Master’s Thesis submitted to the Department of Informatics and Media, Uppsala University, May 2013, for obtaining the Master’s Degree of Social Science in the field of Media and Communication Studies.

**The Use of Social Media as Communication Channels in Nation Branding & New Public Diplomacy Acts:** A study on the “Up Greek Tourism” project in contemporary Greece.

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Abstract:

This thesis, as part of the one-year Master Programme in Social Science with specialization in Digital media, has taken up the concepts of nation branding and new public diplomacy and examined them from the perspective of the role that new, digital or even innovative – as some may call them – media play within them. It consists of five (5) chapters and is a little less than sixty (60) pages long.

The concepts and fields above are usually confused with each other, as people tend to use the one notion for naming the other and vice versa. However, what is common in those two fields is the involvement of new media, such as social media platforms or platforms that enable crowdsourcing activities. Especially, within the past few decades that the internet has invaded the most into the lifestyle of a large segment of this planet, it seems as things, thoughts, ideas and actions are driven by or with the internet.

Thus, with the opportunity of this thesis, I wanted to examine the role that new media play when it comes to talking about nation branding or new public diplomacy acts. This work has attempted to achieve that by focusing on a recently run initiative in Greece, called “Up Greek Tourism”. The initiative’s goal was to promote Greek tourism abroad, in an attempt to help Greece from within. A group of Greek people formulated the group and intended to gather the money through a crowdsourcing platform, in order to advertise Greek tourism abroad.

What I actually tried to do is investigate the way they handled their channels of communication and the reason they chose internet as being central to their communicational policy. My idea was to do that by discursively analyzing a TEDx talk of the initiator, conducting a semiotic analysis on the images they used in their advertisements and by a short content analysis from the early stages of their Facebook page, through which it became known. Last but not least, I tried to verify the results by using their own answers from an open-end questionnaire they answered for me.

Keywords:

Nation branding, new public diplomacy, new media, social media, Discourse analysis, semiotics, content analysis, Up Greek Tourism
1: Introduction, Aim and Motives

1.1.: Introduction

It has been long known, that mankind has always been connected to the notion of exploring, discovering new places and breaking down boundaries. Through attempts of colonizing and imperialization people have always wanted to expand their territories to new places on planet Earth. Thus, countries, empires have always sought ways to build an image of their own to other nations. This is, in other words, what has long been called “diplomacy”.

“Image cultivation, propaganda and activities that we would now label as public diplomacy are nearly as old as diplomacy itself. Even in ancient times, prestige-conscious princes and their representatives never completely ignored the potential and pitfalls of public opinion in foreign lands. References to the nation and its image go as far back as the Bible, and international relations in ancient Greece and Rome, Byzantium and the Italian Renaissance were familiar with diplomatic activity aimed at foreign publics”

(Jan Melissen as cited by Nancy Snow 2010, 88)

The Cold War (1948-91) between the United States and the Soviet Union played a primary role to maintaining public diplomacy’s government mission. (Snow 2010, 88) Public Diplomacy (PD) or even New Public Diplomacy (NPD) could be linked to notions like those of nation or place branding or marketing. It is more than obvious, that place branding stems out of the general field of marketing, which has been often called as “mother” of place branding. The link with marketing has primarily been through tourism, where the focus has been on places as visitor destinations (Hankinson 2010, 15). The tourism marketing literature in particular, is dominated by the perceptual perspective of branding, which is based around the task of image development as the principle objective of place promotion (Hankinson 2010, 20). In other words, governments have employed experts in order to try to use marketing techniques that have primarily been used on products, so that a positive image can be built. Working on a nation as if it as a product, trying to improve or even create its
image, when it comes to other audiences’ perception in terms of attracting tourism or investors is the specific discipline of nation branding.

“Increasingly, in the contemporary period where controlling information and perception is seen as the key to political success, information technologies are being developed and used to influence publics. This is due in part to the shifting notion of values. Previously, there was a greater deal of attention and value in tangible assets – physical and real structures. However, there is increasing attention and value places in intangible assets – reputation, brand and other ‘virtual’ aspects.”

(Simons 2011, 323)

Of course, a much more detailed literature review is to be presented in the respective chapter, in which main views and opinions by major academic authors and scholars will be employed to provide us with a better insight of those two terms, which are distinguished by a very blurry line. However, there have also been claims that nation branding is not something that is new, even if the term is. (Akotia as cited by Simons 2011, 325) This discipline has been a field that, having emerged from the general field of marketing, uses a lot of its literature, codes, regulations and rules. This does not mean, though, that new notions, ideas or strategies should not have been generated.

As mentioned, before public diplomacy, or even new public diplomacy procedures - with which I am going to deal more on the course of this thesis - address the use of new technologies. In other words, the transition from traditional tools of diplomacy to those of public diplomacy or even new public diplomacy also employs the use of innovative technologies such as the internet or the social media (even if they cannot be characterized as innovative any more, for large parts of this planet). Same applies for the procedures of branding or nation branding which have shifted from traditional paths of promotion to online territories with them being either the virtual context within which an idea is branded or the place in which people form groups or structures like crowd funded initiatives or NGOs. Social media platforms are now often the context, within which ideas grow, evolve and become effective faster than
before. That exact power is what I want to examine in the course of this paper. The use of social media, when it comes to engaging with new public diplomacy procedures or branding attempts, with the latter people’s initiatives. In order to do that, I will focus on the case of contemporary Greece. I believe Greece makes the perfect example since it as a country undeniably connected with notions such as tourism, culture and history. That makes Greece a country which has needed – at least since the 30’s – to find ways to promote its most profitable service sectors, such as tourism or build a positive image in general. Meanwhile the Greek government has its own official promotional campaigns throughout the years. However, there will not be any special reference to it or its effectiveness as this thesis is not about comparing the case study with the state campaign in terms of action or effectiveness. Besides that, trying to measure the effectiveness of the campaigns would constitute a totally different research question than the one posed within this thesis and regards the use of new media as communicational channels. The use of the word “contemporary” is not accidental, by any circumstances. My aim is to focus on Greece within the context of the so-called economic crisis. This resulted to Greece being commented in a negative way by the international media. As a consequence, publics being influenced by them may have created a negative stance towards Greece which would end up discouraging them from spending their vacation there. The situation in contemporary Greece has, perhaps, created the necessity for people to try to regain their country’s lost identity separately from state initiatives. A short background on the situation in Greece is also to be presented.

1.1.1.: Research Questions

Such an initiative will be the exact case I will study within this thesis. An initiative that has recently emerged within the Greek environment. It is called “Up Greek Tourism” and it is an initiative which was formed by Greek people living in or out of Greece, who felt the need to find a way to help their country during the hard phase it is going through. What they wanted to do was to promote Greek tourism abroad; as they probably thought that this is what can help Greece at the present times. They created a Facebook page through which they managed to gather the money to pay for billboards advertising Greek tourism in central spots of big cities, such as the Times
sq. in New York or the Piccadilly Circus area in London. Washington has also been one of those.

What I want to investigate within this thesis is the way they decided to communicate the whole idea and all the actions and achievements included. To make it more specific, I would like to know what made them employ digital media as their main channel of communication, instead of traditional media channels and whether – according to them – such an attempt would be inevitable without the use of innovative technology. Through answering those questions, I would like to manage to spot the significance of digital media when it comes to forming groups to achieve a greater goal.

1.2. Personal Motivations for the Specific Topic and Case Study

As master students within the program “Digital Media & Society” our object of study was the influence of the Internet in most of the aspects of people’s lives. In other words, the way Internet shapes human activity and the way people manage the course of this medium were to be investigated. Political action, occupational behavior and culture were some of the aspects that were examined. The common goal, as far as all of them are concerned, was to measure the extent to which the Internet has managed to form people’s lives. A good example to that can be the observation of political or cultural movements or the measurement of the informational society. Notions of internet power and counter-power in terms of political action were also investigated. A common conclusion to all those different cases and objects is that the Internet – or the online – has played a very important role in people’s lives within the last few decades. On the other hand, mankind has found ways to take advantage of it, in order to accomplish its goals. From political movements to cultural organizations and from religious protests to human rights’ organizations, the internet – with the social media platforms being the most profound aspect of it – makes its presence more and more stable and clear.

There was a wide variety of reasons that motivated me to choose this specific topic for this thesis. First and foremost, I have always been very interested in the terms of branding and image building, since it is my prior field of study. What is more, the specific discipline of place branding has been of great interest for me ever since I was
introduced to that by my mentor in my undergraduate studies. I think that the term of
nation or place branding is of great interest for many developed or developing
countries. For the last few years, place marketing is the field, in which I wish to work
as it intrigues me a lot. Furthermore, the term “new public diplomacy” was unknown
to me until very recently. However, it managed to gain my interest and I think that it
is exactly what one could characterize the actions of this initiative as. In other words,
the notion of new public diplomacy matches the case study itself since it includes
notions like absolute participation and everyday people taking up initiatives. More
details about the notion are to be provided in the course of the thesis.
Moreover, the most obvious and outstanding reason for choosing not only the general
field, but this case study as well, is my nationality. Being from Greece did not leave
me with many options when it came to choosing my topic. I wanted to investigate and
examine something that, apart from being interesting in academic terms, would also
be useful to my country. What is more, writing about something that excites me, made
the reading, researching and writing procedure even more fascinating.
When it comes to justifying my choice of that specific case study, I believe that the
story speaks for itself. Contemporary Greece, being struck by the economic crisis and
austerity measures, tries to find ways to exploit its strong aspects. NGOs and
movements have emerged towards that goal and have received a whole lot of
attention. Such a case is the one that I chose to examine as it combines the notions of
new public diplomacy and place marketing with the use of innovative technologies
and the Internet within them. I believe that by exploring the use of the social media
platforms employed within the structure of the projects of the group, I will manage to
get a deeper insight regarding the role of new media in terms of organizing and
structuring groups of people united under the same goal.
2. Theoretical Framework

In this segment of the thesis, theoretical information regarding the notions of nation branding, new public diplomacy (NPD), new or digital media as well as a short background on the current situation of Greece under which the project has emerged, are to be provided.

