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Public Relations towards Member Engagement in Advocacy Networks: the 'No Pesticides on My Plate' Campaign

Abstract

When civil society organisations (CSOs) of asymmetric size, structure and scope become members of an advocacy network, all those variations may lead to discrepant communicative behaviour. Therefore, encouraging member organisations to collaborate and co-create messages towards an advocacy goal is a major challenge. To examine member engagement in an advocacy network, this study scrutinises the strategic communication activities of an environmental network in Turkey, and reviews their EU-funded campaign named 'No Pesticides on My Plate' accordingly. Grounded in the relationship management framework, this paper suggests that the power of relevant public relations strategies and tactics should be taken into account as to ensure the effectiveness of member CSOs' actions in an advocacy network. Depending on a case study to examine the subject, it demonstrates how interpersonal communication and media tactics may be utilised to achieve member relations goals and finally to pursue social change.

Keywords: Advocacy Networks, CSO Communications, Environmental Campaigns, Public Relations

1. Introduction

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have significant functions in democratic societies. They each have distinctive goals, motivations, organisational cultures, activism levels, and professional communication abilities and capacities, even if their fields of activity overlap. When they become members of an advocacy network, as their essence forms the network, they become internal publics of this new structure. So, the network's leader organisation can easily reach them as partners and transmit organisational messages. However, each of the member CSOs is still an independent organisation with its unique and autonomous structure, mission and priority. Thus, these organisations can be considered as external publics for the network. The variations among them may lead to discrepant communicative behaviour and they may need to be persuaded to take an action on behalf of the network. In sum, CSOs as members of an advocacy network are neither external nor internal publics, and yet they are both. Therefore,

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encouraging member organisations to collaborate and co-create messages towards an advoca-cy goal is a major challenge in Public Relations (PR). When this exclusive status is consid-ered thoroughly, it might help the inter-organisational relationship elaboration function of PR.

Civil society is an important social location for PR (Moloney, 2006). Public relations, as a relationship building and elaboration function, can help organisations coordinate action, re-duce uncertainty, build trust, and sustain networks of organisations in civil society (Taylor & Kent, 2017, p.18). Bearing this in mind; the relationship management approach provides a useful framework to study the quality of relationships within an advocacy network.

Social media channels have become an integral part of the advocacy strategies of CSOs, and many of them utilise these platforms to mobilise their audience and involve them to sup-port their work, change behaviour, take part in activism, or increase awareness of an issue. This research examines the role of PR in the relationships among each member CSO and the leading partner in an advocacy network; in doing so it takes social media outcomes of the net-work members into consideration as an indicator of their engagement, and questions whether they co-create and share campaign messages on these online platforms. The study reviews an EU-funded environmental campaign named 'No Pesticides on My Plate' as a case study. 'No Pesticides on My Plate' is an advocacy campaign; focusing on alternative farming and pest management methods, its primary aim is to create awareness in society and change the be-haviour of both the producers and consumers, and finally make an amendment in the rele-vant law in parallel with the EU.

This study conceptualizes PR from a civil society perspective and seeks to further its role in advocacy networks by examining the interpersonal communication and media tactics and their effectiveness in member relations goals, and eventually in a social change.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Public Relations in Civil Society Organisations

For over a decade, social theory has been increasingly included in PR studies (Thomp-son, 2016, p. 214). The scope of PR has been extended and the profession is no longer lim-ited to business functions. Many researchers have an optimistic view towards PR that it has a potential to help solve problems in society (Coombs & Holladay, 2007; Demetrious, 2013; Ihlen et.al., 2009; McKie & Munshi, 2007; Moloney, 2006). The idea of PR is conceptualised with a focus on its role in social changes when examined as a social, cultural, and political phenomenon, and not only as a corporate position (Bicakci & Hurmeric, 2018). Therefore, PR can be defined as an accelerator of social changes, utilizing effective strategic communi-cation skills to negotiate with and to persuade the relevant publics, as to reproduce the civil society. As Taylor (2018) stated,

> The concept of civil society is premised on communication and relationships as civil society activi-ties of debate, deliberation, advocacy, risk management, and public relations strive for a balance be-tween public, organisations, institutions, and government interests. It is never completed and it is in everyone's best interest to keep the iterative process of civil society alive through strategic commu-nication (p.1).

From a sociological perspective, Jeffrey Alexander (2006) positions communication at the core of the civil sphere. As he mentions, through 'communicative institutions' of public

opinion, mass media, polls, and associations, the civil sphere is produced and reproduced. Actually, the fundamental role of these communicative institutions 'is the production of the solidarity necessary for civil society to exist' (Friedland, 2007, 605).

According to CIVICUS, which is a global network that brings together thousands of CSOs involved in the civic life of their respective countries, 'Civil society is our species' response to the basic human need to come together in pursuit of common goals' (CIVIKUS, 2011, p. 4). These common goals may vary from struggling with local problems to dealing with global tribulations. CSOs may focus on issues such as human rights, gender equality and equity, or environmental sustainability, then work for change for public good. The term 'Non-Governmental Organisation' (NGO) is sometimes used interchangeably with CSO; however, 'NGOs should be properly understood as a subset of CSOs' (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 122). Thus, this study has chosen to use 'CSOs' as the most inclusive concept.

CSOs include a diverse set of organisations, ranging from small, informal, community-based organisations to the large, high-profile, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) working through local partners across the developing world. Their governance structures are equally varied, a function of their mandate and constituency. Nevertheless, all CSOs share a common characteristic that they are naturally independent of direct government control and management (Tomlinson, 2013).

To address and resolve societal problems, CSOs generally engage in both service provision and advocacy. In certain contexts individuals and CSOs 'who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchange of information and services' collaborate and form advocacy networks (Keck & Sikkink, 1998, p.36).

