are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council) and their production processes (noticeable increase of recycled fibre proportion for all tissue items and banning chlorine dioxide for the bleaching procedure). Consumers were asked to replace any Kimberly-Clark products by eco-friendly alternatives and sign the petition against clear cutting ancient forests (Greenpeace, 2005). It was not until in 2004 that Greenpeace Canada inaugurated their Kleercut campaign against Kimberly-Clark which lasted for five years.

November, 2004 – Greenpeace began their Kleercut campaign against Kimberly-Clark. The wordplay "Kleercut" referred to one of Kimberly-Clark's leading brands Kleenex and clearcutting forests, which is a form of deforestation where only few if any trees remain, impacting the surrounding wildlife (Greenpeace, 2005; Lehmann & Blount, 2013). During the campaign start, Greenpeace activists obstructed an American production plant and infiltrated a stockholder's meeting at Kimberly-Clark headquarters in Dallas. The protest included the distribution of small brochures titling "Kimberly Clark: Investing in Forest Destruction," and a scene set up that Greenpeace described as a "Forest Crime Scene" outside of Kimberly-Clark's headquarters (Geary, 2009; Greenpeace, 2011b).

April, 2005 – Greenpeace disturbed Kimberly-Clark's annual shareholder meeting by eye-catchingly presenting the three "Kleenex box" trucks, which were built and designed by some activists in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver (Lehmann & Blount, 2013). Additionally, they again use satirical brochures of Greenpeace's socially responsible investment report with the title: "Kimberly-Clark: Investing in Social Destruction" (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

November 3, 2005 – The "Boreal Day of Action", with 350 events being held in 200 cities across the US and Canada, was the first peak of the activism campaign. These actions caught global attention of the media (Greenpeace, 2011b).

November 10, 2005 – Greenpeace launched a controversial ad that read: "How to Destroy the Boreal, North America's Largest Ancient Forest, in 3 Easy Steps: 1. Take out a Kleenex; 2. Put it to your nose; 3. Blow". Similar ads followed consecutively throughout the next months in different print media (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

March, 2006 – At the annual Tissue World convention, with attendees like Procter & Gamble, volunteers and activists continued to make themselves visible by pulling up a banner that read: "Kimberly-Clark: Wiping Away Ancient Forests". Furthermore, they asked delegates to participate in the "Kleercut Challenge", which was composed of only two questions: "1) Can you tell which tissue is made of destroyed forests and which is made from recycled paper? 2) Did you know that Kleenex is made from old-growth trees from the Boreal forest?" (Lehmann & Blount, 2013, n.p.).

March, 2006 – Greenpeace started its international online business initiative called "Forest Friendly 500" with the objective to compile 500 companies worldwide, who would commit themselves to stop buying Kimberly-Clark products. The NGO hoped to enhance the pressure on Kimberly-Clark. Within two weeks they had outperformed the 500-pledge goal and until August 650 businesses had joined (Lehmann & Blount, 2013). Greenpeace also approached college students to participate. They were given starter kits and information packages containing various examples how to successfully petition decision-makers and people of their respective schools to boycott any Kimberly-Clark products. College student groups from renowned universities such as Rice University, University of California-Berkeley, and Harvard University participated (Greenpeace, 2008b; Lehmann & Blount, 2013). However, since Kimberly-Clark felt in the right regarding their business activities, they kept refusing to fulfil the demands, but instead reciprocated with defensive arguments (Lehmann & Blount, 2013). As a consequence, the Greenpeace environmentalists continued their battle to further increase the pressure on Kimberly-Clark (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

July, 2006 – The investigations of the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC), which happened on Greenpeace's request, uncovered that Kimberly-Clark contrary their declaration, had been utilising wood pulp from the coastal temperate rainforests of British Columbia since 1998 (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

March, 2007 – One day after being disturbed during a commercial shooting at the Times Square in New York by a Kleercut activist, Kimberly-Clark published a new procurement policy. Greenpeace's immediate blackguarding of the new policy lead to a downtime in the negotiations between both parties (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

September, 2007 – Greenpeace raised the campaign activities to the next level by first successfully blocking a freighter filled with Boreal forest pulp and then, approaching potential investors by warning them of Kimberly-Clark with banners and spoofed newsletters (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

October, 2007 – Greenpeace manipulated Thomas Falk's (Kimberly-Clark's CEO) keynote presentation, adding slides which demonstrated Kimberly-Clark's function in the destruction of the Boreal forest (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

December, 2007 – Kimberly-Clark launched a $100 million ad blitz campaign for its brand Cottonelle hiring a "dog-alike-looking" bus, which promoted "be kind to your behind", and touring through the US and Canada for several months (Skar, 2008). Greenpeace activists, who had focused their activities on Kleenex until then, disturbed the Cottonelle campaign from day one, calling out to "Leave Cottonelle behind". Furthermore, the environmentalists challenged Cottonelle representatives by asking about their destruction operations in the ancient Boreal forest and unfolded "educational" banners in front of the dog-bus to educate people about the linkage between Cottonelle and ancient forest destruction (Skar, 2008).

Figure 4.6 Exemplary communication material Kimberly-Clark campaign: Attacking the Cottonelle brand (flickr.com, 2008; Greenpeace, 2008a)

March, 2008 – New York's famous "Naked Cowboy" called to "Leave Cottonelle Behind" (Greenpeace, 2008a; Skar, 2008). In Canada, the police arrested four Greenpeace supporters during their attempt to install a massive banner against the destruction of the Boreal forest on Toronto's Eaton Center (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

August, 2008 – Greenpeace published the short animated ironic film "WALL-E+Kleenex = IRON-E" as a reaction to Kimberly-Clark's Pixar's Wall-E co-promoted Kleenex boxes (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

April, 2009 – Two videos were released by Greenpeace with the educational background "What's in your box of Kleenex?" and the popular spoof "Feels Good to Feel" as the kick off for the promotional "Kleenex Comes with More than a Feeling" campaign (Lehmann & Blount, 2013).

August 5, 2009 – Greenpeace and the Kimberly-Clark corporation announced an agreement in their dispute enduring for almost five consecutive years. In the contract, Kimberly-Clark committed to procure 100% of the wood fibre needed for their products from environmentally responsible sources. Moreover, by 2011, Kimberly-Clark would discard any not FSC-certified fibre from the North American Boreal Forest, as well as guarantee a minimum of 40% of their fibre coming from North America is either recycled or FSC-certified which is equivalent to a 71% growth compared to the levels in 2007 (Greenpeace, 2009). The new fibre procurement policy, which was presented during a joint news conference in Washington DC, marked the termination of the campaigning and simultaneously the start of a new partnership.

Besides providing an exceptional example for a brand hostage situation in which a leading product brand of an international company is in the centre of attacking, the Kleercut case further showcases how the constellation between both parties can move from opponents to partners, thus result in an ongoing commitment contract.

4.3.2 Framework Application

Hereinafter, the conceptual framework will be applied to the Kimberly-Clark case and evaluated along the framework. With the third Greenpeace campaign example, we aim to expand the present findings concerning differences between literature and real-life cases. As before, the discussion about Greenpeace in their role as a hostage taker will be neglected, due to the assumption of similar motivational and influencing factors throughout all campaigns. Therefore, the frame application and subsequent analysis of the Kimberly-Clark case will start with the examination of the demand element.

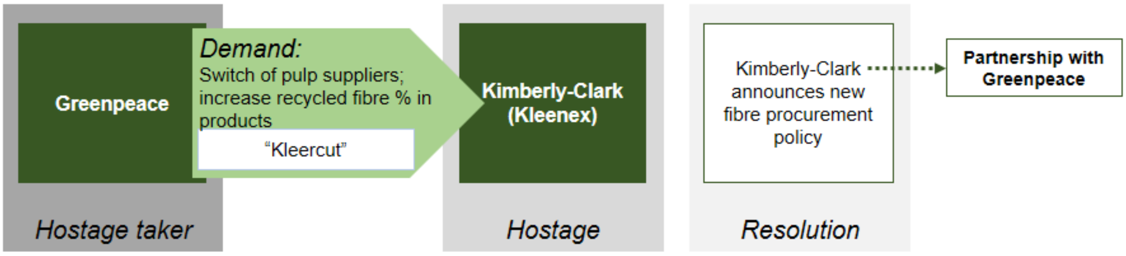

Figure 4.7 Application of conceptual framework to Kimberly-Clark case

4.3.2.1 Demand

Although the background provided first indications that the Kimberly-Clark case differed from the other campaigns, likewise illustrated in the conceptual framework for Kimberly-Clark in *figure 4.7*, yet the hostage taker Greenpeace remains the same. Therefore, we disregard another analysis of Greenpeace in the context of the conceptual framework in *figure 4.7*. Greenpeace published, similar to the previously discussed cases, an investigative report about the deforestation of the Boreal forest in Canada. The ancient Boreal forest is Canada's biggest ecosystem and of great value for the country, due to its size, its ecological value, its wildlife variety, its cultural legacy for Canada and lastly also its subsistence for endemic people. At the same time, Canada is one of the top pulp and lumber producers worldwide. According to the report, large corporations that need pulp for the production of disposable personal care products or newspapers and magazines, are involved in the logging of the ancient forest. A single clear-cut can thereby reach a size of up to 17,000 football fields (Greenpeace, 2004). As a result, more than 90% of the Southern parts of the Boreal forest has been logged so far (Greenpeace, 2004). Kimberly-Clark claimed to aim for an environmental and sustainable production, yet only 19% of their pulp stemmed from recycled sources, making the Kimberly-Clark a part of the list of corporations who were to blame for the exploitation and devastation of wildlife habitats in the Canadian ancient forest (Greenpeace, 2005).

