Chapter 14

The Social Marketing Campaign by Greenpeace Mediterranean Against Broiler Chicken Consumption

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ABSTRACT

Turkey’s first encounter with social marketing began in the 1960s from which time the field has been dominated by public institutions, although during the 1990s non-governmental organisations started running some social marketing campaigns. This chapter analyses Turkey’s first campaign concerning animal products for human consumption called “We Don’t Swallow!” which was undertaken by an environmental non-governmental organisation (NGO) called Greenpeace Mediterranean. The campaign is analysed in terms of the basic concepts of social marketing (problem definition, objectives, exchange, competition, audience segmentation and marketing mix). An attempt is made to establish an understanding of how a NGO sought to affect its target audience’s behaviour in relation to the origin of the meat they consumed. The chapter considers how “brand attack” works as a social marketing strategy and explores the possibilities that new communication technologies offer for social marketing.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about Greenpeace Mediterranean’s “We Don’t Swallow!” campaign which started in May 2016 and was the first social marketing campaign to be carried out in Turkey about the origin of animal products for human consumption. It differs from other social marketing campaigns in that country in its use of a “brand attack” strategy which centres on encouraging the target audience to stop consuming specific brands of chicken that are intensively raised by the broiler industry. The study focuses on the campaign’s problems, objectives, exchange promises, competition circumstances, audience segmentation and marketing mix following a general overview of broiler chicken production and consumption in Turkey.

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The broiler industry is of significant importance to the Turkish economy. As of 2014 the revenue from the broiler industry was US$4.5 billion with domestic poultry production, consumption and especially export having witnessed an increase compared to previous years (Duyum, 2016). With chicken and egg production totaling 1.9 million and 16.5 billion tonnes respectively, Turkey is the largest producer of poultry meat and the third largest egg producer in Europe (Aksoy, 2014). Poultry production has increased considerably due to contracted-out farming and the establishment of large-scale integrated facilities initiated in the late 1980s (Sariozkan et al., 2009). In Turkey, the production and consumption of poultry are mostly based on chicken which constitutes the major part of the meat diet. In 2014 meat consumption per capita was 35 kilograms per year of which only 13 kilograms was red meat. According to the 2015 data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), more than one billion chickens were slaughtered in Turkey, meaning that every 35 seconds a chicken was killed, a number that had multiplied five times since 1995 (Sik, 2016). While chicken consumption in Turkey was close to the world average between 1980 and 2010, it rose to above average after 2010, something which a sector report published by the Turkish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock correlated to the rise in the price of red meat. As the report explains: “The shortfall in protein emerged in Turkey due to the high production costs of red meat and the economic crises which consumers have tried to balance by the consumption of chicken and turkey meat” (TEPGE, 2014, p. 14).

Debates about industrial agriculture and industrial livestock emerged in Turkey in the 2000s as the increase in livestock production became apparent. In 2004 the famous sports commentator, Erman Torgul, stated during a media interview that he did not consume chicken meat because he believed “all chickens are fed on artificial grains and antibiotics” (Pamir, 2004). This interview triggered a wide-scale public debate that has continued to take place every so often in Turkey despite the regular and systematic public relations efforts of the broiler chicken producers. The main axis of this debate centres on food safety with reference to the use of hormones, antibiotics and genetically modified grains and oilseeds in broiler chicken production, a concern that has also created a foundation for organic chicken production and consumption. Research conducted in 2015 concluded that the majority of Turkish consumers were aware of the term genetically modified organisms (GMO) and had some fears about genetically modified food (GMF) believing that they were carcinogenic to humans. They also expressed concern about the increasing risk that natural foods might be disappearing (Tas et al., 2015). However, Turkey’s domestic consumption of organic products is still at a very early stage and demand for them is mostly concentrated in metropolitan areas such as Istanbul and Ankara with the main motivation for their consumption being health and environmental benefits (Ergin & Sacmaci, 2011).

BACKGROUND

Social marketing can be defined as the use of marketing principles and techniques for social change. In their ground-breaking article Kotler and Zaltman (1971, p.5) stated that “social marketing is the design, implementation, and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research”. Social marketing came into being when it was realised that it is not enough just to provide information to change people’s minds (Maio et al., 2007). The emphasis on behavioural change is important in social marketing and is focused on a number of areas: changing an individual’s undesirable behaviours; changing the products used by the public that impact on health and wellbeing; making
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