TOURIST GO HOME: COMMUNICATION AND PROPAGANDA ON YOUTUBE

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ABSTRACT

The Social media are considered to be important for the development of the tourist industry as they provide travellers with brand-new practices for choosing their destination. In addition, the travel websites contribute to this notion by offering the possibility of evaluating and discussing the advantages and disadvantages of various destinations. Nowadays, YouTube is the most visited video-sharing platform on the Internet. It is used for entertainment, political discussion, and recently for marketing purposes in the field of tourism. Via its services, users have the capability of uploading their content (UGC) online to various platforms. Thus, YouTube has become one of the leading tools for promoting users' specific perspectives. It is even used for propaganda. This research focuses on the incidents that occurred in Barcelona, because of the "tourists go home" movement. For the analysis of the results, this paper used elements of descriptive statistics from YouTube and methods of quantitative content analysis. The conducted research included UGC and content from news organizations (e.g. Euronews and Bloomberg). The analysis of YouTube video characteristics such as comments, views, likes, dislikes, channel subscribers etc. revealed that they might be used for influencing the public opinion. Moreover, it was proved that the "tourists go home" movement has challenged the current image of Barcelona as world-class tourism destination.

Keywords: digital media, digital marketing, propaganda, youtube, tourist go home.

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INTRODUCTION

The new network platforms such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, which emerged during the beginning of the 21st century, changed the way people communicate and the facilitation of stakeholder engagement. Social media provide free of charge communication and a new way of sharing information. Some organizations use them as a tool in order to provoke discussions, to attract people's interest and to form a new connection with the audience by overcoming traditional media. Thus, a great number of studies examine their use (Guo & Saxton, 2014). The recent technological breakthroughs brought the expansion of the limits of communication networks, the flow of information, and the boundaries of society, mainly through the services that websites provide to their users. As a result, the notion of network society emerged. According to Castells (2004, p. 3), "A network society is a society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronics-based information and communication technologies". The alteration of the flow of information can be evidenced by the fact that citizens have new ways of communicating with each other and can even contribute to the user-generated content. In some cases, they presented their coverage as an answer to the problem of the declining reliability of reporting (Carr, Barnidge, Lee & Tsang, 2014). The produced footage or content is being rapidly spread via social media. Social media provide tools that can reveal important topics, share videos, photos, and supply new up-to-date information. Through the discussion of each topic, users can contribute different angles or concerns (Westerman, Spence & van der Heide, 2014). Journalists tend to believe that social media represent the public opinion (Anstead & O'Loughlin, 2014). In addition, news organizations tried to adapt to these changes. Some of them invested large sums of money into their online presence and became multimedia news organizations. Moreover, the Internet revealed new web tools that can analyze the content of the articles and reveal even 'hate speech' or the frames of a news story (Karyotakis, Panagiotou, Antonopoulos & Kiourexidou, 2017).

Social media are also important in the development of tourism as they provide new ways of choosing a destination. Furthermore, websites offer more options to the user and give him the possibility of discussing the pros and cons of each place. The users can actively take part in evaluating the provided services due to the plethora of monitoring website platforms (Kiráľová & Pavlíčeka, 2015). Another crucial utility of social media for tourism is searching for travel information. Prominent websites like TripAdvisor are growing rapidly and it is believed that they will be the main sources of information for tourism in the near future (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The technological developments are also connected with funding. Over the years, many public organisations have reduced their budget for advertising tourism. This is the reason why they are seeking for new solutions in order to promote their travel products in a cheaper way (Kiráľová & Pavlíčeka, 2015). The Internet and its digital tools can create advertising campaigns that cost less, target a global audience, and give the users the desired interaction for exploring their travel choices on their own (Kiráľová & Pavlíčeka, 2015). Lastly, the power of social media is revealed in the case of Ōkunoshima Island in Hiroshima, Japan. Since 2014, international tourists in this region have increased due to the spread of relevant videos through the social media (Usui, Wei & Funck, 2017).

