Social Media as a Tool for Online Advocacy Campaigns:

Greenpeace Mediterranean's Anti Genetically Engineered

Food Campaign in Turkey

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Abstract:

Advocacy has been one of the main fields of study in public relations and is established amongst the main functions of public relations. The strong need of non-governmental organizations for public support in order to reach their goals locates public relations and advocacy at a central position for these organizations. Social media, which have been introduced by the further development of Internet technology, especially Web 2.0, has had a significant impact upon public relations and advocacy activities of non-governmental organizations in particular. This development also led non-governmental organizations towards online advocacy campaigns that promote active participation of supporters with more cost effective methods that can easily become widespread. The aim of this study is to place the advocacy campaigns of non-governmental organizations into the context of public relations and to discuss how social media can be utilized in online advocacy through the case study of the *Yemezler!* (We do not buy it!) campaign by Greenpeace Mediterranean that has been significantly successful in a short period in Turkey. The Dragonfly Effect model developed by Aaker and Smith (2010) is employed as a framework in the analysis of the *Yemezler!* campaign.

Keywords: Advocacy; Internet; Nongovernmental Organizations; Online Advocacy; Public Relations; Social Media; Social Networking Sites

Résumé:

La promotion a été un des principaux champs d'étude dans les relations publiques et a été établie parmi les principales fonctions des relations publiques. Les organisations non-gouvernementales ont le fort besoin d'obtenir le support du public afin qu'elles atteignent leurs objectifs. Ces organisations considèrent centrale l'utilisation des relations publiques et de la promotion pour atteindre ces buts. Les médias sociaux, qui ont été introduits par le développement de l'Internet, plus particulièrement le Web 2.0, ont eu un impact significatif sur les activités des relations publiques et la promotion particulièrement pour les organisations non gouvernementales. Ce développement a également mené les organisations non-gouvernementales à s'engager dans des campagnes promotionnelles en ligne qui encouragent une participation active des supporteurs avec des méthodes rentables qui peuvent facilement devenir généralisées. L'objectif de cette étude est de placer les campagnes promotionnelles des organisations non-gouvernementales dans le contexte des relations publiques et de discuter comment les médias sociaux peuvent être utilisés dans la promotion en ligne via le cas de la campagne de Greenpeace Méditerranée qui a eu un succès significatif pour une courte période en Turquie *Yemezler!* (On ne l'achète pas!) L'effet libellule, un modèle développé par Aaker et Smith (2010) est employé comme cadre théorique dans l'analyse de la campagne *Yemezler!*.

Mots-clés: Internet; Promotion; Promotion en ligne; Médias sociaux; Organisations non-gouvernementales; Relations publiques; Sites de réseaux sociaux

Introduction

Even though advocacy has not been studied in depth, it has been addressed by many scholars as one of the main functions of public relations (e.g., Berg, 2009; Bernays, 1971; Cutlip, 1994; Edgett, 2002; Heath, 2007; Nelson, 1994). Advocacy can be described as "the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favourably on—or accept the point of view—the individual, the organization, the idea" (Edgett, 2002: 1). Although individuals can perform the activities of advocacy as mentioned above, the active agents of advocacy are mostly the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work for public interest. Advocacy is a tool for generating public support for particular topics that NGOs focus on. It contributes to the perpetuation of NGOs as well as empowering NGOs as agents in policy-making processes. NGOs usually perform advocacy activities around consumer rights, environment, peace, civil rights, and social justice (Heaney, 2008). As a method, NGOs also tend to organize advocacy campaigns that target wide public support.

Building upon the public support gained, NGOs aim at shaping the political reforms related to their working areas, in favour of public interest in the broader sense via advocacy campaigns.