2.1. What is nation branding (as part of the branding process)

It is more than obvious, that place branding stems out of the general field of marketing, which has been often called as “mother” of place branding. It is believed that it is the application of marketing to a special sort of products, called places (Ashworth and Karavatzis 2010, 8). However, this is not to imply that the whole notion of place or nation marketing is a novel one. As Ashworth and Karavatzis claim (2010), the conscious attempt of governments to shape a specifically designed place identity and promote it to identified markets, whether external or internal, is almost as old as government itself. In the same work, they mention that place marketing in planning was made possible, by a series of conceptual and practical developments within marketing.

“Place branding can be the means for both achieving competitive advantage in order to increase inward investment and tourism, but also the means for achieving community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city and activating all social forces to avoid social exclusion and unrest.”  

(Ashworth and Karavatzis 2010, 7)

But what should first interest us is how all this started. And “by all this” I mean, how and when place branding made its appearance. Although commercial branding can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, it wasn’t before the end of the 1800s that
it did its first appearance in a modernized way. That is almost the time that place branding showed itself in the U.S.A. (Ashworth and Karavatzis 2010, 16-18).

“In general terms, branding is a process which attempts to influence how consumers interpret and develop their own sense of what a brand means and ... a brand is a product or service made distinctive by its positioning relative to the competition and by its personality which comprises a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values.”

(Hankinson and Cowking as cited by Ashworth and Karavatzis 2010, 4)

In other words, one could claim that meanings such as place branding or promoting existed long before the appearance of the internet. As Ward (as cited by Ashworth and Karavatzis, 2010) claims, this activity’s purpose was to differentiate a place and make it more preferable over other ones with a process that was not exclusively based on advertising. As the application of private sector-based marketing techniques became more widespread, the term brand entered the consciousness of the public sector and, shortly afterwards, place branding entered the consciousness of mainstream marketing academics (Hankinson 2010, 18-19). In the same chapter, Sleipn’s (1998) theory is also mentioned, according to which the place product is dualistic, consisting of a “nuclear” product (the place as a holistic conceptual entity) and its contributory elements (the services, activities and features that comprise the place). Another approach to the place product is the one by Van den Berg and Braun (as cited by Hankinson 2010, 19) who divide the product into three levels, the individual service (e.g. a tourist attraction), clusters of related services (e.g. tourism services) and urban agglomeration, referring to the collection of all services that make up the place.

2.1.1.: Simon Anholt's Critique

In an attempt to link this segment of the theory with the following part Hankinson’s (2010) opinion is of great importance. He believes that it is clear from the diversity of the reviewed literature that place branding has been, and will continue to be, studied
from several perspectives, some of which take a critical view.

Such a critique is expressed by Simon Anholt, who might be one of the most famous authors and academics on the field. Simon Anholt is absolutely connected with the term of place branding, as he is the one who introduced it. He has conducted many researches, based to indicators, in an attempt to rank countries according to their image perception. However, he expresses his opposition to the way this term has been perceived. He expresses his critique on the term nation branding itself (2010) as he rejects the idea that it is possible to “do branding” for a country (or a city or a region) in the same way that companies “do branding” with their products and services, as vain and foolish. He strongly believes that government policies cannot be replaced by communications and it takes more than advertising and PR campaigns to alter the image of a city or a country (Anholt 2010, 9). According to him, a more suitable definition for such acts is “competitive identity” (ibid, 11). What is more, he also claims that it is difficult to establish clarity on this point, since only a few nation branding initiatives appear to include any provision for measuring their impact or effectiveness. In other words, he means that although several respective initiatives have appeared willing to “do the job”, very few of them have considered finding ways to measure their campaigns’ effectiveness. In the same book, he also refers to the notion of public diplomacy, in that it is what gets often confused with place branding. Public diplomacy is to be mentioned within the course of thesis, but mainly within the notion of “new public diplomacy”, which fits best to the specific case study of this work. Anholt also mentions that when he introduced the term “place branding”, he intended it to be perceived as that places have brand images instead of wrongly claiming that places can be branded, which he believes to be a very ambitious and entirely unproven claim (2010, 11).

To sum up Anholt’s critic on place branding, he claims that it is not about communication but policies and that it takes three basic principles for a nation to promote itself in an effective way. Strategy, which according to him, is for a nation to know where it stands, where it wants to get to and how it shall achieve it, substance which is the effective execution of that strategy and symbolic actions which are part of the substance but with a communicative power. In other words, innovations, special legislation adjustments, investments, institutions or policies that can have a
positively perceived impact on the public opinion, and thus can create a positive stance towards the place or the nation promoted.
2.2.: (New) Public Diplomacy

“In global communications ideas matter. But ideas alone can’t make any measurable difference if they are not properly marketed to an audience, be it a consumer or citizen.”

(Snow 84, 2010)

It’s all about communication. It has always been so, especially in what has to do with external relations. One of the means to go about improving a country’s reputation has been public diplomacy, which has evolved since the period of the Cold War into a more proactive form of influence (Simons, 2012). Simons claims that there is a need to utilize a means for projecting a country’s attractiveness internationally and that public diplomacy is something that has been in existence for a long time in practice, but is still very much in vogue. He also refers to the problem of it being confused with nation branding or propaganda. According to Nicholas Cull, there are five elements of public diplomacy.

- Listening: collecting the opinions and data from the target audience through listening
- Advocacy: an active function where the messenger attempts to promote a certain idea or policy that benefits them
- Cultural diplomacy: making known and promoting a country’s cultural resources and accomplishments.
- Exchange diplomacy: to send abroad and to receive people for a period of study, thereby exporting ideas and ways of doing things
- International broadcasting (news): an attempt to manage the international environment through mass media assets, in order to engage the foreign publics. (Jowett and O’Donnell as cited by Simons, 2012)

Public diplomacy is perceived as the means for managing a country’s reputation, rather than just a matter of trying to “sell” an idea or policy to foreign audiences (Simons, 2012). According to the same author, there is a significant focus on the role of the mass media and the emphasis given on them when they are needed in
order the message to be conveyed more easily and effectively. Public diplomacy is different from traditional diplomacy, in that the latter employs educated people (diplomats) to get the job done. In other words, the communication is being conducted between officers who represent their countries. On the other hand, public diplomacy is a government’s attempt to reach, not another country’s government, but directly the audiences of interest. That is to say, that people and publics are the target, and not well educated officials. However, communication changes and along change all the communicational tools. Just like any other tool, public diplomacy has managed to evolve. Thus, a new notion has emerged. The one of “new public diplomacy”. New public diplomacy involves more than just governmental action. It involves publics, NGOs and citizens.

“Today's global media and global celebritydom can elevate a person without any formal elite education in foreign policy onto a platform that can reach more global publics than any foreign minister or most heads of state.”

(Snow 2010, 90)

According to Nancy Snow (2010) new public diplomacy meets some significant changes over the old diplomacy model.

- Publics to Publics (P2P) communication: The communication is now run between groups of people, rather than between governments or between governments and publics.
- Unofficial (NGOs, private citizens, practitioners) character: Anyone can now stand up and start his own initiative trying to export or to manage the country’s reputation.
- Everybody’s doing it: Absolute participation
- Active and participatory public
- Dialogic and exchange oriented, two-way symmetric.
2.3.: (New) Media in the Information Society

“A post-industrial society is based on services. Hence, it is a game between persons. What counts is not raw muscle power, or energy, but information. [...] If an industrial society is defined by the quantity of goods as marking a standard of living, the postindustrial society is defined by the quality of life as measured by the services and amenities – health, education, recreation, and the arts – which are now deemed desirable and possible for everyone”

(Bell 1974, 127)

In that way Christian Bell (1974) made an attempt to explain how the mankind and its relation with work has moved on and evolved as time passed by. According to his view, which was very innovative, if the time frame in which it was developed is to be considered, the industrial society was succeeded by an “post-industrial society” (ibid, 112) in which we still live. A rise of the number of the so called “white-collar workers” (Machlup 1962, 380) at the expense of the number of people whose work could be characterized as muscle work is probably one of the most significant symptoms or features of this new era.