Apart from the Internet, globalization has equally contributed in transforming tourism. New places and countries that used to be inaccessible invest large sums of money in improving their touristic facilities. In several countries, tourism is becoming a

sector, which brings considerable revenues. However, this leads to the dependence of the Third World countries upon the First World. Without the prosperity of the second, it is not possible to have the desirable income from the tourist services (Mowforth & Munt, 2016). The creation of social movements is connected to the different values of each group and the conflict that emerges between them in order to promote their interests. They are important for society as they tend to question the social order. A social movement is developed when displeasure is being spread over society and the institutions cannot cope with this situation (Porta & Diani, 2006).

In this study, it is proven that the "tourists go home" tactics represent a global movement, which is against the current practices or image of international tourism. Due to the fact that the "tourists go home" movement in Barcelona achieved attracting the interest of global media organizations such as BBC, Euronews, The Independent, Reuters, and The Guardian, media and users upload videos on YouTube inducing the public's fear regarding this matter. In this paper, the characteristics of YouTube videos are being analysed since the beginning of the movement in Barcelona because social media play a crucial role in the current tourism industry (Zeng, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

YouTube was founded in 2005 as a website that gives the user the capabilities of uploading, viewing, evaluating, and sharing their videos. In 2006, Google bought it and made it the most popular video sharing service of the Internet, as "it accounts for 20-35% of the Internet traffic with 35 hours of videos uploaded every minute and more than 700 billion playbacks in 2010" (Finamore et al., 2011, p. 1). In today's world, YouTube is the most visited video-sharing platform (Figueiredo, Almeida, Gonçalves & Benevenuto, 2014). It is not only used for entertaining purposes, but also for promoting political discussions (Halpern & Gibbs, 2013). The growth of the aforementioned video-sharing platform led to its expansion to the field of tourism. It is becoming a leading tool of promoting travel destinations. It gives tourists the opportunity of regulating the content that will be uploaded online. Additionally, it plays the role of search machine providing reviews, advice, and other familiar activities to the users. Based on their will, they can actively decide what they will do. The travellers do not want any more to be passive during their holidays. These behaviors and the existence of social media have transformed tourism industry. The agents of travelling need to adapt to these changes by exploiting the potentials of new media platforms. For instance, a suggestion is to create content that is focused on the characteristics of YouTube (Reino & Hay, 2011).

Researchers have shown that social media can influence public opinion (Shapiro & Park, 2014) and change the communication strategy of the tourism agencies in order to become more effective (Shim, 2014). It is proven that the views, the comments, and the likes or dislikes can affect the user's opinion (Antonopoulos, Veglis, Gardikiotis, Kotsakis & Kalliris, 2015). "Social media metrics should be taken seriously into consideration when designing a website due to the fact that they have an effect on users' opinion and satisfaction concerning aspects such as the degree of credibility and trustfulness of a news website" (Antonopoulos, Giomelakis, Veglis, Gardikiotis, & Dimoulas, 2016, p. 713). In addition, according to Spartz, Su, Griffin, Brossard and Dunwoody (2017) even the number of views in YouTube can trigger a positive feeling towards the videos that have more views. YouTube is shaping users' image, as its

structure seems to be like the dating websites of the 1990s. It merges into one service file-sharing practices, chats, and forums (Pauwels & Hellriegel, 2009).

The transmission of news, the better connection with the flow of information, the improvement of the interaction amongst the readers, and the encouragement of investigative journalism practices are some of the remarkable changes. In addition, the digital reforms challenged the profession and made citizens take part in producing news stories (Chan, 2014). This phenomenon is called 'citizen journalism'. This kind of coverage can be found mostly in social movements, uprisings, revolutions etc. (Fuchs, 2010). Arab news organizations were pioneers in using amateurs' footage on the coverage of a conflict. During the combat of Gaza War (2008–09), it was too dangerous for media correspondents to function in the area and both sides utilized social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube) as propaganda tools (Hamdy, 2010).

Today, technology has become the main element of marketing. The term digital marketing was developed as a means to better understand the way users try to engage and use digital tools (Antonopoulos, Veglis, & Emmanouloudis, 2017). Digitization is reshaping the way citizens visualize the world. Thus, traditional methods of promotion do not seem to be the case for expanding the revenues in the field of marketing (Ryan & Jones, 2009). The discussions, the videos, and the reviews that are provided by social networks will make them choose their travel destination. Marketing organizations cannot fully understand the phenomenon despite the fact that they are trying to adapt them and offer more choices to the consumers (Hays, Page & Buhalis, 2012).