Approaching advocacy from a historical perspective, the last three decades stand out as a period in which NGOs spent more time and gave more priority to advocacy activities at local, national and international levels (Coates & Rosalind, 2002). The timing is not coincidental: Neo-liberal policies of the post-1980 period, the transformation of state-citizen relations through governance discourse, and the public discussions encouraged by NGOs around relatively invisible issues and new communication technologies enabled NGOs to gain wider public support for their advocacy campaigns. Their potential to establish relationships between different parties such as civil societies and state, local, national, and international organizations empowered their advocacy campaigns, whilst the public support they achieved via these campaigns allowed them to take part in the processes of policy-making as active and powerful agents. On the other hand, the topics of advocacy campaigns conducted by NGOs are various, including:

> general principles of inclusion and participation in decision making, through macro issues such as reform of the WTO, human rights, corporate responsibility, and the regulation of multinational corporations, to more specific issues such as education, debt, child labour, food security, biotechnology and reproductive health.
>
> (Hudson, 2002: 407)

Public relations of NGOs, Online Advocacy, and Social Media

As Brainard and Siplon (2004) argue, NGOs attempt to survive in a very competitive environment, although they are not part of the private sector. Even though NGOs do not constitute a part of public administration, they endeavour to provide services for those in need. Although not being grassroots, they are expected to operate as vital mediator organizations, to actively participate in the policy-making processes, and to empower democracy. All these functions can be realized via well-established and well-sustained communication with their publics. The key notion for facilitating effective communication with publics is public relations. In other words, effective communication and relations established with different public parties is a prerequisite for the continuity of NGOs. The intensity and direction of these relations are constructed according to the social responsibility targeted by NGOs. Furthermore, NGOs need volunteers to accomplish their programmes and to provide their services; they depend on the media to publicize their works, activities, and campaigns; they depend on donors and sponsors for financial support; and they need public support for their advocacy activities. These networks of relations with the related public bodies must be managed within a particular framework and according to a certain agenda. That is to say, NGOs require structured public relations activities in order to achieve their communicative goals (Özdemir & Aktaş Yamanoğlu, 2010).

Spencer (2002) discusses the main opportunities that the Internet can bring to NGOs as a public relations domain. Taylor, Kent, and White (2001) emphasize the significance of the Internet for NGOs in terms of gathering resources and communicating with the targeted publics. Regardless of the structure of organization, the use of the Internet is substantial for all sorts of organizations. However, considering the needs of NGOs, the importance of the Internet for these

organizations becomes even more vital. Undoubtedly, the Internet is more productive when compared with traditional tools of public relations in terms of cost and speed.

While the opportunities, different uses, and application trends that the Internet provides for NGOs were being discussed in public relations literature (e.g., Naude, Froneman & Atwood, 2004; Reber & Kim, 2006; Spencer, 2002; Taylor, Kent & White, 2001; Waters, 2007; Yeon, Choi & Kiousis, 2005), Web 2.0, which was developed in late 2000s, influenced public relations practices, and advocacy activities in particular. The notion was coined by O'Reilly Media in 2004 and was described as "a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010: 61). Along with new opportunities, Web 2.0 also provided a platform for realization of the claim of mutuality of the dominant paradigm, the Excellence Theory, in public relations literature. Web 1.0 only allows one-way communication in static websites, and it does not correspond to the needs of public relations professionals who expect to develop two-way communication with publics via organizational websites (Seltzer & Mitrook, 2007), whereas Web 2.0 technology, on the other hand, allows for sharing, linking, collaborating, and inclusion of user-generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Thackeray et al., 2008), and suggests various opportunities for public relations professionals to interact with publics while adopting new forms and tools of technology and integrating them into their daily lives (Curtis et al., 2010). Hence, this new domain enabled the genuine two-way and mutual communication between organizations and publics and provided new opportunities for establishing relationships.

One of the indicators of this newly formed communication domain is social media. Kaplan and Haenlein define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content" (2010: 61). Providing a dynamic media environment, social media empowered all public categories and transformed communication of organizations with their employees, clients, and the media which constitute their own public (Wright & Hinson, 2009). Mangold and Faulds (2009) addressed social media as social networking sites, creativity works sharing sites, user-sponsored blogs, company-sponsored websites/blogs, company-sponsored cause/help sites, invitation-only social networks, business networking sites, collaborative websites, virtual worlds, commerce communities, podcasts, news delivery sites, educational materials sharing, open source software communities, and social bookmarking sites allowing users to recommend online news stories, music, videos, and so on.