Therefore, Greenpeace felt an urgent need to address this topic publicly and call for action. As it seems to be part of Greenpeace's strategy, the NGO first pushed for a face-to-face meeting with Kimberly-Clark to present their research results and address their demands towards the company. The meeting did not deliver satisfying results; thus Greenpeace took the next step (Paul, 2009). With the launch of the "Kleercut" campaign in November 2004, the NGO chose to make Kimberly-Clark's product brand Kleenex the centre of the campaign. Greenpeace aimed to harm the reputation of Kleenex, to increase the pressure on its owner Kimberly-Clark to give in to their demands. The following demands were communicated:

1. Stop purchasing virgin fibre endangered forest for paper production

2. Only buy pulp from logging operations that have been certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), which guarantees sustainable forest management

3. Drastically increase the proportion of recycled fibre that is used for all tissue paper goods

4. Entirely eliminate chlorine dioxide of the bleaching process in the production cycle (Greenpeace, 2005, 2008b)

The analysis of the previous cases has shown, how the integration of social media impacted the effectiveness of the overall campaign. However, in 2004, at the campaign start, barely any popular social media platforms of today were founded or established yet (Facebook founded in 2004, YouTube founded in 2005), thus big parts of the campaign activities refer to traditional communication and activism methods. Besides the conventional activism which included reports, protests, educating customers about the environmental issues, the installation of massive banners, mocking newspapers, and joint projects with shareholders and the media, Greenpeace began to publish YouTube videos regarding that case in 2008 (Paul, 2009). Several parts of the campaign material included the Kleercut play on the words, satirical brochures or spoof ads a technique, that besides drawing attention, also reminds of subvertisements methods in culture jamming campaign strategies (Warner, 2007).

Figure 4.8 Exemplary communication material Kimberly-Clark campaign: Attacking the Kleenex brand (lifegoggles.com, 2008)

To increase the pressure on Kimberly-Clark, Greenpeace requested consumers to also take action and signal their disagreement with the corporate behaviour. For this, Greenpeace created an online petition where people could send message to Kimberly-Clark demanding to end logging in ancient forests such as the Canadian Boreal. Furthermore, the NGO recommended to replace any Kimberly-Clark products with "forest friendly alternatives" as one meaningful action (Greenpeace, 2005).

The fundamental objective is of high importance regarding the motivation and drive behind Greenpeace. This has been discussed in literature by Gent et al. (2013) who addressed the reputation trap of NGOs, meaning the ongoing pressure to produce tangible outcome, to maintain their reputation and obtain funding from donors by achieving policy goals, was further reflected in the analysis of both the Mattel and the LEGO case. In the Kimberly-Clark case the underlying goal of protecting the ancient forests and their wildlife habitats is very apparent. Doubtless, having Kimberly-Clark committing to the campaign's demands would bring Greenpeace one step closer to this overarching goal and at the same time provide an accomplishment story for donors and stakeholders.

4.3.2.2 Hostage

When applying the conceptual framework to the Kimberly-Clark versus Greenpeace case, we recognised Kimberly-Clark as the hostage. Likewise, many other FMCG companies, Kimberly-Clark follows an umbrella approach enclosing multiple product brands within their brand architecture. Kimberly-Clark's most famous brands are Kleenex, Scott, Huggies, Pull-Ups, Kotex, Poise, Cottonelle, and Depend, with which they hold a top 2 brand share in 80 countries (Kimberly-Clark, 2017).

In the centre of the campaign was the product brand Kleenex, as the campaign name Kleercut indicated. As consumer brands have in the previous cases proved to be a desired target of Greenpeace, we find it not surprising that the NGO chose Kleenex as the brand to attack. However, because Kimberly-Clark refused to meet the demands of Greenpeace, the NGO escalated their campaign by targeting Cottonelle, another top brand of Kimberly-Clark (Greenpeace, 2008a). As argued by Kapferer (2012) and Melin (2002), many corporations use their successful product brands to manage their corporate reputation. Therefore, it can be seen as strategic move of Greenpeace to target a second popular product brand of Kimberly-Clark during their campaign, as the reputational damage of two brands, arguably, multiplies the effect on Kimberly-Clark, thus, increase the pressure to give in.

Being attacked by an NGO, should not have been a surprise to Kimberly-Clark. Even though one can argue, that Greenpeace's report revealed various large corporations of the paper industry being engaged in the highly damaging deforestation practices in the Boreal forest (Greenpeace, 2004), Kimberly-Clark could have been aware to be of special interest according to their commitment to sustainable business policies (Kimberly-Clark, 2004). After first ignoring Greenpeace's letters in which they requested a face-to-face meeting to address their demands, and later not taking them seriously with their research outcomes, the NGO decided to campaign against Kimberly-Clark (Paul, 2009).

Although, Greenpeace started with quite a sensationalist campaign with activities, such as blockades at offices, disrupted meetings, disturbing commercial shoots, and ultimately YouTube videos (Schwartz, 2011), here again similarities to culture jamming activities can be found, we identified that Kimberly-Clark adopted a so-called "Deny Crisis Response Strategy" according to Coombs' (2007) SCCT framework at first. The MNE refused to admit any crisis or even rejected to consider Greenpeace as an important stakeholder. Suhas Apte, vice president for global sustainability at Kimberly-Clark, confessed that "Kimberly-Clark didn't think they were doing anything wrong. The company took a lot of pride in its sustainable practices. […] We used to consider NGO's as non-value add entities." (Schwartz, 2011, n.p.). Meanwhile, Greenpeace attacked their investment bank warning them about Kimberly-Clark's logging business in the Canadian forests, naturally bad press would appear, but Kimberly-Clark continued to emphasise their on-going performance in environmental issues, by publishing new policies, and sustainability reports (Lehmann & Blount, 2013). Kimberly-Clark's management perceived their own activities as responsible and environmental-friendly, thus stuck to the deny strategy (Morden, 2014), which might seem less surprising, considering that Kimberly-Clark won several sustainability and environment prizes, such as being one of "100 Best Corporate Citizens", because of their achievements in "combining strong financial performance with responsible practices on environmental and social issues" (Kimberly-Clark, 2007, n.p.).

Nonetheless, after Greenpeace's move to encourage college students, as well as the attack toward a second popular product brand (Cottonelle), Kimberly-Clark increasingly worried about their corporate reputation, suffering under the brand attacks of their top product brand. Therefore, the negotiation processes could ultimately be continued in late 2008 (Schwartz, 2011). From denying any guilt for multiple years, the tide turned completely after the announcement of an agreement on the demands of the case. Kimberly-Clark then adopted the Secondary Crisis Response Strategy - bolstering - deriving from Croombs' (2007) situational crisis communication theory. Thereby, the reminder and the ingratiation tactics were applied by the MNE. Not only did Kimberly-Clark mention the advantages accrued due to campaigning and fighting against each other, "new procurement policy may have been stronger than it may have otherwise been" and "media and stakeholders paid attention to the issues raised" (Skar, 2014, n.p.), they also admired the joint partnership. Both, Greenpeace and Kimberly-Clark released articles and press releases for their five-year anniversary collaboration in which Greenpeace emphasised: "[…] the effect of the new policy and our collaboration has had a much larger effect. After all, the Kimberly-Clark fiber buying policy is global […]" (Skar, 2014, n.p.), while Kimberly-Clark enthused: "the collaboration with Greenpeace and other stakeholders such as the Forest Stewardship Council has helped us gain insights into ways to improve the sustainability of our products and supply chain." (Morden, 2014, n.p.).

4.3.2.3 Resolution

The provided background of the Kimberly-Clark case has indicated already that the way to a resolution was neither quick nor easy. In the end, Kimberly-Clark kept defending their corporate behaviour and reputation for almost five years, before giving in to Greenpeace's campaign demands. However, besides the surprise of an unexpected agreement, both parties even committed to collaborate. Fairly, one can wonder how two opposing corporations shift from a conflict to a partnership (Geary, 2009).

At the beginning of the campaign Kimberly-Clark were silent in their response. However, on March 25, 2007, Kimberly-Clark decided to make a move, by publishing a new procurement policy, which nonetheless seemed unacceptable to Greenpeace. Even though, the released policy lead to taking up negotiations for the next half a year, it remained without any results (Lehmann & Blount, 2013). Kimberly-Clark's global sustainability leader Lisa Morden explained in an interview later:

> While we felt that our practices at the time were very responsible, this high-profile conflict with a leading NGO raised questions and concerns with customers and overshadowed our good environmental performance (Morden, 2014, n.p.).

After a year of stand still, it required the engagement of a third party to get the negotiations back on track. It required the exclusion of propaganda, as well as lawyers, both parties were able to actively work on a solution, which was ultimately announced at a joint news conference on August 5, 2009 (Geary, 2009; Lehmann & Blount, 2013). Besides the mediation through a third party, further circumstances were critical to turn the tide in the negotiations: trust and mutual respect towards each other and each other's stakeholders, the acknowledgement of the respective reputation and as opposite stakeholders (Morden, 2014; Skar, 2014).

> We learned that Greenpeace has just as much at stake as Kimberly-Clark does. Both teams highly value their reputation with their stakeholders and want to be respectful to all as they work together (Morden, 2014, n.p.)

These reflective insights, confirm what literature (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004) has approached, reputation is a key essential to NGOs as well as to companies. While attacking each other's reputation harmed the connection between the NGO and company, the mutual respect towards each other created a foundation for discussions. Furthermore, Kimberly-Clark underlined the theoretical concept of the special stakeholder role an NGO holds towards a company (Geary, 2009). Kimberly-Clark seemed to handle the hostage taker significantly better, once seeing them as another large stakeholder that has its own reputation, too (Morden, 2014). Nevertheless, it was also noticeable, that the longer the campaign continued, the bigger the urge for pressure grew for Greenpeace. When Kimberly-Clark refused to give in to the requested demands, the NGO escalated the brand hostage by targeting another successful product brand of the Kimberly-Clark's brand portfolio (Cottonelle). Doubtlessly, the pressure on the MNE rose significantly, as any reputational damages on their product brands can also fall back on its owning corporation´s corporate reputation.