Barcelona is today one of the most popular tourism destinations around the world. It combines a number of activities for the travellers, as it is a financial, cultural, and sports centre. Additionally, its port remains one of the most important crossroads of Europe for transportations until today. Barcelona's airport has over 34 million passengers per year. In 2010, Barcelona's international visitors were 5,160,037 (World Tourism Organization, 2012). Six years afterwards, the total number of tourists in different types of accommodation was 9,861,671 (Turisme de Barcelona, 2016). Another key-point for the success of Barcelona's tourism industry is the Turisme de Barcelona, which was founded in 1993 by Barcelona Municipal Council, the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Shipping and the Barcelona Promoció Foundation. Via this organization, the local government and Barcelona's stakeholders are running activities in order to promote the city as a tourist destination. Turisme de Barcelona implements yearly about 400 promotional activities (World Tourism Organization, 2012).

The millions of the people that visit Barcelona each year is the main reason why protests against tourists erupted. Graffiti with the moto "Tourist go home" are one of the forms of protesting by the local residents. This phenomenon began about three years ago in 2014. Barcelona's citizens tend to believe that tourism is one of the most crucial problems of the city. In addition, the local population tends to be against Airbnb because it has helped in attracting large number of tourists (López Díaz, 2017) and there is "a positive correlation between presence of Airbnb apartments and return on equity" (Aznar, Sayeras, Rocafort & Galiana, 2017, p. 147). However, the recent events that attracted the interest of international new media organizations started from Mallorca, in which the slogan "Tourist go home" appeared as graffiti (Pemberton, 2017). Subsequently the movement spread to Barcelona and a large number of people organized an anti-tourism march on the 17th of August 2017, in San Sebastian. The young generation of Catalonia and the Basque Country are supposed to be the main organizers of the anti-tourist campaign. The most thrilling event took place in Barcelona,

where a disguised small group of individuals stopped a bus near Barcelona's football stadium. The "Arran Jovent" group is linked to Popular Unity Candidacy (pro-Catalan independence political party) and it was the one that took the blame for the attack. Lastly, the hashtag #touristgohome emerged on Twitter and provoked a hot debate about the anti-tourist campaign (Peter, 2017).

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In this study, a sample of the YouTube videos was collected via the search engine of YouTube, as nowadays YouTube is the most visited video-sharing platform (Figueiredo, Almeida, Gonçalves & Benevenuto, 2014). Moreover, quantitative content analysis was used because through this method, data are "usually analyzed to describe the typical patterns or characteristics or to identify important relationships among the content qualities examined. If the categories and rules are conceptually and theoretically sound and are reliably applied, the researcher increases the chance that the study results will be valid" (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2005, p. 3). The research was conducted by the means of anonymous web browsing via "google chrome" in one day (30 October 2017). The language of the research was US English and the region was the United States of America. In addition, there was no login by the user and no use of cookies (Antonopoulos, Veglis, & Emmanouloudis, 2016). The key words for the collection of the sample were "tourists go home". Subsequently, the search engine provided the following words: "tourists go home", "tourists go home rt", "tourists go home refugees welcome Barcelona", "tourists go home spain", "tourists go home", and "tourists go home barcelona". The filter was "by relevance" and there were 3,000,000 results. Lastly, the results that were taken into consideration were the ones uploaded until 17th of August 2017.

Hence, the following questions were asked:

RQ1: Is there propaganda in the YouTube videos?

RQ2: Which content do the users prefer?

RQ3: Does the "tourists go home" movement negatively challenges the current image of Barcelona as world-class tourism destination?

RESULTS

There were 45 videos included in the sample. Users uploaded the majority of them (27 out of 45). Only 18 belonged to news outlets: Ruptly TV (4 videos), Euronews (6 videos, 3 in English, 1 in Italian, 1 No Comment, and 1 in Spanish), AP Archive (1 video), CGTN America (1 video), Vocativ (1 video), IBTimes UK (1 video), Bloomberg (1 video), ODN (1 video), cambio16 (1 video), and Oh! My LOL (1 video).