Social media, just like the Internet, has been one of the popular fields of study in the last decade. One can distinguish several approaches in public relations studies that relate to social media: 1) the impact of social media on public relations in general or certain public relations practices in particular (e.g., Ang, 2011; Barker, 2008; Taylor & Kent, 2010; Wright & Hinson, 2008; Waters, Tindall & Morton, 2010); 2) the uses of social media as a public relations tool by different organizations (e.g., Briones et al., 2011; Greenberg, Knight & Westersund, 2011; Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012); 3) a particular social media platform as a public relations tool (e.g., Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010; Smith, 2010; Xifra & Grau, 2011); and 4) the understandings and uses of social media by public relations professionals (e.g., Diga & Kelleher, 2009; DiStaso, McCorkindale & Wright, 2011; Eyrich, Padman & Sweetser, 2008; Macnamara, 2010). These studies usually highlight the opportunities of social media as a realm for public relations. Despite the fact that social media provide a substantial ground for NGOs that struggle in developing sustainable relationships with donors and volunteers and employing public relations

professionals with their low budgets, the amount of studies that focus on NGO uses of social media are very limited. Furthermore, one can find very few studies focusing on social media and public relations in a developing world context in the literature.

The new communication environment created by social media inevitably affected advocacy as a public relations function as well. The end of the 1990s, when researchers started to mention electronic advocacy, online advocacy, or cyber advocacy (e.g., Bennett & Fielding, 1999; FitzGerald & McNutt, 1999; Schwartz, 1996), through the mid 2000s, especially during fast developments in the domain of the Internet, has led to the reshaping of the advocacy activities of NGOs. Such a reformation of public relations via social media concepts such as moderation, interactivity, interchangeability, propinquity, responsiveness, and dialogue (Kent, 2010) changed the appearance of advocacy campaigns of NGOs after the mid-2000s. NGOs were obliged to reshape their advocacy campaigns under the requirements and expectations of the new communication environment in which interactivity is regarded as the main distinguishing feature, participation is promoted, editorial oversight is preferred to conservativeness, participants are more or less interchangeable, closeness and proximity are established among users, and communication becomes a genuine dialogue thanks to the responsiveness (Ibid). Some studies discuss the extent to which social media can be utilized in accordance with the communicative aims of organizations (e.g., Blanchard, 2011; Shih, 2011; Solis & Breakenridge, 2011); however, the Dragonfly Effect Model, which was developed by Aaker and Smith (2010), provides an explanatory and functional framework for using social media in order to trigger rapid changes. The model "symbolizes the importance of integrated effect and is akin to the ripple effect—a term used in economics, sociology, and psychology to indicate how small acts can create big change" (Aaker & Smith, 2011: 32). Aaker and Smith (2010) argue that the campaigns facilitated via social media must be conducted with four basic abilities: focus, grab attention, engage, and take action. The model is based on the assumption that the four abilities working together will produce "colossal results" in social media.

Considering Web 2.0 and social media in particular, the main strength of online advocacy lies in the potential of employing social media by an individual or self-organizing group for a certain goal, when compared with mass media. Collaborative environments support and facilitate instantaneous engagement and participation of the masses, thereby "network enriched" solutions can be possible (Bresciani & Schmeil, 2012). The masses that realize that their contributions can have a rapid effect and outcome become more willing to participate to the advocacy activities. NGOs can share information about their advocacy activities via social networking accounts such as Twitter and Facebook, they can upload their creative works to sharing sites such as YouTube, and they can create micro sites focusing solely on their advocacy campaigns. Furthermore, technologies of social media enable individuals to follow advocacy campaigns. NGOs can build a continuous and stronger relationship with their targeted groups through sharing up-to-date information about their campaigns. Another advantage of utilizing social media in advocacy is the facility of adjusting communicative messages according to contemporary circumstances. It is also possible to share particular information with particular stakeholders via social media in advocacy campaigns. Social media also challenges the excuses raised by individuals against participating in the campaigns, such as "I don't have time", "I don't know enough about it", "I don't know where to begin or what to do next" (Galer-Unti, Tappe & Lachenmayr, 2004: 281-282) because supporting an advocacy campaign is as easy as clicking the mouse or pressing the "send" button.

Greenpeace and Advocacy

Greenpeace is one of the leading and well-known environmental NGOs. Zelko (2004) mentions that the logo of the organization is as well-known as many multinational companies. Emerged from an anti-nuclear splinter group of the Sierra Club in Canada in 1969, Greenpeace has become a globally active and centrally coordinated multi- million dollar organization (Eden, 2004). The organization is currently present in 40 countries across Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. Greenpeace is distinguished by its financial independency from governments and private companies as it does not accept donations from neither of these, but it relies on contributions from individual supporters and foundation grants. It has attracted the attention of many scholars and researchers from various disciplines in the social sciences due to its different structure when compared with other NGOs, its activist attitude, and the effective communication tactics and strategies it employs (e.g., Dale, 1996; Doyle, 2007; Heinz, Cheng & Inuzuka, 2007; Hirzalla & Van Zoonen, 2010; Murphy & Dee, 1992).

