



Community interactions

– How visitors co-create Greenpeace’s online presence

Aristeidis Andreas Progoulakis Castillo

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Aristeidis Andreas Progoulakis Castillo

Supervisor:	Sofie Joosse, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development
Examiner:	Hanna Bergeå, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development
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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
Department of Urban and Rural Development
Division of Environmental Communication

Abstract

The online presence of environmental NGOs (ENGOS) has opened the opportunity to gain independence from the limitation of the news media coverage they can get. However, multiple challenges, including dealing with interactions on social media, are among the complexities of using those channels. Communication in those spaces usually takes a positive or negative character, including strong criticism towards the ENGOS. To date, only a few studies in the environmental communication literature have analysed the implications of social media interactions for the ENGOS. Marketing studies about online brand communities, though, have developed several concepts that are tested in the analysis of this thesis.

This thesis aims to better understand online interaction on an ENGO social media page, in order to find out if the ENGO could adapt their online posting or interaction to promote beneficial interaction for the organisation with their visitors on Facebook. The approach selected includes a netnographic study and a thematic analysis of comments on different kinds of posts on the Greenpeace UK page. The qualitative data shows that there are important differences between the brands and ENGOS and missing aspects when using the online Brand community framework, but also new possibilities for understanding favourable and unfavourable comments of visitors on a Facebook toward the community. Finally, the practical implications of managing the social media of an ENGO are discussed regarding the use of the idea of 'community' understood as a group of people with shared concerns and values that co-creates a page.

Keywords: community, Greenpeace, Facebook, page, social media, co-creation, online community, interaction, comments, environmental communication, marketing, NGO

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Abbreviations

C2B	Consumer-to-business
C2C	Consumer-to-consumer
CE	Customer or consumer engagement
EC	Environmental communication
ENF	Elephant Nature Foundation
ENGO	Environmental non-governmental organisation
ENP	Elephant Nature Park
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OBC	Online brand community
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
V2C	Visitor-to-community
V2O	Visitor-to-organisation
V2V	Visitor-to-visitor

1. Introduction

1.1 Research problem

Social media, particularly Facebook, have been used by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and environmental NGOs (ENGOS) to reach millions of people without geographical barriers (Katz-Kimchi & Manosevitch 2015) and to mobilise (Lindgren 2017). Facebook pages, digital spaces created by organisations within the platform, are accessible to anyone with a Facebook account. Therefore, their published content is available to any user of this platform. Also, its content will appear in the followers' feed who have pressed the page's like button. Like any other Facebook user, they can read, comment, share, or react with a like or use different emojis to interact with the content.

Every time an ENGO posts something, one can observe different interactions going on under the post. Of course, some users will ignore or just read them. However, others will choose to act and maybe say something. They could show support to the organisation, complain or agree with the content, point out different ways to see an issue, suggest ideas, answer other users' questions, disapprove opinions, criticise the ENGO for a campaign or even for something they did in the past. All these examples of comments that emerge motivate the present thesis to ask what is happening in this social media atmosphere where environmental communication occurs.

Communication is an essential part of the labour of an ENGO since, through it, they spread their messages, gain support, raise money, and influence the views regarding what they consider as issues that need to be addressed by the society and the governments. Nevertheless, organisations cannot directly control what happens when they send out a post, whatever the content is. Viewers, supporters, and opponents react in various ways. In this sense, an ENGO posting one or two times per day, every day, might have messages with none, ten, or hundreds of comments, including diverse types of interactions. Within those, conversations and discussions between visitors also arise. Then, the organisation can react to comments or not. It can, in general, take decisions regarding how they handle social media, particularly Facebook, to serve its interests in the best way possible, helping its causes and public communication.

At first sight, one can observe that there are several and sometimes numerous ways users react to a post of an ENGO. For this thesis, the case of Greenpeace UK and its public Facebook page is selected due to their high amounts of interactions found on the platform, its relevance as a global ENGO, history, reputation, and declared interest in large-scale environmental issues (Greenpeace International 2022). Moreover, offices of this ENGO, like Greenpeace UK, seem to give high importance to this platform since they constantly promote their activities and invite people there to join their causes sometimes on a daily basis. They also obtain feedback, for example, receiving comments that approve their posts. However, other users propose views completely different within the same thread or even show strong disagreement. Consequently, the content presented on a Facebook page, where this ENGO shares the core of its action, is not determined uniquely by Greenpeace but co-created with the users who interact with their comments.

Content posted on their social media channels takes different forms, which I chose to call 1. informational, 2. cognitive-emotional, and 3. call-to-action. These categories of content are inspired in part by the work of by Katz-Kimchi and Manosevitch (2015), who found that a Greenpeace campaign on Facebook used: information (about the issue, policies, and the broad context), call for action (ranging from like to share, and voice opinions), and empowerment (to show the advance of the campaign and keep people motivated). Also, Dolan et al. (2015), studying consumers and ‘uses and gratification theory’, explain the motivations of individuals to search for specific content in social media to satisfy their needs. They consider that information (the most important for users), entertainment (that allows escapism, hedonistic pleasure), remunerative (that offers rewards), and relational content (connecting with others, sharing views and experiences) are the type of content that gratify users. Besides, they said that those functions are the reason why people actively select media to consume online. Based on all the above, and through observation of the posts, the terms 1. informational, 2. cognitive-emotional, and 3. call-to-action, will be used in this thesis in the following way. First, informational content is information created by the organisation or compiled from third parties to provide data and context about an issue. Second, cognitive-emotional content is similar to what Dolan et al. (2015) call ‘relational content’, which mainly includes images and text that evoke feelings about nature or environmental matters. Third, call-to-action is when explicit support for a cause is requested through an action such as signing a petition.

The influence of users and their interactions in social media is relevant for this thesis to understand better one of ENGOs’ most crucial environmental communication tools. However, the attempts to study them are not very extensive within environmental communication. Exceptions include Lin (2012), Yeo (2014), and Newell and Dale (2015). In contrast, marketing research about online communities has multiple examples of efforts to understand the members of social

media communities and their capacity to influence others about their view of companies and products (Kozinets 2002, Hollebeek et al. 2017; Peeroo et al. 2017). For this reason, concepts from this type of literature will be introduced and explained later on and tested as a possible tool to help in the analysis of the community formed by Greenpeace UK on Facebook.

1.2 Aim and objectives

My thesis aims to better understand online interaction on an ENGO social media page, in order to find out if the ENGO could adapt their online posting or interaction to promote beneficial interaction for the organisation with their visitors on Facebook. Thus, one of the objectives is to analyse the comments published by users and the interactions of users and Greenpeace UK on the Facebook page of the ENGO. This is to determine how they impact the organisation's public communication and their management of social media and a Facebook page in particular.

A second objective connected to the aim is to categorise detected forms of engagement, providing examples and displaying how they are performed through comments on the platform. Also, I intend to discuss whether they constitute positive or negative value for the organisation.

Another objective of this project is to explore possible connections between the nature of the content published (1. informational, 2. cognitive-emotional, and 2. call-to-action) and the type of comments and interactions performed by those who actively participate in writing something back.