These networks are generally temporary, however in some cases they may evolve into being permanent. A network becomes successful as collaborating member organisations become involved in its processes and develop harmonious relationships, particularly with the leading CSO. Depending on the structure, leadership is important in advocacy networks. As NGOs and civil society activists exercise public leadership strategies, studies address 'framing and staging of the issue, the importance of networking, and relative merits of collaborative versus adversarial tactics in dealing with governments and corporate actors' (MacKinnon et.al. 2009, 359). However, the impact of successful leadership on member engagement towards advocacy goals, which is the main focus of this study, is overlooked.

2.2. Engagement of Members in Advocacy Networks

Following the establishment of a civil society network, the main struggle is designing dissent and protest PR tactics, aiming at setting a relevant agenda, as to influence public opinion. "Dissent PR" is explained as the sharing of ideas, commentaries, and policies through strategic communication techniques in order to change current, dominant thinking and behavior in discrete economic, political and cultural areas of public life. "Protest PR" is identified as a consequence of the dissent term. It is persuasive communication that aims to implement ideas, behaviors and policies into law, regulation and other forms of executive action (Moloney, 2012). The success of dissent and protest tactics relies on reaching diverse public segments with consistent messages; therefore an advocacy network campaign's PR management is responsible for setting, implementing, and evaluating the strategic communication plan. However, encouraging member organisations to collaborate and create a unique voice towards strategic communication objectives should be a primary concern, before trying to accomplish

goals towards external publics such as governments, media, and society at large. Therefore, before planning dissent and protest PR tactics, interpersonal communication tactics should be considered.

The network members are 'information-seeking publics'; these groups have gone somewhat out of their way to interact with the leading organisation (here Bugday). The members are presumably already interested in the issue; they have some knowledge of the relevant facts and are open to the organisation's message (Smith, 2009, p. 189). An appropriate and timely selection of the PR tactics helps advocacy networks to generate a bound with their members and keep them engaged. Ronald D. Smith (2009) classifies interpersonal communication tactics that can 'work with either internal or external publics' (p.188). These tactics are grouped as personal involvement, information exchange and special events. Organizational-site involvement; (e.g. plant tour, open house, trial membership, free class, sample, shadow program, ride-along and premiere), and audience-site involvement are among personal involvement tactics (p. 190). Second category, that a leading organization may utilize, is information exchange tactics. Educational gatherings (e.g. convention, council, conference, seminar, symposium, colloquium, workshop, training session), meetings, demonstrations (e.g. rally, march, demonstration, picket, boycott) and speeches are included in this category. Third and the most common category is special events. Various types of special events created by the organization provide a location to interact with the members. Progress oriented events (e.g. celebration of the growth and development of a community), social and artistic events such as concert, exhibition, and art shows can be considered among these tactics (Smith, 2009, p.189, 192).

Advocacy networks are fundamentally different in structure and scope to the organisations that form them. This includes decision-making structures as well as communicative flows. In advocacy networks, in order to join forces to achieve a common goal, coordination and negotiations are needed for several organisations of asymmetric size and scope (Acosta, 2012, p.159). Public relations efforts may help CSOs think in network terms, especially as many of them would be used to working either by themselves, or as service providers, or as part of coalitions that work with a hierarchical structure.

Partner or member engagement in advocacy networks is conceptualised as a communication process for working collaboratively with the leading partner (and other member organisations) to address the relevant issues in order to set the agenda. The members' ability to make meaningful contributions to the campaign's goals and overall success depends highly on their motivation, commitment, and involvement in the campaign; that is in turn provided by strong PR leadership. As Bryant (2003) posits, leaders play a fundamental role in creating and sharing organisational knowledge as well as providing vision and motivation. Considering leadership styles, 'the importance of collaboration, shared decision making, and participative practices in effecting change in public relations environments' is supported by an inclusive leadership style (Werder & Holtzhausen, 2009, p.424).

Among leadership skills, effective media management plays an important role. Correspondingly, Vlahoviæ (2013, p. 13) asserts that 'CSO media relations should play a central role in CSO endeavours to be viewed as being in a leadership position in strengthening engagement in civil society'. Thus, being competent in both traditional and digital media relations is an important asset for a leading CSO in an advocacy network.

Although CSOs have begun to implement social media tactics in order to enhance their communication, organisation, and fundraising strategies, studies denoted that advocacy or-

ganisations were not successful enough to utilise the benefits of social media (Bortree & Seltzer, 2009; Guo & Saxton, 2014; Lovejoy, Waters & Saxton, 2012). Advocacy networks, to reach the general public and fulfil objectives, should use social media channels properly; accordingly, the member organisations in a network need to be informed, educated, and motivated about the network's communication strategy and social media tactics.

2.3. The Theory of Relationship Management

Businesses have used alliances to share knowledge and resources amongst themselves to achieve corporate goals, yet little is written in the literature on how non-profit organisations manage alliances and what makes these alliances effective (Polonsky, Garma & Chia, 2004). There are also studies on the collaborations of corporate CSOs, predominantly in relation to corporate social responsibility issues; however, strategic communication studies concerning engagement and collaboration among the CSOs are overlooked (Sommerfeld & Kent, 2015). As such, the relationship between the member CSOs in an advocacy network should be scrutinised from the PR perspective for successful outcomes and sustainable societal impacts.

Among theories such as Resource Dependency, Social Network, Collective Action, and Community Ecology, Sommerfeldt and Kent (2015) asserted that Relationship Management Theory is beneficial in understanding the quality of relationships in a network. Relying on the idea that the relationship management perspective holds that public relations balances the interests of organisations and publics through the management of organisation–public relationships (Ledingham, 2003, p. 181), this study is conceptually grounded in relationship management theory, which has been advanced as a general theory of public relations.

> When scholars and professionals conceive of social networks as opportunities to take advantage of strategic network positions, the relationship building function enacted by organisational communicators can turn to improving civil society networks and other communities that work to benefit society (Sommerfeld & Kent, 2015, p. 250).