The main role of Greenpeace can be summarized as opposing the impact of multinational companies and encouraging governments to implement, complete, and perpetually empower new legislation to protect the environment (Mate, 2001). Greenpeace International describes its areas of work as climate change, forests, oceans, agriculture, toxic pollution, and nuclear on its website. (Greenpeace International, 2012b). The organization employs different strategies, such as releasing scientific reports, and focusing on lobbying activities, activism, and advocacy campaigns in order to achieve its goals in the various areas mentioned. Greenpeace advocacy campaigns focus on environmental problems caused by the private companies; environmental policies of local, national, and international organizations; and related legislation implemented by governments. Through its advocacy, Greenpeace tries to make the public adopt and support its point of view and motivate supporters to apply pressure on companies, organizations, and governments in the context of this point of view. Greenpeace advocacy campaigns of the 2000s, such as "Stop Climate Change", "Stop Whaling", and "Eliminate Toxic Chemicals" stand out among others. The ongoing campaign, "Save the Arctic", which is conducted by Greenpeace International (2012a), is a successful example of global advocacy campaigning. With this campaign, Greenpeace aims to collect one million signatures in order to draw attention to the Northern Arctic, which is threatened by oil explorations, industrial fishing, and wars. In a similar vein, 411,000 signatures have been recently collected by the advocacy campaign of Greenpeace Mediterranean in Turkey, "How many centimetres is yours?", which aims at preventing baby fish hunting through public support. As a consequence, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock proposed a bill about fish hunting (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 2012a).

Greenpeace is one of the NGOs that foresaw the power of Internet and effectively utilized it in accordance with the goals of advocacy. The organization has been actively running a website since September 1994, which reached 360,000 hits per week by 1996 when Internet usage was relatively limited (Keys, 1996). Currently, Greenpeace International has a professionally structured international website, which is linked to its official social media accounts, along with national and regional websites. The organization also creates micro websites for the advocacy campaigns it runs. Furthermore, it employs social media very effectively: In August 2012, Greenpeace International had 1,182,088 fans on Facebook and 562,571 followers on Twitter. Moreover, Greenpeace International benefits from sharing sites such as YouTube. In the same timeframe, there were 43,922 subscribers of the YouTube channel

on which the organization has shared 441 videos, and these videos were watched 22, 272,814 times.

The Case: *Yemezler!* (We do not buy it!)

Campaign Background

Discussions on the use of genetically engineered organisms (GEO) started in Turkey in 2010. Turkey was one of the countries that signed the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2004. Following the Biosafety Law enacted in 2010, Turkey introduced biosafety regulations and established the Biosafety Council that processes the applications and makes decisions for the import of products containing GEO. After the application of the Turkish Feed Manufacturers' Association, the Council allowed 13 corn varieties containing GEO to be used in the production of fodder for the first time in December 2011. The Federation of Food and Drink Industry Associations of Turkey (FFDIAT, 2012) applied to the Council for permission to import 29 genes with GEO in March 2012 including 1 sugar beet, 1 potato, 3 soybean, 3 canola, and 21 corn genes. The Biosafety Council refused the demand for the application to be evaluated within the "simplified procedure" and decided to form a special biosafety committee (Biosafety Council, 2012).

  Although Greenpeace Mediterranean, which has been active since 1992 in Turkey, is among the founders of the "Say No to GEO" platform alongside some trade unions, environmental activists, associations, and municipalities, it was not actively engaged in an advocacy campaign on this topic. However, the 100,000 signatures collected within 48 hours for the petition in late 2011 (which was actively supported by Greenpeace Mediterranean against the aforementioned decision of the Biosafety Council to allowed the import of 13 corns), the level of engagement of the Greenpeace supporters of this campaign within such a short period, and the number of e-mails and phone calls received, made Greenpeace Mediterranean realize the demand among supporters to take further steps regarding GEO. This would eventually give rise to Greenpeace Mediterranean's online advocacy campaign *Yemezler!*, or, "We do not buy it".