The last objective is to try out insights from marketing research, specifically online brand communities, customer engagement (and enagement), co-creation, co-destruction (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001; van Doorn et al. 2010; Peero et al. 2017), as well as consumer-to-business and consumer-to-consumer interactions (Peero et al. 2017), to the realm of environmental communication to assess its value to help understand EC on ENGOs social media pages.

1.3 Research questions

For this study, the following questions have been considered:

Question 1: What does Greenpeace UK post on its Facebook Page?

Question 2: To what kind of interaction (comments from readers, and response from Greenpeace) does this lead?

Question 3: Considering this, what kind of posts and interactions are likely to be beneficial/harmful for the ENGO? Why?

2. Background

In this section, I present some significant lines of research into social media and ENGOs and position my research in relation to them.

The importance of social media for ENGOs has been considered by various studies and has changed throughout recent years. These platforms are here defined as services where people can have an account, follow each other and interact. They allow then “co-creation and constant editing by multiple users of multimodal content, that is, content which mixes several modalities (written text, photographic images, videos, sounds, etc.)” (Lindgren 2017:29).

As a first and more general approach, there is the idea in the literature that social media offers ENGOs new platforms to spread their messages while counteracting the discourse of news media (Hansen & Cox 2015; Burch 2021). This relates to the possibility of influencing the way their stories, campaigns, actions, and opinions are communicated to the public. “News cycles, concerted campaigns by opponents, unfavourable media framing, low salience of environmental news, and other obstacles often inhibit the effectiveness of the group’s communication” (Hansen & Cox 2015:75). Then, the advantage of social networks would be to deliver a message without needing intermediaries that could also alter or damage what is meant.

Besides recognising the importance of serving ENGOs’ interests, scholars also acknowledge the complexity of these communication channels. For instance, Hansen and Cox (2015) reviewed several studies addressing how ENGOs deal with communication issues with media and construct their messages to reach social media audiences. Based on these studies, they signal the great difficulties of ENGOs in gaining attention from traditional news organisations. However, again, scholars view social media as an excellent opportunity for ENGOs in terms of visibility and interaction to spread their matters of interest while being independent of the traditional news media (Lester & Hutchins 2009; Lester & Hutchins 2012; Hansen & Cox 2015; Pezzullo & Cox 2018). However, Hansen and Cox (2015) emphasise the need for further research into the challenges that the use of social media represents to the job of ENGOs:

“[...] environmental NGOs are turning to new media platforms as pivotal components in their advocacy. Yet, few studies have fully traced the strategic implications of such advocacy, particularly within complex, open networks in which multiple sources, diffuse audiences, user

participation, and remediation characterize the communication milieu of environmental campaigns” (Hansen & Cox 2015:82).

These are critical general considerations, and I agree that social media opened opportunities for ENGOs to gain public attention and act independently to communicate about their political work and advocacy campaigns. At the same time, there is still a lot to study about social media as a communicational space. For example, the control that ENGOs are said to have over their own channels is not as complete or straightforward as it may sound above. After all, the ENGOs social media pages are the sum of all content and interactions, including angry, irrelevant, and supporting comments from visitors. As such, ENGOs may need a whole new set of skills to work with their outreach positively and collaboratively. The lack of study related to ENGOs is a critical issue for me because Facebook remain the most popular platform worldwide, and hundreds of thousands of users follow just Greenpeace UK. For those reasons, I believe that its analysis could help the ENGOs in their relationship with the public and benefit us to better understand the environmental communication on these ENGOs social media pages.

An example of the importance of social media for ENGO is given by Lin (2012) for an institution called Elephant Nature Park (ENP). This author says that platforms like Facebook contribute to the creation of awareness of the efforts of the NGO. “[...] the ENP creates and cultivates a borderless virtual community who shares concerns about domesticated and abused elephants and feels attached to the NGO” (Lin 2012:200). In this quote, I wish to emphasise ‘borderless virtual community’. According to Lin, Facebook does not just send out info and allow individual interactions but, importantly, creates a community. Something that, of course, would be much more difficult in traditional media. Lindgren (2017) discussed classic sociological ideas about community as a place where people with shared values interact. He highlights the following definition that explains two crucial features of a community:

First, it is a web of affect-laden relationships that encompasses a group of individuals—relationships that crisscross and reinforce one another, rather than simply a chain of one-on-one relationships. [...] Second, a community requires a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, mores, meanings, and a shared historical identity — in short, a culture. (Etzioni & Etzioni 1999:241).

Lindgren (2017) also defines community but this time in the online context, describing it as “groups of individuals who interact around a common interest, where the interaction is mediated or supported by internet technology” (Lindgren 2017:89). This idea of creating a community through social media is something that I will look at closer in my work, because I would like to know if there is a community and what that means for the interactions happening on the page.

Besides, the interaction facilitated by social media in the study of Lin (2012) related to “positive e-word of mouth” that supports the challenge of encouraging people to join the organisation and collaborate with it. Therefore, I have mixed feelings about promoting interaction as a form to generate positive word of mouth because I think it is valid and beneficial for ENGOs. Nevertheless, this does not mean that interaction could not lead to people also sharing something negative when following an organisation in an online community.

Given the above, I am interested in defining beneficial and harmful interactions for an ENGO on social media like Facebook. I would like to see if there are connections between the type of content and interactions happening that could explain, for instance, what aspects that organisations publish lead to valuable recommendations and support, or negative responses, and possibly the creation of such a borderless virtual community.

Zhang and Skoric (2020) observed different platforms where ENGOs focused on the capacity to generate post sharing based on the kind of messages and how they were framed and posted by the organisations. They found that ENGOs emphasised ‘urgency’ in their messages and used mainly a national and global perspective versus a more local one that, according to the authors, could be better to encourage motivation. Besides, they detected a lack of ‘efficacy’ within motivational frames that would be better to create hope. In general, the authors provided suggestions about managing the content that could help ENGOs convey their messages to a larger audience. In a similar vein, Vu et al. (2021) investigated how ENGOs communicate on Facebook to engage with people by implementing specific framing of their messages and asserted that certain frames could motivate people to act. I do not deny the importance of framing the content. However, as social media is essentially interactive, I believe this needs to be combined with a focus on comments, the subsequent interaction and their impact on their community.

Other attempts to look at interactions have focused on social media’s potential to create engagement from visitors. For example, Newell and Dale (2015) explored the dissemination of climate change research. They found out that the type of media (video, images, or text) in the content on a Facebook post was the key to “[...] influence the number of people who viewed and interacted with the post” (Newell & Dale 2015:224). Thus, it was not the post’s topic that was crucial in grabbing the attention of the visitors, but the type of media. This is very interesting, but I find that this distinction does not explain the character of this viewership. One thing is to grab attention, and the other is to produce positive or negative feedback. Knowing more about the kind of feedback these media types receive would be an important next step in research.

Even though research from media studies, science communication, and environmental communication has shown an interest in understanding ways to

reach and interact with the public online, many areas are still uncovered. Helpfully, research in marketing has developed much more theoretical and practical knowledge about online communities but in the context of brands (Schau et al. 2009; Wirtz et al. 2013; Tiruwa et al. 2016). For example, they have examined how websites, blogs and forums created an area where consumers could talk about products and services while cooperating and discussing as a community (Borle et al. 2010; Hollebeek et al. 2017). Furthermore, this interest in those online groups included the analysis of social media as a new ecosystem where brands started growing online communities. Although this kind of research proposes marketing tools for companies to increase sales, I believe it may offer new perspectives to analyse virtual communities. Therefore, for this thesis, I have included them in the background and will try them out to assess their value for broadening the online investigation around ENGOs by applying, contrasting, and adapting their ideas to the interest of environmental communication.