However, measuring multi dimensional concepts, such as relationships, has always been challenging. Hon and Grunig (1999) had developed a multiple-item scale, for the Institute of Public Relations, that centered on four aspects of relationships. Waters and Bortree (2012) mentioned them as, 'Trust, satisfaction, commitment, and control mutuality have been explored by a variety of relationship management scholars, and they have become the commonly accepted way of measuring the organization–public relationship' (p. 124). Research has shown that the student-university relationship (Hon & Brunner, 2002; Ki & Hon, 2007), the manufacturer-retailer relationship (Jo, 2006), the community-municipal utility relationship (Hall, 2006) and the community-Air Force base relationship (DellaVedova, 2005) have been measured via four relational outcomes scales (as cited in Waters, 2008, p.76).

As indicators of relationship quality, these four interpersonal communication variables have been applied in recent PR research (Kang, 2013, p.42). 'Control mutuality' is about being attentive to what each others say. It can be considered as listening and being listened, as well. An organization's inclination towards reflecting its power as an authority outrages the feeling of equality between the parties. 'Trust' is associated with the organization's skills, its perceived ability to keep its promises and the way it treats people fairly and justly. 'Commitment' is related with the sustainability of a relationship. When the commitment level is high, the belief in the existence of a long-lasting bond between the parties is high, as well. The last dimension is 'satisfaction'; it is related with mutual benefits of the parties. When they feel

happy, enjoy dealing with each other and they are pleased with their relationships then there is a satisfactory relationship (Sommerfeld & Kent, 2015). Consequently, the four dimensions can help assess the quality of a relationship between the leading partner and the members of a civil society network.

'Communicative driven relationships with publics in NGOs can be studied from both relational processes and outcomes […], outcomes in terms of the communication goals of these relationships' (Oliveira, 2017, p. 117). CSOs develop their presence in social media platforms and advance their advocacy strategy. These platforms are used to set the agenda according to the interests and objectives of CSOs (Duberry, 2019). Because of accessibility to publics enabled by new technologies, CSO communicators would be particularly engaged in new media (Vlahoviæ, 2013).

Consequently, this study scrutinises the strategic communication activities of an environmental advocacy network from Turkey, reviews the campaign called 'No Pesticides on My Plate' in order to examine member engagement in an advocacy network, and questions whether the network members are motivated enough to spread the campaign messages through their social media accounts.

3. The Case Study

3.1. 'No Pesticides on My Plate' Campaign

Alongside the ecological movement, there are numerous worthwhile initiatives from farmers, organisations and businesses to improve sustainability in agriculture and food systems. They can be allies in advocating for more conducive framework conditions (IFOAM, 2017) throughout the world.

At the end of 2019, one of the leading environmental CSOs in Turkey, the Bugday Association, established a network that brought together relevant CSOs and civil initiatives with common interests, with the goal to contribute to food safety, health and environmental protection in the country through decreasing the use of pesticides and promoting alternative farming and pest management methods. This advocacy network, led by Bugday, initiated a campaign called 'No Pesticides on My Plate' (*Zehirsiz Sofralar*) http://zehirsizsofralar.org/english/.

Following the establishment of the network, Bugday invited relevant CSOs to become members. Bugday was successful in explaining its mission to the third sector organisations and persuading them to take action; subsequently, within a couple of months the number of member CSOs reached one hundred. Among the organisations were cooperatives, agricultural communities, associations, ecology networks, collectives, platforms, and professional chambers. Various sizes, structure, and motivations of the network members had become major challenges for the strategic communication management of the network, of which Bugday was in charge. As a result, this network and its endeavours were selected as the subject case for this research, and the member organisations formed the population.

3.2. Research Questions

In the context of this research, 'the leading CSO' will be subsequently referred to as 'Bugday'. Given this study's aim to examine member CSOs engagement in an advocacy network,

five research questions were posed. The first question was related with how Bugday managed the network's PR strategically to keep the members engaged:

RQ1. What are the PR strategies and tactics employed by Bugday to encourage the member CSOs to support campaign objectives?

Subsequently, three questions were asked in order to understand the members' ability to manage their social media accounts relationship with Bugday from their perspectives.

RQ2: Do the member CSOs have the necessary technical capacity and human resources to manage their social media accounts?

RQ3: Do the member CSOs comprehend the network's communication strategy?

RQ4. Do the member CSOs feel engaged enough to contribute to the campaign?

The last question was posed to reveal the quantity of social media outcomes of the campaign:

RQ5. Do the member CSOs co-create and share the campaign messages on their social media accounts?

3.3. Research Design and Data Collection Methods

This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods in answering the five research questions. Considering these questions, the study was divided into three phases: In the first phase, the goal was understanding the insights of the leading organization (Bugday) where the second phase was related with the members' perceptions. Therefore, in the first and the second phases of the study, the semi-structured interview method was chosen for its ability to effectively build understanding with interviewees, collect a maximum amount of breadth and depth about the data, and explore research questions (Leech, 2002) from 1 to 4. The third phase of this study was depending on a quantitative method; a content analysis of the members' Facebook and Instagram pages was made to correspond the last research question regarding the members' social media outcomes.

Interviews

As to provide an inquiry-based conversation, the interview protocol refinement framework of Castillo-Montoya (2016) was followed. The interviews all began with an explanation of the study, followed by a series of questions.

Considering the first research question, the study relied on data obtained from semi-structured interviews with the campaign's senior communication director and Bugday's general manager, via telephone. The interview protocol was developed over the secondary research findings and Smith's (2009) classification of the PR tactics. Secondary sources, such as the network's e-mail group messages, the campaign's website content, fund application documents, and Bugday's Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts were scanned as to form a basis to in-depth interview questions. Before the interviews, the managers were e-mailed a brief version of the questions, to enable them to gather any necessary details regarding the content of the network's PR strategy and tactics. Three phone calls in total were audio recorded and then transcribed; the average duration of each call was about twenty minutes.