Entering a collaboration notably differentiated the Kimberly-Clark case from the LEGO and Mattel campaigns. Referring to Nelson's (2007) NGO Engagement Modes between NGOs and corporations, the two toy producer cases were prevailing limited to the confrontation mode and one-way information flows, while Kimberly-Clark and Greenpeace moved to a cooperation mode. After both parties had engaged in a two-way dialogue, listened to each other's views and feedback, they finally signed a formal collaboration agreement. To successfully implement the far-reaching sustainability goals of the contract, Greenpeace and Kimberly-Clark committed to meet semi-annually to review the progress, present reports, and debate about future investments and innovations. As such, Greenpeace further engaged in a consultation mode akin to that of Nelson's NGO engagement modes (Nelson, 2007; Schwartz, 2011).

A partnership like the present one certainly entailed beneficial consequences for both sides. It is reasonable that the mutual added values rooted to the expertise and knowledge both parties could rely on afterwards. Kimberly-Clark received consultancy concerning environmental issues, and at the same time could use their powerful position in the industry to set new certification standards for pulp production, a favourable purpose for Greenpeace (Geary, 2009). Arguably, for Greenpeace a further added value lied in getting closer to achieving their fundamental goal: stopping any logging in an ancient forest. The Greenpeace USA forest campaign director Scott Paul highlighted the aim for the overarching objective, when he explained that due to its prestige and strong market position, Kimberly-Clark could impact the entire paper industry as "game changer" or at least influence other major players as Procter & Gamble (Geary, 2009). Yet it remains questionable, whether the fundamental objective has been met. According to Richard Brooks, Greenpeace Canada Forest Campaign Coordinator, the real winners of the campaign are "ancient forests like the Boreal Forest" (Fleischer, 2009). Michael Conroy, an expert on grassroots campaigns who has been interviewed by Grist.org, concurred:

> This is a huge victory for global forests, the FSC, and Greenpeace. […] Kimberly-Clark is the world's largest manufacturer of tissue paper products. The nature of the commitments, the specific timetables provided, and the Kimberly-Clark agreement to report back regularly on what proportion of the fiber sourced for its tissue has come from recycled and FSC-certified sources makes this a very credible commitment (Fleischer, 2009, n.p.).

Skar (2014) concluded that Kimberly-Clark's policy change and the engagement in the Forest Stewardship Council General Assembly, goes far beyond procurement shifts in their own supply chain, but impact the "the world's most respected forest certification system". These statements indicate that at least parts of the fundamental demand, have been met, yet future will show, if Kimberly-Clark continues to play a significant role in its industry. While in 2014, both organisations proudly "celebrated" their five-year partnership anniversary and published press releases highlighting joint achievements, as well valuing their cooperation. Both Kimberly-Clark and Greenpeace praised their key learnings gained through the campaign and the subsequent partnership: trust as an honest common ground for negotiations and discussions, the respectful handling of each other's reputation, and understanding the other party as a key stakeholder (Kimberly-Clark, 2014; Skar, 2014).

4.4 Organic Consumer Association Protests against Starbucks

As the purpose of this study is to explore the brand hostage phenomenon, we will now look into two additional cases, which involves two different NGOs and corporations. The Organic Consumer Association (OCA) is an online and grassroots NGO with interest in campaigning for health, justice and sustainability (Organic Consumers Association, 2017). The NGO is relatively smaller and less famous than Greenpeace, however, despite fewer resources, the OCA is still involved in several campaigns. One of the more public and ongoing battles of OCA involving Starbucks is the so-called "Frankenbuck$" campaign. After years of activism since 2008, OCA managed to put sufficient pressure on Starbucks to make them announce that all their products were to become rBGH-free - which is a genetically engineered artificial hormone injected into dairy cows to produce more milk. However, despite the earlier campaign success, OCA have continued to pressurise Starbucks and since 2014 have demanded from Starbucks to their sales of organic milk, fair trade coffee and fair trade chocolates (Organic Consumers Association, 2014).

When applying the conceptual framework, the OCA case displays similarities to the Greenpeace case against Kimberly-Clark. The hostage taker can be identified as OCA, while the corporate brand of Starbucks is the hostage. However, as in the case of Kimberly-Clark, there is no third party involved. All communication material from OCA point towards Starbucks being the intended target for OCA. The NGO's demands to Starbucks are specific and clear - "to increase its sales of organic and fair trade coffee, organic milk and start selling fair trade chocolate" (Organic Consumers Association, 2014, n.p.). Furthermore the OCA case also displays a rather hidden fundamental goal behind their campaigns. This is evident as OCA continued their activities against Starbucks even after their rBGH campaign success, seemingly chasing a larger unannounced objective. This trend might continue even if OCA succeeds in achieving the current campaign's objectives. There are therefore hints of a larger fundamental objective, which is also expressed by Katherine Paul, the associate director of OCA. According to Katherine Paul (Buss, 2014), due to the size of Starbucks and its influence on society. The OCA claims that Starbucks needs to take responsibility and take the lead on fairtrade and organic matters. Thus, even if OCA succeeds in this campaign there might be further objectives or a larger fundamental one, which OCA is trying to achieve.

In terms of the actual media campaign, we find that the battle between the two parties also unfolds on a reputational level, such as the three main Greenpeace cases. Indeed, this is important as it points out that other NGOs, besides Greenpeace, engages with companies on a reputational level. Thus, the aim of these campaigns it to cause reputational damage, or at least a large enough threat for companies, to respond and give in to campaign demands. This is evident during OCA's campaign, where the NGO published several brand parody materials such as mock-up of the corporate logo of Starbucks and the "Frankenbuck$" term. These actions are arguably aiming to cause reputational damage on Starbucks. Furthermore, legendary rocker Neil Young was recruited to support the campaign as a means to gain public support. As such, all of OCA's activities are arguably an attempt to gain publicity and public backing from involved stakeholders. By gaining the support of stakeholders and convincing them of OCA's frame of Starbucks being guilty of not living up to its responsibilities, OCA are able to inflict reputational damage and be perceived as a large enough threat towards Starbucks, thereby pressuring the corporation into meeting its demand.

However, Starbucks' responses during the campaign have remained relatively silent, which may indicate that OCA have not been able as of yet, to fully convince stakeholders of their frame. Starbucks reduced their communication to one single public announcement surrounding the previous OCA campaign about rBGH. In addition, the company have occasionally published press releases regarding how important fair trade, ethical sourcing and animal welfare is to the organisation, although not mentioning OCA in any way (Craves, 2014; Paul, 2014; Ventiera, 2015). It is feasibly that Starbucks do not consider OCA's latest campaign as an immediate crisis, and have therefore decided on a non-response communication strategy towards the NGO. This approach is closest to that of a Deny Crisis

Response (Nelson, 2007). The campaign however is still on-going and the question remains, whether the campaign can gain sufficient traction to put sufficient pressure on Starbucks.

4.5 Green America against General Mills

In line with the purpose of the study of investigating the brand hostage phenomenon, we present another case of a smaller NGO engaging in a brand hostage. The GMO Inside campaign consist of a coalition of businesses and non-profit organisations, with Green America in the lead. The mission of Green America is to bundle economic power of various stakeholders to develop a society that is both socially and environmentally sustainable (Green America's GMO Inside Campaign, 2013). In 2012, Green America attacked America's first choice brand for breakfast cereal - *Cheerios* owned by the nutritious food provider General Mills for using ingredients that a very likely to contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Green America's GMO Inside Campaign, 2013). GMOs are associated with impacting health and being harmful to nature and environment.

With GMO Inside, the American NGO relied on a particular strategy: In the first place, consumers and the public were educated about the issue, subsequently called for action to bring up their concerns themselves. Thousands of petition signatures and comments via the Cheerios app, 25,000 emails and 40,000 critical Facebook posts reached General Mills emphasising health and environmental concerns about GMOs containing products, demanding change respectively (GMO Inside, 2012; Shemkus, 2014). In response to that, General Mills removed the app from its Facebook page and diverged from their every-other-day posting standard to zero social media communication, presumably to reduce customer traffic on their Facebook page (GMO Inside, 2012). Therefore, we argue that General Mills applied a Diminish Crisis Response strategy (Coombs, 2007) to deal with GMO Inside's attack, as they tried to decrease the perceived damage and to prevent further negative attention. At the beginning of 2014, General Mills gave in (claiming it as a result of consumers concerns only – not accepting Green America's pressure) and announced to stop using GMO-containing ingredients in their production of original Cheerios cereal. Even though, Green America acknowledged the General Mill's progress; the NGO was not entirely satisfied with the resolution. General Mills restricted their announcement to one of their brands (Cheerios original) only and further refused to label other brand's ingredients accordingly (Horovitz, 2014). As a result, General Mills' Honey Nut Cheerios, America's number one breakfast cereal, appeared as the centre of the current follow-up campaign.

Relating to our conceptual framework, we consider the Cheerios case most similar to the Kimberly-Clark case, due to the constellation of common key elements. Green America doubtless acts as the hostage taker, while General Mills' product brand Cheerios is the hostage. Comparable with the Kimberly-Clark campaign there is no third party involved as all activism material and communication related and aimed to attack Cheerios only. Thus, the intended target for Green America was the FMCG company General Mills. GMO Inside's demands were formulated straightforward: 1) Remove GMOs from all General Mills products, 2) neutrally test for and label GMO-containing ingredients, 3) end all opposition activities towards GMO labelling (Green America's GMO Inside Campaign, 2013). As all European General Mills cereal products are either GMO-free or labelled accordingly, Green America was convinced to ask for achievable goals. However, as mentioned, General Mills seemed solely partly insightful, limiting their new GMO ingredient policies to their brand Cheerios original, while Green America demanded the change for their whole product range. Here might lie one of the biggest differences to the Kimberly-Clark case. While Kimberly-Clark ultimately not only agreed upon Greenpeace's requests, they even further strived for a mutual partnership after the case resolution. Green America, nonetheless, kept campaigning against Cheerios, due to the dissatisfying response from General Mills. A second difference to the Kimberly-Clark case is represented in the fundamental goal. As known, the GMO Inside campaign is not limited to Cheerios as a target, but attacked several FMCG brands which use ingredients that are likely to contain GMOs. Therefore, the fundamental goal for the Cheerios case and similar campaigns can be stated as: an ongoing campaign dedicated to publicising and educating which consumer brands are likely to contain GMOs, thus are at risk of being harmful to the natural growing environment of plants and impacting human health (Green America's GMO Inside Campaign, 2013). During Greenpeace's kleercut campaign, however, Kimberly-Clark was the only ultimate target, thus the campaign ended after the resolution.

