Radoslav V. Baltezarević* \
Vesna Baltezarević***

THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL POLITICAL COMMUNICATION SUPPORTED BY NEUROMARKETING METHODS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS A TOURIST DESTINATION***

Abstract: *Digital political communication is developing in parallel with the modernization of information and communication technologies. In an effort to design political messages as adequately as possible neuromarketing methods, that have already had astonishing commercial results, are increasingly being applied. These methods make it possible to find hidden subconscious information in the minds of consumers. Experts in the field of political marketing, wanting to communicate with the younger population, are increasingly employing social media influencers and use the benefits of electronic word-of-mouth communication (eWOM). Their posts are generally considered to be a credible source of information and tend to be viral (spread exponentially through the digital environment). Influencers have the power to encourage followers to engage in a discussion of a particular political phenomenon and share such information with other Internet users. Social media influencers can contribute to building a positive image of political candidates by presenting them as charismatic, ordinary people. In some situations, consumers may associate politically motivated communication with a tourist destination, which can have both positive and negative consequences depending on consumer attitudes towards a particular issue. Negative political comments (for example, messages placed in a digital environment by owner of tourist facility can cause a crisis on the website, and lead to a wave of electronic negative word-of-mouth communication (eWOM) and even boycott by consumers, which as a consequence can significantly endanger the company's image.*

* Professor, Faculty of Business Studies, Megatrend University, Belgrade; r.baltezarevic@gmail.com

** Professor, Faculty of Law, Megatrend University, Belgrade; vbaltezarevic@megatrend.edu.rs

1. Introduction

Today, political marketing is becoming an unavoidable strategy of political communication. Modern times require more advanced approaches, which is why politics and marketing experts are increasingly turning to the digital environment, aware that traditional communication techniques are no longer enough to win elections.[1] The rapid development of technology, led many academics and experts in the field of political marketing, to transfer the incredible results of neuromarketing to the political sphere, and to benefit from its new methods and techniques by understanding the minds of political consumers.[2] Organizations today should communicate with consumers using more efficient and creative techniques, in order to be noticed and survive in an increasingly competitive market.[3] It can be said that the basic difference between traditional marketing and neuromarketing techniques is the direct impact on consumer consciousness, through an attempt to understand the decision-making mechanism in his brain.Neuromarketing methods deal with in-depth (often hidden) psychological analysis of the influence of the irrational in the decision-making process.[4] Neuromarketing experts are increasingly using experimental research to advance their strategic marketing initiatives based on a series of conclusions about different segments of the population. Segmentation of relevant populations into certain groups based on their characteristics has changed with the development of consumer analytics, so that psychographic data (information on tastes, attitudes, preferences and personality types) show that they improve the ability to predict message strategies based on demographic data.[5]

Nowadays, understanding the non-verbal cues and personality traits of political consumers can help achieve a functional match between candidates and their supporters, and thus be used successfully to predict the outcome of political campaigns.[6] Voting behavior is based more on understanding the minds and feelings of voters and how they interact with the complex functions that elections

[1]   Baltezarević, R., Baltezarević, B., Baltezarević, V., Kwiatek, P. & Baltezarević, I.,(2019): Political marketing in digital games: 'game over' for traditional political marketing methods. *Acta Ludologica*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 28-47. ISSN 2585-8599. e-ISSN 2585-9218. EV 5620/18

[2]   Lieberman, M.D., Shreiber, D. and Ochsner, K.M., (2003): Is political cognition like riding a bicycle? How cognitive neuroscience can inform research on political thinking, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 24 No. 4, pp. 681-704.

[3]   Baltezarević, I. & Baltezarević, R., (2019): Prikriveno oglašavanje u novim medijima, *Baština*, sv. 48, pp. 171-179. UDK 659.1 doi: 10.5937/bastina1948171B

[4]   Lindstrom, M., (2010): *Buyology*, (Crown Publishing Group, New York, NY).