Generally there are no fixed formulas for analysis of data in qualitative research methods. The process consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence in address initial propositions of study. To do this, the researcher needs an analytic strategy that relies on theoretical propositions as guides (Plowman, 1998, p.250). Correspondingly, the transcribed texts were analysed according to five stages proposed by Schmidt (2004): First, following an intensive and repeated reading of the fully transcribed interviews, analytical categories were set up. As a second stage, in order to relate particular passages in the text of an interview to one category, a guide was formed. The guide was tested after the first interview and it was revised. Thirdly, using this coding guide, all the interviews were coded according to the analytical categories by two coders. The coding described here was similar to the content analysis technique of scaled structures. Fourthly, on the basis of this coding, overviews were produced and in the fifth and final analytical stage, the data was interpreted (p. 253). For the interpretation stage of the first phase interviews, this study relied on the categorization of Smith (2009) and the perspective of Bryant (2003) towards organizational leadership.

The second, third and the fourth research questions were posed to comprehend how the network members used the collective campaign messages, and how they viewed their relationship with Bugday. In order to answer these questions, the second phase of research was designed. Again, the study employed an in-depth interview method in order to obtain responses from the members. Initially, the entire member CSOs were contacted via e-mail and asked to participate in the research. 12 of these members ultimately agreed to be interviewed and semi-structured interviews were conducted with them through telephone between January 2021 and March 2021. The average duration of the audiotaped interviews was 18 minutes. The records were then transcribed for analysis purposes. The names of the participants and member organisations are kept anonymous for ethical reasons; structural data concerning them are given in the Appendix II.

According to the interview protocol, first two questions (q1 & q2) were general information questions. Following four questions (q3, q4, q5 & q6) were formed to answer the second research question. These interview questions aimed to collect structural data about the member CSOs. Following nine interview questions were posed to reveal the members' perceptions towards their relationship with Bugday, which were the third and the fourth research questions. In framing these interview questions the study benefited from Bugday's answers given in the first phase (q7, q8 & q11) and four relationship quality dimensions mentioned in the relevant literature (q9, q10, q12, q13, q14 & q15) (see Appendix I). Entire interviews were transcribed literally and the texts were analysed according to five stages proposed by Schmidt (2004) as explained in the previous phase; yet there was an alteration only in the last stage of the procedure. The interpretation of the data was made depending on the Relationship Management Theory (Sommerfeldt & Kent, 2015) in the second phase.

To achieve internal consistency during the data collection and analysis processes, the coders utilized the same interview protocols, co-created and shared analytical categories and the guides. They also shared coded transcripts both in phase I and phase II and discussed any possible inconsistency for a full agreement.

Content Analysis

The fifth and the last research question pertained to the social media outcomes of the network members within the scope of the campaign. This was the third phase in which the study benefited from content analysis of the member CSOs' social media posts. Facebook and In-

stagram were chosen for social media analyses, as Bugday indicated these were the most popular channels for the network members. Between December 2019 and April 2020, members' official Facebook and Instagram accounts were scanned. The accounts that were actively used and had at least one campaign message were included in the sample. A total of 38 Facebook and 36 Instagram accounts were chosen for analysis. The sample was formed of 3876 Facebook posts and 3152 Instagram posts. Two coders quantitatively measured the frequency of relevant posts, employing a coding protocol to look for any text or visual posts, concerning 'No Pesticides on My Plate' campaign messages.

When a frequency-based classification is made, such as searching for keywords in a text, frequency analysis is a suitable method. It is one of the content analysis methods (Bilgin, 2006, p.18). The coding protocol was formed depending on the search for the Turkish keyword '*Zehirsiz sofralar*' (No pesticides on my plate). Each social media post was coded as 1 in the chart if:

– a post included the key word in the title, body text, hashtag, link, tag and/or the visual image in any form (Photo, graphic, illustration, video clip etc.),

– a post had the key term either in the text or in the visual,

– a post had the key term both in the text and the visual,

– multiple visuals in one post included the key term.

The images were not coded according to another protocol, because all the campaign visuals included the official logo with the name of the campaign on it. The number of relevant posts was recorded in an Excel spreadsheet on a weekly basis separately by the coders. Inter-coder reliability was then checked according to Holsti's reliability formula (Allen, 2017).

One limitation of this method was that 'Stories' were excluded from the analysis. Because of their ephemeral nature it was not possible to access their contents; only the posts on the main pages were included in the sample.

3.4. Findings

This research was composed of three phases. In the first phase, Bugday 's insights were analysed as to understand which strategies and tactics were used in their member relations, within the advocacy campaign. Bugday 's main strategy was proactive; Audience participation was their action strategy, transparency was the communication strategy and both logical and emotional appeals formed the basis of their message strategy. When the relevant tactics were scrutinized, the findings confirmed that the media tactics were developed upon digital channels, whereas interpersonal communication tactics were based on various forms of gatherings. The second phase of the study aimed at unveiling member CSOs insights towards their relationship with Bugday . The results of the interviews proved that, even the members defined themselves as active and engaged partners, they were neither enough trained on social media management, nor aware of importance that Bugday gave to message sharing over social media. The positive attitudes they held towards the leading CSO did not enable them to behave towards campaign objectives. This finding was also confirmed with the results of the third phase. The frequency analysis of the campaign's social media outcomes revealed that the member CSOs did not share the campaign related posts with a high frequency.

Phase I: Insights of the Leading CSO

The first research question asked: What are the PR strategies and tactics employed by Bugday to encourage the member CSOs to support campaign objectives. Two interviewees from Bugday were questioned regardingly. Since this study focused only on member relations the interview questions did not scrutinize general media relations or consumer relations tactics and lobbying efforts particularly; however, some tactics were naturally targeted towards overlapping publics.