Moreover, the battle between both parties certainly takes place on a reputational level, which supports more conformity with all other evaluated NGO cases. As one of the biggest players in the American breakfast cereal market, Cheerios owned an extensive reputation and even got nominated "The Most Reputable Company in America" by *Forbes* in 2012 (Green America's GMO Inside Campaign, 2013). Secondly, thousands of American children had Cheerios for breakfast every day, thus the topic rose very quickly among concerned parents. "We do value our Cheerios fans and we do listen to their thoughts and suggestions," stated General Mills spokesman Mike Siemienas, clearly indicating that the company saw their reputation jeopardised by the worries of stakeholders (Horovitz, 2014). Lastly, General Mills has additionally committed to CSR goals including the protection of the environment, sustainability and trustworthy behaviour (Green America's GMO Inside Campaign, 2013), making the GMO issue a sensitive topic for General Mills and simultaneously a valuable target for GMO Inside.

4.6 Towards an Advanced Framework

After applying the conceptual framework to each of the three Greenpeace cases and the additional two smaller NGO cases, we found that the conceptual framework was not sufficient in fully illustrating the phenomenon of a brand hostage. In the following section these findings and conclusions will be highlighted and discussed. This process is important to understand in order to generate new theory from the findings and integrate it into a more comprehensive framework.

4.6.1 Third party

One of the findings of the analyses was the identification of a third party in a brand hostage. In the conceptual framework, the brand hostage setup was visualised in simplified manner. The hostage taker attacks the hostage followed by a demand. As soon as the hostage meets the demand, the brand hostage ceases and the issue is resolved. However, during the application of the framework to the three Greenpeace cases, we found that in reality, the setting can be played out differently and more complicated.

What we noticed in the LEGO and Mattel cases, was the presence of a third party, who were more or less the intended target for Greenpeace. In each case, Greenpeace branded Shell and APP as the "bad company" or the main culprit so to speak, while LEGO and Mattel acted more as silent partners to the crime, found guilty for their collaboration with the culprits. Although LEGO and APP were the main target for Greenpeace, LEGO and Mattel presented a much more exquisite target for the NGO. LEGO and Mattel were globally well-known brands and who were much loved by consumers, such brands have a certain reputation to live up to. Greenpeace therefore saw the opportunity to use the reputation of LEGO and Mattel against themselves, to create mass awareness for their cause and garner public support, even from the two organisations' stakeholders. The reputation of LEGO and Mattel effectively functioned as a double-edged sword for the two organisations. Greenpeace's effective use of media campaigns which used the brand/reputation of their victims against themselves, created enough public pressure which ended their respective "bad" partnerships with Shell and APP.

Arguably, Greenpeace did not only attack the reputation of LEGO and Mattel, but the residual damage also impacted the reputation of Shell and APP. For APP respectively, the loss of a major contracting partner will undoubtedly have impacted APP financially. But the residual damage on its reputation may also have influenced other partners to withdraw from their respective deals with APP. This resulted in APP announcing their forest conservation policy, which was a main goal of Greenpeace, when they first published their deforestation report prior to the Mattel case. The case therefore hints at a larger, more fundamental goal behind Greenpeace's action. Which in the case of the Mattel case, was and has always been to cancel all contracts between APP and its partners, as a way to stop APP's deforestation activities in the Indonesian rainforest.

Things were slightly different with the Kimberly-Clark case, as Greenpeace did not target a third party since Kimberley-Clark was the main target and culprit in the case. However, also in this case a demand and a fundamental goal (stop logging in the ancient forests) existed and it was neither Kimberly-Clark clearcutting in the Canadian Boreal forest themselves rather their suppliers, however, Greenpeace's demand was oriented slightly different. Indeed, Greenpeace also requested to stop any collaboration with suppliers logging in the Boreal, nonetheless, predominantly they demanded adjustments in the composition of Kimberly-Clark's products. More precisely, Kimberly-Clark was asked to change the ratio of recycled fibre and virgin fibre in their products, which not only impacts the whole supply chain, but also the product such as consistency and colour. Therefore, Kimberly-Clark was publicly accused for being one of the main culprits behind the damage in the Boreal forest.

Therefore, there exists a link between an NGO and a third party via a bigger underlying objective behind each campaign. In the LEGO case, for example, the termination of the Shell cooperation is demanded, due to Shell's oil drilling business in the Arctic. However, the underlying goal was to "stop any drilling and save the Arctic" as published by Greenpeace in their initial arctic report, prior to the commencement of the LEGO campaign. The third party is therefore not the centre of attention in the NGO's media campaigns but still the hostage, however the residual reputational damage caused is certainly felt and the possibility of financial implications are also present, as in the case of APP.

4.6.2 Choice of Hostage and Target

The recognition of the third party, opens up the room for discussion about the choice of a "good" target and hostage. Greenpeace seems to follow a well-constructed strategy in their brand hostage campaigns, thus neither the target would be selected by coincidence. In the evaluated cases Greenpeace took the popular product brands Kleenex and Barbie, pressuring the respective companies Kimberly-Clark and Mattel, as well as the famous corporate brand LEGO. As pointed out above, a third party has additionally been targeted in two of the three campaigns (Shell and APP). What is it that makes a brand or company a "good" target for Greenpeace?

Based on the investigated campaigns, a typical pattern we identified was that Greenpeace initially picked up upon something that has already been heavily discussed, in either online or offline environment, as for example building upon the current oil drilling debate in the LEGO case. Extensive field work provided Greenpeace with insights of the concerned industries, such as which companies were involved in the environmental devastation. In the respective research reports Greenpeace named the corporations with environmental critical behaviour and international influence concretely, creating a selection of possible targets. The target choice then commonly fell on one or multiple major industry players, with a significant impact in their respective industries. Although Greenpeace could have directly targeted the "third parties" APP and Shell, however, these big corporations are less well-known in the public. As Greenpeace notes in their Down to Zero report (Greenpeace, 2013a), consumer companies are key in solving the deforestation in Indonesia. Consumer brands are well-known and loved by consumers, targeting LEGO and Mattel allows an NGO to leverage on this and thus raise public awareness of environmental issues. Furthermore, both companies were closely linked to their "third party" companies Shell and APP, while already having integrated CSR goals in their businesses, making them an easy prey for Greenpeace's campaign.

In the end, a good target for brand hostage campaigns has to be differentiated between the hostage and the intended target. Latter usually impacts the environment massively, functions as a supplier to other big companies, but are not particularly well-known in the public. Hostage targets, however, are in contrary popular consumer brands, with a mass following and great reputation, which may already be involved in certain environmentally-friendly activities or policies. These characteristics make them specifically vulnerable for a Greenpeace brand hostage campaign. In the case of Kimberly-Clark, however, we found the corporation to be a combination of both a hostage and intended target. First of all, they are a big influential company within their industry, but were harvesting from the Boreal forest. At the same time, they possessed a large portfolio of leading product brands across the world. Therefore, Greenpeace did not choose to target an additional third party, as there may not have been one or even have to, since Kimberly-Clark was found to be the major culprit who also owned well-known consumer brands. Thus, Greenpeace initially targeted the Kleenex brand, however, as Kimberly-Clark refused to meet the demands, Greenpeace escalated their activities, where the NGO even began to target an additional product brand of the corporation, Cottonelle, pressuring Kimberly-Clark to give in to the NGO's demands. As such, although there was no third party involved, one can say that the hostage and intended target was one and the same in the case of Kimberly-Clark, while the hostage campaigns were specifically geared towards the product brands Kleenex and Cottonelle. Furthermore, it is important to point out that in long-term campaigns such as the Kimberly-Clark case, it seems that NGOs may escalate by targeting additional product brands of the corporation. This is important, as this may lead to increased reputational damage and threat for a corporation.

4.6.3 Fundamental Goal

As already mentioned above, another element we could uncover in all brand hostage campaigns was that Greenpeace had an underlying goal in each campaign. These underlying or fundamental goal often consist of massive change of behaviour within an industry sector, involving environmental issues which are closely connected to the core values and mission of Greenpeace (Greenpeace, 2016b).

Greenpeace promises in its mission statement that they apply "creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future" (Greenpeace, 2016b) to reach the goal of protecting the earth's ability to "nurture life in all its diversity" (Greenpeace, 2016b). Therefore, these underlying goals can be seen as Greenpeace's fundamental goals in their brand hostage campaigns.

To continue, we need to establish the difference between the fundamental goal and the campaign goals. While the campaign goals are relatively clear and easily identifiable in the cases, the presence of the fundamental goal was not clear from only reviewing current literature, for which reason it was not illustrated in our conceptual framework.

The campaign goals can be regarded as "the demand" during a brand hostage. The demand is the publicly communicated campaign goal targeting the hostage, formulated in a definitive and specific manner. Once the hostage "pays the ransom", it gets released from the hostage situation. For instance, the *Everything is NOT awesome* campaign ended immediately after LEGO announced to not continue their promotion contract with Shell. Similarly, Mattel and Kimberly-Clark "got released" after agreeing to cancel their contracts with APP and respectively to adapt the procurement policies.