[5]   Sandy, C. J., Gosling, S. D., & Durant, J., (2013): Predicting consumer behavior and media preferences: The comparative validity of personality traits and demographic variables. *Psychology &Marketing*, *30*(11), 937–949.

[6]   Olivola, C.Y. and Todorov, A., (2010): Elected in 100 milliseconds: appearance-based trait inferences and voting, *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 83-110.

serve in democracies. These interactions are examined precisely by political neuromarketing, which claims that voters generally support politicians whose traits match their traits.[7]

Among the most common neuromarketing strategies on social networks are telling stories on social media platforms as an effective way to share emotions and connect with Internet users with a similar experience. It is desirable that such ads (storytelling) do not last longer than 20 seconds. Posts of macro influencers (celebrities) also play a very important role. Social media posts and ads are thought to connect consumers to products more personally than a television ad.[8] Neuromarketing is an area that is rapidly expanding in politics. According to some studies, there are certain areas of the brain that are activated when political candidates publish statements.It was found that when people are subjected to political advertising stimuli, activation of the medial prefrontal cortex is associated with the continued support of the political candidate represented in the political advertisement. Also, when individuals change their preferences from one candidate to another, it has been noticed that the lateral prefrontal cortex is intensely active.[9]

The majority of social media users are people between the ages of 16 and 30, and nearly 70% of them follow influencers and believe their recommendations.[10] Neuroscience has shown that viral posts on social media with a high level of user engagement are mostly initiated by influencers who understand and communicate precisely with the target audience.[11] Many scholars today believe that there is a strong link between the political environment and tourism development.[12] Negative messages that appear on social media can influence tourists' decision-making and change their plans.Social media can play a major role in creating a better image of tourism, but they must be used carefully.[13] Recent research in the field of tourism, in the case of a large number of countries, has shown the impact of

[7]   Caprara, G.V. and Zimbardo, P.G., (2004): Personalizing politics: a congruency model of political preference, *American Psychologist*, Vol. 59 No. 7, pp. 581-594.

[8]   Premnath, D., Nateson, C., (2021): Applications Of Neuromarketing Sciences On Digital Marketing Models - A Theoretical Frame Work. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education*, Trabzon Vol. 12, Iss. 7, 3127-3132.

[9]   Ariely D., Berns G. S., (2010): Neuromarketing: the hope and hype of neuroimaging in business. *Nature reviews Neuroscience*, vol. 11, p. 284-292.

[10]   Mañas-Viniegra, L., Núñez-Gómez, P. & Tur-Viñes, V., (2020): Neuromarketing as a Strategic Tool for Predicting How Instagramers Have anInfluence on the Personal Identity of Adolescents and Young People in Spain.*Heliyon*, 6(3), e03578

[11]   Sheldon, P. & Bryant, K., (2016): Instagram: Motives for its Use and Relationship to Narcissism and Contextual Age. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 58, 89-97

[12]   Jayawardena, Richard Teare, C., & Jayawardena, C., (2013): Innovative solutions for future tourism development in Sri Lanka (2013-2026). *Worldwide Hospitality and TourismThemes, 5*(5), 512-531.

[13]   Faraj,F., Chible, H., (2020): Effect of Social Media on Tourism during Lebanese Political Crisis, *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management,* Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 82-92

positive and negative word of mouth communication (WOM) on tourism products. A New Zealand-based study found that negative word of mouth (WOM) can have a huge impact on a destination's image, as disgruntled visitors spread unpleasant comments about their experiences.[14] Similarly, a study based on Caribbean countries found that in situations where locals show hostile feelings towards tourists, the result is a negative WOM which could result in a decline in the industry.[15] For example, a hotel's reputation gets worse if the relative weight of negative comments is higher than positive ones,[16] because negative comments have a stronger effect than positive or neutral ones, because they seem more credible for consumers.[17] Also, the possibility of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), which occurs when both positive and negative comments are present at the same time, must be considered.[18]