“The global information society is evolving at breakneck speed. The accelerating convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting multimedia and information and communication technologies is driving new products and services, as well as ways of conducting business and commerce. At the same time, commercial, social and professional opportunities are exploding as new markets open to competition and foreign investment and participation. The modern world is undergoing a fundamental transformation as the industrial society that marked the 20th century rapidly gives way to the information society of the 21st century. This dynamic process promises a fundamental change in all aspects of our lives, including knowledge dissemination, social interaction, economic and business practices, political engagement, media education, health, leisure and entertainment. We are indeed in the midst of a revolution, perhaps the greatest that humanity has ever experienced. To benefit the
world community, the successful and continued growth of this new dynamic requires global discussion.’’

(World Summit on the Information Society Announcement, November 2003 as cited by Chadwick 2006)

The above cited indicate a change in the way people interact in this era. In other words, a shift towards new technologies such as the internet and its media is to be observed. Consequently, one could wonder what this can bring to traditional or conventional means of communication such as television, newspapers, radio etc. Thus, within this chapter, I would like to examine and present the differences between old and new media channels, as far as political participation or deliberation. This will help to get a better insight on the use of the internet in people’s participation to various social, political or national issues. Since, the project that is investigated in this thesis constitutes such an issue, this theoretical analysis will give a better insight on the comparative importance of those two different media channels.

As Chadwick (2006) chooses to put it, in the early 70s, conference phone calls, interactive cable television, and portable video cameras were seen as the revolutionary route to grassroots citizen activism and a more democratic system of media production based upon the involvement of community groups in program making. This implies that, means that today might be characterized as primitive have once been innovative and have a caused a significant change for the time.

“The concept of e-democracy is associated with efforts to broaden political participation by enabling citizens to connect with one another and with their representatives via new information and communication technologies.’’

(Hansard Society, 2003 as cited by Chadwick 2006)

However, what is of even greater interest in regard to this thesis is the notion of e-mobilization. This means the mobilization of people forming social movements or interest groups with the aid of the internet. Communication technologies have long been powerful factors shaping political mobilization (Jones as cited by Chadwick 2006, 114). According to Chadwick there are three areas in which the impact of the Internet can be measures in terms of mobilization. First, the way that Internet has affected the way traditional movements have chosen to change their communicational
policies in order to reach bigger groups or to put pressure on political elites. This is not to imply that it has changes those procedures to an absolute extent, rather than it has facilitated the possibility for recruitment, fund-raising, organizational flexibility and efficiency. Secondly, he claims that transnational groups, although having existed long before the intense rise of the Internet, have met a significant improvement within the last ten years with the intense use of the Internet. Last but not least, he mentions the notion of hacktivism, which means employing characteristics and tools that can only be found in the online world, in order to put pressure. (Chadwick 2006, 115)

2.3.1.: The Introduction of New Media in Nation Branding and New Public Diplomacy

What happens though, when it comes to branding through new emerging innovative techniques? As mentioned before, although attempts for promoting or marketing places – either as part of the branding process, or not – have existed for many decades, it would not be wise but to admit that, with the Internet having invaded into our lives, this sector would remain the same. It is now easier than ever to reach audiences from all around the globe, just with a few clicks and almost for free. The way the Internet has influenced the traditional marketing sector, it has also reached the tourism marketing field. Especially now, with the latest form of presence of the Internet, social media, having changed the way we interact to a great extent. According to Fouts (2010) who has studied the role of emergent media, social media on cultural relations, public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy, countries need to pay significantly more attention to their identity and brand as it is manifested across multiple evolving internet-based platforms.

“*For the social media, virtual world and physical world interactions are not mutually exclusive. They are part of a broader tapestry of interactions that a country should employ to manage its brand. Choosing virtual does not mean excluding the physical.*”

(Fouts 2010, 118)
He also claims that technology and social media tools are evolving at a pace that often far exceeds the agility or comfort level of standard government pace and practice. He says that the problem in incorporating those techniques often lies within bureaucracy and he mentions the main reasons for which people react to his writings on incorporating those techniques in cultural relationships.

- “Cartoonish” appearance
- Not real (People tend to perceive the digital as non-real)
- Anonymity within the social media
- Fear of technology (People are afraid that they cannot keep up with the pace that technology evolves)

“We are at a turning point in our civilization: The evolution of a new global culture and economy is being written across an evolving communication tapestry. [...] Today’s country brands are just as likely to be affected by headlines in a major paper as they are in a protest on an island in Second Life or a sea of a million Twitter users changing their accounts to protect the identity of a few. For countries to have a true impact on their brand, they must be willing to engage cultures and communities where they are, not where they think they should be.”

(Fouts 2010, 119-120)

As Govers and Go claim (2010) the creative use of technologies will allow places to co-create identities, experiences and imaginaries as traditional marketing promotion will not win the hearts and minds of a global audience any longer. Apart from the written literature on the field, it takes just a look around for someone to realize the dominant presence of the new technologies, which also replaces the internet in a polite way, in the way everything is promoted and marketed with it being a product, a service, a corporation or even a country. According to Simons, social media are becoming an increasingly popular in public diplomacy programmes. At this point, what is of great interest is the opinion of Facebook’s Vice-President of Global Communications, Elliot Schrage, as cited by Simons (2012), on how social media
networking sites are changing the way people are thinking about who their friends are, what companies are interacting with or what government they are interacting with. According to him, there are three advantageous aspects when the social media are employed in public diplomacy. First, he believes that Facebook creates an opportunity for people to see the world through the ideas or opinions of their friends. In other words, the information is no more shaped by external factors, rather than people and their friends. Secondly, he underlines the authenticity that Facebook provides to its users, in that it is all about their ideas, opinions and values. Thirdly, he claims that it now easier than ever to get to know what someone cares about, what he or she likes, not just once but within the course of time.

“Social media users are a discerning and educated target audience, and are also networked and motivated to communicate.”

(Simons, 2012)

From all the above, the emerging connection between traditional marketing policies and new technologies, is more than obvious. This link is what I want to examine through the specific case study of the “Up Greek Tourism” initiative. Assuming that the new media has made it even easier for people to interact, communicate and interact, I would like to measure the motives, the intentions as well as the results. The above theories are also to be connected with notions of new public diplomacy or that of loss of cultural identity and the attempt to regain it.

2.4.: The link with the Case Study

As mentioned before, there is a plethora of reasons for choosing the case of the “Up Greek Tourism” initiative in Greece. However, I believe that those reasons are even more profound at this specific point of the thesis. Personal motivations for deciding to work on that movement, such as nationality, prior background or personal professional or academic preferences were just part of the total motivations. In an attempt to justify the connection between the notions of nation branding and new
public diplomacy with this specific initiative and the motives behind it, I will try to
give a small, but not scientific description of the initiative. Of course, the formal
details will follow later, in the course of the thesis, as given by the people who ignited
that fire. They were willing – and actually did so – to answer to my questions, so one
of the following chapters will be devoted to citing their opinions, views and the facts
as they experienced them. New public diplomacy is all about giving everybody the
opportunity to engage themselves into an attempt towards improving or managing a
country’s reputation. Combined with nation branding and the use of social media
within it, there is, I think a perfect match to the initiative, its motives and its reasons
for existence. The “Up Greek Tourism” initiative showed itself about one year ago.
My first contact with it, was on Facebook, where I first saw that there is fan page with
called that way. There was a post about their first attempt that managed to draw a lot
of attention, which was to post a billboard, promoting Greek tourism, in the Times
Square in New York. Reading this post, I realized what it was all about, got fascinated
by the idea and wanted to know more about it. Accidentally, one of the following
days some people of the group happened to appear on a TV show on the state
broadcaster introducing themselves and explaining their motives. Their inspiration
seemed to be the crisis by which Greece was – and still is – struck as well as the
austerity measures imposed. The members of that group envisioned a better future for
their country, and thus they thought they should find a way to help it. For many
people, including them, tourism has always been – and continues to be – the most
important industrial aspect of Greece. Thus, they seemed to believe that a smart way
to help Greece is to try to promote it as a tourist destination, advertising it to publics
abroad. However, the most interesting part of the story was the way they believed
they should do it. Observing the constant changes that social media platforms and the
Internet in general, make to the way we interact and communicate, they managed to
take advantage of these changes and crowd-source their effort. In other words, they
built two accounts, on the two most popular and influential social media platforms
(Facebook & Twitter) through which they made their voice loud. It was asked that
any volunteer, either being Greek or not, would donate an amount of money in order
the amount needed for the advertisement’s place in the square to be gathered. For that
purpose, they used a site that facilitates crowdsourcing activities. The amount of
money required was gathered and the advertisement was posted in the most central
spot of New York. Two other similar attempts were carried out in Washington and
London respectively, with the latter being the most recent one. The whole effort, as mentioned before, drew a lot of attention by the international and domestic media despite the fact that it was just one out of the many similar initiatives that have emerged within the years of the economic crisis. From all the above, I claim that there is a perfect match between the theoretical part describing the notions of nation branding and new public diplomacy and this initiative in contemporary Greece. It incorporates the notions of publics to publics communication, NGOs involved and absolute participation which are three basic characteristics of new public diplomacy. As mentioned before, the exact details about the facts around the whole initiative, as well as a short background on Greece’s official governmental promoting acts, are to be presented in the course of this thesis. The chapters with the method selection procedure description and the data analysis are to follow.