  Following FFDIAT's application to the Biosafety Council, Greenpeace Mediterranean decided to launch an advocacy campaign and began deliberating a communication strategy. Three alternatives emerged for the advocacy campaign: 1) targeting the brands that are members of FFDIAT, 2) targeting the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock, or 3) targeting the Biosafety Council. Before reaching a final decision, Greenpeace Mediterranean employed a company to conduct a national survey on GEO. According to this survey, 83.3% of the participants mentioned that they would not buy a packaged product if they knew that it contains GEO, 79.2% stated that they would have less confidence in the firm/brand that imports products with GEO (or applies to the Council to import), and only 17.5% of the participants mentioned that they would continue buying the products of a brand that uses GEO (Greenpeace Mediterranean, 2012b). The results of the survey influenced the organization's decision on the "brand attack" strategy, thereby targeting the brands in its advocacy campaign. In line with this strategy, Greenpeace Mediterranean structured a campaign message that invited FFDIAT member companies to take part in an anti-GEO front and to withdraw their applications to the Biosafety Council. Greenpeace's brand attack strategy would target the leading food sector brands in Turkey, which also constitute the largest shares of the advertisement pie, such as Eti, Ulker, Algida, and Sana.

This strategy practically forced Greenpeace Mediterranean to design its campaign as an online advocacy effort dependent on social media. The organization, which worked with public relations, advertisement, and media agencies during its previous campaigns, found itself desolated when these agencies did not want to work for Greenpeace Mediterranean. They were worried that their involvement in the campaign would damage their good relationships with the leading food brands. This challenge led Greenpeace Mediterranean to benefit from the power of social media.

Campaign Analysis

The Dragonfly Effect model developed by Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith (2010) is employed here in the analysis of how social media were used in Greenpeace Mediterranean's online advocacy campaign *Yemezler!*. This model demonstrates the extent to which synchronized ideas can be used to create rapid transformations through social media. Advocacy campaigns substantially aim at generating rapid transformations among targeted publics, and leading these publics to think, behave, and act in certain ways about particular topics. Aaker and Smith's model is based on four skills/wings. The first one is "focus", addressing the need to focus on one concrete and operational aim in order to make a change via social media. The second skill/wing of the model is to "grab attention". This skill refers to an authentic and memorable message that can be distinguished by the targeted group that is exposed to various messages in the social media. "Engage", the third skill/wing, emphasizes creating a personal connection, accessing higher emotions, such as compassion, empathy, and happiness, via social media. The last skill/wing, "take action", suggests enabling and empowering others to take action. The *Yemezler!* campaign is analyzed in the context of advocacy through these four basic skills/wings. Case study data were derived from various sources, including an in-depth interview with Erhan Çokkeçeci (personal communication, 2012, August 15), resourcing and new media director of Greenpeace Mediterranean; Media Monitoring Excel files created by Greenpeace Mediterranean; Greenpeace Mediterranean`s website; and relevant social media sites.

The first wing of the model emphasizes the importance of focusing on one particular outcome rather than "thinking big". As such, the main goal is divided into attainable sub-goals, developing particular parameters in order to measure success, and building an action plan. In accordance with the first wing, Greenpeace Mediterranean identified a specific goal, which was to pressurize the brands to withdraw their existing applications to the Biosafety Council, rather than "thinking big" about the GEO that has been on the organization`s agenda under the title of sustainable agriculture for a long time. Particular metrics defined to measure the campaign's success included the number of signatures within a certain period of time and negotiations with the Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock and other bureaucrats being mentioned on the first page of at least ten national newspapers. Greenpeace also had a written action plan for this online advocacy campaign. The organization aimed at raising awareness in 2012 and the withdrawal of the applications by mid-2013. In this regard, the campaign achieved success earlier than anticipated in the action plan.

The second skill/wing of the Dragonfly Effect model refers to drawing the attention of the targeted group. Considering that individuals are exposed to numerous messages via social media in everyday life, it is vital to attract people's attention to an NGO advocacy campaign and engage them in it. Greenpeace holds a relatively privileged position in engaging the public via social media because it already had a massive "cyber activist" public supporting its campaigns

online, and there are more than 20,000 financial supporters of the organization in Turkey. These cyber activists were a multiplier in the campaign, as they helped spread the campaign to a wider public.