An example of the possible contribution of marketing studies is expanding the concept of community, which I already touched upon above, based on Lin's research. Marketing scholars have explored groups following brands and labelled them as "brand communities". In other words, a brand community "is a specialised, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001:412). In digital media, they have been called "online or virtual brand communities" (OBCs) (de Valck et al. 2009; Wirtz et al. 2013). In this context, Zaglia (2013) said that members of OBCs feel an identity connection to other members and the community around the brand. This is a useful development of the concept of community for this thesis and could help me analyse the social aspect and, more precisely, the interactions in social media. Besides, mentioning identity connection as embedded in OBCs may be interestingly associated with an already presented sociological definition of community by Etzioni and Etzioni (1999). They refer to a 'shared historical identity' among individuals as a requirement for a community to be considered as such.

Besides the definition of OBC, marketing research has advanced the evaluation of practices made by what they define in the context of brands as consumers. For instance, throughout a netnographic study of an online forum, Hollebeek et al. (2017) created a typology to describe eight engagement practices, ranging from "greeting" to "assisting", "celebrating", "appreciating", "empathising", "mingling", and "ranking". They explained how those practices are performed in a specific community: a community interested in luxury handbags. Based on their study, they asserted that knowing about those interactions between members of an OBC could be helpful to managers to "devise tactics to engage and bond with consumers, enhance the customer value proposition and, ultimately, generate improved organizational performance" (Hollebeek et al. 2017:212). Unfortunately,

this kind of research has not yet been developed in the field of environmental communication. Therefore, I will take help from marketing research to analyse what is happening in the online community of a non-commercial 'brand'.

To prove how far marketing research has been trying to determine the possibilities of social media to produce positive outcomes for brands, one can look at another netnographic study by Potdar et al. (2018). They turned to Facebook to determine and test customer engagement patterns on the pages of two banks in Australia. Their main goal was to establish how different combinations of practices could result in the customer recommendation of the brand. They are labelled them as: communication (on social media), interaction (comments, reactions, posts), experience (positive), satisfaction, continued involvement, and bonding (emotional). The authors determined that the faster pattern of practices leading to a brand's recommendation was communication-interaction-recommendation. Also, they found that in many other routes followed by customers, emotional bonding was frequently present as the previous step before the recommendation practice.

Additionally, the researchers claimed that this knowledge could help managers satisfy customers and make them become strong supporters of the brand. "[...] managers should ensure that they continually involve with their customers to increase the number of customers who then become bonding type or recommending type customers" (Potdar et al. 2018:607). This idea of identifying behaviours and how combined they can empirically lead to specific actions seems quite advanced and nourished by previous studies. Nevertheless, this study's approach motivates the aim of this thesis to provide a first identification of the interactions going on Greenpeace's page.

The marketing research mentioned above, with its focus on the actions performed by users and followers of brands, and the implications they have for the value of the companies, seems helpful and will be tried out to analyse and discuss the Facebook page of an ENGO. For the same reason, the next section will define certain concepts from literature about OBCs that will be part of this thesis.

3. Conceptual framework

In this part, I gathered specific concepts because I believe they might contribute to the analysis and discussion of my study. The terms are used in the study of OBCs, and are based on the descriptions provided mainly by Peeroo et al. (2017), who conducted a netnography on the Facebook pages of two grocery stores in the UK.

Co-creation: This is a practice of consumers that generates value for the company by posting positive comments (Peeroo et al. 2017). Examples include favourable reviews, helping other customers, and defending the brand (Ibid.).

Co-destruction: According to Peeroo et al. (2017), this happens when customers damage the company or even when they recommend other people visit the brand's competitors.

Customer or consumer engagement and enagement: CE can take positive or negative forms and be defined as "a customer's behavioural manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" (van Doorn et al. 2010:254). However, In their research, Peeroo et al. (2017) added the concept of 'customer enagement' to describe co-destruction and negative comments.

Consumer-to-consumer marketing: Peeroo et al. (2017) uses this concept as C2C and explain it as customers' active position that makes them feel empowered and leads them to interact with other consumers in an OBC. Furthermore, they provide examples of C2C, like when users help and provide solutions, criticise other consumers, join conversations to defend the brand, or promote other brands' advantages.

Consumer-to-business marketing: Similarly, C2B comments refer directly to the brand by answering questions or asking about prices and products. Both kinds, C2C and C2B, are classified as favourable or unfavourable:

"Favourable customer posts turn customers into co-creators of value, while unfavourable customer posts make customers become co-destructors of value" (Peeroo et al. 2017:1251).

There are six concepts from marketing literature that have been included in this thesis. However, some of them talk about 'consumers' or 'customers', which does not seem the best form to label people who engage with a post of Greenpeace UK. While marketing research looks at users who buy products or consume services, the ENGO has visitors who have not paid for what the organisation offers, or not

directly if we think that some of them might donate to the organisation. Still, they are not people discussing a commercial transaction for a product or service. Ultimately, the reviewed marketing literature studies consumers and concrete objects or services, i.e. grocery stores or luxury handbags available in the market, and analyses several aspects that might affect a brand's reputation and sales.

Despite the differences, it will also be part of the discussion to reflect on whether, in some way, the visitors of Greenpeace's page are 'consumers' but of ideas and political visions on aspects related to the environment, which they may or may not feel identified. Hence, somehow, I could say that Greenpeace is not a 'brand selling a product' (but an ENGO offering environmental content), nor 'making sales' (but convincing the public to support its causes).

The concepts presented in this framework will be tested in other parts of the thesis, like the analysis and discussion. However, before doing it, they need to be rethought or at least renamed (see table 1) to fit the context of an ENGO. Furthermore, Peeroo et al. (2017) found several types of comments that likewise need to be amended for the ENGO context (see table 2).

The table presents selected terms from marketing, followed by their name for this thesis, and a definition in the context of the study of the ENGO's community.

Table 1. Marketing concepts and thesis concepts accompanied by definitions

Marketing concept:	Thesis concept:	Thesis definition:
Online brand community	Online community	non-geographically tied community that interacts with an organisation, its ideas and content in a dedicated online forum or network
Co-creation	Co-creation	Practice that creates value for the organisation by posting positive comments. Examples include showing enthusiasm or humour and users who help and advise others within an online community
Co-destruction	Co-destruction	The negative form of engagement that damages the organisation by, for instance, posting sarcastic comments, criticising actions or other visitors
Customer or consumer engagement, and enragement	Visitor engagement and enragement	Expressions of visitors interested in the organisation or its content. They can take positive or negative forms

Consumer-to-consumer marketing (C2C)	Visitor-to-visitor interaction (V2V)	When visitors interact with other people in an online community in relation to the organisation
Consumer-to-business marketing (C2B)	Visitor-to-organisation interaction (V2O)	When visitors direct their communication to the organisation by, for instance, asking questions

Peeroo et al. (2017) summarised the type of comments found in the analysis of the Facebook pages of grocery stores. They have been included in table 2 and complemented with the names for these kinds of comments on the Greenpeace UK Facebook page. Additionally, as the authors did for their marketing study, comments are also divided into favourable and unfavourable for the brand, or Greenpeace UK in the case of the present thesis.