However, the fundamental goal reaches beyond solely targeting the hostage. As we have touched upon before, the fundamental goal is often formulated prior to the hostage situation and is intrinsically motivated by the values and mission of the NGO. Furthermore, the fundamental goal is often communicated in an initial "industry wide" report by Greenpeace, a brand hostage is simple one of many strategies that Greenpeace uses to achieve it. In the examples of LEGO, Mattel and Kimberly-Clark the fundamental goals aimed for was “Stop drilling and Save the Arctic” (LEGO), and “saving the Indonesian rainforest” (Mattel) and “Stop logging in the ancient forests” (Kimberly-Clark). These fundamental goals, were in part achieved by targeting a major partner of the third party, by conducting a brand hostage strategy. Forcing the partner to end relations with the third party, causing reputational damage and public pressure, which in the end would play a part in forcing the third party to comply with the NGO’s demands and thus achieve their fundamental goal.

Having identified the fundamental goals underlying each brand hostage case, one can wonder why Greenpeace, besides the demand, follows an additional fundamental goal. Literature supports the necessity for approaching a fundamental goal, as social watchdogs (Burchell & Cook, 2013; Fassin, 2009) are representatives of the common good (Baur & Palazzo, 2011). However, due to the reputational trap that NGOs are under, there is a constant pressure to live up to their reputation and display signs of competence towards their stakeholder (donors). Consequently, NGOs such as Greenpeace, therefore, need to “prove their worth” on a regular basis besides the achievement of longer-term fundamental goals, as these may take considerable time to achieve. The success of campaigns against corporations, which resulted in the fulfilment of the outlined demands, can arguably be considered as short-term immediate achievements to satisfy stakeholder expectations. But furthermore, the public displays of successful campaign activities can also be included into this category as climbing down Mattel’s Headquarters, manipulating Kimberly-Clark presentation slides or the series of viral videos, are arguably aimed to not only create reputational damage on the targeted company, but also to convince the NGO’s own stakeholders of their competence and achievements. Although, successful campaigns assist the NGO to achieve the fundamental goal in the long run, the campaigns and its activities are arguably a method that Greenpeace uses, to demonstrate immediate successes in the short-term to satisfy its stakeholders.

Thus, the NGO faces a controversial conflict of reputation interests: Either satisfy donors with short-term successes or approving their legitimacy via year-long campaigns to reach fundamental goals. To Greenpeace keeping their reputation towards both stakeholders is equally essential. Launching a brand hostage campaign can, therefore, be seen as one attempt to overcome this reputational trap. On the one hand, Greenpeace can, with short-term successes, satisfy donors, on the other hand live up to requirements paying into the account of legitimacy.

4.6.4 Reputational Battlefield

Consistent with Yin (2003), following a multiple-case study approach enabled us to perceive the surroundings of a brand hostage, as well as we gained a better understanding of “how” the phenomenon occurs. When examining all five cases, we discovered that the campaigns were unfolding on a stage we term as a “reputational battlefield”. In this battlefield, the hostage taker would engage in reputational battles with the hostage and to some extent the intended target (third party). The subsequent reputational damage inflicted on the hostage, would have a spillover effect towards the reputation of the intended target. The reputational battle between the three parties is therefore a significant element of the brand hostage phenomenon.

In a brand hostage, all parties aim to protect and maintain their respective reputation. When Greenpeace published the initial report of Mattel being linked to the deforestation of the Indonesian rainforest, Mattel did not respond in any meaningful way according to Greenpeace. As Greenpeace have to live up their own reputation, and the expectations of their own stakeholders, the NGO is arguably trapped in a reputational trap, and thus need to act in order to satisfy its stakeholders and maintain their reputation. The same can be said with Mattel and even APP, as during the campaign both publicly responded in a manner to either protect or repair any reputational damage caused. Stakeholders are seemingly the key to who can become the victor of the reputational battlefield. As noted by LEGO during their dispute with the NGO, Greenpeace managed to confuse and thus convince LEGO’s stakeholders of LEGO’s misconduct in their partnership with Shell. Greenpeace’s creative and provocative Barbie campaign, arguably convinced Mattel’s stakeholders to take the NGO’s side. Therefore, whoever wins the reputational battle, depends on who manages to convince the majority of stakeholders of their respective frame.

One advantage and arguably a reason for Greenpeace to engage with a brand hostage type of strategy, is that companies may be more susceptible to give in to demands, if their reputation is under threat. In the cases of Mattel and Kimberly-Clark, where respectively the strongest product brand was taken hostage, both corporations ultimately saw their product and corporate reputation jeopardised. Thus, it could be expected that a company would give in to demands, to protect the reputation of their product brand and/or corporate reputation. Furthermore, similar to NGOs, corporations also have their own respective reputational trap so to speak. As they also need to live up to stakeholders demands, which are often about delivering profits and maintaining a good corporate reputation, as any reputational damage could lead to profit loss or worse. Therefore, for all parties, whether it is the hostage taker, the hostage or the intended target, a brand hostage campaign unfolds and is won or lost on a reputational stage.

4.6.5 Cooperations

What is notable in the three case examples is that only one of the cases (Kimberly-Clark) resulted in a form of partnership between the hostage taker and hostage. When analysing the three cases and comparing them with each other, we found that LEGO and Mattel are the most similar in scope, type of campaigning and the time it took for a resolution. Furthermore, the main issue did not inherently touch the core business of both organisations, but the primary issue for Greenpeace was their linkage to a perceived “bad partner”. Thus, LEGO and Mattel were not the main culprit or ultimate target during the campaigns, but Shell and APP respectively. To further illustrate this, Greenpeace termed Mattel during their campaign a “silent partner” to forest crimes, by supporting APP activities.

In the Kimberly-Clark case, we find noticeable differences when compared to LEGO and Mattel. First of all, the length of the campaign is by far the biggest difference. The Kimberly-Clark campaign lasted for five years compared to LEGO’s three months and Mattel’s five months. Furthermore, Greenpeace was fundamentally attacking Kimberly-Clark’s core business as the company’s business model was around producing paper-based consumer products. Thus, compared to the other two brand hostage cases, where LEGO and Mattel was just a means to an end for Greenpeace, Kimberly-Clark was Greenpeace's primary and ultimate target. At the highest point of the campaign, to say the relationship between the NGO and corporation was antagonistic is almost an understatement, as the parties were not able to come together for negotiations. Which is the very reason why it was surprising that the two parties ended up resolving their differences that ended in a green partnership. Although this only occurred due to the intervention of a neutral mediator, which enabled a more open communication line between Greenpeace and Kimberly-Clark.

A motivation from Kimberly-Clark's side to enter a partnership may be due to gaining access to Greenpeace's expertise, and to develop a trusting relationship between both parties. Furthermore, it is conceivable that Greenpeace may act as a form of early-warning system for Kimberly-Clark in terms of warning them of any potential breaches of CSR policies. Which allows the corporation to avoid a repeat of its earlier crisis and protect its core business. Furthermore, Kimberly-Clark will have the opportunity to consult with Greenpeace on any business matters that may be related to CSR policies. From Greenpeace's perspective, there is no doubt about the value of gaining access to an influential player in the industry such as Kimberly-Clark. The partnership with the corporation, may assist Greenpeace in push its agenda throughout the industry, and further gain crucial insight, into how companies operate in the particular industry.

Therefore, by reviewing the cases, a green partnership may occur between the hostage taker and hostage. However, as evident in the case of Kimberly-Clark, there are certain characteristics that may need to be fulfilled for this to happen. First, the hostage should be the primary target of the NGO - there is no intended third party target. Second, the issue at hand concerns the core business of the hostage. Third, open communication between the two parties will need to be established. Thus, if the three characteristics are fulfilled - a green partnership may occur.

4.7 NGO Brand Hostage Framework

The conceptual brand hostage framework purely mirrored knowledge derived from existing theory. It was used as a guide for analysing selected brand hostage cases to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon occurring between NGOs and Corporations. From a thorough and detailed evaluation and discussion of five representative NGO brand hostage cases, we found additional relevant elements of the phenomenon. We now move on towards presenting a more advanced framework we call as "NGO Brand Hostage Framework" seen in *figure 4.9* below. The framework incorporates theory, as well as the findings of the case analysis. The following section will briefly introduce and cover the different elements.

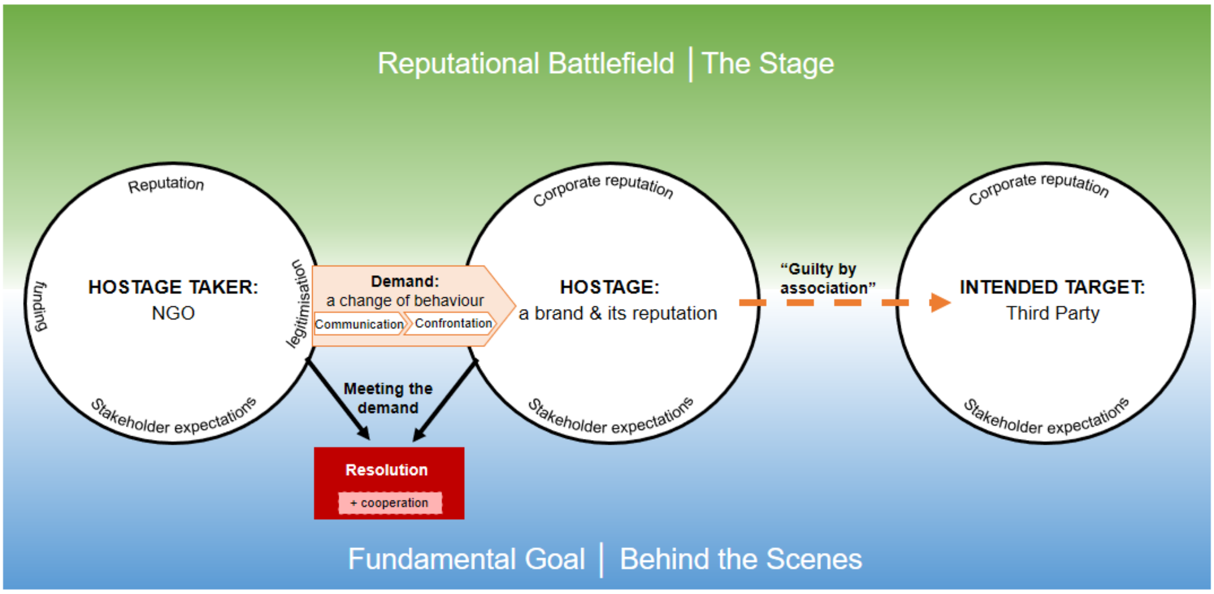

Figure 4.9 NGO brand hostage framework

Compared to the conceptual framework, we extended the model in *figure 4.9* by the intended target, the fundamental goal and the reputational battlefield as additional elements, as well as specifically illustrate interlinks between the components. The framework displays that a brand hostage campaign is more complex than so far explained in current literature.