Table 1. The videos of the study

TITLE	LINK	USER NAME
Barcelona Mayor to Tourists: Go Away	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYhbBr91pHc	Bloomberg
Barcelona residents protest against tourists	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rojcBi7uVH4	ODN
Tourists go home' say Spanish locals in backlash to holiday boom	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cn5JuhH-SJI	euronews (in English)
Record-breaking tourist season expected in Spain	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5FIz6g4-RM	AP Archive
Anti-tourist demos spread from Barcelona to Mallorca	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAyhpbgsKAs	euronews (in English)
Busting the boom: why Barcelona wants to curb mass tourism - reporter	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGK0RY1ej6Y	euronews (in English)
Spain: 'Go home, drunk tourists!' demand thousands of Barcelona locals	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdfaGDnYTDo	Ruptly TV
Spain: Anti-'binge tourism' demo swarms streets of Barcelona	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ7cy4z4AlE	Ruptly TV
Spain: 'Barcelona is not for sale' – Too many tourists say protesters	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciZRHDq82Qg	Ruptly TV
Spain: Ibiza locals protest mass tourism through traditional means	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLNTEzJDk5M	Ruptly TV
Tourist go home: campaña contra el turismo masivo en Pais Vasco y Cataluña	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYvxTpyRGuQ	euronews (en espaniol)
Barcelona beach protest	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAk1NcYSabM	No Comment TV
Cities Around Europe Rebel Against Tourism	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_oW0LXNEtr0	Vocativ
La Vida Moderna 4x01...es gritar "Tourists go home" cuando viene la familia de visita al pueblo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wj7dqt1ceAE	Oh! My LOL
"Tourists go home". A Majorca monta la polemica contro i	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NHgiTKd70g	euronews (in italiano)

vacanzieri		
Barcelona is looking to limit tourists coming in	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jcqBFMr-p8	CGTN America
Anarchists protest against tourist 'invasion' in Spain	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5TIAOfXwcU	IBTimes UK
Tourist go home - Vlog en Barcelona #2	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qu9YfVuqGmM	Max Minguella
"Tourist go home, tourist welcome"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZBEAi3ahM	cambio16
Overcrowding at Europe's tourist hotspots prompts backlash	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb53tSYZXuE	ReutersHD
Backlash against holidaymakers in Spain with 67m visitors outnumbering 47m population	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvWlB0jeDNI	PAPARAZZI NEWS
Living in Spain - Tourist phobia hits Spain	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4HcQlOaN3w	spainspeaks
A safe space for freethinking |Barcelona, Tourism and refugees ||Between the go home and welcome	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1DHSQw94sM	Hashim Almadani
Anti tourism protests spread across Europe	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2L2NXSF9TV4	gemini48
CARTE POSTALE / IMMIGRANTS WELCOME - TOURISTS GO HOME	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3ohWyHGFgw	Antifa Live
MAJORCA BACKLASH: British holiday influx is 'more than ANGUISH' moan islanders	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8jUZ_zmdJM	news usa
Spain: Tourism secretary sympathises with anti-tourism protesters	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kpnIMwtudA	gemini48
MIGRANTS WELCOME - TOURISTS GO HOME	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wkse-smwKSY	Antifa Live
GO HOME FUCKING TOURISTS -Rémi Gaillard	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiqQYnnr7GM	Nuh kill me
Spain's anti tourism riots step up as violent clans MERGE	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgmdda5tixE	Real Thing TV
Go Home Fking Tourists!!!	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChuSJ3f8QHE	iTrending