This mixture of positive and negative comments about a tourist destination or tourist facility may be the result of sensitive political attitudes posted in the digital environment by tourism representatives, which consumers may subconsciously or consciously positively or negatively associate in their minds. The knowledge in the field of neuromarketing will enable a better understanding of the behavior of consumers in the virtual environment. Since people are not always willing to share their hidden emotions and attitudes, politics and marketing experts will be able to respond to all those hidden needs and desires of consumers with this new knowledge, which would not be possible with traditional marketing methods. This will lead to better digital political communication in a digital environment, and thus more precise design of audio-visual messages whose effects will be much more effective. Of course, such premeditated communication would reduce the risks of causing dissatisfaction among consumers and nullify the possibility of boycotts, spreading negative eWOM communication and eroding the image. Although there are consumers who react positively to brands that are associated with political ideologies, personalities and activities, according to Pfeffer public expression of political views may be a risky business strategy. He also added that political announcements in the digital world could include losing profitability and creating a negative brand image.[19]

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[15]   Crick, A.P., (2003): Internal marketing of attitudes in Caribbean tourism. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 15 (3), 161-166.

[16]   Rose, M., and Blodgett, J. G., (2016): Should hotels respond to negative online reviews? Cornell Hosp. Q. 57, 396–410. doi: 10.1177/193896551663261

[17]   Park, S., and Nicolau, J. L., (2015): Asymmetric effects of online consumer reviews. Ann. Tour. Res. 50, 67–83. doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2014.10.007

[18]   Roy, G., Datta, B., and Mukherjee, S., (2019): Role of electronic word-of-mouth content and valence in influencing online purchase behavior. *J. Mark. Commun.* 25, 661–684. doi: 10.1080/13527266.2018.1497681

[19]   Pfeffer, Juergen, Thomas Zorbach, and Kathleen M. Carley, (2014): Understanding online firestorms: Negative word-of-mouth dynamics in social media networks. *Journal of*

2. Political Communication in Digital Environment:
impact on consumer perceptions of tourist destinations

Political communication presents the flow of information from the political system, through various channels, to the public and voters. Such communication has been described as a critical element that helps to create interactions and develop relationships between stakeholders and the political system.[20] Political marketing is a relatively new and underdeveloped area of academic discipline,[21] and unlike conventional marketing, which relies mostly on products and services in commercial organizations, the main focus of political marketing is on political candidates, market values, and political party ideologies.[22] This kind of marketingis conducted by candidates, political parties, governments, lobbies and interest groups who want to direct public opinion to adopt their ideologies in order to win elections.[23] Marketing in politics represents the political offer of the party, its leader, politics and issues that the electorate can deal with, based on what is perceived as the orientation of the public and the electorate, and the chosen strategic position of the party. This application of key marketing concepts is applicable in the world of politics and can ensure victory in elections but also contribute to nation building.[24]

Political marketing has experienced rapid development when the promotional function of social media is combined with their potential to collect and process large amounts of scattered data on the basis of which conclusions can be drawn about the behavior of Internet users. This information is obtained on the basis of reverse marketing, where people search for products (and not the other way around) using Internet search tools.[25] The data that Internet users leave behind is an invaluable source of information on

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[20]   Gurau, C. and Ayadi, N., (2011): Political Communication Management: The strategy of two main candidates during the 2007 French presidential elections. *The Journal of Communication Management.* Vol 15, pp. 5-22.

[21]   Scammell, M., (1999): Political Marketing: Lessons for Poltical Science. *Political Studies*, XLVII, 718-739.