Three main analytical categories and their sub categories were set up for the analysis as follows:

1. Strategy
    a. Action
    b. Communication
    c. Message
2. Media tactics (towards the members)
3. Interpersonal communication tactics
    a. Personal involvement
    b. Information exchange
    c. Special events

The first category was the strategy. The campaign's action, communication and message strategies towards the member CSOs were examined. The campaign's communication director, Turgay Özçelik, mentioned that their member communication strategy in the network was *proactive*. He stated:

> Our strategy depends on transparent communication, newsworthy information, and audience participation. We are trying to collaborate with our members on every possible occasion and to increase the capacity of Bugday staff and the members of the network, especially for networking, lobbying, advocacy and campaigns through meetings, webinars, and participation in European events of the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Europe (Turgay Özçelik, personal communication, March 2020).

Transparency has always been a prominent communication strategy in the network. Members were continuously informed about upcoming programmes and events, as well as the latest news about the cause and the petition campaign, and they were encouraged to share this news through their social media accounts. The tone of the e-mails was motivational; wording was neat and strong. Bugday continuously provided visuals and documents ready to be shared on social media platforms without much effort. Considering the message strategy, the interviewees mentioned that their messages were always evidence based, such as the *use of statistics* and *testimonies*. They believed strong visual presentation could enhance the message effectiveness, thus they generated custom made illustrations for every occasion and they constantly shared them with their members. To persuade audiences, besides logical evidences, *fear appeals* were considered as a part of their message strategy. Bugday 's General manager indicated as:

Before persuading the public we need to provide logical evidences for our partners […]. In the world there are 860 millions of farmers and farm workers. Every year about half of them (44%) are poisoned from the pesticides; we give these scientific research results in our messages (Batur Țehirlioðlu, personal communication, April 2020).

However there was no clear answer about how they communicated with the members about the core elements of their strategy. Providing them with the designed content was seen sufficient. These materials were coded among media tactics as second analytical category:
– Photo frames for Facebook
– Designer-made illustrations for every occasion
– Links to the petition campaign
– Links to articles written by supporter opinion leaders
– A 14-part special video documentary series broadcasted on YouTube

All the digital materials were provided with adapted versions for each social media platform appropriately adjusted in size and necessary technical formats (word count, hashtags, link formats, and so forth). Given Bugday 's struggle in motivating the members regarding social media visibility efforts, they arranged and announced special dates (5th February and 30th March) for collective message sharing. Accordingly, all the network members were asked to share the designated social media messages on a given date, from their respective accounts. Communication director Özçelik admitted that they were "a bit late in this endeavour", yet "successful in mobilizing the members" (Turgay Özçelik, personal communication, April 2020).

Throughout the interviews, it was mentioned that Bugday 's media tactics heavily relied on digital media such as e-mail messages from the network's Google Group (this was a members-only closed group) and later from a WhatsApp group. The social media account named '*ZehirsizSofralarÝçin*' and the campaign Web Site (www.zehirsizsofralar.org) were used as the main hubs for informing the members.

Third analytical category was interpersonal communication tactics. They were initially coded according to three sub-categories as personal involvement tactics, information exchange tactics and special events. However, it was difficult to differentiate member involvement from information exchange tactics and special events as they were interwoven in this case. Because Bugday intended to actively involve the members and create an environment suitable for the network's interests during various types of meetings and events. As Özçelik mentioned "different types of gatherings gave members the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes and be continually informed about the network's path" (Turgay Özçelik, personal communication, March 2020). Eventually, all the sub categories were integrated and named as "member engagement tactics". In this scope, the following tactics and the relevant publics are listed:
– Non-toxic conference (general public)
– Briefing meeting (members)
– Training sessions (members)
– Workshops on campaigning, lobbying and communication strategies (members)
– Discussion session (members)
– Press conference (media; the bulletins are shared with the members, too)
– Agro-ecology workshop (members in the Aegean region)
– 'No Pesticides on My Plate' panel (members in Ankara, media)
– Documentary displays (members in Ankara, media)
– Petition stands (general public, members)
– Progress-oriented meeting (members)

Between November 2019 and March 2020 there were five formal meetings in the three biggest cities of Turkey. Interviewees did not give an exact number of the participants but they asserted that all the member CSOs participated in at least one of the meetings. Bugday men-

tioned that members were informed about the meetings and invited to participate via e-mails sent through the network's Google Group. The interviewees emphasized that throughout the meetings, the members were asked for their support in accomplishing the campaign goals. However, they did not give clear examples regarding the expected style and wording of the promotional posts, and thus much was left open to improvisation. Referring to the findings of the second phase, some members thought that they were supporting the campaign by sending an environmental message of their own; however not using particular campaign messages, not mentioning the name of the campaign or not using the campaign hashtag would not help reaching campaign objectives. Because, publics cannot associate these individual messages with the campaign without any frame and specific mention.

Member involvement in the project was repeatedly encouraged. However, as the campaign's communications director stated, member involvement and participation was not sufficient at the end of the three-month period. In response, they decided to form *small communication groups* among the members to simplify the flow of information; Bugday 's communication team was in charge of moderating these groups. Group formation began during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic spread in Turkey, in March 2020. From that point forward, all meetings were to be held remotely. The network pursued online activities for the purpose of maintaining the attention of the various publics; during the last two months, the task of member communication was put on the back burner due to the turbulent environment of the pandemic.

