Social Networking and Local Controversies: The Construction of Rhetorical Devices in the Hazelnut Market in Turkey

Ebru Tekin Bilbil, Özyeğin University, Istanbul, Turkey

ABSTRACT

Based on the components of new media, this article focuses on the intersection between communication networks and content (media) through personal connections and cable/interactive television. First, it analyzes how connections through social networking as a communication and power maintenance strategy produce rhetorical devices through categorizations, symbols, and metaphors by standing on emotions, suspicions, and threats at the local level. Second, it examines the complex and ubiquitous nature of social networking to elaborate how local market actors create uncertainties and how uncertainties are socially constructed through rhetorical devices. Based on the in-depth interviews and participant observations, this article reveals how sociotechnical controversies are created, formed and shaped with rhetorical devices that produce uncertainties at the local level.

KEYWORDS

Local, Market, Media, Power, Price, Rhetorical Devices, Social Networking, Turkey, Uncertainty

INTRODUCTION

Based on the assumption that social networking is not a new phenomenon (Christakis & Fowler, 2009), this article depicts how locality is the main drive for creating social networking through connections (i.e., changing from word-of-mouth to online digital platforms). With regards to the components of new media, this article focuses on the intersection between communication networks and content (media) through personal connections and cable/interactive television (Flew, 2007). First, communication networks are referred to as connections through social networking as a communication strategy to create and enhance connections. The common point of the connections uses power actors to convince local people of a common interest and cause. Second, regarding content (media), this article elaborates on the complex and ubiquitous nature of social networking to identify its purpose, creation, work, and local effects. Analyzing the local market and market-making process can answer these questions and reveal how social networking is derived from contentious controversies created at the local level. It also analyzes how local institutions contribute to market-making processes by creating rhetorical devices.

Networks include a specific set of connections between people in the group (Christakis & Fowler, 2009). According to Gilles et al. (2009):

... a social network consists of a set of agents, which represent individuals or organizations, and a set of arcs, which connect the network agents. Social network theory suggests that these connections
provide each agent with social capital and that the attributes of individuals are less important than their relationships and ties with other agents within the network.

James Fowler (Christakis & Fowler, 2009) analyzed the origins of people’s political beliefs by examining how humans come together to accomplish what they could not achieve on their own. It was proposed that altruism and goodness are essential to the growth and endurance of social networks. However, this article reveals how power creation and maintenance become the agent’s main motive to create and be part of a network. Through the creation of rhetorical devices, this article reviews the creation of these connections, as well as analyzes network functions. Therefore, this article reveals how rhetorical devices create sociotechnical controversies. The concept of controversy is identified as (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2009):

Controversy focuses on plausible but fictional scenarios that provide acceptable interpretations of the observed facts … Controversy carries out an inventory of the situation that aims less at establishing the truth of the facts than at making the situation intelligible.

This article analyzes rhetorical devices in relation to an attempt to structure a reality in the process of sociotechnical networks (Lilley, Lightfoot, & Amaral, 2004) as the formalistic language with metaphors to persuade the audience (McCloskey, 1985; Mirowski, 1994; Swedberg, 2003) and change (Chakraborty, 2005). Based on a case analysis, this article is followed from an intensive fieldwork conducted in 2009 supported by numerous in-depth interviews and participant observations.

CONSTRUCTION OF RHETORICAL DEVICES

This article focuses on rhetorical devices used by formal institutions at the local level. According to Callon et al. (2009), ordinary citizens have learned to mistrust information provided by the institutions. The isolation and exclusion of the producers reflect their suspicious behavior. Callon et al. (2009) argued that the suspicions of the inhabitants are encouraged by the ambiguous strategies of the institutions:

The only rational strategy that remains open to ordinary citizens is that of suspicion. To change the relation of force unfavorable to them, and to force professionals to take account of their fears and explore the overflows brought about by science and technology, laypersons must establish public debates so that the anxieties, fears and doubts that poison their private lives are expressed.

Through “storytelling, forecasting, and rhetorical devices” (Hollander & Gordon, 2006), the market groups categorize and symbolize each other using symbols and metaphors (Van Gorp, 2007). The tools of categorizing, symbolizing, explaining, storytelling, forecasting, and emotions, as adopted from Hollander and Gordon (2006), are analyzed as the constitutive factors of rhetorical devices. The following conceptual research diagram summarized the interrelationship between the concepts to depict how social networks create connections and how rhetorical devices through controversies create uncertainties (Figure 1).

Rhetorical devices prevent hazelnut producers from examining the knowledge provided by local institutions. This type of knowledge, “indisputable knowledge” (Callon et al., 2009, p. 1), creates uncertainties because the knowledge provided by formal institutions is not disputed on the ground. For instance, the perception of forward [alivre] was an indisputable phenomenon due to hostility and suspicions. From fact to disputed fact, suspicion was created through rhetorical devices. Rhetorical devices prevent hazelnut producers from examining reliability of information.

As a case study, with this article, the dynamics of the 2006 protests are examined with a focus on how rhetorical devices created uncertainties. In 2006, the Union of Hazelnut Sales Cooperatives (Fiskobirlik) was financially strained. The breaking point of the spot prices decreased following high prices due to the 2004 frost and 2005 Fiskobirlik purchase prices. Fiskobirlik and prices symbolized
Related Content

**Virtual Research Conferences: A Case Based Analysis**
[www.igi-global.com/article/virtual-research-conferences/72867?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/virtual-research-conferences/72867?camid=4v1a)

**Framing Non-Formal Education through CSR 2.0**
Bogdan Ptru, Monica Ptru and Camelia Cmeciu (2013). *Social Media and the New Academic Environment: Pedagogical Challenges* (pp. 115-142).
[www.igi-global.com/chapter/framing-non-formal-education-through/73310?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/chapter/framing-non-formal-education-through/73310?camid=4v1a)

**When the Virtual and the Real Clash: Power and Politics in a Social Networking Community**
[www.igi-global.com/article/when-virtual-real-clash/47199?camid=4v1a](www.igi-global.com/article/when-virtual-real-clash/47199?camid=4v1a)
Social Media in Political Public Relations: The Cases of the Portuguese Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the Socialist Party (PS) in the 2009 Parliamentary Campaign


www.igi-global.com/chapter/social-media-in-political-public-relations/203360?camid=4v1a