2.5.: Contemporary Greece

The situation, under which the project has emerged is the so-called economic crisis and the austerity measures that it brought along. It all started with the agreement that the Greek government had with the European Union and the International Monetary Fund in order to receive a loan which would help the Greek economy face its large deficit that had been created mainly within the past decade. A memorandum was signed, according to which the Greeks had to liberalize its economy. Apart from that, a set of austerity measures were to be voted by the Parliament which would lead to cut off in wages and pensions but to an increase in taxes, as well. Matsaganis (2011) has carried out a very detailed reference to the causes of the crisis as well as to its links with the welfare state and the absolute need for social protection system. More specifically, what he claims is that social protection can help cope with the consequences of the crisis. In another report of his (2012) he focuses on the effects that such a crisis had on the labour market and the distribution of incomes. He also claims that the Greek welfare state was “poorly equipped to meet the challenge” of providing social protection and he concludes by suggesting ways of social policy ‘in an era of permanent austerity’.
Within this segment, I think it would be of high interest to give a short background of the involvement of Greek people with the Internet when it comes to protest, political action or any kind of generic action online. The most known example of such case has been the case of the “Indignant Citizens Movement” (Kinima Aganaktismenon Politon – Κίνημα Αγανακτισμένων Πολιτών) which gained a lot of attention from both the domestic and international media at a point of time that the entire planet was hit by the so-called global economic crisis. Choupis (2011) among others gives a thorough background of how the crisis emerged and a cynical view on why should it be Greece, since all E.U. members had “lived” beyond their abilities for long. The movement was mainly structured and organized through the social media platforms. It is said to have started as an innocent initiative which eventually took huge dimensions within the Greek society, that was affected by the debt crisis. What was different with that specific case, was that it was all about peacefully protesting by occupying Athens’ biggest central square in front of the Greek Parliament building (Sintagma sq.) The Internet, and social media in particular, are frequently credited in public discourse with being instrumental for the development and coordination of various contemporary social movements (Lu et al.). They specifically studied the case of the Indignant Citizens Movement, as they believe that the risk of global economic consequences was more obvious there. They studies the Facebook usage within the days of mobilization and they concluded to the fact that although users had a plethora of Facebook pages on which to post or interact with, they only converged with a small number of them (2-3) and that was what made the networking mobilization work.

3.: Methodology

3.1.: Methodological Background

As mentioned before, the entire topic of the thesis is of great interest for me and that was the reason for choosing it. At the early stages of the decision-making procedure, I was so strongly motivated towards investigating this specific topic that I had not taken into consideration any possible threats, dangers or difficulties I might face, as far as
the methodological part is concerned. Being so confident and absolutely motivated encouraged me to conclude to my topic’s decision. After having stated the general field I would like to deepen into and concluding to the scope from which I would like to investigate it with the aid of our supervisors, I started thinking the ways I would be able to conduct my research. In other words, I got deep into thinking the kind of research I would like to make, but more significantly the kind of research I would be able to conduct, given the fact that I would have to examine a case that has to do with Greece, when living in Sweden.

Initially, I thought I was extremely lucky, since I happened to know a woman who lives in my hometown, who was involved to the initiative as a volunteer and thought she could help me with my research by making it easier for me to get hand of information regarding the initiative as well as get in contact with the group’s core for the further stage of my research. As a consequence, I contacted her and she assured me that she would help me with anything I might need throughout my research procedure. She also suggested sending me a mail with any initial information I might need. At this stage, I thought it would be even better to fly to Greece myself so that I could have a pilot interview with her that would introduce me to the phase of my research. I asked her whether we could meet in case I visited Greece during March and she was absolutely positive. My consideration was that I might also be able to contact the project’s initiators if I was in Greece. Thus, I organized a small trip to Greece during March, which – as also mentioned in the thesis’ proposal – would consist the data collection part. However, things did not happen as expected as some difficulties came as obstacles in my way. Despite the fact that I flew to Greece, I never managed to meet the woman, who was willing to help me. She never showed up to our meeting, although it had been rescheduled many times. As a result, the potential danger of me not being able to conduct my research due to lack of data, pushed me into seeking different ways to obtain the necessary data. At that point, I decided to contact the core of the initiative itself, through their Facebook page. I have to admit that their response was immediate and positive. I explained the reason of my attempt to communicate with them, clarifying its purpose and goal. The reason, I am using “they” or “them” referring to the group is that, until that time I did not know the specific person I was talking to as my messages were exchanged on Facebook with “Up Greek Tourism” as a user. Later, I was asked to send an e-mail with all my questions and requests. It was at that point, that I got to know who I was talking to. Of
course, all the names will be given on the course of this paper. After our first communication, we concluded that I was to send an open-end questionnaire with all the basic questions that were necessary to do my research. My thought was that the same questionnaire would be answered separately by all the involved members of the initiative, or at least by the three people who consisted the core of the group. At this point, I have to mention that the person I was communicating with asked for further details regarding my thesis, such as my University, the specific topic as well as my supervisor. However, this did not happen, but instead what I received was a questionnaire answered by the group as an entity and not by three different people. All my questions were answered but in addition to that I was also given internet links which would operate as questions to me a couple of my answers. Those links were a YouTube video with a TEDxAthens talk given by the initiator of the group regarding the initiative itself and a specialized web newspaper’s article on the issue, including an interview from the same person. Those will be – among other material – part of the data that will be analyzed on the course of this thesis. The exact methods are to be discussed in the following section of the chapter.

3.2.: Methods Employed

From all the above and pieces of the puzzle that are going to be added within this chapter, it becomes obvious, that the research can and will not be focused towards a specific research method. Different kind of data that came up on the course of the research, made it inevitable to stick with just one method rather than a combination of more. One could call it a “mixed methods research” but according to Daymon and Holloway (2011), such a research comes up when the researcher uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches in one empirical study, drawing pragmatically on distinct research paradigms. The reason I chose to conduct such a survey, was because I wanted to take advantage of all the available material I had at my disposal and could lead me to some significant results.
In order to obtain deeper knowledge into the structure of nation branding or new public diplomacy acts, I will focus on a specific initiative that is being run in Greece, within the past few years. In other words, I will try to intensively investigate this case as a tool for obtaining more detailed information regarding my research question.

“Because case study research is not a method but a broad methodological approach or research design, a good way to think about it is as an umbrella under which can fit other approaches (such as grounded theory, ethnography and discourse analysis) depending on the aim of your research. Within its embrace, a case study also encompasses multiple methods (interviews, observations, document analysis, focus groups and so on). Perhaps confusingly, the outcome of the process of case study research is known as a case study.”

(Daymon and Holloway 2011, 114)

From the above quote, we realize that a case study is more of a general way of getting deep into your specific point of interest. Metaphorically, we could characterize it as a tree with its branches being other more specialized research methods such as content analysis, semiotics or even interviews. Of course, this is not to imply that any kind of qualitative research cannot be included in a case study. However, this thesis will not include any collection and analysis of qualitative data. As Daymon and Holloway point out, the aim of the case study is to increase knowledge about contemporary – and sometimes historical – communication events and processed in their context. More specifically, questions like “how” or “why” things happen in a specific situation (2011, 115). What is of great interest is the ways that you manage to answer the above questions according to Piekkari et al., as cited by Daymon and Holloway and they can provide us with a great insight of how a case study actually works. Those are the following:

- Undertaking a detailed analysis of a case, i.e. a particular phenomenon in its setting
• Trying to understand it from the point of view of the people involved
• Noting the many different influences on, and aspects of, communication relationships and experiences that occur within the case
• Drawing attention to how those factors relate to each other
• Often also noting the broader social forces and regimes of power in which the case is embedded

When a case study is employed, what is of great importance is to specify both the place and time within which your case is to be examined. When it comes to this specific case, I will not constrain it to any specific period of time or any specific place. However, the part of the research which has to do with the analysis of the initiative’s page on Facebook will focus on the period of time that the whole operation was ignited and wanted to get the publics informed. Apart from that, the entire study will focus on the period with its starting point being its ignition and the finishing point being today. As far as place is concerned, as general as it might sound the study will investigate things that occurred both in Greece and abroad, since the whole aim of the initiative was to promote Greek tourism outside of the Greek borders.

3.2.2.: Discourse Analysis

“Discourse analysis is a cross-disciplinary research approach which focuses on the analysis of talk and text. The notion of “text” embraces written, spoken and non-verbal language, as well as other forms of presentation sourced in interviews, documents, and visual images such as films, photos and advertisements.”