[22]   Baines, P., (2012): Political marketing has lessons for business schools,
Date of access: 19/02/2022. http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/e58afb24-2755-11e2-abcb-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2KXBcFpQ5

[23]   Newnham, J., & Bell, P., (2012): Social Network Media and Political Activism: A Growing Challenge for Law Enforcement. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, *7*(1), 36-50

[24]   O'Shaughnessy, N., Baines, P., O'Cass, A. and Ormrod, R. P., (2012): Political Marketing Orientation: Confusions, Complications, and Criticisms. *Journal of Political Marketing*, Volume 11, pp. 353-366

[25]   Sharma A., Sheth J. N., (2004): Web-based marketing. The coming revolution in marketing thought and strategy, *Journal of Business Research*, no. 57.

practically everything. Of course, among the topics that users deal with are politically related topics. This information is crucial to marketing and political professionals when creating political marketing strategies. Opinions of web users about various political actors, their activities, statements, etc., represent such data, on the basis of which it is possible to determine political preferences based on geographical, demographic, psychographic and behavioral aspects. The collection of such data enables marketing professionals to link all this information to political preferences, and thus can create more accurate advertising content that will be more adequately adapted to the preferences of the recipients.[26]

The benefits of social media have not gone unnoticed and many world political leaders have adopted a platform to communicate during their political campaigns, and thus maintain a close and open relationship with citizens and mobilize them for active participation in political life.[27] Digital media content can be updated quickly without spending a significant amount of money and time, allowing digital media users to easily achieve their communication goals through a variety of online activities.[28] Social media is considered a technology that expands political, social and economic freedoms.[29] This interpretation is justified, given that social media platforms have increased the ability to find and disseminate political information, and thus provided a wide range of political information and activities to Internet users.[30] Social media is a means by which citizens' participation in political life can be increased. Unlike other mass media, social media provides two-way and even multi-way forms of communication channels, which improve the feedback process and encourage interaction among users.[31]

The interactive nature of the media creates opportunities for citizens to participate in electoral processes in the digital environment. Online political activities (e-participation) include writing e-mails to politicians, donating money online, visiting politicians' campaign websites, e-campaigns, e-voting and so

[26]   Pawełczyk, P., & Jakubowski, J., (2017): Political marketing in the times of big data. *Przegląd Politologiczny*, (3), 34-44. https://doi.org/10.14746/pp.2017.22.3.3

[27]   Ekwueme, M., & Folarin, S., (2017): Role of social media in electioneering: The case of the Nigerian 2015 presidential election. In: Proceeding of the Covenant University Conference on e-Governance in Nigeria (CUCEN2017), pp. 299-311.

[28]   Montgomery, K. C., & Xenos, M., (2008): *Civic life online: Learning how digital media canengage youth*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).

[29]   Diamond, L., (2010): Liberation technology. *Journal of Democracy*, 21(3), 69–83.

[30]   Breuer, A., & Groshek, J., (2014): Slacktivism or efficiency-increased activism? Online political participation and the Brazilian Ficha Limpa anti-corruption campaign. In: Y. Welp, & A. Breuer (eds.) Digital Oppor-tunities for Democratic Governance in Latin America, Routledge, pp. 165-182. doi: 10.4324/9780203361986-10

[31]   Milakovich, M. E., (2010): The Internet and increased citizen participation in government. *eJournal of e-Democracy and Open Government*, 2(1), 1-9

on.[32] Access to the Internet, with the help of smartphones, has also significantly increased access to political information, especially in isolated places.[33]

The impact of word of mouth electronic communication (eWOM) is increasingly being studied in a political context. Research has shown that eWOM affects the image of a political candidate.[34] Given the fact that word of mouth communication (WOM) has a strong impact on consumer behavior, its extension to the digital space (eWOM) is of particular importance and is used in many digital political campaigns today. The fact that the strongest influence on the decision-making process in the virtual environment have influencers, ie people who are perceived by the followers as credible sources of information (due to their expertise in a particular field), their engagement by politicians is becoming increasingly common practice.