Table 2. Summary of type of comments found in grocery stores research and their adaptation to the context of Greenpeace's Facebook page

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Thesis name	Type	Thesis name
C2B or V2O			
Customer query	Visitor query	Complain	Complain
Participation – perform action desired by company	Participation – perform action desired by the ENGO	Criticise action of the company	Criticise action of the ENGO
Express enthusiasm	Express enthusiasm	Post sarcastic comments	Post sarcastic comments
Express humour	Express humour	Post sceptic comments	Post sceptic comments
Ask for additional incentive	Ask for additional incentive		
Provide suggestions to the company	Provide suggestions to the ENGO		
C2C or V2V			

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Thesis name	Type	Thesis name
Customer Referral	Sharing a positive story about the ENGO	Provide information about competitors	Provide information about opponent person, groups or organisations
Give advice to other customers	Give advice to other visitors	Warn customers against a product or service	Warn other visitors against the content published by the ENGO
Help other customer	Help other visitors	Retaliate – inform customers of actions taken out of dissatisfaction	Retaliate – inform visitors of actions taken out of dissatisfaction
Provide support and encouragement to other customers	Provide support and encouragement to other visitors	Negative customer referral	Negative visitor referral
Defend the company and its employees	Defend the ENGO and its members		
Criticise other customers	Criticise other visitors		

4. Methodology

To study ‘online communities’, as Kozinets (2002) labelled them, he developed an unobtrusive technique, a kind of ethnography conducted on internet-based environments for marketing research that he called netnography. The creator of this method highlights its qualitative nature and the use of publicly available information online obtained through observation of behaviours. Therefore, considering the digital environment of this thesis, netnography was selected. This marketing research method gathers information “in online forums to identify and understand the needs and decision influences of relevant online consumer groups” (Kozinets 2002:62). Netnographies studies, though, are not limited to traditional forums but extended to other platforms like Facebook (Peeroo et al. 2017; Potdar et al. 2018).

This marketing originated technique has been employed in some studies within environmental communication (Yeo 2014; Haider 2015), but it is still relatively unexplored in this area.

Even though Kozinets (2002) refers to its flexibility as a central characteristic of netnography, he recommends a series of steps for conducting research: Entrée, data collection and analysis, providing trustworthy interpretation, research ethics, and member checks. The first step, entrée, is covered in this work by selecting the Facebook Page of Greenpeace UK, since it provides content posts that can be processed to answer the research questions. Also, as Kozinets (2002) recommended, familiarisation with the community selected has been done before starting the data collection.

The second step, data collection and analysis, was conducted by manually gathering comments from the Facebook Page. The analysis of field notes complements the effort to obtain meaningful information. As Kozinets (2002) points out, they serve the analysis by adding insights to the actual messages found in the online community. Therefore, notes have been taken throughout the process while copying and studying the online comments.

The third step, providing trustworthy interpretation, is granted by conducting a conscious qualitative study of communication behaviours in a specific online community to provide answers to the research questions.

The fourth step refers to ethical concerns. As Peeroo et al. (2017) did in the context of a public Facebook page research, comments are quoted (exactly as they were represented on social media), but users' names are not disclosed.

For the fifth step, member checks, i.e. presenting the findings to the people studied, will not be included following its completely unobtrusive nature (Peeroo et al. (2017).

The data collected in this case corresponds to 521 comments that are part of posts of Greenpeace UK posted on their Facebook Page between the 8th and the 10th of March 2022. For a qualitative study, looking at comments and interactions, this is a large amount of data. It is also comparable to the 595 comments used by a previous study (Yeo 2014).

Furthermore, the data was used to evaluate the presence of the three kinds of posts' content published by the ENGO, i.e. 1. informational, 2. cognitive-emotional, and 2. call-to-action, recognised through observation of the online community.

As previously explained, data has been collected and analysed simultaneously by using field notes, codes, and later themes. The thematic analysis stayed open to codes and themes that could provide categories of comments to present as findings for analysis. Moreover, categories provided by the marketing literature about types of comments were used in case they could explain the comments collected. Previously all of those categories from the literature were adapted to the context of the ENGO (summarised in table 2). In addition, and based on several rounds of analysis, new codes and themes were constructed since they could describe the specific ways of communicating in the online community of Greenpeace UK (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Codes initially indicated if the topic and comments were direct to the organisation or other visitors. After that, themes created groups of comments with similar characteristics that could lead to categories. Again, the idea here was to provide new definitions of comments connected to the interest of this thesis project and the research questions.

For the data analysis, tables are used to order the comments, the relationships found among them, and possible codes and themes. Besides, categories were created to describe interactions that could not be connected to definitions from marketing literature (Peeroo et al. 2017). Therefore, an abductive approach was employed, i.e. "a repeated process of alternating between (empirically-laden) theory and (theory-laden) empirical 'facts'" (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009:5). The research process is neither pure from the bottom-up (inductive) nor completely top-down (based on theory) but combines them organically throughout a learning process (Ibid.).

Finally, comments with vague language, offtopic, and without a recipient (the ENGO, other visitors, or the community in general) were not considered for

categorisation since they cannot be classified as favourable or unfavourable interactions.

5. Analysis

The analysis is presented in order to answer the research questions. First, the analysis concerned the content Greenpeace UK posted on its Facebook Page, research question 1. The ENGO publishes daily content referring to several topics. The most recurrent posts found in the analysis of the collected data were labelled as cognitive-emotional. These posts are characterised by the use of images together with text. They present or represent nature, animals or graphics that incite reactions based on questions or proposals addressing environmental issues.

The second type of content is named call-to-action. In those posts, Greenpeace presents an environmental issue supported by graphic content. It encourages direct action of the visitors by providing a link to a campaign or website where they can sign a petition.

The third kind of post is referred to as informational. They provide data generated, mainly, by a third party like news media accompanied by text created by Greenpeace to give a context of an environmental problem. More findings regarding the content of the posts and its possible connection to beneficial or harmful interactions are examined when answering the third research question.

The data also provided information for understanding the interactions, relating to research question 2. In order to facilitate analysis, types of comments made by visitors to the Facebook page and examples were summarised (see table 3). This typology of comments will help answer research questions two and three about types of comments and interactions and their likeliness to produce beneficial or harmful for the ENGO.

Following the conceptual framework that marketing literature provided and its adaptation to this particular study, posts are classified as favourable or unfavourable, indicating that they provide positive or negative value to the ENGO in the context of the online community. The comments that refer directly to Greenpeace UK are classified as visitor-to-organisation interactions, while those aiming at other visitors are labelled as visitor-to-visitor interactions. For each type of comment, there is one example provided.

The posts are divided as favourable or unfavourable depending on their positive or negative character for the ENGO. Each of them is accompanied by a real comment obtained during the data collection. They correspond to different threads, so the posts in the table's rows are not necessarily related.