4.7.1 Hostage Taker

An NGO remains in the role as the hostage taker, influenced by motivating factors which include the constant pressure to prove their legitimacy, to present regular campaign achievements to maintain their reputation, to ensure funding and fulfil stakeholder expectations. It is important to mention that these motivators are not mutually exclusive and are interlinked across each other, as maintaining a good reputation is part of satisfying stakeholder expectations, which is linked to funding and so forth. Nevertheless, we find that these are the main motivating factors that influence NGOs in engaging in a brand hostage.

4.7.2 Demand

As identified in the case analysis, every demand process starts with the communication of the issue towards the hostage. If the hostage, however, does not respond in a desired manner, the NGO initiates the confrontation as a second step. Nowadays, the confrontation usually happens via a media-effective viral campaign with controversial and/or humorous elements. Greenpeace for instance admitted that they move from the communication to the confrontation stage very quickly, to increase the pressure as soon as possible (Reestorff, 2015). Throughout the analysis of the different cases, it became clear that of Nelson's (2007) four major categories of engagement modes appear in the selected cases, naturally, the confrontation and the communication, referring to one-way information flows, modes of engagement appeared in every campaign. Furthermore, we identified the application of consultation and cooperation as engagement modes in the Kimberly-Clark case, when both parties aimed for a consecutive partnership after a resolution. Therefore, we argue that Nelson's (2007) NGO-corporation engagement modes are highly relevant in both the demand and resolution element of a brand hostage.

In alignment with both existing literature (Burchell & Cook, 2013; Molina-Gallart, 2014) and the outcomes of the analysis, a brand hostage campaign ends as soon as the demand is met. As already indicated in the conceptual framework and in alignment with Nelson's (2007) engagement modes, a possible resolution could lead to a cooperative engagement mode between an NGO and a corporation, which comes in the form of a strategic partnership. An NGO serves in a consultative manner in line with one of Nelson's (2007) engagement modes, as in the case of Kimberly-Clark, where Greenpeace would offer their expertise and knowledge on relevant environmental issues to the company. We, therefore, argue that if a partnership manages to occur between the two parties - an engagement mode of cooperation and consultation can be adopted between the parties; thus the cooperation remains an important and potential outcome of the resolution.

4.7.3 Hostage

In terms of the hostage, an NGO either attacks the corporate brand, or holds (one of) the corporation's product brands as hostage. This is illustrated in the three Greenpeace cases, where the corporate brand of LEGO was held hostage, while in the Mattel and Kimberly-Clark cases it was the Barbie and Kleenex brands, which are product brands of the respective corporations. Through the case analysis, it was found that whether the target is a product brand or corporate brand depends on the level of consumer perception of the brand. A product brand which is significantly more well-known to consumers (often a consumer brand) than the corporation's own corporate brand can be considered an ideal target. Alternatively, a corporate brand would be the ideal target if the main consumer products all adopt the same name and brand as the corporate brand. Even though, there is a tendency of a greater perceptibility of corporate brand names additionally to the product brands, consumers do not always know the brand architecture in the background (Kapferer, 2012). For these reasons, some companies even adopt their corporate brands respectively to their star product brand, as seen in the Volkswagen group or L'Oréal group for example (Kapferer, 2012). In the end, NGOs target well-known, beloved and influential consumer brands when addressing their demand for a change of corporate behaviour. In addition, as seen in the Kimberly-Clark case, there is a possibility for an NGO to target several product brands of a corporation during a long-term campaign. As Greenpeace first initially targeted Kleenex, but later also included the Cottonelle brand. This can be significant, as it can be argued that by having multiple product brands being targeted, can increase the reputational damage and threat posed by the brand hostage campaign.

Furthermore, as with the hostage taker, a hostage's behaviour during a brand hostage is also influenced by motivational factors, which was also previously identified in the conceptual framework. The manner of how a hostage reacts is first and foremost influenced by their own corporate reputation. The more a company sees their reputation jeopardised, the higher the probability of reacting rather quickly. As we have discovered through the case analyses, corporate reputation plays a significant role as all hostage behaviours are either an attempt to maintain and/or protect its corporate reputation, which is inherently linked to stakeholder expectations (Roper & Fill, 2012). It is therefore important to emphasise that stakeholder expectations and corporate reputation are interlinked, as failure to maintain corporate reputation would also mean failure to meet stakeholder expectations and vice versa. Although not displayed in our framework, the level of perceived reputational threat will often lead to a formulation of an appropriate crisis response strategy. It is, therefore, important to point out that although a corporation will attempt to devise a suitable response to the brand hostage campaign. Nevertheless, the successfulness of that response will not only depend on whether the response is suitable for the specific context, but also whether stakeholders are convinced by it. In the end, as already discussed in previous sections, the victor is ultimately determined by the involved stakeholders.

4.7.4 Intended Target

A new element, which was derived from the case analyses, is the role of the third party. The role of a third party was discovered from the LEGO and Mattel cases respectively. Certain brand hostages may contain a third party, which is the NGO's intended target. Similarly, to the hostage, the intended target is also influenced by its corporate reputation and stakeholder expectations, thus has to maintain their reputation and meet stakeholder expectations. Hostage and intended target are connected via a collaboration, supplier contract or a partnership, which is mostly the thorn in the NGO's side, penalised though the brand hostage campaign, as we term it "guilty by association". This is illustrated as the dotted line between hostage and intended target. However, a brand hostage does not necessarily include a third party, such as the example found in the case of Kimberly-Clark, where the hostage was the intended target so to speak. While both the LEGO and Mattel case illustrates a third party in the form of Shell and APP. Nevertheless, it is important when approaching brand hostage cases to fully identify all the involving parties, which from our cases either involves two or three parties.

4.7.5 Reputational Battlefield - The Stage

Another new element of our framework is what we term the reputational battlefield, which serves as the stage in which the brand hostage campaign unfolds. As we have seen during the case analysis, all three parties - hostage taker, hostage and intended target engage in a reputational battle for the support of the involved stakeholders. Meaning, if a corporation's stakeholders are convinced by the NGO's frame and thus adopt the frame by publicly supporting the NGO's demands, the subsequent pressure and reputational damage and threat on the company's reputation, is more often than not, enough to force the company to meet the demands of the NGO. This is most evident in the LEGO case as even the CEO of LEGO stated that Greenpeace may have been successful in convincing their stakeholders of the allegations made by the NGO (LEGO, 2014b). Furthermore, as found in the LEGO and Mattel cases, any reputational damage inflicted on the hostage, has a spillover effect toward the intended target. Thus, during the two campaigns, APP and Shell would comment and engage in the Greenpeace campaigns, as an attempt to either protect their reputation and/or maintain their relationship with Mattel or LEGO respectively. Therefore, we argue that a brand hostage is fought on a stage this study terms as a reputational battlefield, as the reputations of each party is at stake and the victor is who captures the hearts and minds of the stakeholders.

4.7.6 Fundamental Goal - Behind the Scenes

The origin and base of every brand hostage campaign, lies in the fundamental goal of an NGO. As the reputational battlefield provides the stage in which the brand hostage unfolds. The fundamental goal can be described as what drives the brand hostage campaign behind the scenes. The fundamental goal commonly reaches beyond the demanded behavioural change in a specific company. In terms of the chosen NGO cases of this study, according to Greenpeace (2016b) the ultimate and fundamental goals of the NGO is to "use non-violent, creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems, and to force the solutions which are essential to a green and peaceful future." (Greenpeace, 2016b, n.p.).

This is in line with their aims of protecting the Arctic, preserving the Canadian Boreal forest and the Indonesian rainforest, and the manner in which they attempt to achieve that, where one strategy is the usage of brand hostage campaigns. Furthermore, if there is a intended target (third party) involved in the brand hostage campaign, then the fundamental goal is inherently more linked to the intended target, even more so than the hostage. This is due to the hostage in this case is used simply as a means to end to get to the intended target, as in the cases of LEGO and Mattel. In these cases, Shell was primarily responsible for the Arctic oil drilling, and APP was the main culprit behind the deforestation of the Indonesian rainforest. As such, the entire LEGO and Mattel campaigns acted as a stepping stone for Greenpeace to prevent Shell from drilling in the arctic, and to cancel all contracts between APP and its partners to save the Indonesian rainforest. (Greenpeace, 2013a). Nevertheless, the fundamental goal touches upon all parties in our framework as it is the underlying reason for why the brand hostage occurs. Thus, the fundamental goal influences and impacts all involved parties.

The *table 4.1* presented below gives an overview of the five analysed cases and their differences in regards of the introduced NGO brand hostage framework.