The term influencer is reserved for individuals on social networks with a large number of followers, who are considered leaders in society.[35] A good example of this is the engagement of several influencers in Taiwan in 2020.In fact, by hiring influencers, President Tsai Ing-wen wanted to present herself in videos posted by influencers on social media sites as a charismatic and ordinary woman who makes excellent use of Hokkien skills, a language variety originally spoken by about 70% of Taiwan's population. In addition, she presented herself as someone who is skilled in food preparation, and always willing to talk about her travels. In that way, the president had a positive influence on her personal image (Cheng Sega, 2021).The inclusion of emotions in electronic word-of-mouth communication (eWOM) is a key factor in viral marketing. Viral marketing helps companies build emotional relationships with their customers. It involves the exponential propagation of messages through the digital environment. In this way, the message can reach a large number of users in a relatively short period of time.[36]

Kuypers (2018) noted that voters may or may not support a political candidate on social media in order to attract the attention of followers. However, when

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[32]   Medimorec, D., Parycek, P., & Schossböck, J., (2011): Vitalizing democracy through e-participation and open government: An Austrian and Eastern European perspective, Date of access: 18/02/2022. https://pdfslide.net/documents/vitalizing-democracy-through-e-participation.html

[33]   Miner L., (2015): The unintended consequences of Internet diffusion: evidence from Malaysia. *J. Public Econ.* 132:66–78

[34]   Hultman, M., Ulusoy, S., & Oghazi, P., (2019): Drivers and outcomes of political candidate image creation: The role of social media marketing. *Psychology and Marketing*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1002/ mar.21271

[35]   Hennessy, B., (2018): *Influencer: Building your personal brand in the age of social media.* (New York, NY: Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing Corp).

[36]   Baltezarević Radoslav, Baltezarević Ivana, Kwiatek Piotr (2016): *Impact of viral marketing onconsumer`s attitudes towards brands: In the Internet as a Tool of Modern Business and Communication,* (Saarbrücken, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing). ISBN 978-3-330-01350-6. (pp.106-128).

it comes time to go to the polls, voters have the choice to stay true to their political beliefs. Based on the results of a survey conducted in 2021, it has been proven that Internet users seeking online referrals perceive macro-influencers (celebrities) as more credible sources of information than micro-influencers (Kwiatek, et al, 2021). Political and marketing experts should examine in more detail the conditions and factors under which the flow of information and network structure in social media encourage citizens to exchange opinions. A better understanding of these factors will provide significant implications for social change and ideological and party political divisions (Dunlap, et al, 2016).

From all the above, it can be concluded that digital political communication is developing rapidly and that its impact on consumer behavior is undeniable. However, political communication is often a sensitive topic in business, and it is difficult to predict what consequences it may cause. If the communication of representatives of tourist destinations and facilities in the digital environment is clumsy or reckless and if political views are expressed with which a number of consumers disagree, it can lead to a boycott of facilities, motivate an avalanche of negative comments on social networks and very bad reviews on specialized tourist ranking websites (for example, Tripadvisor). All this can directly endanger the image of the tourist facility, and indirectly the image of the entire tourism industry.

Very often the sharing of political opinions can be risky in business and can have negative consequences if the target market does not agree with the opinion expressed. A negative post on an organization's website can cause a crisis (which can damage the brand image). Failure to resolve the crisis may result in their consumers feeling anxious and ignored.[37] In such situations, it is very important to deal with the new problem immediately and, if necessary, sincerely apologize for mistakes and consumers will forget about the crisis after a while.[38] Unfortunately, few people today know how to combat negative posts, however they must immediately address this in order to preserve their brand reputation.[39]

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[37]   Canhoto, Ana Isabel, Dirk vom Lehn, Finola Kerrigan, Cagri Yalkin, Marc Braun, and Nicola Steinmetz. (2015): Fall and redemption: Monitoring and engaging in social media conversations during a crisis. Cogent Business and Management 2: 1084978

[38]   Managing the Reality of Consumers Protesting with Their Wallets, (2018): Stores NRF Magazine, March 12. Date of access: 19/02/2022. //stores.org/2018/03/12/brandboycott/