Table 3. Summary of type of comments found on Greenpeace UK Facebook page

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Post	Type	Post
a. Visitor-to-organisation interaction (V2O)			
Visitor query	How can we stop JBS doing this?	Complain	Hey Greenpeace, if the Greenpeace Executives and AR not consuming at near poverty levels you're a bunch of hypocrites
Participation – perform action desired by the ENGO	Signed and shared	Criticise action of the ENGO	Greenpeace, all I want is to live a reasonable comfortable life and to be able to afford heating, electric, food and a roof over my head like a lot of normal people but the more you kick off the more the government puts up the green tax!! The pollution stays the same we all just pay more to pollute, thanks to you!!!
Express enthusiasm	Nice 1 good idea. There is so much rubbish everywhere nowadays	Post sarcastic comments	Do Greenpeace campaign against tree felling in England ?
Express humour	I'd still have to ask my grand children	Post sceptic comments	How is he going to fight climate change by picking up plastic? You guys need to ensure you are taken seriously and rubbish like this harms the cause

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Post	Type	Post
Provide suggestions to the ENGO	Didn't we already all petition to tell the government this, and they've just waited few months to try again? Not saying I won't sign it, just saying they don't give a toss about bees or petitions or public opinion. All they care about is lining their pockets with the corporate bungs they get in exchange for allowing the destruction of the biosphere		
b. Visitor-to-visitor interaction (V2V)			
Give advice to other visitors	Adding sugar to the water helps	Provide information about opponent person, groups or organisations	I urge all #Greenpeace followers to watch "Cowspiracy" on Netflix
Help other visitors	you can usually download them online if you search for the make and model	Warn other visitors against the content published by the ENGO	maybe so, but its not fighting climate change which is what the article claims
Provide support and encouragement to other visitors	maybe join me in a #PlogRun and I would help you learn how you can multitask. It's amazing to run and pick up litter	Retaliate – inform visitors of actions taken out of dissatisfaction	I will stop supporting #Greenpeace no more donations no more shares NOTHING ! I AM DISGUSTED AFTER WATCHING THAT

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Post	Type	Post
			DOCUMENTARY BY LACK OF CHARACTER AND BACKBONE OF YOUR TEAM
Criticise other visitors	Do you know what ego means? It's not about eating them, it's about thinking you're superior to them		

Under both parts A and B, I categorised the comments based on the concepts from marketing literature (Muniz & O'Guinn 2001; van Doorn et al. 2010; Peeroo et al. 2017) as a straightforward way to start answering the question about the kind of interaction (comments from readers, and response from Greenpeace) that occur with the posts. However, the analysis showed that specific categories, even after their adaptation, could not be found in the context of Greenpeace's Page. Indeed, those labelled as 1. defend the ENGO and its members, 2. ask for additional incentive, 3. negative visitor referral, and 4. sharing a positive story about the ENGO, were not found in this analysis. The implications of this finding will be considered in the thesis's discussion part when debating the differences between brand communities and the online community of Greenpeace UK.

Furthermore, it is noticeable that numerous comments could be deemed either favourable or unfavourable for the ENGO but do not suit the categories already presented and exemplified. Besides, whether they are directed to the organisation (V2O) or other visitors (V2V) is unclear. These types of comments react to the content of Greenpeace UK posts in some way, but they do so without referring directly to what is posted by the organisation. They seem to relate more to a general mindset supported on the Greenpeace page than to the post's actual content. Those who post this type of comment do so by showing their perspective about the organisation's ideas or other people's beliefs. However, they do not name anyone in particular, and the text of these reactions does not target a specific visitor or the organisation but the page as a whole. In terms of content, their proximity to page discussions implies that they are still related to what is debated. Likewise, their purpose seems to be to communicate opinions and points of view that differ positively or negatively from what is discussed, sharing their opinion or experience regarding environmental issues in a space where their visions could be of interest

to others. For the same reason, it would be possible to think that they seek to interact and receive feedback from others who can comment or, at least, read their ideas. In this sense, they could be seen as people who think strongly about something that they do not see reflected in Greenpeace’s posts or visitors’ interactions. Even they might be evaluating that the ENGO and other visitors talk about something from the wrong perspective and, therefore, they aim to express it ‘correctly’.

The comments presented have been analysed since they do not seem to fit in the categories A and B derived from the selected marketing literature but are still relevant to the image projected by the analysed page. Hence, I labelled them as visitor-to-community interactions and divided them as favourable or unfavourable: ‘express alignment by sharing experiences or opinions’ and ‘express disagreement by promoting opposing ideas or opinions’. Both categories demonstrate the high level of knowledge these visitors have of environmental or sustainability topics. However, those of the first type show a general agreement with the ideas posted by Greenpeace UK. In addition, they try to enrich the discussion by talking about their personal experiences and opinions.

On the contrary, the other types of comments show an opposite view to a greater or lesser extent, but they question Greenpeace UK posts’ ideas. Due to the limitations of this study, it is not possible to determine if those visitors are, in general, supporters of the ENGO or rather opponents. For instance, classifying them for only one comment as opponents or outsiders could be unfair, because they might show agreement on other occasions. Also, considering that they could seek to contribute to moving the discussion forward, I think they are likely to be part of the community.

To sum up, comments that show a certain degree of alignment but are not clearly directed to the ENGO or other visitors were classified as visitor-to-community interactions. I will discuss later the impact of using marketing concepts in the study of environmental communication that did not consider this classification.

The newly created categories of ‘express alignment by sharing experiences or opinions’ and ‘express disagreement by promoting opposing ideas or opinions’ are divided as favourable and unfavourable, respectively. Each of them is complemented with examples of comments found during the data collection and analysis. They show how different visitors express their points of view to the community on the Facebook page.

Table 4. Visitor-to-community interactions found on Greenpeace’s Facebook page

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Post	Type	Post
c. Visitor-to-community interaction (V2C)			

Favourable posts		Unfavourable posts	
Type	Post	Type	Post
Express alignment by sharing experiences or opinions	I looked on YouTube how to replace battery on a Lenovo laptop. Who designs this stuff? They need new product designers. Overly complicated but doable	Express disagreement by promoting opposing ideas or opinions	Wow. Every little helps. But frankly you can't do both, at best its bits on a run on farm or hill paths. Can't think why BBC even covered this non-story

Table 4 demonstrates that Greenpeace UK received several comments that reveal more about what people think and where they stand with their lives. They tell more about beliefs, lifestyles and values than other types of comments previously classified in the marketing literature (Peeroo et al. 2017). Sometimes visitors choose to share their opinions regarding the issue that the ENGO is posting about. They might use links or provide information about something that demonstrates that they agree (to some extent) with the general idea of Greenpeace's post but, at the same time, want to expand on it by sharing something else they know or support. Many visitors demonstrate prior knowledge about environmental issues they share with a community that can recognise them. Occasionally, they received comments that valued or discarded their ideas, achieving an interaction that reinforced or contested their expressions. It seems to prove the point previously explained that they were looking for further discussions, using this page to gain attention. Sometimes, it appears that they try to contribute by exposing a point from their side to the community, which could be considered part of the co-creation (see table 1) taking place on the page.