The campaign has a simple, original, and catchy title: *Yemezler!*. The idiom is a homophone borrowed from Turkish slang and literally means "they don't eat it". However it also means "I shall not be cheated". In a semiological sense, it suggests that the products with GEO would not be consumed and emphasizes the common disbelief of the argument that GEO are healthy. In accordance with the ironic tone and slang reference of the campaign, Greenpeace Mediterranean, which is well aware of the power of visual imagery from its former advocacy experiences, used a fork in which the middle tine is longer than the others, referring to the gesture of "giving the finger" as the campaign visual to support the slogan of the campaign. Greenpeace Mediterranean used five different versions of the visual as profile pictures in its social media accounts and shared the visuals with its followers at different times during the campaign. The visual has been so popular that one of the biggest-selling national newspapers, *Aksam*, made professional photographs with 12 celebrities wearing the t-shirts with the visual of the campaign. The newspaper also supported the campaign by allocating a full page of its Sunday supplement to the *Yemezler!* campaign (Barbaros, 2012, March 24). The campaign was widely publicized in the national press with articles, news, and interviews.

Initially, a micro site, which provided clear and comprehensible information about the harms of GEO, was built to establish a rational for the advocacy campaign at the www.yemezler.org address. However, Greenpeace Mediterranean was forced to embed this micro site into its own website when the web service providing company withdrew its support from the campaign. The organization worked with professional photographers designing shots on a GEO theme to use during the campaign along with the campaign visual and shared videos to draw attention. In this phase, Greenpeace Mediterranean posted two popular videos: The first video provided useful information about the health problems caused by GEO, and the second was a scene from a popular television serial, *Fatmagul`un Sucu Ne?*, in which characters discuss the harms of GEO.

Engaging a target audience is the third wing of the model. This wing is related to mixing the right social media tools and telling a personal story. Greenpeace preferred to conduct the *Yemezler!* campaign via social networking sites. Boyd and Ellison defined social networking sites as the latest online communication tool that allows users to create a public or semi-public profile and create and view their own as well as other users' online social networks (Subrahmanyam et al., 2008). Greenpeace Mediterranean identified Facebook and Twitter, which are the most popular networking sites in Turkey, as the main domains of the campaign. Facebook, which was founded with the mission "to make the world more open and connected", recorded 901 million active users by March 2012 (Facebook, 2012). Facebook is distinguished from other social networking sites with its large number of loyal users. According to the 2012 statistics, there are 30.68 million Facebook users in Turkey (Statista, 2012). On the other hand, Twitter is a microblogging service that enables people to share short textual messages, or tweets, with other participants. Currently, 3.8 million people are active on Twitter in Turkey (Atasoy, 2012). No doubt, the popularity of these social networking sites attracted the Greenpeace Mediterranean that, at the time of this writing, had 485,109 fans on Facebook and 197,703 followers on Twitter. One can argue that the relationship Greenpeace established with its followers on Facebook and Twitter contributed a great deal to the success of the online advocacy campaign.

According to the social media monitoring data compiled by Greenpeace Mediterranean, Greenpeace shared 54 posts, 31 of which were link sharing, during the *Yemezler!* campaign on Facebook. The first post, which was a link directing the visitors to the micro site of the *Yemezler!* campaign, was shared on 28 February 2012. Then, campaign news and articles and links posted about the campaign on Greenpeace Mediterranean's main webpage were shared on Facebook. Greenpeace Mediterranean continued the brand attack strategy through these links and shared posts about the brands. For instance, on 30 March 2012, the NGO shared on its Facebook page that during the popular television show *1Kadin 1 Erkek*, tweets by *Yemezler!* hashtags would be broadcasted during the program. A link was posted on 9 June 2012 regarding information on the use of GEO by a brand that was attacked as part of the communication strategy. Similarly, news concerning companies blocking e-mails from consumers who protested the food brands in favour of the campaign was announced on 2 July 2012. The last post on 15 August 2012 celebrated the withdrawal of the application and the success of the campaign.