[39]   Canhoto, Ana Isabel, Dirk vom Lehn, Finola Kerrigan, Cagri Yalkin, Marc Braun, and Nicola Steinmetz. (2015): Fall and redemption: Monitoring and engaging in social media conversations during a crisis. Cogent Business and Management 2: 1084978

3. The role of neuromarketing methods in creating digital political communication (with reference to its impact on tourism)

It has long been known that consumers are very complicated and diverse, however neuromarketing methods give a better insight into their shopping intentions and the changes that are hidden deep in their brain.[40] Neuromarketing has become an important trend today, integrating the study of customer behavior with neuroscience.[41] It concentrates on understanding consumer behavior from the aspect of conscious, unconscious and emotional, as well as relevant factors. However, even the world's leading experts have only scratched the surface of the marketing power of neuroscience, the first results in this area are very promising.[42] It can be said that the science of neuromarketing is the final business product derived from the field of medical research known as cognitive neuroscience.[43]

As meeting the needs and desires of consumers has become imperative, the fact that it has become possible to analyze the basic mental processes that occur when decisions are made, this objective perspective provided by neuromarketing and neuroscience research seems very encouraging.[44] When using these methods to study issues in political neuroscience, instruments which are used are also used in medicine. It is still possible to make a (relatively short) list of all political neuroscience studies conducted with structural magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), functional neuroimaging (fMRI) or electroencephalography (EEG).[45]

In the last few years, there has been a real explosion of neuroscientists' ability to directly study brain activities related to the frequency, time and space where these activities take place.[46] Leading expert in the field of neuromarketing, Cao

[40]   Sharma, R., & Sinha, A., (2020): Neuromarketing and understanding antecedents of consumer switching intensions—a systematic review of literature. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology*, *17*(6), 14660-14675.

[41]   Zahopoulos, V., (2020): Understanding neuromarketing techniques and their use in localization. In *Digital and Social Media Marketing* (pp. 299-304). Springer, Cham.

[42]   BaltezarevićRadoslav& BaltezarevićVesna**,** (2014):Neuromarketing- A New Approach to Theory of Communication. In: R. Grozdanic, Z. Nikitovic, & D. Jovancevic (Eds.), *Management, Marketing and Communication: Current and Future Trends*(pp. 259-271). Faculty of Business Economics and Entrepreneurship, Belgrade JEL classification: A12, D11, M31, UDK: 658.8.013. ISBN 978-86-6069-105-9, COBISS.SR-ID 210422028.

[43]   Lee, N., Butler, M.J.R. and Senior, C., (2010): The brain in business: neuromarketing and organizational cognitive neuroscience, *Der Markt*, Vol. 49 Nos 3/4, pp. 129-131.

[44]   Huettel S.A., Song A.W., McCarthy G., (2009): *Functional magnetic resonance imaging*, 2nd edn. (Sinauer, Sunderland).

[45]   Haas, I. J., (2016): Political neuroscience. In J. R. Absher & J. Cloutier (Eds.), *Neuroimaging personality, social cognition, and character* (pp. 355–370). Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-800935-2.00019-1

[46]   Lee, D., Hosanagar, K., & Nair, H., (2018): Advertising Content and Consumer Engagement on Social Media: Evidence from Facebook. *Management Science*, http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.2017.290

Felix, noted that applying a certain strategy of measuring brain activity in order to measure an individual's response to various marketing elements, can help convince consumers of the desired action. He also urges companies to incorporate neuromarketing tools into digital platforms for greater consumer engagement.[47]

Social networking sites are now seen as key players in political processes. They provide a wide range of neuromarketing tools and techniques, along with some sophisticated advertising platforms created to facilitate online micro-targeting for political use.[48] However, new scientific tools and modeling techniques in political marketing, although undeniably effective for political success, at the same time, can pose a major problem for the quality of democracy.[49] A few years ago, an experimental study tried to identify emotional limitations for the party's political verdict in the US presidential election. In this study, 30 committed supporters from the Republican and Democratic parties were exposed to subjects with judgmental tasks involving judgments about information threatening their own candidate, or an opposing candidate. Neuroimages of participants' minds (via fMRI) demonstrated emotion-related brain area activity when prompted to criticize a preferred political figure. The results confirmed that the areas of the brain responsible for objective thinking did not respond during this study.[50]