Phase II: Insights from the Network Members

The Bugday Association supported this study and requested that member organisations participate in this particular academic research. Previously, in April 2020, an online relationship quality survey[1] was sent to one hundred member organisations over the network's Google Group. However, the response rate was very low (15%) and member CSOs were unwilling to contribute to the study. The reasons for this low participation are the subject of another study; in addition, the quarantine period triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic might have affected the psychology of people working in the third sector. Therefore, it was decided to conduct follow-up interviews with members who agreed to answer interview questions. Research questions 2,3 and 4 were related with the network members' structures and perceptions. Four main analytical categories and their sub categories helped simplify the data obtained from interviews, they were set up for the analysis as follows:

1. General info
    a. Name/code
    b. Interviewee: Manager/facilitator/volunteer
    c. Active &engaged: yes/no
2. Structure
    a. Position: Employee/a volunteer/ a group of volunteers
    b. Education: yes/no
    c. Professional experience: yes/no
    d. E-mail recipient: me/other
    e. Content decision: me only/ a group of members/the manager
3. Strategy
    a. Level:Informed/not informed/ not sure
    b. Detail: Transparency/ participation/newsworthy info

      c. Social media
4. Relationship quality
      a. Trust/technical sufficiency: Yes/not sure/no
      b. Control mutuality/mutual equality: Yes/not sure/no
      c. Satisfaction: active/not active
      d. Commitment: financial benefit/moral benefit

The second research question was: Do the member CSOs have the necessary technical capacity and human resources to manage their social media accounts? The results proved that they do not have enough training and/or expertise to manage their organisations' digital channels.

The majority of participants were representatives from associations and agricultural communities. One initiative and one foundation contributed to the study, as well. The interviewees were either employees or volunteers and they were chosen with the criteria of being one of the campaign contacts in their respective organisations. Social media accounts were managed either by an individual or a group of volunteers, except for one association in which a communications professional carried out the task of social media management. The so called 'social media coordinators' in the CSOs were generally amateurs who were familiar with social media. Two of them had formal communications education; two other participants mentioned that they benefitted from online courses and certificate programmes to educate themselves on digital media.

As deducted from the interviews, agricultural communities, collectives, and initiatives in particular have fewer professional organisational structures where a flat hierarchy is observed. This sometimes enables these organisations to make decisions more quickly, but there is also the challenge that roles are not clearly defined. Specifically, one respondent mentioned as:

When a group of people is responsible for a given task, each of them expects someone else to do the task, and thus it remains undone. For example last week Oya (a member from Bugday) came to visit us and she reminded about the upcoming No Pesticides Week, personally I share posts on our account but I did not share something relevant because we have younger members to do it (P10, personal communication, March 2021)

Advocacy networks may need to consider that when multiple individuals are responsible for one task, the result might be discrepant or insufficient communicative outcomes.

The third research question was: Do the member CSOs comprehend the network's communication strategy? The participants were asked whether they were informed about the campaign's communication strategy. Five of them responded affirmatively; the others were either not sure or had no idea about the issue. Despite this perspective, 9 out of 12 participants believed that Bugday shared its objectives *transparently*, which was claimed to be a major communication strategy. As examined in the previous sections, Bugday had held several meetings to inform the members; in spite of their efforts, the network's entire strategy was not clearly understood. Where the individuals who supported the campaign embraced campaign messages, the member CSOs, officially, did not share the posts at all. It was not because the members did not support the campaign, as all of them expressed sincere dedication, but they either did not seem to be aware of the importance of spreading the campaign messages, or those who were managing the accounts did not have enough time and/or capacity to handle the organisations' social media accounts properly and professionally. A representative of an agricultural community expressed as:

It would be beneficial to be supported technically, as we are all amateurs trying to cope with updating our digital channels. Nowadays there are many online education opportunities; I would volun-

tarily participate such a program (social media management) to develop myself (P7, personal communication, March 2021).

It can be asserted that Bugday was not aware of the shortcomings of the network members before deciding the network's strategy, which was relying so much upon social media.

The fourth research question was: Do the member CSOs feel engaged enough to contribute to the campaign? The members' engagement was questioned over four dimensions of relationship quality that were trust, control mutuality, satisfaction and commitment. In general entire participants considered themselves to be active and engaged members of the network.

Considering the *trust* dimension, all the participants asserted without hesitation that Bugday was technically sufficient in conducting such a campaign. The interviewees were of the same mind that the specific visuals and messages, which were designed to be shared on social media, facilitated their actions. An interviewee particularly emphasised as:

> I adore the illustrations and images designed for the campaign! We always say with my friends how much we love that creativity. People share these posts because they like them. Of course, it is easier to forward the posts then making them by our own (P4, personal communication, February 2021).

However the same CSOs have lamented about their insufficiencies in managing their digital channels and only providing content was not enough to support them.

When the participants were asked about whether they believed that the relationship between Bugday and their organisation was based on *mutual equality*, the answers varied. Almost all of the agricultural communities presented themselves as societies generated with the support of Bugday , so the leading CSO was a kind of elder sibling for them. Bugday , one of the oldest and most effective organisations in the field, was accepted as an authority, which ruled out any existence or expectation of equality. Representatives for four out of six associations believed there was an equal relationship between Bugday and their organisation. One association and the foundation were unsure about how to define equality; they asserted that in dealing with the members of the network, Bugday might have had a tendency to throw its weight around. In the network, decisions about the future were already set by the leading CSO, and members were expected to act accordingly.

> Bugday is the oldest actor in our struggle; we all respect them. We are all working towards the same objective: A better world! They build up this network and united us, we will follow the path they opened for us even with our eyes shut (P5, personal communication, February 2021).

The collaborative attitude (P5, P7, P9) and Bugday's willingness to listen to the members when they had something to say (P1, P6), encouraged the members to become active in the network, as claimed. During the interviews, when talking about what encouraged them towards engagement, the participants frequently mentioned their personal motive for a common objective. This was related with *satisfaction* dimension of relationship quality. None of the interviewees made a concrete recommendation for better engagement; however, one of the participants (P7) mentioned that at the end of March 2020, Bugday established a WhatsApp group in order to facilitate inter-group communication. For the rest of the project, this group was asserted to be one of the main communication channels for the members, which seemed to contribute to the sustainability of the 'No Pesticides on My Plate' network. This study has not looked into the reasons why the establishment of the group was left until the very end of the active campaign process.