Furthermore, the organization followed a consistent approach on Twitter, organizing daily campaigns with a "call to action" motto. Greenpeace aimed at gathering the users under the *Yemezler!* hashtag and extending the impact through the tweets that were accumulated in the *Yemezler!* hashtag pool and could be noticed by those who are interested in the social responsibility project. As a part of the brand attack strategy, the social media accounts of the relevant brands such as @Ulker and @Algida were also included on Twitter as "mentions" in order for the brands to follow the public reactions. This enabled individuals to support Greenpeace while demonstrating against the brands directly at the same time. The links, which were added to tweets and directed readers to the main page of the campaign (such as http://t.co/MFZWrmHG), also directed the followers to further information on the website. Moreover, many Greenpeace supporters shared tweets including their own views, and others supported the campaign with retweets. The primary support on social networking sites came from Twitter celebrities who are also cyber activists for Greenpeace, with millions of followers. Greenpeace Mediterranean also attracted different groups on social media via topics in its posts. *Yemezler!* is among the most personalized of Greenpeace Mediterranean advocacy campaigns. It is more powerful when compared with anti-nuclear or climate change campaigns, as GEO have direct impacts upon people's everyday life. Therefore, Greenpeace Mediterranean has been able to personalize its story through posts and tweets emphasizing this direct impact of the GEO.

The success of a social media advocacy campaign depends on spurring the target audience to actually act on behalf of the cause. Hence, the campaign should tell the targeted group what to do for the campaign and get them do it. For that purpose, Greenpeace first asked people to sign a petition and collected 326,591 signatures. Then, Greenpeace encouraged its supporters to take part in the "brand attack" strategy, leading them to post comments on the brands' Facebook and Twitter accounts and contact the call centres of these companies. Greenpeace also regularly shared the achievements and milestone numbers of signatures (such as 100,000 and 250,000) with supporters, based on the strategy of positioning individuals as partners in the campaign.

Finally, as an outcome of Greenpeace Mediterranean's online advocacy campaign, FFDIAT (2012) in an announcement invited the Biosafety Council to end the worries and chaos overwhelming the public concerning the GEO, to take action about related problems caused by GEO contamination, and declared the withdrawal of its relevant application to import 29 genes with GEO.

Conclusion

The rapid development in Internet technologies during the last decade provided new tools for NGO advocacy campaigns. Social media in particular, which became a part of everyday life after the introduction of Web 2.0 technology, provide new opportunities to NGOs. Social media reduce NGOs' dependency on mass media; enable them to reach broader publics; provide a platform for developing two-way, mutual communication with publics; and facilitate participation in their advocacy campaigns more than ever. Achievements gained via social media are important because they demonstrate to online NGO advocacy campaign supporters on their computers, tablets, and smart phones that there are alternative ways to participate in the policy making processes. Additionally, social media have strengthened NGOs vis-à-vis their opponents through the online support they have gained.

The *Yemezler!* campaign of Greenpeace Mediterranean is an example of effectively utilizing social media for advocacy in terms of particular effect and outcome aims and other indicators that can be utilized in measuring the achievements of the campaign. The popularity of social media attracted different publics and engaged them in the campaign. Furthermore, the *Yemezler!* campaign achieved its goals in a relatively short period of time, beyond Greenpeace's expectations. The campaign, which was conducted solely through social media without the involvement of professional media agencies, gathered hundreds of thousands of signatures in just a few months and forced FFDIAT to withdraw its application for importing GEO to the Biosecurity Council. Furthermore, the campaign introduced the GEO to the public agenda via mass media thanks to the public support it gained through social media. Greenpeace Mediterranean has been able to run the campaign without any agency support because of the brand attack strategy it adopted. It focused on a single goal of applying pressure on companies to withdraw their applications by successfully integrating the ironic, original, and catchy title "We do not buy it!" into each phase of the campaign; effectively relating GEO to everyday life and personalising the story; establishing a rational foundation for persuading people to take action by providing the basic information about GEO via the micro website; and creating sufficient pressure to force FFDIAT to retreat to the social media supporters. No doubt, Greenpeace's past experience with professional communication management combined with its endeavour make social media the centre of its efforts to engage individuals in its global advocacy campaigns contributed a great deal to this GEO achievement.