On the other hand, those who expressed some level of disagreement with post content and related matters still displayed a high interest in the environmental topics, but in a way that could be different from what Greenpeace UK is proposing. Besides the example provided in the table, it was interesting to observe the case of a visitor who repeatedly interacted with comments disqualifying the idea of the post. This person replied to others with a brief opinion, saying that cellphones that owners can repair themselves are too expensive compared with a well-known brand product. One could also ask why a person, like the one in this case, wanted to interact here if the visitor did not share the same mindset with the others in commenting on the page. For the same reason, it can be a question of whether this person can even be deemed as part of the community or not. It might be that in a different post, the visitor could agree or express enthusiasm about the ENGO. That is not included in this analysis, so we do not know. Nevertheless, assuming he was

there only to disqualify the community's ideas, the purpose relates more to using this page to provoke or voice an opposing view to an audience prone to react and affect the community as a form of co-destruction (see table 1).

Considering the type of content and the comments found, I try to answer the third question about what kind of posts are likely to be beneficial or harmful for the ENGO. It is interesting to observe the interactions where Greenpeace UK gets involved in this respect. For instance, data shows that visitors who pointed out their enthusiasm sometimes received positive comments from the ENGO in cognitive-emotional posts. Also, Greenpeace responded more often to favourable than to unfavourable comments, for example:

Visitor comment: "Wow beautiful animalxx"

Greenpeace UK comment: "Couldn't have put it better"

Greenpeace's cognitive-emotional posts also triggered unfavourable comments criticising the organisation and blaming it for its actions.

Visitor comment: "Greenpeace, all I want is to live a reasonable comfortable life and to be able to afford heating, electric, food and a roof over my head like a lot of normal people but the more you kick off the more the government puts up the green tax!! The pollution stays the same we all just pay more to pollute, thanks to you!!!"

Even with a comment of Greenpeace explaining and providing information in a link, the visitor who published the comment above insisted on accusing them of increasing taxation of essential goods and services, thus displaying a general discontent with the ENGO's 'green politics'.

There is another interesting case to analyse concerning call-to-action posts. Positively, some visitors asking for links to sign a petition received a comment back from Greenpeace. In contrast, one visitor complained about Greenpeace not responding to questioning in a documentary within the same kind of post. After receiving a response from the ENGO, the person went further and published a retaliation post, informing everyone who could read about his action taken out of dissatisfaction with the organisation, which is one of the unfavourable types of interactions.

Visitor comment: "I urge all #Greenpeace followers to watch "Cowspiracy" on Netflix".

Greenpeace UK comment: "Please don't forget to sign our petition calling on Tesco to ditch forest destroyers and massively reduce the amount of meat they sell 📄
<https://act.gp/3uHPHH1> We'd love to have your support".

Visitor comment: "I will stop supporting #Greenpeace no more donations no more shares NOTHING ! I AM DISGUSTED AFTER WATCHING THAT DOCUMENTARY BY LACK OF CHARACTER AND BACKBONE OF YOUR TEAM".

On the same day, but of an earlier post, this visitor also wrote: “Watch the documentary “Cowspiracy” on Netflix”. However, in this case, the post type was cognitive-emotional, and the person did not receive an answer from Greenpeace. These interactions raise questions about what happens when the organisation does not respond and if this is better in some cases to avoid unfavourable reactions. Alternatively, the lack of responses to the first comment about Cowspiracy could have aggravated the visitor and prompted his subsequent retaliation. It is also interesting to note that no other visitors reacted publicly to these comments. No one defended the ENGO, but neither did they support the person who criticised it.

Furthermore, within the cognitive-emotional post, multiple comments showed sceptical views, while other visitors were confused about the ‘meanings of the images connected to the posts. They were making queries but did not receive answers to clarify the content posted.

Queries in call-to-action posts and enthusiastic comments in cognitive-emotional posts were the kinds of interactions where Greenpeace responded most often in the posts selected for this study. Greenpeace responded with a link or friendly words toward the visitors. However, they did not respond to queries within informational and cognitive-emotional posts. The latter refer to more general topics (cognitive-emotional posts) or information coming from other actors (informational posts). Therefore, ENGO responses to visitors seem to be more common when they are directly involved with the post, as is the case with a call-to-action. It could be because its interest in achieving a support activity such as signing a petition could justify its attention and responsiveness to the visitors’ doubts. Alternatively, it could be because Greenpeace seldom responds.

Ultimately, several favourable and unfavourable comments were found in the informational posts, but no interactions with the ENGO. In summary, beneficial and harmful comments and interactions appeared in all post categories. However, it is not easy to establish how likely one versus the other is to produce a specific type of comment from the visitors.

Even though the findings provided many insights regarding the interactions, at this point, there is no clear or direct causality between the type of posts of Greenpeace (1. informational, 2. cognitive-emotional, or 3. call-to-action) and the character of the comments received as beneficial or harmful. The type of comments and interactions show that they are diverse. In many cases (e.g. enthusiastic comments) are triggered by all types of posts. Also, visitors complaining about the organisation were found in all three categories. However, there were no comments labelled as ‘criticise the action of the ENGO’ within informational posts. Despite this finding, it cannot be ruled out that a broader data collection could show this type of comments associated with informational posts. Likewise, a longer study over time may be able to shed light on a more stable relationship between the type of content and the type of comments and interactions that can be triggered.

The previous analysis also recognises part of the limitations of this thesis when claiming the likeness of certain content and interactions to produce beneficial or harmful comments. Likewise, the boundaries that define a post as informational and not a call-to-action could be questioned since this categorisation can be arbitrary. The same point could be claimed for the type of comments because the decision of whether they are favourable or not for the ENGO is again, in some cases, arbitrary.

6. Discussion

6.1 An ENGO on a Facebook page

At a general level, this study confirms what earlier research has found. First, the Facebook page of Greenpeace UK shows a large number of interactions, constituted mainly by the comments that their visitors publish in their posts. To a reduced extent, Greenpeace UK offers responses to some users, especially those who interact with its call-to-action posts.

Second, it is confirmed what the literature reviewed on environmental communication says concerning the independence that a social network can offer an ENGO (Lester & Hutchins 2009; Lester & Hutchins 2012; Hansen & Cox 2015; Pezzullo & Cox 2018; Burch 2021). They are the ones who decide the type of media posted, the text, and the recurrence of posting. This platform allows it to eventually reach hundreds of thousands of people without depending on news media organisations. Even though it was not part of the analysis, It can also be added that the posts trigger shares that make Greenpeace UK content visible on the networks of hundreds of users.

Third, the existence of a borderless community that interacts on topics of interest to them (Lin 2012; Lindgren 2017) seems present in this case. Visitors, for instance, express their enthusiasm and agreement with the ideas that the ENGO transmits. This sense of community that shares concerns (Lin 2012) and encourages actions and ideas could be claimed when they participate and comment by performing an action desired by the ENGO, like signing a petition. In addition, Facebook features allow users from anywhere to access the page and interact with Greenpeace and its visitors.

Fourth, as scholars warned, several complexities are associated with the social media community (Hansen and Cox 2015). In this case, they are primarily manifested with the lack of control over what is generated on the page. The unfavourable comments, for instance, show how a page created by Greenpeace is not only a space containing positive comments from advocates of their causes.