The results of recent empirical studies have prompted many experts to take a closer look at a new branch of political marketing, based on the use of advanced brain activity recording techniques to understand consumer political behavior and decision-making processes.[51] Political neuromarketing is defined as a new subfield that helps political marketers to obtain more detailed information that is done in the cerebral mechanism of the minds of political consumers and their response (subconscious) to political marketing stimuli. Some experimental research results show that relationships of similarity and attractiveness in political communication can lead to deeper admiration between voters and candidates at the physiognomic level.[52]

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[47]   Cao Felix, (2019): How to Use Neuromarketing in Your Digital Marketing, Agents of change, Date of access: 19/02/2022. https://www.theagentsofchange.com/felix-cao/

[48]   Bond, S., (2017): Google and Facebook build digital ad duopoly, Financial Times, 14 March, Date of access: 19/02/2022. www.ft.com/content/30c81d12-08c8-11e7-97d1-5e720a26771b

[49]   Gorton, W.A., (2016): Manipulating citizens: how political campaigns' use of behavioral social science harms democracy, *New Political Science*, Vol. 38 No. 1, pp. 61-80.

[50]   Westen, D., Blagov, P.S., Harenski, K., Kilts, C. and Hamann, S., (2006): Neural bases of motivated reasoning: an fMRI study of emotional constraints on partisan political judgment in the 2004 US Presidential election, *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, Vol. 18 No. 11, pp. 1947-1958.

[51]   Bailenson, J.N., Iyengar, S., Yee, N. and Collins, N.A., (2008): Facial similarity between voters and candidates causes influence, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 72 No. 5, pp. 935-961.

[52]   Ibid

The iterative reprocessing model suggests a network of brain regions most likely to be in charge of evaluations, including sub cortical regions such as the amygdala, insula, and hypothalamus. The regions in the brain that allow further processing are the anterior cingulate and orbitofrontal cortex, as well as the regions involved in higher-order processing, such as the prefrontal cortex. These brain regions make it possible to mix sensory information with affective knowledge and thus create a combination that produces an assessment in any life situation.[53] Mentioned regions in the brain are the subject of analysis and are present in political neuroscience studies, as well.[54] The results of the research singled out the part of the brain, known as the amygdala, as the part that reacts to familiar faces. The amygdala is thought to respond to negative stimuli (such as fear), but also to positive, such as excitement, or motivationally relevant stimuli. The strength of the amygdala response is related to the strength of the affective response (positive or negative) to different political parties and their candidates.[55]

Most recent studies, examining the role of emotions in social psychology and cognitive neuroscience, have focused on trying to understand the structure and function of emotions. Emotions also help to explain political behavior, thus, they have become the central focus of political scientists who want to better understand how emotions affect political evaluation and decision making.[56] Understanding emotions, although still very complicated, is an effective method of political psychology. Many studies have shown that the emotional response of individuals can have an impact on political campaigns.[57] Messages that are in some way designed to carry an emotional message are much more likely to generate some kind of reaction from the user and thus make him feel the need to pass them on to other users, by adding their personal opinion on the topic. Research on political communication on Twitter has concluded that messages that contain some kind of emotional power (whether positive, negative or mixed) are much more likely to go viral than those who do not.[58]

[53]   Cunningham WA, Zelazo PD, Packer DJ, Van Bavel IT., (2007): The iterative reprocessing model: A multilevel framework for attitudes and evaluation. Soc Cogn. 25:736-760.

[54]   Jost JT, Nam HH, Amodio DM, Van Bavel IT., (2014): Political neuroscience: The beginning of a beautiful friendship. *Adv Political Psychol.* 35:3-42.