The campaign conducted by Greenpeace Mediterranean stands as a substantial case for discussing the uses and the opportunities of social media in NGO advocacy campaigns. The *Yemezler!* campaign demonstrates that social media provide an alternative realm for NGOs that are challenged by various problems in conducting advocacy campaigns offline. One could observe that the organization employed social media in accordance with its preference of "brand attack" strategy, however with conventional media habits. In other words, the organization did not make the most of the social media as it considered social media a tool rather than an interactive realm. Consequently, Greenpeace Mediterranean could not benefit from the interactivity and dialogue that are the most important opportunities provided by social media and regarded social media as a one-way communication tool that facilitates sharing of information with its supporters.

To the extent that advocacy campaigns are able to achieve their goals via online media only, one can argue that when campaigns are coordinated across different online platforms, they can create a multiplier effect and reach their goals more effectively. On the other hand,

conducting an advocacy campaign online does not necessarily result in interaction or two-way communication. If organizations do not focus on utilizing the interactive feature of social media, social media cannot spontaneously act as an interactive tool. In this case, it only serves to disseminate information towards the supporters and does not necessarily facilitate any dialogue or engagement with them. Therefore, NGOs, which are heavily reliant on supporters, donors, and members to survive, must develop strategies to benefit from social media as an interactive tool and utilize it in improving relationships with publics in advocacy campaigns. The *Yemezler!* campaign was able to engage the target public as the problem was directly related to people`s everyday lives. However, interactivity would be more useful in many ways in the campaigns that deal with other topics that people may find more difficult to engage with.

This study offers a useful framework in the Dragonfly Effect model for conducting NGO advocacy campaigns, with the *Yemezler!* campaign as its focus. To further test and refine its usefulness, online advocacy campaigns of different NGOs that operate in different places on different scales with different agendas must be examined in depth. Such studies can contribute to the literature and enable comparative analysis. Campaign success is loosely regarded herein; more specific, measurable, and consistent indicators related to the Dragonfly Effect must be developed to more accurately ascertain "success" of online NGO advocacy campaigns. Achieving pre-defined goals cannot be taken as a sufficient indicator of the success of advocacy campaigns.

The *Yemezler!* campaign is noteworthy in terms of indicating the new horizon that the Internet and social media have brought for NGOs. It demonstrates that it is still possible for NGOs to conduct successful advocacy campaigns depending solely on their own resources and social media without the support of external agencies and huge campaign budgets. NGOs that are able to benefit from social media in advocacy campaigns and that can use it properly will widen their supporter bases, manage to motivate a large number of supporters to take action, and maintain active participation in policy-making processes in the future.

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B. Pınar Özdemir, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Faculty of Communication, Ankara University. Her 2006 doctoral dissertation was titled "Globalization and its Impact on Public Relations". She has various academic publications, and has been teaching marketing communication and public relations to undergraduate and graduate students for several years.

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Anti-GMO Advocacy Funding Tracker. This GLP project maps contributions by foundations to anti-biotech activists and compares it to pro-GMO industry spending. Viewpoint: Greenpeace-funded study backfires, undermining case to treat gene-edited crops as GMOs. Mary Mangan | October 13, 2020. Twitter. Exploring this issue has brought to the attention of the subcommittee that engineered genetic manipulation of plant breeding materials has already occurred in many of the crop varieties that are currently being used in organic farming. A partial list: Disease resistant tomatoes (embryo rescue to introduce resistance genes). For example, online advocacy campaigns have been conducted by nongovernmental organizations to promote active participation of supporters in the case of Greenpeace Mediterranean's anti-genetically engineered food campaign in Turkey (PÄ±nar Ã–zdemir, 2012). Digital activism has reached an all-time high because social media can be used effectively to express dissensus, as was examined in the case of Chick-fil-A's Facebook page (Ciszek, 2016). Social Media: Theories for Managing Relationships and Conflicts with Strategic Publics. Chapter. Social media campaigns are the rocket fuel of your marketing efforts: a concentrated burst of energy that pays off in a major boost to your brand reputation, awareness or sales. A social media campaign is a series of coordinated activities aimed at achieving a specific goal over a set period of time, with outcomes that can be tracked and measured. It can be limited to a single network, or take place across multiple social media platforms. Looking for inspiration for your next social media campaign? That served as a springboard for launching their campaign and gaining even wider recognition. What you can learn: Timing is everything. Coors Light not only offered a promotion that addressed the stress and fatigue of a global epidemic, but also leveraged their latest 15 minutes of fame.