Concerning the *commitment* dimension, the member CSO's were also asked about the financial and moral benefits of being a member in this network. None of them indicated that

they benefitted financially. Indeed, Bugday has only supported members as far as facilitating their participation in meetings. Moral benefits, however, were numerous: interviewees mentioned a sense of belonging (P1, P3, P5, P12) doing something good for the country and the environment at large (P4, P7, P8, P10), realising themselves (P4, P7, P11), a spirit of solidarity (P5, P9), and empowerment for the future (P6).

The content analysis in the next section looks at the social media outcomes of the campaign, as to answer the last research question.

Phase III: Social Media Outcomes

Research question 5 asked: Do the member CSOs co-create and share the campaign messages on their social media accounts? As to answer this question, the contents of the member CSOs' official Facebook and Instagram accounts were scanned for 18 weeks, between November 2019 and April 2020, and the frequency of relevant posts was measured quantitatively. Two coders separately recorded all the numbers in Excel charts on a weekly basis according to the protocol. Holsti's formula was used to find out the inter-coder reliability. For the analysis of Facebook contents reliability coefficient was 0.99 and for Instagram post's content analysis it was 0.98. The achieved coefficients were acceptable.

As for the quantity of active pages belonging to a total of one hundred members, 82% of the member CSOs had official Facebook pages, whereas 71% of them had official Instagram pages. Among the members who had official pages, 46% of the Facebook users and 50% of the Instagram users shared the campaign messages at least once.

The number of Bugday 's messages on these platforms was calculated as a benchmark; on Facebook there were 95 posts, and on Instagram there were 69 posts during the campaign period. Table 1 below presents the data, followed by the highlights of the frequency analysis of the social media outcomes.

Table 1. Social Media Outcomes

	*Facebook**	%	*Instagram**	%
The members' active official pages	82/100	82	71/100	71
Accounts with at least one campaign post	38/82	46.3	36/71	50.7
Overall campaign posts	243	-	202	-
Bugday's campaign posts	95/243	39	69/202	34.1
Posts following the first meeting of the network (last week of November '19)	62/243	25.5	50/202	24.7
Posts following the second meeting of the network (last week of February '20)	14/243	5.7	11/202	5.4
Posts after the first social media call (first week of February '20)	25/243	10.3	51/202	25.2
Posts after the second social media call (last week of March '20)	29/243	11.9	18/202	8.9

* Facebook and Instagram columns are given in full numbers

– Only half of the active members shared campaign messages on social media. Considering that some members do not have Facebook or Instagram accounts, the percentage of shared posts was even lower.

– On Facebook, the highest number of relevant posts by a member was 19. On Instagram that number was 17. They were from different organisations, however both were agricultural communities. When the analyses were examined, apparently agricultural communities were the most engaged structures, with a post sharing frequency of 5.3 on Facebook and 4.6 on Instagram. The average post sharing frequency of the members was found to be 3.2 on Facebook and 2.4 on Instagram.

– International NGOs and professional chambers did not share campaign messages on their Facebook pages, whereas a small number (N: 3) of shared posts were counted on Instagram.

The timing of the shared posts was also taken into account. In the week following each of two major member gatherings (24th November and 28th February), questions arose regarding certain message clusters in the chart. It is possible to conclude that initial meetings have a potential to motivate members to take action (25% of the overall posts). However, after this meeting there was only a slight increase in the shared posts (5% of the overall posts).

The network management had planned two collaborative social media messaging activities, on 5th February and 30th March. They had e-mailed the member CSOs asking them to share the campaign visuals on their social media accounts. The replies to these requests were visible on the charts. The first request had received a reaction on Instagram, where 25% of the posts were sent subsequently. Relevant Facebook posts made up 10% of the overall Facebook posts that week; even though this number was not as high as Instagram, it was still within a range that made sense. Following the second attempt to activate the members, the CSOs shared 9% and 12% of the total messages on their Instagram and Facebook accounts, respectively. When the outcomes of these request e-mails were considered thoroughly, these percentages meant that the members, who were already sharing posts supporting the campaign, were moderately motivated to share messages at a designated time.

The analysis of the members' Facebook and Instagram pages gave us some perspective about the network's social media outcomes. It is possible to claim that the results were not satisfactory, as none of the member CSOs shared even 20% of Bugday 's campaign posts. In spite of Bugday 's motivational attempts (meetings, e-mails) and technical support (illustrations, photos, frames, and other items ready to be shared on social media), the social media outcomes were quantitatively low.

4. Conclusion

This paper proposes that to ensure the effectiveness of member CSOs' actions in an advocacy network, within the relationship management framework, communication management and PR leadership should take into account the power of relevant PR strategies and tactics, and network dynamics. Using a case study to scrutinise the subject, it was demonstrated that Bugday , the leading CSO in the 'No Pesticides on My Plate' campaign, failed to provide proper leadership since the member CSOs did not fully cooperate. The findings enabled us to identify the neglected points in the communication process and to comment on possible reasons.

The action, communication and message strategies of Bugday , were coherent throughout the five months chosen for the analysis, and clearly illustrated a variety of interpersonal

communication and media tactics for member collaboration. Their approach was proactive; audience participation was the action strategy and transparency was the communication strategy. In their communication strategies they were depending on statistics and testimony as verbal evidences whereas fear appeal was the preferred emotional appeal. Concerning the tactics, formal meetings in various forms (panel, seminar, agroecology workshop, conversation, and documentary display) were favoured. While communicating with the network members, Bugday mainly utilised group e-mails through Google. The frequency of messages, format, language, and tone were appropriate; they repeatedly provided materials (visuals, text, videos, and petition links) to facilitate social media sharing. One potential communication obstacle was the fact that some members were not actively using their e-mail accounts. Bugday , realising the problem, established a WhatsApp group in the last month of the campaign. It would have been more beneficial to make this change earlier.

Member interviews confirmed that the leading CSO was believed to be technically competent to conduct such advocacy work. However, this competency was not sufficient to engage the partner organisations to disseminate campaign messages through their official social media accounts. Despite Bugday 's member engagement tactics, particularly meetings and group messages, the members were only motivated to share the campaign messages right after they were asked to.

