

Chapter 1

Ecological Issues and Public Awareness in Social Media: Greenpeace Mediterranean's Turkey Case

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ABSTRACT

We are threatened by global ecological problems, which are affecting living and non-living existence. Turkey is also facing significant ecological issues. However, Turkey's mainstream media do not give wide coverage to the environmental issues and problems. So, environmental organizations have organized some events through Facebook and Twitter. Social media highly contributed to the publicity of environmental issues and problems over the country. In this study, the authors aim to analyze social media policies of Greenpeace Mediterranean in Turkey. For this purpose, Facebook and Twitter contents of the organization are examined by content analysis. Research was conducted for three months between January 1, 2017 and March 31, 2017, and the data was collected daily. In the analysis, they focus on the main lines of the discussions during that period, main points of the communication strategies followed, interaction levels of the organization and the followers, and also the acts and policies to create public awareness. The concluding part of the study is reserved for discussions and recommendations on the issue.

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INTRODUCTION

The current era is a period in which direct intervention of mankind to the geologic age is an issue. Scientists refer to this period or age as “Anthropocene.” The term denotes human’s being one of the fundamental parameters of environmental degradation. This corruption, occurred after the industrial revolution, has reached an irremediable level today. While ecological problems are rather tragic, considerable steps could not be taken against this derogation. However, we are adequately informed about ecological problems. According to Zizek (2012: 33), we are well equipped with criticism directed against capitalism. We are exposed to many publications, articles, and television news in opposition to companies recklessly polluting the environment. However, we stand in a position where we hesitate to take action and solve problems. The author (2012: 13-14) defines this situation with the notion of “fetishist split”. According to the author, the notion that corresponds to humankind’s awareness of the problems, but not believing in them, is considered as “a sure indicator of the financial power of the ideology that leads us to neglect what we see or hear”.

Today, as a result of the pressure and ideological orientations of the mainstream media, ecological problems cannot receive considerable coverage at times. Media can also be the source of inaccurate and misleading information against ecological problems. The high visibility of the problems for people may also give way to a green propaganda of problem makers. Such cases make ecology a popular issue. The danger embedded by the popularization is that social opposition is suppressed. That the ecological awareness is surrounded and transformed by the system indicates the danger embodied by popularization. In this manner, the spread of developments which cannot be accepted from the ecologic perspective such as eco-friendly products, ecologic engines and packaging passivate people against ecological problems (Önder, 2003: 219).

For environmental organizations such as Greenpeace, media is an essential factor in molding public opinion and activating people. Since the year it was founded, Greenpeace, an organization that tries to draw the attention of media and society through creative communication strategies, is looking for ways to have coverage in media to reach large masses and struggling to make the party which is the source of problem step back in the ecological problem it is fighting against.

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