Europas Sehnsuchtsorte In Gefahr	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5O4GuZfoQ6k	Grenz Wert
Barcelona struggles with rising tide of 27 million tourists	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyrQ42H75Xk	Necronomicon
Tourists go home': Holidaymakers face backlash from Spanish locals angered by rising visitor number	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uW8pVcJpN6g	Fahad Nabeel
«tourist go home!»: las protestas llegan a la prensa internacional	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuyJQDdKPYY	Molly Cuming
Tourist Go Home! Europas Sehnsuchtsorte In Gefahr 2017	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fo1e1m365MI	MutterDoku
Tourists, go home | Coses Que Passen 1	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYqreIOvW-4	Tamayo Stuff
"tourist go home!"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSnUsxot3VA	Chad
News Update "Tourists go home": 05/08/17	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17XTCBFWhhA	World News
Go home fucking tourists ⬦RG	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcj7l6Ro4rM	barakauto34 BARAK
Amsterdam tourist backlash reaches: British hotspots blocked to save city	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9NMS4NvXH4	NEW WORLD 360
BBC News – "Tourists go home": Leftists resist Spain's influx - Hot News	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC4yLhM2qjQ	Hot News
Spain holidays: Brits urged to LEAVE country forever after summer antics	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cjjJxE7Fl8	Top News 24h
Go Home Tourist Plane Banner	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmMM_OyX46U	Unique Clips & GIFS
UK tourists in Spain should be CAPPED: Majority of Majorcans want to LIMIT holidaymakers	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3tCyafNs1o	News U.S Today

The total duration of the videos of the news organizations were 78:07. On the contrary, the user-generated videos were 178:01 minutes. The overall views of the videos of the news outlets were 420,982, far more than the views of the user-generated videos, 19,623. "Oh! My LOL" had the most views, 36,2677. The most popular user video belonged to "Antifa Live" with 5,005 views. The overall number of likes and dislikes were

5,540 likes (5,229 likes were from the news outlets' content and 311 likes were from users' content) and 467 dislikes (401 dislikes stemmed from mass media organizations and 66 dislikes originated from users). The total number of comments was 1,720 (1,634 comments on the videos of mass media organizations and 86 comments on user generated content). "Oh! My LOL" also has the greatest number of comments (1,108) from the news outlets. The video "Living in Spain - Tourist phobia hits Spain" that was uploaded by "spainspeaks" had the most comments (32) from the UGC. Two videos that were provided by the user "Antifa Live" had deactivated the comments of the videos. The total number of the news outlets' subscribers was 4,279,288. On the other hand, 31,813 subscribers were following UGC. Bloomberg had the highest number of subscribers 723,000. The most popular user regarding the subscribers was "PAPARAZZI NEWS" with 10,000 people subscribing. Lastly, the majority of the videos (30 out of 45) concerns Barcelona's "tourist go home" incidents.
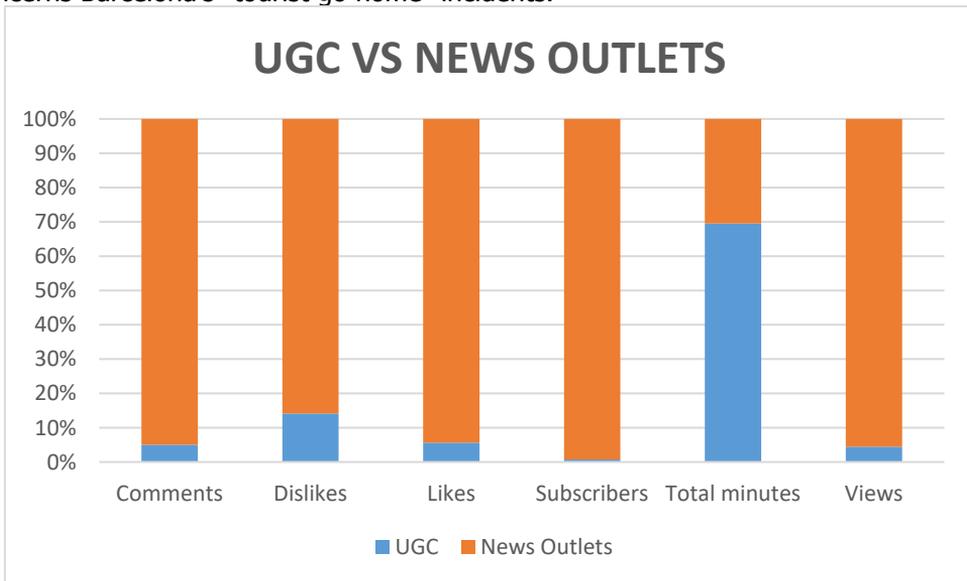

Figure 1. The differences of the UGC's videos from the news outlets' videos.