(Daymon and Holloway 2011, 165)

When it came to deciding upon the method with which I would examine the TEDxAthens talk, I thought that the best way to do so is to discursively analyze it. According to Rose (2001) the notion of discourse has been central part of Foucault’s both theoretical arguments and to his methodology. Foucault, according to the same author, has been a writer whose work has always been cited when it comes to psychoanalysis. She also claims that discourse has a quite specific meaning as it refers
to groups of statements which structure the way a thing is thought, and the way we act on the basis of that thinking. More specifically, she also quotes Nead’s (1988) opinion, according to which discourse is a particular form of language with its own rules and conventions and the institutions within which the discourse is being produced and circulated. According to Foucault, discourse is powerful but it is powerful in a particular way it is powerful, because it is productive. Probably, this is the reason why people thought they should investigating behaviors by analyzing the discourse in which they are involved. However, according to Daymon and Holloway discourse analysis is not a clear-cut approach to qualitative research but most researchers agree that the key focus is on the production of social life through language and social practice and that this includes how individuals identities, organizations, industries, communities and social contexts are created and maintained through social discourse (2011, 165). Further on their work, they specify the main sources of data, for a discourse analysis, might be websites, written documents, the televised speeches and broadcast interviews of politicians or political advertisement (2011, 166). This is how I intend to connect the data I have at my disposal with the theory around discourse analysis. As mentioned before, Yorgos Kleivokiotis – who is the initiator of the idea – has provided me with a YouTube from a TEDxAthens talk of his own, in 2012. The talk’s title is “The Future of our Country is in our Hands”. I am intending to analyze the discourse used within that sixteen (16) minutes long talk. The talk was given in Greek, and as I am a native Greek speaker and fluent user of the English language, I will be able to translate the talk and use the segments which are to be analyzed.

“A discourse is a way of talking or writing about something to make it meaningful. It is underpinned by assumptions about what we know to be “true” with regard to how we conduct ourselves what and how we communicate, and what we understand. Although language is a major feature of discourse, a discourse is more than language because it constitutes, or produces, a particular view of social reality.”

(Daymon and Holloway 2011, 166)

There is a plethora of reasons, why I chose to conduct a discourse analysis on this specific video. First of all, I believe that one’s words are not randomly employed and that one can find a great meaning behind the specific set of words, gestures and
images used to communicate a message. Second, this talk was given at the point, when the whole “Up Greek Tourism” initiative started to gain the biggest part of the attention and it worked as a presentational talk to the public. Last but not least, I think that the whole idea of the TEDx meetings has managed to receive a lot of the public sphere’s trust and has been characterized as trustworthy and that the content circulated within them is valid.

According to Daymon and Holloway (2011, 167), discourse analysis has similarities with conversation and narrative analysis but is more flexible because there is less an emphasis on naturally occurring talk. That constitutes the main link between my choice of discourse analysis and this talk, because a talk is not naturally occurring rather than planned.

“Discourse analysis appreciates that language, or discourse, is not simply a device for producing and transmitting meaning. It is a strategy which people use purposefully to try to create a particular effect.”

(ibid, 167)

Last but not least, the use of metaphors is a significant part of the field of discourse analysis. Metaphors signify meanings, which we want to be conveyed more easily and have to do with the how of the language use. In the same work, the authors claim that the metaphors are used in order to guide and reveal our thinking. The use of metaphors is examined, by discourse analysts, in a way to investigate how meanings are encapsulated in discursive practices. Closing the segment of the methods’ part which has to do with discourse analysis, I would like to clarify that I also have an answered questionnaire at my disposal, which could also potentially be part of my data to be discursively analyzed. However, I chose not to do such an analysis on it, but instead translate it and use it in within a later stage of the analysis procedure, as a tool for verification, justification or rejection of the analysis procedure output. That is to say that it will be employed later on the course of the research procedure.
At this point of this thesis, it is more than clear that the research can – or will – not be focused on a particular method, rather than on a mixture of them. A method that can help a lot towards understanding motivations and even the ways with which this initiative was structured and managed to “send its message” is semiotics. Semiotics, which comes from the Greek word σημείο (simio) which means sign, examines and analyses the way images and icons employed when a message is to be conveyed. The field which has mostly been investigated with the method of Semiotics is advertising due to the extensive use of images, along with text, whose goal is to influence people towards a certain buying decision against another. In an attempt to draw a line from the theoretical framework to this specific method, I claim that the advertising campaign is of vital importance for a place marketing act. It is its central axis, around which the whole project is circulated. According to Williamson (as cited by Rose, 2001) argues that one of the most influential ideological forms in contemporary society is advertising. She claims that advertisements are ubiquitous and thus appear autonomous, so that they have ‘a sort of independent reality that links them to our own lives’. Thus, I believe that analyzing the actual campaign and the way people from the initiative decided to design their advertisements, will help me understand or get a better insight regarding the stereotypes or norms that prevail in Greece, as far as it being promoted as a tourist attraction is concerned.

“Ads saturate our lives. [...] Yet, because ads are so pervasive and our reading of them so routine, we tend to take for granted the deep social assumptions that are embedded in advertisements.”

(Goldman as cited by Rose 2001, 71)

That means that special attention is to be given in the content of the advertisements, as it has a lot of important information to give us regarding the society we live in as well as certain stereotypes that surround it. Daymon and Holloway claim that when using semiotic tools to analyze advertising, your aim is to uncover the cultural
communication codes that marketing communicators draw in order to persuade consumers to form desired interpretations about brands. According to Williamson (ibid, 87), in order to analyze an image, or a few, it is necessary to look at the images they are constructed in contrast to, or in relation to. Thus, as part of this study I will attempt to analyze the signs and images embedded in the advertising campaign of the initiative which has been the core of its actions. The initiative, as mentioned before, has managed to post three (3) different billboard banners in Washington, New York and London with the latter being the most recent of them all. The billboards, aiming at reminding the publics of Greece as tourist destination, were designed by volunteers from the group specialized on graphic arts and not only. They also became parts of the initiative’s page on Facebook, either as uploaded images or as covers for the page. This means they constituted the central part of the group’s actions and incorporated the thoughts and motivations of the people involved. As a consequence, I strongly believe that they can supply the research with a great amount of help towards understanding the initiative and answering the question.

3.2.4.: Content Analysis

When having to investigate such a case, in order to generalize the results to a broader theory as a tool for answering a question, it becomes more than obvious that special attention has to be given to the context within which the case was structured and promoted. In this case, as mentioned many times before, the whole idea was centralized around the axis of the social media platforms. Whether this has been a necessary aspect of today’s society in turning the whole idea into reality is still to be questioned and investigated. Social media platforms were employed in order the targeted publics – and not only – to get informed. A site for raising funds was also employed in order the necessary funds for the advertisements to be raised. As a result, I believe that it is of great interest to have a look on the way the people from the initiative decided to penetrate into the publics and keep them informed mainly about their plans and intentions but also regarding their progress and achievements. This may give us an insight on the actual role of the social media platforms employed e.g. Facebook and the comparative importance between them and traditional media platforms like TV channels. In other words, I think that a closer look has to be given.
on the group’s Facebook fan page, which was — and still is — the one through which they communicate their actions. However, I suggest that this look has to be focused on the prior stages of the page’s evolution, during which the whole initiative was still at a starting point. That emerges from a combination of reasons. First of all, I think that it would be impossible to examine the page in detail from the point it was launched until today, especially when other methods are also to be used, because in such a case the data and their analysis would overcome the size and timetable of this thesis. Secondly, the most interesting part, as far as that page is concerned, is the period it was launched and the periods before each billboard posted, in that a great deal of information can emerge from the way the whole plan was communicated through Facebook. As the whole central idea is about discovering the channels of communication, in relation to them being either traditional or innovative, I claim that it will provide this research with great outcome. On the other hand, this is not to imply that this outcome is not to be rejected by the results of the other separate methods or by the questionnaire which will help clarify, verify or even reject the results. That is why, I decided not to use the questionnaire as a source of data to be analyzed, rather than as way of ending up with an answer which will be as clear as possible and at the same time helping at matching the group initiators’ stance — which has been clearly stated - with the one which will obviously emerge by the different research method parts. The page’s analysis will be conducted using the content analysis method the background of which will be presented now.

It obviously derives from the method’s name that it is all about analyzing content. But what exactly constitutes content? As mentioned by Rose (2001, 54) content analysis was originally developed to interpret written and spoken texts. She continues by claiming that content analysis is “methodologically explicit” and that it is based on a number of rules and procedures that must be rigorously followed for the analysis of images or texts to be reliable. Krippendorf (1980) as cited by Rose presents a different stance as far as content analysis, is concerned. He claims that this method, although being a qualitative one, it includes many elements that would mainly characterize a qualitative method.

“Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid references from date to their context.”
According to the same work, content analysis is a way of understanding the symbolic qualities of texts, by which he means the way that elements of a text always refer to the wider cultural context of which they are a part. Rose also underlines that, studies using content analysis use numbers to make their points. Furthermore, she claims that the use of numbers in content analysis which is similar to a quantitative method helps “making” things more clear in a more scientific way. She cites Lutz and Collins opinion, that the empirical results from a content analysis can avoid being confused by the huge amount of data and material to be analyzed, since the use of numbers helps towards that direction. What is more they also claim that the results from a content analysis significantly reduce the potential bias included and that the need for rules in content analysis forces a researcher to be methodologically explicit. The content analysis in this thesis will be conducted with the help of screenshots from the Facebook page of the initiative. Posts, and other images in general, are to be collected since the day of its launch (23 December 2011) in the form of screenshots from the page itself. Then, the images will be analyzed according to the rules that dominate content analysis and that will be discussed upon in a parallel way with the analysis itself. The use of the term “images” in the course of this thesis is not to imply that icons and pictures are only to be examined, rather than images constitute the screenshots from the Facebook page, which are to include written texts such as headlines, headers or titles that accompany the different kinds of posts.
4. Data Presentation and Analysis

What is to follow is the analysis of the three different data sources, selected and explained in the methodology part. Those documents will probably help obtaining the information needed. It will all start with the TEDx talk discursive analysis which will be followed by the advertisements’ semiotic analysis and the Facebook page’s content analysis. At that point, I want to state that the title of the chapter which includes both presentation and analysis was not selected randomly. I intend to present the data and analyze it at the same time, as an analysis in a different segment of the thesis would be harder to achieve and follow, since a large part of it constitutes of images. However, a separate chapter with the results and the points for discussion is to follow. It will be in that chapter that the links between the actual theoretical framework and the analysis’ output are to be presented.