Fifth, comments and interactions on the page can be categorised as favourable or unfavourable for the organisation (Peeroo et al. 2017). Thus, inputs can be positive towards Greenpeace UK, for example, when expressed humour or

enthusiasm concerning the content of the posts. Furthermore, visitors' input can also enrich the interaction and the discussion in the community. For example, when providing suggestions or helping other visitors. Nonetheless, not all inputs are favourable for the ENGO, like when comments complain about Greenpeace's claims and proposals. They can even be seen as a way to damage the organisation, for instance when a visitor uses the comments section to retaliate publicly against the ENGO.

Lastly, the relationships found between types of posts and comments or interactions of a certain kind (favourable or unfavourable) provide insights about this Facebook page. However, at this point it is difficult to establish a causal relationship. For instance, it would be hard to say that call-to-action posts always tend to generate positive comments. Alternatively, claim that Greenpeace responses to comments in informational posts are likely to trigger specific interactions (positive or negative). It is not easy to map a complex environment as a Facebook page where, although the topics of the posts are about the environment, they correspond to different subtopics and approaches, and interactions are pretty diverse. Studies like the one by Hollebeek et al. (2017) say that there is value for a company in understanding what is happening in its online community. However, specific recommendations may require extensive analysis of observed practices. Potdar et al. (2018), for example, determined consumers' path to making a recommendation, but that work was built on previous studies of consumer interactions. In this case, this could be the first step to establishing the interactions on a Facebook page for an ENGO.

Now, moving from this general level, there is a specific topic worthy of attention here that this thesis has started to shed some more light on, which is the idea of a Facebook page as a community.

6.2 Brand community versus online community

Looking at the interactions and comments on the Facebook page, I see a community emerging: they tend to share the same interest and concerns for the environment. For example, visitors express their enthusiasm for protecting nature and show their commitment when responding to a call-to-action of Greenpeace. Likewise, Lin (2012) highlighted that an ENGO could create awareness, shared concern and "positive e-word of mouth" through its Facebook page. In this sense, the analysed page is a community that spreads the vision and mission of Greenpeace with people who care about what they say.

Nevertheless, other definitions, like the one from Etzioni and Etzioni (1999), could make it more difficult to claim the existence of a community. They say it also requires "[...]a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, mores, meanings, and a shared historical identity — in short, a culture" (Etzioni & Etzioni 1999:241).

Proving this historical bond sounds quite complex for a Facebook page where loyalty is not a requirement, and labels like ‘visitors’ express the brief contact some people might have with the alleged community that is open to everyone with a platform’s account. Still, the visitors’ political interests and values, expressed in several comments, could be a plus to deem Greenpeace’s page a community. They even express their agendas and how they agree or disagree with what the ENGO proposes. Considering all those characteristics, the ties between Greenpeace and its visitors look more substantial than the online communities of two grocery stores and their relationships with consumers (Peeroo et al. 2017). The researchers confirmed that in these cases, as occurs in OBCs, “[...]conversations occur on prices, performance, quality and personal experiences with specific brands” (Peeroo et al. 2017:1251). The focus on consumption in OBCs versus values and politics on the page of Greenpeace creates an interesting distinction between communities.

It is fair to say that marketing literature about OBCs and media studies has a simpler definition of community than Etzioni and Etzioni (1999). Indeed, Lindgren (2017) refers to “[...]individuals who interact around a common interest” on the internet, while Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) say that a brand community relies on “[...]structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand”. Therefore, interactions that primarily occur around a product or service might still meet the standards to be considered a community or an OBC in that definition. However, this conceptual understanding of community (OBC) did not suffice to explain the community on the Facebook page of the ENGO, as the terms were mainly focused on consumption, i.e. the transactional relationship between the brand and the community members. Despite that, I still think that it is valuable to consider OBCs literature to encourage new perspectives about social media groups.

Another observation to exemplify differences between online communities of an ENGO versus commercial brands could be argued when looking at the typology of comments. I had taken these types from the OBC literature and translated them into my conceptual framework from brand to ENGO (see table 2). However, in the analysis of Greenpeace’s page, some of them were not found. The types of comments missing were 1. defend the ENGO and its members, 2. ask for additional incentive, 3. negative visitor referral, and 4. sharing a positive story about the ENGO. While ‘defend the ENGO and its members’, was missing from my analysis, I do not think it unlikely that it would appear in a more extensive data collection because other comments demonstrated that some visitors were committed to the ENGO. This is different for the other three types. ‘Ask for additional incentive’, in the case of the OBCs, referred to comments in which customers were looking for economic benefits. Such a message is less likely to fit the Facebook page of an ENGO because there is no direct economic transaction between Greenpeace and its visitors. In a similar vein, ‘sharing a positive story about the ENGO’ (called

customer referral in the case of the OBCs) and ‘negative visitor referral’ are less likely to fit the Facebook page of an ENGO because Greenpeace does not offer a direct service or product. Hence, they will not be ‘satisfied’ or ‘dissatisfied’ customers who will talk about their shopping experience.

Interestingly, a visitor’s retaliation comment in which he said he would stop supporting Greenpeace illustrates what a nonconsumer could complain about regarding expectations from an ENGO versus what is delivered. All the differences establish an important distinction when evaluating the online community and thinking about its management implications. Despite sharing with OBCs a common interest of their visitors, Greenpeace’s community is loaded with more complex nuances reflecting people’s thinking. Then, it seems critical to consider political alignment, beliefs, and values as the elements that could trigger possible positive or negative interactions for the ENGO. Therefore, I think it might need a more sensitive treatment. I also suggest that thinking of your Facebook page as a community is helpful for ENGOs like Greenpeace to build on their social media strategy.

I believe that another point of the analysis that supports the political complexity of Greenpeace’s community can be found in the visitor-to-community interactions that I created. The reason to do so was that the literature about OBCs on Facebook (Peeroo et al. 2017) did not consider this type of interaction. Those expressions that I labelled, when favourable, are comments within this category that support or even reinforce the page’s identity. In contrast, unfavourable comments tend to disqualify the community’s ideas. Unlike the comments in the OBCs described by Peeroo et al. (2017), these expressions towards the community do not need to refer directly to a brand (or Greenpeace in this case) nor other customers (or visitors) to positively or negatively engage with the page of the ENGO.

6.3 Can a Facebook page really be a community?

I would like to provide a final answer to this question. An easy way to respond is to bring up the thesis definition that I stated in my conceptual framework, adapting what marketing literature on OBCs says about online communities. The description states it is a “non-geographically tied community that interacts with an organisation, its ideas and content in a dedicated online forum or network”. I think the analysis supports the idea that the Greenpeace UK page is an online community, because it details several ways of interaction in a platform with open access to users with Facebook accounts.

More importantly, I believe that a benefit of understanding this page as a community allows the use of more concepts to see what is happening and what helps or damages the organisation. Moreover, I consider that seeing the page as a community encourages a more delicate treatment of the communication. It is quite

different to see Facebook only as a one-way-information channel to spread posts versus a place where a community eventually grows and thrives around the ENGO, sharing its values and concerns.

On the other hand, one could claim that a Facebook page of an ENGO does not constitute a community despite the definitions. Instead, it could be just a place for people who casually dedicate time to commenting on random things without even bonding with the page. I think that some comments from visitor-to-community interaction could be explained by this idea as well. For example, the fact that they are not referring directly to the post's conversation nor the organisation or other visitors could mean that there is not such a community to respect when interacting. However, I still imagine it would be less likely to understand the possible implications of interactions or why the negative comments against the ENGO if we set community ideas aside.