Table 4.1 Summary of analysed cases and their differences in the framework application

NGO - Hostage	Essential advancements from conceptual to NGO brand hostage framework
Greenpeace - LEGO	• Hostage taker: Greenpeace, hostage: LEGO • Demand: End the cooperation with Shell; LEGO's reaction: Diminish Crisis Response Strategy • Third Party: Shell, connected to the fundamental goal to Save the Arctic and stop drilling • Resolution: LEGO did not renew the partnership with Shell
Greenpeace - Mattel	• Hostage taker: Greenpeace, hostage: Mattel's product brand Barbie • Demand: Engage in anti-deforestation policies and break the contract with APP; Mattel's reaction: Diminish Crisis Response Strategy with an Excuse Tactic • Third Party: APP, which stood in direct connection to the deforestation of the Indonesian rain forest • Resolution: Mattel cancelled the contract with APP
Greenpeace - Kimberly-Clark	• Hostage taker: Greenpeace, hostage: Kimberly-Clark's leading product brands Kleenex and Cottonelle • Demand: new eco-friendly procurement (limit logging to FSC-certified forests) and production (recycled fibre) policies; Kimberly-Clark's reaction: First, Deny Crisis Response Strategy, later Bolstering as a Secondary Crisis Response Strategy • No third party involved as Kimberly-Clark, one of the major players in the industry, was the intended target for Greenpeace • Resolution: formal agreement on new procurement and production policies, additional subsequent cooperation between Greenpeace and Kimberly-Clark
OCA - Starbucks	• Hostage taker: Organic Consumer Association (OCA), hostage: Starbucks • Demand: to make all products rBGH-free (artificial hormone), increased use of fair trade products; Starbuck's reaction: Crisis Response Strategy • No third party involvement • Resolution: Starbucks announced to only sell rBGH-free products; fair trade campaign is ongoing
Green America - General Mills	• Hostage taker: Green America on behalf of GMO Inside, hostage: General Mills' product brand Cheerios • Demand: Stop using ingredients that are likely to contain GMOs in American Cheerios products, if so, declare on the packaging; General Mills' reaction: Diminish Crisis Response Strategy • No third party involvement • Resolution: General Mills stopped using GMO ingredients for Cheerios original, the campaign continues for the other Cheerios flavours

4.8 Towards a Definition

In line with the purpose of this study to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage. It is, therefore, necessary, and important to approach a definition of the phenomenon. As evident from the literature review, although the phenomenon of brand hostage shares similarities to the mentioned hostage examples and it is conceivable the phenomenon occurs in different settings, we have chosen to focus on the context of NGOs and their interactions with corporations.

Based on the literature review we were able to create a conceptual framework as guidance for the research and analysis. We conducted a multiple-case study of five NGO brand hostage cases, and the ensuing analysis revealed a more complex modus operandi than the conceptual framework anticipated. We, therefore, decided to construct a more comprehensive NGO brand hostage framework based on these findings. This resulted in the inclusion of additional elements such as the third party, fundamental goal, reputational battlefield and cooperation. We argue that what distinguishes a brand hostage in this context, is that an NGOs is taking a corporation's brand as a hostage, by engaging in a reputational battle as a mean to achieve their strategic goals. This is influenced by their motivations to maintain their reputations and to meet stakeholder expectations, which is supported by current literature and in the findings.

Finally, based on the literature review and the findings leading to the NGO brand hostage framework, which ultimately, built the basis for the definition of the phenomenon. We, therefore, define brand hostage as:

> **Involving either two or three parties a hostage taker, a hostage and an intended target, where an non-governmental organisation (NGO) holds a corporation's brand or product brand, as a hostage through a media campaign, until the demand, a corporate behaviour or policy change, is met, in order to achieve a strategic fundamental goal. If the perceived level of threat or reputational damage is large enough, it may result in a resolution, which subsequently may lead to a cooperation between the NGO and corporation.**

5 Conclusion

The fifth and final section of the research paper will conclude the findings of the study. The purpose of this study was to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage with the aim to develop a framework and a definition for a deeper understanding of its modus operandi. A generic framework deriving from existing literature was developed and functioned as guidance in the NGO case analysis. Three main cases of Greenpeace have been investigated, as well as two examples in order to demonstrate that the phenomenon is not limited to Greenpeace's strategies. Based on this an NGO brand hostage framework was evolved and lead towards the definition of the phenomenon of brand hostage. Finally, the theoretical and practical contributions arising from the presented study will be outlined in the following section. Besides that, suggestions for further research will be discussed and approached.

In the study, we aimed to expose how and why the phenomenon of brand hostage occurs, how NGOs interact with companies in these brand hostages. Therefore, we combined various fragmented concepts relevant ideas of existing literature into a conceptual framework. By means of this model each component was explained thoroughly. Following, three exemplary Greenpeace cases and further two cases of smaller NGOs were applied to the conceptual framework with the purpose to gain further insights to be able to refine the model. Indeed, the analysis of the LEGO, Mattel and Kimberly-Clark case provided significant input to extend the concept to a more advanced and detailed version. We identified that each brand hostage campaign had an underlying goal reaching beyond the specific demand targeting a third party in two (LEGO and Mattel) of the five cases. Furthermore, the dispute between hostage taker and hostage takes place on a reputational level. Depending on how involved the respective stakeholders are, hence how much pressure they put on the situation, either the NGO's or the company's reputation is more jeopardised, thus has more interest in a fast resolution. Moreover, the Kimberly-Clark case illustrated that after the resolution, there is even a possibility to continue in a green alliance. Accordingly, we included the elements and interlinks in a advanced framework which visualises the phenomenon of brand hostage. Ultimately, the extensive analysis together with the NGO brand hostage framework enabled us to define the phenomenon of brand hostage.

5.1 Contributions

To our knowledge, this study is the first to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, with the aim to develop a framework and definition for a deeper understanding of its modus operandi. Therefore, several related research areas inspired this research, namely NGO literature, reputation management and crisis communication theory. The research indicated that the phenomenon embraces more complexity than initially assumed after reviewing existing literature, thus we, arguably also contribute to theory with this study. To do so, the research followed an inductive research approach in a multiple-case study design, as noticed several times throughout this research. Ultimately, the brand hostage phenomenon could be defined as well as presented in an NGO brand hostage framework deriving from existing literature and the findings of the NGO case analysis. Following, the study's main contribution both on a theoretical as well as on a managerial level will be demonstrated.

5.1.1 Theoretical Contributions

We will now present the theoretical contributions of the study. This study has three main theoretical contributions, which stem from the aim of our study, which identified a need for more knowledge surrounding the brand hostage phenomenon. Even though the phenomenon of brand hostage was not completely unknown amongst several researchers (Cervellon, 2012; Molina-Gallart, 2014), theory lacked a deeper understanding of its modus operandi along with a definition. The aim of the study attempted to close this gap.

The establishment of the brand hostage phenomenon

Therefore, the first theoretical contribution from this study, was to fill the academic gaps found in literature, by developing a framework and definition, which allows for a deeper understanding of the modus operandi of a brand hostage phenomenon. The "NGO brand hostage framework" is a result of our study, which allowed the study to reach a definition of the phenomenon, and thereby establishing the phenomenon and its relevance in academics. The framework is able to provide insights and theoretical explanation of the modus operandi of the phenomenon, thereby helps to put the spotlight on the growing importance of NGOs in business environments today. Furthermore, it moves the discussion of the phenomenon of brand hostage forward to inspire further research on the topic, as this study only convers the phenomenon from a NGO and corporation context.

The definition of the brand hostage phenomenon

A second theoretical contribution of this study is, the definition of a brand hostage phenomenon in the context of NGOs and corporations. As one of the main aims of this study was to develop a definition of the brand hostage phenomenon. The study defines a brand hostage as:

> *Involving either two or three parties a hostage taker, a hostage and an intended target, where an non-governmental organisation (NGO) holds a corporation's brand or product brand, as a hostage through a media campaign, until the demand, a corporate behaviour or policy change, is met, in order to achieve a strategic fundamental goal. If the perceived level of threat or reputational damage is large enough, it may result in a resolution, which subsequently may lead to a cooperation between the NGO and corporation.*

The definition was derived from existing theory as a basis, but further included the findings from a multiple case study, which ensures that it is not entirely decoupled from practice. The development of a definition is important as the definition gives a clear context of where and how further research can be conducted on the brand hostage phenomenon in a NGO and corporation context.

The contribution to multiple literature streams

The third contribution is to the literature. The study mainly contributes to the literature on NGO, reputation management and crisis communication theory. More specifically, the study confirms and integrates the work of NGO-corporate engagement modes, NGO legitimacy and NGO accountability, thereby strengthen the NGO literature. Furthermore, the study also incorporates Coombs' (2007) SCCT framework of crisis response strategies and thereby also strengthens crisis communication literature. Finally, the findings of the research fill a gap in reputation literature concerning the management reputation and its influences during a brand hostage.

5.1.2 Managerial Contributions

The multiple case study and the resulting framework and definition for the brand hostage phenomenon, provide insights into its constitution and modus operandi. We have presented five NGO cases which all have their variations and similarities in terms of how managers from both sides have engaged in a brand hostage. As such, these findings are relevant for managers of NGOs, corporations and corporations which find themselves as the intended target. We will in the following section present the managerial implications for all three key parties involved in brand hostages: NGOs as hostage takers, corporation as hostage and the third party corporation as intended target.

Implications for managers of NGOs

1. Firstly, the study consists of a multiple case study of five NGO brand hostage cases, where three of them (Greenpeace) are deemed highly successful, while the other two are still ongoing. The study, therefore, provides valuable insight into the management and application of a brand hostage campaign to achieve strategic goals. As Greenpeace can be regarded as the de facto main player in the NGO industry, in terms of campaigning for environmental issues, and having a proven track record of success with their campaigns. Therefore, the development of the NGO Brand Hostage Framework, which allows for an in-depth understanding of the modus operandi of a brand hostage, can be considered to provide a form of "best practice", in terms how to run a brand hostage campaign. This is important for managers of NGOs, as the study can serve as a guide, while providing key insights on how to effectively run a brand hostage campaign against corporations.