4.1.: “The Future of our Country is in our Hands” – Discursively Analyzing a TEDx talk

The title of this segment of the thesis stands for the title of the talk given by Yorgos Kleivokiotis during the TEDxAthens event in 2012. Apparently, the title of the talk, which also made a title to the respective YouTube video was not randomly selected, rather than in an attempt to include the central idea of what comes next during the presentation, as well as the central concept of the whole initiative. In order to avoid using the same name over and over again, I will use the initial Y as a signifier for the talker Yorgos Kleivokiotis. During the start of the video, Yorgos is standing on the scene wearing blue jeans, a T-Shirt and a jacket. The most interesting part of that, and the reason I am especially referring to his appearance on that day is the logo that was printed on the T-Shirt. A special edition of the “Keep Calm” quotes was printed on the white T-Shirt saying “Keep Calm and Travel to Greece”. In that way, using a humorous stance, Y. probably wanted to convey the message which of course is the promotion of the Greek tourism. Then Y. welcomes everybody by saying: “Ladies and Gentlemen, for the next seventeen to eighteen minutes, I would like to tell you the story of Up Greek Tourism. It is a story about a group of people who believe that the
exit of Greece from the current situation lies in our hands. In the hands of Greek people, either living within or outside the borders of Greece.” In that way, he avoids any kind of introduction and cuts directly to the chase of the talk. What is of great interest, is him referring to the help by Greek people living abroad, making in that way a clear but indirect reference to the Greek diaspora and its significant role. After that, he proceeds on to explaining the way that he came up with that idea. The most interesting part of that segment is the words and the images he used to do it. He says: “In 2010, that at last the situation in which Greece was, became known and everybody could tell the direction towards which we were heading, I thought that we are lucky to have tourism, which can get us out of the difficult situation by bringing in money from abroad.” The use of the phrase “at last” indicated a thinking person, who had probably realized the situation long before the formal announcements. At the same time, he projects images showing people on strike at Greece’s main harbors or archaeological sites or even posting billboards on Acropolis and mentions that those were the images that were broadcasted by the international media abroad.

![An image projected during the talk, showing taxi drivers on strike in central Athens.](image)

He then makes a reference to the factors resulting to the current situation with them being the “political system” and “us” “to the extent that a democratic system allows and at the same time confesses him as “desperate”. Y. then gives information about his thoughts that being desperate would not help and the way he had to help, when living in Dubai. He says that he created a Facebook event (underlying that it was not
yet a page), through which he could invite all his friends to visit Greece in summer with the hope that it would become viral and that they would invite their own friends. That happened and he says he “realized that 175,000 people had been invited to my imaginary party in Greece” and that the whole thing drew attention by the some international media and that it was this “unexpected success” that made his believe that he could do something greater. Y. explains how he came up with the idea of employing a digital platform located in California in order to raise a fund with which to build a promotional campaign for Greek tourism. At that point, Y. mentions the other two (2) people belonging to the core of the group by saying: “I quickly realized that I would not be able to do such a thing by myself, especially when living in Dubai, so I contacted Onic Palatzian, an old friend, and Stathis Haikalis whom I knew only through social media as a communication specialist.” He uses the word “credibility” as what he hoped they could offer to that effort. This implies that he perceived his “mission” quite responsibly and seriously. Then the three (3) central principles of the initiative were presented with them being:

- Only the three of them would be responsible for any decision-making within the group.
- They would include a group of volunteers, giving them a space of freedom to act within.
- The project would be consisted by a clear, short-termed task for reasons of efficiency.

“Governments are trying to find solutions, but we as individuals should not wait.”

(Onic Palatzian in the group’s presentational video)

The above is a clear link between the group’s vision and the theory regarding new public diplomacy, which says that it is all about ordinary people taking their own initiatives when in need to promote their country’s image abroad. The first video displayed in Times Square in New York was also projected during the talk with the observation that it was created with a technique using all the pictures of the people that contributed by offering an amount of money.
When proceeding into analyzing the results of the whole initiative Y. claims that according the platform used for raising the money, almost nine million (9,000,000) people got to know about the whole thing. At the same time, the logos of the media corporations, TV channels and newspapers that made a reference to the story of Up Greek Tourism. Y. also refers to the feedback they got from the publics as well as the second billboard posted in Washington. A special reference was made to the “most important reference to the initiative” as Y said. That was a reportage by CNN in New York. At this point the next step of the group was also published, with it being a billboard in the Piccadilly Circus area in London which became true in February 2013.

“Concluding, I want to say that the goal of Up Greek Tourism was not to bring tourists to Greece. That was the secondary goal. We could have promoted anything other than tourism. The actual goals of the initiative were three:

1. To create a positive stance towards the creativity and innovation of Greek people, abroad.
2. To give an example of what a group of people who believe in an idea can accomplish with the use of the social media and mainly without any governmental help.
3. To raise the morale of Greek people either living in or outside of Greece, who observe what is going on with anxiety and disappointment.”

(Yorgos Kleivokiotis)

4.2.: The meaning behind the signs

As mentioned in the respective segment of this thesis, it has been claimed – and justified – quite strongly that advertisements play a significant role in shaping our society as they can indicate stereotypes, ideas and beliefs that characterize the world as we know it. Thus, an examining approach towards the pictures and
images used in the different advertising billboards, will probably give us some information regarding the way communication was handled.

![Image](image.png)

Figure 2: One of the images displayed in Times Square in New York.

In Figure 2, we can see a young woman with her arms wide spread and her hands up almost indicating the sky. The background is blue, as in all the images, and the subject is wearing a striped T-shirt and white sunglasses. The text next to the woman says “See you in Greece”. According to Dyer, as cited by Rose (2001, 75) there is a plethora of aspects or perspectives, based on which, an analysis can be held on an advertisement. Employing, those points on this particular image, one can easily notice that the girl or woman is of a young age, which probably indicates innocence, carelessness or a lust for life. Furthermore, according to the same author, the selection of a female subject indicates passion or emotion. What is more, we can notice that her hair is covered and not let loose which can mean that there is no reference to lust, beauty or seduction. The selection of race is absolutely justified, since the campaign is to promote Greece. As far as secondary aspects of the image are concerned, as noted before the subject is wearing a summer outfit, which clearly refers to Greece as a tourist attraction. Moreover, the stance of the subject as described before shows enthusiasm and positive feelings to be linked with what is being promoted. Last but not least, one could also say that the text included in the image, could potentially be her own words.
Figure 3: Another image of the New York billboard showing the Parthenon temple in Athens.

The figure above (3) does not need much of an analysis since the image displayed included the most known aspect of Greece as a tourist destination, which is history and culture. A very important aspect of what Greece can offer to a tourist is signified by using the Parthenon temple as a sign. The relationship between the signified and the sign is more than obvious.

Figure 4: A young man surfing. Another image displayed in New York.

Same as in the other image, employing people, a respective analysis can be conducted. The subject is male and is surfing. Both the subject and the surfing board – as all of the images – are constructed using the pictured of the people having donated their money for the campaign. This subject is also probably young which means that a notion of innocence needs to be given as well. However, this time the subject is a male athlete, which according to Dyer’s check-list implies a tone of action and vigorousness. What is more the set which obviously is the sea or the ocean, apart from
indicating another significant aspect of Greece, also implies the notion of fantasy through an exotic set displayed. Last but not least, it can be seen that the text “Join us in Greece” uses a significant space within the image with “Greece” being the largest part of it.

![Figure 5: A fish boat as part of the London campaign.](image)

When it came to expanding the effort in the area of London, in order to communicate the message to the British public, the same style was used. The blue background continues to exist in the images displayed in the Piccadilly Circus area for two (2) weeks. However a new image was introduced. That, of a fishing boat with two fishermen on it and the text “We are off to Greece”. This probably links the campaign to one of Greece’s main industry sector which is fishing. However, one does not have to stick to that, since it is the obvious result. In other words, a deeper meaning is also to be found in this image. It could be that high quality of food or other services can be found in Greece and that Greece having been linked to primal sectors of production, like agriculture or fishing implies the notion of originality and pureness.

Last but not least, what would be of great importance is to have a look on the avatar especially designed to promote the campaign in London. The Avatar was obviously inspired by the London Underground logo which is one of the most characteristic pictures associated with London. However the “Underground” part has been replaced by the phrase “Greece Calling”. In that way, Charis Tsevis (the designer of all the images for the campaign) intended to target to Greek people living in London and
U.K. in general and at the same time to make it easier for people living in Greece – and not only – that the new campaign will be all about London.