Regarding the characteristics of the examined videos, the one that was uploaded by Bloomberg seems to misinform the viewer as its content differs from its title "Barcelona Mayor to Tourists: Go Away". There is no mention of the "tourist go home" movement and it seems to be a campaign for promoting Barcelona as a tourism destination. Furthermore, the user "gemini48" uploaded a video named "Spain: Tourism secretary sympathises with anti-tourism protesters", which includes only a brief statement (1:06 minutes) of the Secretary General of World Tourism Organization who seems to be in favour of the movement. However, one cannot have a clear view of the Secretary General's opinion. In addition, the video "Barcelona struggles with rising tide of 27 million tourists" uploaded by "Necronomicon" is peculiar, as there exists only an image as a cover photo and the content is consisted of a text that is being read by a robot. This practice seems to happen also in other cases such as the videos that were provided by "Hot News", "NEW WORLD 360" and "World News". These profiles alongside with the one named "ReutersHD" were trying to portray themselves as news outlets.

DISCUSSION

Regarding RQ1 it seems that videos such as "MIGRANTS WELCOME - TOURISTS GO HOME", "Spain: Tourism secretary sympathises with anti-tourism protesters" etc. have content that is related to propaganda as, according to Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, p. 1), "Propaganda is a form of communication that attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist". However, the majority of the users tend not to take seriously into account the content that is provided by individuals as the total number of views of news outlets' videos is 421,138 and the views of the user-generated videos are only 19,467. At this point it should be mentioned that the "Antifa Live" does not leave the users to express their opinions on the video because the comments are deactivated. As a result, only one narrative can be communicated. Moreover, it seems that users such as "ReutersHD" try to mislead the audience by creating a channel that mimics a prominent international news organization. Perhaps, this is happening because the user wants to disseminate its message via a more newsworthy channel.

Furthermore, the users tend to interact more with the content of the news organizations (RQ2). Almost all of the likes and the dislikes were in the news media's content (5,229 out of 5,540 likes and 401 out of 467 dislikes). The same also applies for the comments on the videos as 1,634 out of 1,720 comments were on the news outlets' content. In addition, the number of the subscribers of the news organizations (4,279,312 out of 4,311,101 subscribers) can reveal the preference of the users. However, it is peculiar that amongst the several videos of the study, the most popular of them is the one that is not provided by a prominent news organization, but by "Oh! My LOL" (comedy show from Monday to Friday).

Although researchers have shown that social media can influence the audience (Shapiro & Park, 2014; Antonopoulos, Veglis, Gardikiotis, Kotsakis & Kalliris, 2015) and the fact that almost all of the videos (30 out of 45) concern Barcelona's "tourist go home" events, it is not clear if "tourists go home" movement negatively challenges the current image of Barcelona as world-class tourism destination. However, it is known, according to Hays, Page and Buhalis (2012), that through the social media, a global audience can be reached and can affect the users' opinions regarding their travel destinations (RQ3).

CONCLUSIONS

The new findings of this study revealed that the "tourist go home" movement provoked a large number of videos concerning its events. The analysis of YouTube video characteristics such as comments, views, likes, dislikes, channel subscribers etc. proved that they might be used for influencing the public opinion. Moreover, the "tourists go home" movement has challenged the current image of Barcelona as world-class tourism destination. In addition, the users tend to follow the well-known news organizations in order to be informed about the specific incidents. Barcelona is the city that is being mentioned in almost all of the examined videos. Thus, digital marketing campaign on YouTube would have cost a large sum of money in order to fight back the aforementioned movement. Moreover, tourists by using digital platforms such as Airbnb rent houses that would inhabit residents, provoking the local community and creating arguments in favour of the "tourist go home" movement.

The impact that this movement has is not clear in relation to Barcelona's touristic image. Nevertheless, it is proven that YouTube videos can be used in some cases as a propaganda tool, and, indeed, this is happening also in the case of "tourist go home" movement. Furthermore, numerous additional studies could be conducted to increase

the body of research on the "tourist go home" movement. While this study focused exclusively on the characteristics of YouTube videos, a qualitative analysis would give a more complete and detailed description of the content of the examined sample. Furthermore, a research that includes more media and cities would provide a better feedback in order to identify the communication techniques of the aforementioned movement.

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