2. Secondly, another implication for NGO managers is that the study provides insights, in regard to the choice of a "good" target for a brand hostage campaign. Which in the study is found to be popular consumer brands, either being a corporate or product brand. Furthermore, the corporation behind the brand is often a major player in its respective industry.

3. Thirdly, as illustrated in the Kimberly-Clark case, brand hostage campaigns can occasionally be loaded with conflicts, increasingly resource-intensive and long-lasting. It is, therefore, also important for NGO managers to understand the motivations and influences which drive their targeted corporation. As found in the case of Kimberly-Clark, an open communication approach conducted behind scenes, where distractions are removed and reputations are respected may in fact lead to a cooperative partnership - which can have a positive influential impact on both the NGO's strive to achieve its fundamental goals, and the corporation's attempts to stay competitive and protect its business.

Implications for managers of a hostage corporation

1. In line with our study, we aimed to explore the phenomenon of brand hostage, with the aim to develop a framework and a definition for a deeper understanding of its modus operandi. Therefore, as the insights were relevant for managers of NGOs, on how to effectively run a brand hostage campaign, likewise is the study relevant for managers of hostage corporations (for example the LEGO corporation in the Shell Greenpeace case). The study provides valuable insights in how to manage and quickly resolve, the dispute in which the NGO may have against the corporation. Based on the study's findings, quick reaction, and open communication, which are conducted behind the scenes with an NGO, can often lead to a beneficial resolution for both parties, or the very least limit the reputational damage and threat the campaign poses.

2. As the study provides insights on what is regarded as a "good" target for a brand hostage campaign. Likewise, these insights can be relevant for managers of a potential targeted brand. Understanding the elements of why a popular consumer brand is an ideal target, allows a corporation to plan ahead and engage in pre-emptive activities, to protect and avoid their brand to be selected as a potential target. For example, this could involve an extensive review of their current CSR policies and ensuring these are met, from the highest level in terms of business partners, down to lowest level of their supply chain. Alternatively, engaging and involving NGOs for consultative purposes on any potential environmental issues may also be an effective strategy as a preventive measure, while establishing a positive relation with an NGO.

3. Additionally, the recognition of an NGO's stakeholder role could implicate the handling of future stakeholders' relations. As based on our findings, NGOs are increasingly acting as a key stakeholder in corporations, whether corporations accept this or not. Furthermore, the study finds that stakeholders hold an important role in determining the plot of a brand hostage campaign. A convincing and credible response to a brand hostage campaign, may limit the reputational damage and threat posed by the campaign, as discovered in our multiple case study, a determining factor behind Greenpeace's successful campaigns was their ability to convince involved stakeholders of their frame. Likewise, if a corporation is able to craft an effective,

convincing and credible response or frame, there is a possibility for stakeholders being convinced and adopting the frame, therefore, limiting any reputational damage from the campaign. In addition, if a corporation is successful in convincing stakeholders, it may very well be conceivable that a corporation is able to “turn the tables” on the NGO, and, therefore, cause reputational damage on them. Although, this has not been found in any of our cases, we cannot say with certainty this can occur.

Implications for managers of the intended target corporations.

1. Lastly, the findings of the study are also of relevance for managers of the intended target. Arguably, it might be difficult for managers to evaluate whether they are a potential third party target. However, one indication could be an association of the company’s core business to environmentally or ethically questionable activities, which might be a thorn in the side of NGOs. In that case, managers of these corporations should pay close attention to their partnerships with other companies. We identified three concrete risks to consider:
    - First, could any of the collaborations be perceived as a form of greenwashing or social license?
    - Second, did partners implement strict CSR policies that might endanger the partnership?
    - Third, is the partner a major corporation in its industry with one or several popular consumer brands?

    Particularly, the second and third point should be taken into account as further implications may result, such as reputational damage, losing an important business partner, financial loss due to customer churn or costly adaptations of own procurement and supply chain policies.

2. According to the study’s findings, corporations which are regarded as the intended target are often framed as, the main culprit or “bad guys”, during a brand hostage campaign. Although once a brand hostage campaign commences, it is unlikely to fully avoid any reputational damage or financial implications from the campaign. Furthermore, NGOs conduct extensive groundwork before commencing a campaign (seen in their opening reports prior to commencing a brand hostage campaign), and there is, therefore, a level of truth in how an intended target’s business model, can be environmentally damaging. Nevertheless, knowing this, corporations who are considered an intended target, have the same possibilities as the hostage corporations, which is to quickly react and engage with the NGO directly, to find a suitable solution and thus, attempt to limit the reputational damage and foster a beneficial relationship with the NGO. Although, this may be rather difficult if the solution aims to dismantle the very business model, in which the corporation is built upon.

3. Finally, from the study’s findings, brand hostage campaigns are increasingly being used by large NGOs such as Greenpeace, and smaller more local NGOs such as OCA and GMOInside. Nevertheless, our study does not find any indication that this trend

will slow down in the foreseeable future. As brands are growing more powerful each day, so is the importance of reputation management and satisfying various stakeholder demands. It is, therefore, a growing concern for managers of corporations, who can be categorised as intended targets. As the study indicates there will be more of such brand hostage campaigns in the future due to its success in achieving NGO strategic goals. Thus, it is important for managers of intended target corporation, to extensively analyse the sustainability of their business model and find possible ways to improve, protect or change it. As the study indicates, it is only a question of time before a corporation with a large environmental footprint, gets targeted by an NGO such as Greenpeace.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

NGO targeting corporations has been an increasing trend over the last two decades. Greenpeace, being the major NGO in this area, do not seem to have any plans of stopping such an approach in the foreseeable future. The literature surrounding the phenomenon of brand hostage is still early in its development, there is, therefore, a need for additional research on the topic of brand hostage, and how NGOs systematically target and interact with corporations during a brand hostage. Additionally, this research is, likewise every study, determined in one way or another, therefore the uncontrollable limiting factors should be acknowledged.

The choice to undertake the research in a multiple-case study design based on solely secondary data, entailed limiting consequences and at the same time led to a growing interest to explore the phenomenon with extended data material. From the beginning, we understood that a mixed-method research design, including primary and secondary data, would have valorised the study, as conducting interviews would have backed up our findings or provide unknown insights, as well as reduce misunderstandings deriving from a pure secondary data analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Therefore, we initially intended to interview representatives of the involved parties. However, as none of the requested organisations seemed available, we had to admit that due to the sensitive topic, the hostage companies were not willing to comment on the campaigns. Thus, we had to limit the empirical research of the study to purely case analyses of secondary data and as a consequence, decided to consider two additional non-Greenpeace NGO cases to verify the findings and prove they are not solely a Greenpeace strategy. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to explore the phenomenon more in-depth by taking the internal views of the involved parties into account.

The second limitation falling back on the research design concerns the imbalance of sources. As mentioned in our study, Greenpeace and other NGOs communicated their campaign activities and successes extensively, the targeted hostage companies, generally kept their communication to a minimum. Possibly, because they had very little interest in revisiting a case they would rather forget. The only exception was found in the Kimberly-Clark case, arguably because the resolution came with a collaboration with Greenpeace.

Further, it could be of interest to investigate brand hostage campaigns from different perspectives. As this research had centred the main analysis around three Greenpeace cases, the examination of brand hostage campaigns from more NGOs could be worthwhile. Examining the phenomenon from the angle of the targeted company could also be important to extend the knowledge around NGOs' brand hostage campaigns. Furthermore, conducting a comparative case analysis between brand hostage cases of major international NGOs and smaller local NGOs, to identify any variations in motivation, relationship dynamics and traits, may also be of interest.

Another possibility would be to conduct a longitudinal study, which follows the inception of a brand hostage campaign, from when an NGO identifies a target, to when a resolution has been achieved with the corporation. By conducting such a study, it would be possible to monitor any ongoing dynamics and interactions between the NGO and corporation. In the Kimberly-Clark case, we had detected that some campaign materials were not available to the its full extent, as links and articles have been removed, due to Greenpeace ceasing its campaign activities and entered a partnership with the corporation. Following a brand hostage campaign from the beginning to the end would prevent such a limitation or censoring of data.

As our research has primarily focused on NGO cases of brand hostage, we have found from our literature review signs of the phenomenon occurring outside of the context of NGOs and corporations. Therefore, it is conceivable that phenomenon of brand hostage occurs in other settings, which involves other entities besides NGOs and corporations. From a brief inspection, it would be interesting to for example look at the case of The Umbrella Revolution in Hong Kong. Where in 2014, the central business district of Hong Kong was taken as a hostage and occupied by thousands of protesters of consisting of Hong Kong residents. All were part of the so-called "umbrella revolution" which shuttered the entire business sector of Hong Kong into a halt. The issues were Beijing reneged on the agreement to grant open elections by 2017. The group demanded a "true universal suffrage" announcing that the protests and occupation would not end until Beijing changed its electoral guidelines (Kaiman, 2014). Another example case would be the Swedish pilot union SPF against Scandinavian Airlines (SAS). In April 2016, SPF started their negotiations for higher wages and improvements in the working contracts with SAS. However, SPF declined SAS' proposed improved contract offer and the pilot association asked its 400 members in Sweden to strike to pressure SAS into meeting the union's demands (SAS, 2016; (Garcia, 2016a). These are just two examples of cases amongst several which can be identified. It would therefore be of interest to study cases different from NGO cases according to the brand hostage phenomenon. As it will allow for the identification of any differences or similarities in dynamics and characteristics. In addition, it could be interesting to compare our conceptual framework to an alternative framework developed from these different cases, as there may be variations and differences depending on the context of where the phenomenon occurs.

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