Another case that can be used for community discussion is the person who asked about Cowspiracy and after commented with retaliation against Greenpeace, 'screaming' with capital letters. The fact that none of his comments generated an interaction from other visitors could reflect a collective silence for behaviour the community does not like, therefore, decide to ignore. It would be worthwhile for future research to look closer at this.

6.4 Conceptual framework from OBCs

In this study, I have chosen a framework from marketing literature (Peeroo et al. 2017) and translated it into the context of an ENGO. I think it helped highlight the differences between brands and an ENGO. However, since some categories were not found or did not fit the context of my study, it was crucial to work on the adaptation and creation of new categories to describe the interactions. In the following paragraphs, I will elaborate on the use of this framework, including some pros and cons.

First, positive comments and interactions towards Greenpeace UK or other visitors are beneficial to the community in the sense that they share the values and ideas promoted there. They also constitute positive forms of visitor engagement. Similarly, the concept of co-creation, previously defined in the conceptual framework, helps explain what happens when the organisation posts content and is favoured with feedback and interactions that reinforce the message and even expand it. Some visitor-to-community interactions could be seen as examples of co-creation since they contribute to further discussions within the community. Moreover, the concept can be used to refer to what happens in general on the Facebook page because its content is not exclusively defined by the ENGO, but co-created with its visitors.

Second, sarcastic comments or direct criticism towards the organisation or other visitors demonstrate how negative interaction occurs within the community. Although both are forms of visitor engagement, i.e. interactions with the posts, one could question whether some unfavourable reactions can affect its consideration as a community due to the lack of shared values. However, the term co-destruction describing negative expressions like retaliation, could help say that even when engagement takes negative forms and aims to damage the ENGO's image, it can be part of the possible actions taken by some visitors. The latter has also been described as visitor enragement.

Third, visitor-to-organisation and visitor-to-visitor interactions positively describe how comments are direct to either the ENGO or visitors on the page. However, they were not enough to explain other kinds of comments that, in this context, required a different label, i.e. visitor-to-community interactions, to refer to broader expressions of alignment or disagreement that also co-create or co-destruct.

Fourth, the idea of an online community opened an important part of my discussion as it moves to determine the extent to which the interactions respond to something beyond a random comment. Questions about values, shared concerns or political vision were used to analyse a community's existence on the Facebook page. This led to some suggestions regarding the relevance of the community concept for the social media strategy of ENGOs.

Finally, I believe that the adaptation of 'consumers' to 'visitors' was useful to illustrate the differences between the brands and an ENGO. Visitors then appeared to be moved by 'consuming' ideas and political visions about the environment versus consumers who pay for commercial products and services.

7. Conclusion

In this research, I have looked into the Greenpeace UK Facebook page, including posts' content and comments. I have categorised and tried to better understand how users influence this space by performing beneficial or harmful interactions.

This is a specific case and, of course, not generalisable. However, I think I learned a lot and developed multiple descriptions, explanations and even concepts to draw the interactions of an ENGO on Facebook. In addition, other Greenpeace offices worldwide and most other environmental organisations have a presence on the Facebook pages showing the various cases that can be considered for research.

Based on this study of Greenpeace UK, I have found two main issues. The first one, community, revealed multiple possibilities when evaluating the character of the interactions contained in my findings and how they could be or not suggest an existing online community on a Facebook page. The second one refers to the use of marketing literature about OBCs, which is meant to study consumers and companies on social media. While developed for a consumption context, from my experience, it is worth looking into this research area, even if it does not entirely fit the context of ENGOs. Despite the differences, I believe it would still help think through the research problems. In my case, it created opportunities to develop ideas and to look at the data from a new perspective. Visitor-to-community interactions are an example of a contribution of my thesis that I was able to make because I was using this framework. They were missing in the concepts derived from the marketing literature. Using the marketing approach paradoxically highlighted to me that this was something important for this ENGO.

There is still much more to discover for marketing research and online communities on Facebook. Therefore, other concepts and theories could complement further studies. Besides, other aspects or concepts of marketing research, even online communities, could be helpful. For example, new ethnographic studies going deeper into identities on Facebook pages or combining other methods (Kozinets 2002) could be employed in more extensive research. They could be used to research ENGOs' social media communication and develop more theoretical and practical knowledge. In this thesis, I have only touched upon the idea of the ENGOs Facebook page as a community. It would be worthwhile to study further the engagement practices and people's motivations that lead to

participation in online communities (Vernuccio et al. 2015; McLaughlin 2016; Lima et al. 2019).

While this study does not show evidence of a definite community, some interactions seem explained by it. Moreover, as a practical implication of this study, looking at a Facebook page as a community of an ENGO promotes different communication management. This is because posts are not seen as directed to a random audience in a unilateral channel of the organisation, but to a community with ties that co-creates values, concerns, and 'green politics'.

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Popular science summary

Organisations like environmental NGOs (ENGOS) are employing the so-called pages of Facebook to spread their messages and campaigns. There, users can follow, comment and react to posts created by the ENGOS. As a result, they can gather multiple interactions of people interested in their content daily. Could we call a page a community then? This is one of the main questions derived from the present thesis after analysing 521 online comments on the Greenpeace UK page, one of the offices of the global ENGO that accumulates hundreds of thousands of followers on Facebook.

This study aims to observe what is said online from the posts generated by this ENGO to find out if they could adapt their online posting or interaction to promote beneficial interaction for the organisation with their visitors on Facebook. The thesis also tests a series of concepts from the marketing literature about online brand communities. The marketing insights are adapted to this work in the field of environmental communication. Results show that some types of comments posted by customers of grocery stores appear equivalently on Greenpeace's Facebook page directed to the organisation. Expressing enthusiasm or humour, making queries, or providing suggestions to the ENGO, are part of the favourable interactions found. On the other hand, complaints, criticising actions of Greenpeace, and sarcastic and sceptical comments, are on the list of the unfavourable ones.

Among the interactions directed to other visitors, there are comments helping and giving advice to other visitors, on the favourable side. However, on the contrary, some comments warn visitors about the content posted or publish a retaliation.

Furthermore, specific types of interactions were not found. It is argued that their absence might be connected to the fact that the analysis uses ideas that originally referred to 'consumers' or 'customers', who buy products and services, and not to 'visitors' of an ENGO. Some examples are 'asking for additional incentives' and 'negative visitor referrals'. Discussing the occurrence of certain interactions and not others also opens the discussion about the characteristics that define a community or online community. Moreover, comments directed to the community (as a whole) are particular to the Greenpeace case and motivate the creation of a new category. They either express alignment with the mindset of the page (favourable) or show disagreement by promoting opposing ideas (unfavourable).

The results reveal the differences found on a page of an ENGO versus a brand when applying marketing concepts about online brand communities. Besides, the discussion and the distinction of a page as a community are considered helpful in observing the complexities of this Facebook environment. This social media could be seen as more than just a one-way information channel. For this reason, the thesis suggests that thinking of the Greenpeace page as a community may be relevant to defining the social media communication strategy of an ENGO.

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