Effective delivery of messages, particularly in advocacy networks, is reliant on in-depth understanding of the members' structures. Inter-organisational relationships can be elaborated over an integrated communication strategy that should be based on valid audience research data concerning the size, scope, internationality, volunteer base, technical capabilities, and core mission of the individual organisations. Furthermore, PR professionals in an advocacy network should consider the priorities of member CSOs and their possible previous experiences as network members, and act accordingly. Even when the core communication strategy of a network is developed by a leading organisation, it should be kept in mind that member organisations should be active participants in the communication process by having a stake in designing the relevant tactics and creating campaign messages. An inclusive style of PR leadership in the leading organisation should enable a democratic and multi-vocal communication structure through all mediated and face-to-face channels. Bugday should have done a better research into the shortcomings of the network members before deciding the strategy. Online workshops for social media management for the network members would have helped them better integrate with the campaign strategy and spread the campaign messages properly. Or they could have shifted their strategy to rely less upon social media and include some traditional channels. It can be considered as a leadership failure on Bugday 's part.

In order to generate public awareness regarding the harms of pesticides, to build public pressure on the government, and finally to create a positive change in the legislation, Bugday used member engagement tactics to mobilise the network members in terms of co-creation of social media messages. Therefore, one of the core objectives in this advocacy campaign was to provide high social media visibility, yet the level of co-created social media messages was not satisfactory. Here are some possible reasons for this:

– Network members' lack of professionalism in social media management: In general, CSO members communicate with Bugday individually, but even if they are motivated about the advocacy issues, they do not manage the social media accounts of their organisations. In most of the member CSOs, amateur volunteers who are not fully technically capable manage the social media accounts. Hence if the members, particularly those who are serving as ad-

ministrators, do not inform and motivate their volunteers who are acting as social media managers, the chain is broken and messages fail to be shared.

– Perception of mutual benefits is low: Some of the network members are not directly involved with network issues such as environment, ecology, or farming. CSOs such as the Another School is Possible initiative, the All the Children Are Ours Association, and Hope for Children with Cancer have their own agendas and are only indirectly concerned with the network's causes. Some of the organisations are international and/or extremely large, such as the World Wildlife Fund and the Aegean Exporters' Association. The enormity of these organisations generates additional communication requirements. Google Group e-mails may not be sufficient in provoking their interest; more personal forms of communication should be considered given that CSO egos might be high in these giant organisations.

– Some of the member CSOs have different priorities: Even if a member CSO is operating in the same field, it might be conducting similar but separate programmes or campaigns. For instance, CSOs such as the Environmental Energy Association or DogTarBesBir that have programmes funded by European Union, might be prioritising their own initiatives.

This study aims to fill a gap by scrutinizing the leading CSO - member CSO relationship from a relationship management perspective, with a specific focus on advocacy networks. The members' previous experiences or positive personal attitudes towards the leader are not sufficient to involve them in the campaign process and achieve network's objectives. The leading organization should properly segment the members as primary publics. The impact of organisational variables such as size, structure, professionalism level, and technical capabilities on communication outcomes should be considered from PR perspective in order to identify them. If the leading organization does not select strategies and tactics according to the relevant publics' features and needs, they fail.

CSOs differ from business organisations. It could be inferred that PR efforts may help them think in network terms, especially as many of them would be used to working either by themselves, or as service providers, or as part of coalitions that work within a hierarchical structure. In order for PR to be beneficial in civil society networks, these differences should be defined via another empirical study. It can be concluded that this study contributes to our understanding of the role and significance of PR management in advocacy networks and civil society at large, with a particular focus on member engagement, by displaying the leadership mistakes.

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Acknowledgements

APPENDIX I

No Pesticides on My Plate – Member Interview Questions

Dear participant:

This interview is being held as part of an academic study scrutinising the member relations within the 'No Pesticides on My Plate' network. Organisations' and interviewees' names will be kept anonymous and the findings will only be considered for academic purposes. Throughout the interview you will be asked 15 questions; the duration will depend on the length of your answers. I would like to have your consent for audio recording.

1. The organisation:

2. Position of the interviewee:

3. Position of the person managing your social media accounts

      a. An employee (paid)/ A volunteer / A group of volunteers

4. Formal communications education or professional background of the social media manager:

5. Who received the e-mails posted from the network?

6. Who decided whether or not to share the contents (messages, visuals…etc.) of the e-mails? Would you tell us about that process?

7. Were you informed about the network's communication strategy – when, where and how to share the campaign messages – during the network meetings?

8. Do you think the particular visuals and messages that were designed to be shared on social media facilitated your actions?

9. Do you think that Bugday is technically sufficient in conducting such a campaign?

10. Do you believe that the relationship between Bugday and your organisation is based on mutual equality?

11. Do you think that Bugday shares its objectives transparently with your organisation?

12. What encourages you to be an active member in the network?

13. What else could have been done to engage the members within the network?

14. What are the financial and moral benefits of being a member in this network?

15. Do you think that you are an active and engaged member in this network? Why?

APPENDIX II

Member CSOs' Structures

	Organisation	Interviewee's Position	Social media manager is
P1	Agricultural community	Member	a volunteer
P2	Association	Volunteer	a group of volunteers
P3	Association	Administrator	a volunteer
P4	Agricultural community	Member/ Volunteer	a volunteer
P5	Foundation	General Secretary	a professional
P6	Association	General Secretary	a group of volunteers
P7	Agricultural community	Volunteer	a volunteer
P8	Association	Administrator (associate)	a volunteer
P9	Initiative	Member	a group of volunteers
P10	Association	General Secretary	a volunteer
P11	Association	Coordinator	a group of volunteers
P12	Agricultural community	Volunteer	a group of volunteers

[1] The findings of the relationship quality survey were presented at the 27th International Public Relations Research Symposium (BledCom), July 2020.