What is common is all those images – apart from the last one – is the fact that they were designed with a technique employing the pictures of all the people having donated an amount towards the achievement. Their pictures were gathered through the digital platform that was employed in order the required amount of money to be gathered. Furthermore, the blue colour is intensively present in all the images employed. At this point, I need to underline that not all the pictures were presented and analyzed, rather than those that – according to my opinion – constitute a significant sample of the total of images. However, this is not to imply that there were significant differences between them. Last, but not least it has to be clear, that the posts were videos consisting of images, a few minutes long, that were projected in a certain frequency for a given period of time.

4.3.: Analyzing the Facebook Page

Rather than strictly following the rules and procedures that are crystallized in content analysis, and that have been mentioned in the respective segment of this thesis, I have come to believe that another approach is to be proffered in this case, as it might offer more in terms of sufficient outcome. The reason I claim this, is because as I have mentioned before, I want to focus on the period that the page was ignited. My
intention is to have a closer look on the Facebook activity within a short period after the 23rd December 2011 which was the time that the group created the page and joined Facebook. As a result, I won’t be able to classify the method for selection of the images into any specific method as found in most books regarding content analysis. It will follow the sequence of the posts on the page itself independently of any form of special selection. What is more, I would like to underline the fact that the use of the word “images” does not imply the existence of pictures or icons, rather than the screenshots taken from the page on Facebook. I will attempt to analyze the posts, in terms of what they are about but more importantly of the words that accompany them, meaning the headings given by the page’s manager.

![UP Greek Tourism](image)

I hereby launch this crowd-funding campaign 😊

Like · Comment · Share

2

Figure 7: The first status update of the page on Facebook, three days after it joined Facebook.

Figure 7 consists the first ever status update of the page. The words used witness a tone of decisiveness, passion and courage for the goal to be achieved.
What is interesting with those three (3) different posts on the 27th December 2011 lies beyond the intense online activity. As can be observed, two (2) of them are links to international sites, one from France and one from the U.S. In both of them, a header in English has been used either summarizing or translating the content. This probably happens because more and more people, who do not speak Greek, tend to “like” the page. However, there is a post that comes from the online version of a Greek newspaper, claiming that, according to BBC, Santorini is the most beautiful island on the planet. This post does not have any header neither in English nor Greek, letting us think that interesting sources from the Internet were employed, sometimes without taking into consideration the target group of the page.
Within the following posts the first direct references to the tourism industry of Greece were made, underlining the fact that it is claimed to be the sector that can help the country improve its situation within these circumstances. What is more, specific aspects of tourism such as food are being mentioned in the form of an article regarding young Greek chefs and restaurants. What is interesting here, is the use of the international (English) version of a Greek newspaper as a source. This probably means that a lean towards the international audience is to be expressed.
The above figure includes two posts from the last day of 2011. The posts, as anticipated, are to promote Athens through a time lapse video and an article referring to famous “stars” helping in promoting Greece as a tourist destination. What is of great interest, regarding those posts since the point of the page’s ignition is that, apart from the first status update, there is no specific reference to the campaign itself. What can only be seen is an attempt to advertise or promote Greece by using articles showing a positive stance towards the country or particular aspects of it. This would mean either that the campaign had not yet been decided upon, or that at this early stage the anticipations of the group did not hit high and thus they “limited” themselves – at least for a short period of time – within just the attempt to positively affect and encourage people both from abroad and from Greece when it comes to their perception of the country as a tourist destination. The limited number of images used for this analysis emerged from the intention not to generalize the focus on to the entire course of the page, rather than on its start.
5.: Results and Points for Discussion

The aim of this chapter is to gather all the points discussed in the previous chapter in order them to be crystallized in terms of the theory given in the respective segment of this thesis. Those points are then to be discussed again, in the form of results of the research conducted and with the aid of the tool that I have referred to quite a lot, in the previous chapter. In other words, the answered questionnaire is to be employed in order – as mentioned before – the results to be either verified or rejected. At this point, I have to make it clear once again, that the research question regarding the way the group managed its communication channels and why the internet has been center to their communicational procedures, is believed to be answered with the intervention of this open-end questionnaire. The questionnaire was conducted and answered in Greek, however I will translate it myself – as I am a native Greek speaker and able to use the English language quite sufficiently – and use the segments that, according to my beliefs and intuition, can help in answering the research question. Last but not least, I would like to make it quite clear, that the possibility of the analysis outcome to be insufficient has been a case that has existed in my mind, throughout the entire reading, writing and researching process.

Starting from the attempt to make a clear and stable connection between the theoretical background and the actual case employed, as well as the outcome emerged; I will first present the elements witnessing that connection. First of all, the employment of the nation branding theory reflects to the actual content of the initiative’s intentions which was building a campaign for promoting Greece as a tourist destination abroad. Although it is not about an official state campaign, it still incorporates most of the characteristics of a nation branding campaign. A target group was specified, short-term and achievable goals were settled, the logos and the advertisements were designed and the means for funding were decided upon. In our case – as mentioned many times before – the campaign was funded through “loudsauce.com”, an international crowd-funding platform to raise money.

Moreover, the strongest of the links between the theoretical background and the research material and outcome, lies within the New Public Diplomacy theory. To make it more specific, I mean that this case crystallizes almost absolutely the concept
of NPD. NPD clearly includes the element of crowd-sourcing as being central to its notion. This happens, for a variety of reasons, many of them having emerged from the analysis part. The fact that it a private initiative by a group of people, and not an official governmental one, is what makes the connection the most profound. As Snow claims, in the respective chapter of this thesis, New Public Diplomacy activities are all about the action of groups of people, rather than state ones. As mentioned in the first chapter, publics to publics (P2P) acts are the key characteristic of NPD and this is exactly what happened in this case. This is even more obvious in the quote of Onic Palatzian from chapter 4, claiming that there is no more time for waiting government to do something, but it is time for us to act. In fact, the unofficial aspect of this initiative is what drives it to be included more, under the NPD umbrella. It was stated in the theoretical chapter, that one of the main and distinctive characteristics of New Public Diplomacy is the rather unofficial way that it is being conducted. No state or governmental involvement is present. Finally, the absolute participation of the publics, which was facilitated in this case either in the form of volunteerism or money donation and was profound through the advertisements’ design process, is a key characteristic of NPD. People fully engaged to their goal, is what was called “absolute participation” by Snow (2010).

Parts of the questionnaire are to follow, which will give a better insight to the case and will hopefully help towards answering the research question.

“Q: How do you perceive the crisis of Greece and Greece of the crisis?
A: We believe that the crisis is the result of a combination of reasons

➢ Bad global financial conditions.
➢ Bad financial management in the country that led to an enormous debt.
➢ Dysfunctional internal economy that led to the necessity of endless external funding.

Q: It has been quite known that the gathering of the required amount of money was the result of crowdsourcing. How did you come up with the idea of crowdsourcing with the help of social media platforms like Facebook? Apart from Facebook, what other platforms helped you achieving your goal?
A: Crowdsourcing is the contemporary version of fundraising. Through special digital platforms that do not face legal, tax or other technical problems, anyone can create a cause and gather money from the public for its funding. We used loudsauce.com. Social media help in spreading the message. We only used Facebook and Twitter. We didn’t have time for more.

Q: having achieved three different goals, what did you notice it is, as what we could call “the power of the social media”? Do you think that such an action would be feasible 15 years ago, without the help from the Internet?

A: We might need to explain the project a little more. Each project constitutes of three parts.

- Crowd-funding; the part in which we gather the money and gain the trust of the publics. This part is especially important for the Greek audience, as we want to prove that we can do things with little money and no help from the state.
- The advertising campaign in the form of a billboard.
- Project’s promotion through domestic and international media.

Doubtlessly, social media played their role throughout the entire procedure, but traditional media are the ones that promoted and conveyed the project’s message to larger segments of the public in a short period of time. Even 15 years ago, and without the Internet’s presence, the structure of Up Greek Tourism, regarding the money raising, would still be the same. We seek small amounts from a lot of people in order to achieve a goal. Thus, probably the same structure would seek to be applied in that era with its respective tools and data.”

The above is the most significant extract from the questionnaire that the project’s initiators answered for me. The reason, I wanted to know their perception about the current crisis in Greece, was because I thought it might give a good explanation into their initial motivations. This is not to imply, that understanding the deeper motivations would give any direction regarding the channels of communication. As a
result, being interested in issues like their communication channels, made me want to also ask them, their opinion regarding the use of social media in their project and what made them employ them as central in their campaigns. I was surprised to reveal the structure of each project according to their plans. In this structure, as observed in the segment of the interview above, three (3) different stages constituted their work. Apart from crowd-funding, which obviously plays a significant role in the effort, the other two (2) stages seem to receive equal attention by the group’s core. The stage, in which they try to gain the public’s trust and convince them to contribute to their attempt, is being followed by the stage in which they try to communicate the whole process through traditional media channels like TV channels or newspapers. This means that their decision of using the social media in their project was only because they thought it would help spreading the message of crowd-funding easier and more efficiently. But, once the goal was fulfilled they counted on traditional media, for their accomplished work to be spread around the world. However, another aspect of their work that intensively witnessed in the analysis outcome was the fact that they used the digital pictures of all the people having donated part of their money, in order to design their advertising campaigns and billboards, made me want to further investigate their deeper thoughts regarding the necessity of the internet in their project. Thus, I asked them whether they believe that such a goal would be feasible 15 years ago, in a period in which the internet was not so intensively present in our everyday lifestyles. They replied that, even 15 years ago, the structure of Up Greek Tourism regarding the money raising would still be the same, even without the internet. It would probable seek ways to be applied within the era and its respective tools and data. Their answer to that question was what could be claimed as the answer to this thesis’ research question. It implies that the use of the internet and the social media was, in a way, random and that such a procedure would have taken place even without them. However, the crisis and the urgent necessity for seeking ways to help happened in the era that they prevail, and they were employed in order better and more efficient results to be observed. Traditional media, although not being promoted as central to their campaigns, seemed to play an extremely important role in the whole process.
6.: Conclusion

When starting to work on this thesis, for the purposes of the Master programme in Digital Media & Society, I did not expect it to fill me with knowledge in different aspects of academic work. Apart from deepening my knowledge into topics that have always been of great interest to me, such as nation branding or new public diplomacy, I found myself totally overwhelmed by the fact that I got to obtain deep both theoretical and practical experience on a qualitatively approached research. What is more, the most fascinating part was the one, during which I got to investigate a case study that had long been of great interest to me, for personal reason mentioned in the respective chapter.

However, the most significant part was the one during which I managed to answer the question I had posed as the aim for this thesis and considered the way the initiative handled its communication channel and why the Internet had to be central in its communication policy as well as the role of the traditional media in the entire effort. As discussed in the results chapter, the actual research seemed to play a secondary role in answering the question, whereas the questionnaire I got answered from the initiative group – initially employed as a verifying tool – helped a lot in gaining a deeper insight into their actual use of social media in their projects, as well as their perception of the role of traditional media within it. People seemed to have a very clear insight of how they wanted to have their work structured. The role that the social media played in their project was to use them as a tool for gaining people’s trust in order to employ it and turn it into actual contribution in the form of money donation. They used them in order to show everybody that people can manage common goals, especially when it comes to helping their own country, without an enormous amount of money, and more importantly, without any assistance or help from the government itself, even though it could be claimed that such a case should have been among its duties. At this point, I also want to clarify that the reason why I did not try to make any comparison between this case and the official state acts, was because it was clarified by the initiative’s people that, although those two actions have run simultaneously, they were totally independent from each other. What is more, the role of the traditional media was also mentioned within this thesis, with them being the means for conveying their accomplished goals and projects. In
other words, it seems as though they had an equally significant role in the entire process. What is more, this slightly suggests small decline from the initial hypothesis, I had in my mind when starting to read about this issues, according to which traditional media should probably be playing a completely secondary role in the entire process. This is also profound in the fact that, when it came to answering some of questions they suggested me to read some of their interviews in newspapers or in that, during the TEDx talk a large reference was made to the story from CNN about the initiative.

It is obvious that the analysis process did provide me with helping output towards the answering of my question. Interesting data regarding the use of social media or the content of the advertisements themselves were found that gave a direction towards the issue of communication management within the project. This is to imply, that the decision for using the questionnaire as a verifying tool turned out to be quite effective, as it led to serious and sufficient results in that direction. The relation of different channels of media within the particular project were found and that can probably lead us to the conclusion that different new public diplomacy or nation branding acts might – or actually do – follow similar procedures when it comes to their external communication with the publics. This is to say that my original hypothesis, according to which the Internet must have been the one and only channel of their communication, was rejected. However, at this point I want to make it clear that the reason for not stating my initial thoughts was because I did not want to add any kind bias in this thesis, that would end up to the results being prejudiced.

The internet, as huge as a role it might play in our everyday lives, it seems as though it cannot replace other traditional media channels with much longer history and access to bigger part of the publics. However, it is more than obvious, that it plays an increasingly important role when it comes to communicating certain ideas and messages. Issues like diplomacy or certain aspects or forms of it, such as new public diplomacy have to be examined more closely within the context of the Internet and the innovative technologies. This case showed how combining different potentials that the new digital era has to provide us, with traditionally used channels can bring up a quite significant and remarkable result. It would be foolish to characterize the social media platforms as the unique channel of communication employed by the
initiative’s people, rather than as the one being central to its procedures accompanied with all the other that could be employed. This is to imply that although the Internet and its potentials have reached the highest – so far – level of invasion into shaping our communications, traditional media channels are not to be supplanted, rather than investigated more carefully. I hope that respective research will be also conducted in the future, in the fields of nation branding or new public diplomacy and its respective contemporary communication channels. A focus must be given on them, especially now with the development of new media. Many aspects of them are still to investigated and examined and will be more than overwhelmed to find out that those issues are of a great interest equal to mine.
Reference List:


• Youtube. 2013. “The future of our country is in our hands: Yorgos Kleivokiotis at TEDxAthens”. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mNx_PUx9dcU. (Accessed May 9th)
Appendix:

Here follows the transcript of the TEDx talk mentioned and employed in the research part.

“The Future of Our Country is in our Hands”

“Ladies and Gentlemen, for the next seventeen to eighteen minutes, I would like to tell you the story of Up Greek Tourism. It is a story about a group of people who believe that the exit of Greece from the current situation lies in our hands. In the hands of Greek people, either living within or outside the borders of Greece. Allow me to start by answering the most common question that is posed to me: How Up Greek Tourism started. How was the whole idea born? In 2010, that at last the situation in which Greece was, became known and everybody could tell the direction towards which we were heading, I thought that we are lucky to have tourism, which can get us out of the difficult situation by bringing in money from abroad. However, at the same time, the images being broadcasted abroad showed Greek people preventing tourists to disembark from the cruise ships, showed Greek people who closed the central streets off, or posted panels on the most important monument of the country. On the one hand, we had the Greek political system, that brought us to this situation, with our own contribution, and on the other hand we had different groups of people, who in order to ensure their own field’s work rights, damaged the entire economy. Me, belonging to the majority of people, who want to see this country making a progress, I felt desperate watching all those things happening. But, as despair never helped anyone do anything, I started thinking what I could do as an individual, from Dubai where I live in order to help improve this situation. The first idea I had was to create a Facebook event, by which I would invite all of my friends living abroad to visit Greece during summer. They, in turn, invited their own friends and this became viral and at a certain point I realized that 175.000 people were invited to my imaginary party in Greece. And this drew the attention of some international media. This unexpected success put me into thoughts. One year later, when I found out that there is a digital platform in California, which allows you to
fund advertising campaigns, I thought that I could possibly convince other people, who have a similar way of thinking to mine, to fund an advertising campaign for Greece. I quickly realized that I would not be able to do such a thing by myself, especially when living in Dubai, so I contacted Onic Palatzian, an old friend, and Stathis Haikalis whom I knew only through social media as a communication specialist. And I was lucky, as both of them accepted to join my cause, by bringing along not only the credibility I wanted to have in this project, but their executorial abilities as well. So we created together Up Greek Tourism. There are three main principles, which I think contributed to this project’s success.

- Only the three of us would be responsible for any decision-making within the group.
- We would include a group of volunteers, giving them a space of freedom to act within.
- The project would be consisted by a clear, short-termed task for reasons of efficiency.

(At this point a video in English is being projected)

As you saw, when we had already started gathering money, we didn’t yet know where we would post this billboard. Fortunately, we met a Greek-American man, who was working for a company that owned billboards, and he offered us a place in Times Square in New York, which is a place by which hundreds of people pass every day and was the best spot for us.

Up Greek Tourism’s team worked methodically, did a lot of work through the social media and finally gathered the amount of 25.000 US dollars, that we needed in order to make this project true.

(At this point he gives a short description about the group’s members and he the video from the billboard is projected)

This video was displayed twice an hour, for thirty days in New York.

(Photographs from the day that the video was first displayed, are projected)

If we have a look on the results, all those media you see (projecting the logos of the media that hosted the project) and the platform that facilitated our crowd-funding
process, concluded that around 9.000.000 people around the world, learned about it. Apart from that, we had thousands of positive messages, many e-mails and people sending their own feedback. On top of that, it was very interesting that the Greek Embassy in Washington used our campaign, on the Embassies’ Day in order to decorate its buildings. What is also very interesting, is that a group of Greek-American people found a billboard on Washington’s 7th Avenue and posted this advertisement for about 30 days. Our most important video was the following (the reportage from CNN is being projected).

And now, I want to answer the second most common question, about our next steps. Katerina is an architect in London, who along with her friends decided to post this (projecting it) in the Piccadilly Circus area in London and we hope that with your support and help to manage

Concluding, I want to say that the goal of Up Greek Tourism was not to bring tourists to Greece. That was the secondary goal. We could have promoted anything other than tourism. The actual goals of the initiative were three:

1. To create a positive stance towards the creativity and innovation of Greek people, abroad.
2. To give an example of what a group of people who believe in an idea can accomplish with the use of the social media and mainly without any governmental help.
3. To raise the morale of Greek people either living in or outside of Greece, who observe what is going on with anxiety and disappointment.”