[55]   Ousdal OT, Jensen J, Server A, Hariri AR, Nakstad PH, Andreassen OA., (2008): The human amygdala is involved in general behavioral relevance detection: Evidence from an event-related functional magnetic resonance imaging Go-NoGo task. *Neuroscience.* October 15, 156(3):450-455.

[56]   Rozin P, Haidt J., (2013): The domains of disgust and their origins: Contrasting biological and cultural evolutionary accounts. *Trends Cogn Sci.* 17(8):367-368.

[57]   Marcus, G.E. vd., (2004): Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Campaigns. *Political Psychology*, ed. John T. Tost vd., New York and Hove: Psychology Press, 215-235

[58]   Stieglitz, S., and Dang-Xuan, L., (2013): Emotions and information diffusion in social media—sentiment of microblogs and sharing behavior. *J.Manag. Inform. Syst.* 29, 217–248.

A 2008 study by Baumgartner found that digital political satire has an impact on the evaluations of political candidates. The results showed that watching animated political cartoons in an online environment can have a negative impact on the ratings of presidential candidates.[59] The second experiment showed that the participants of the experiment who watched the animated video "Second Term" (on YouTube) where President Bush mocks himself, has led to a decline in trust in political institutions, but, on the other hand, this kind of self-effacing humor has led to an increase in President Bush's favorable ratings.[60] It is discovered that, by using neuromarketing tools, more attractive advertisements activate the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and ventral striatum (responsible for emotions in the decision-making process and recognizing rewards).However, when presenting less attractive advertising to the participants, these brain regions were not activated, indicating that by using neuromarketing techniques it is possible to find out whether advertising is considered attractive or not. What is even more interesting is that this study showed that advertisements are more memorable if they are very attractive or, on the other hand, very unattractive.[61]

In the coming years, significant improvements and a better understanding of descriptive, predictive and prescriptive consumer profiles are expected. Neuromarketing research may even be able to segment consumers according to differences in the brain, that do not map directly to demographics or psychographies.[62] The use of electroencephalograms and functional magnetic resonance imaging, as instruments of neuromarketing, on the content of social media can help to obtain valuable information on how to better optimize the content that is placed.[63]

Social media can have an impact on collective action,[64] this includes enabling users to participate in political demonstrations, exchanging opinions with

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[59]   Baumgartner, J. C., (2008): Editorial cartoons 2.0: The effects of digital political satire on presidential candidate evaluations. *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *38*(4), 735-758. doi:10.1111/j.1741-5705.2008.02675.x

[60]   Baumgartner, J. C., (2007): Youth, online political humor, and the JibJab effect. *Social Science Computer Review*, *25*(3), 319-338. doi:10.1177/0894439306295395

[61]   Kenning, P., & Linzmajer, M., (2011): Consumer neuroscience: an overview of an emerging discipline with implications for consumer policy. *Journal für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit*, 6(1), 111-125.

[62]   Stanton, S. J., Sinnott-Armstrong, W., & Huettel, S. A., (2016): Neuromarketing: Ethical implications of its use and potential misuse. *Journal of Business Ethics,* volume 144, pages 799–811

[63]   Micu, A., Capatina, A., Micu, A-E., Geru, M., Aivaz, K., Ainur M., Mihaela C., (2021): A new challenge in digital economy: neuromarketing applied to social media. *Economic Computation & Economic Cybernetics Studies & Research* . 2021, Vol. 55 Issue 4, p133-148.

[64]   Valenzuela, S., (2013): Unpacking the Use of Social Media for Protest Behavior: The Roles ofInformation, Opinion Expression, and Activism. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 57(7),920-942.

other people on political and other issues, but also organizing activities in the digital environment in order to confront political dissidents. In a business system, such as representatives of the tourism industry, after a clumsy political announcement, Internet users can bombard the organization's website with thousands of negative comments, leave bad reviews on specialized sites, create shameful mimes, discuss on forums, and very easily, this kind of communication gets out of control and goes viral. In that case it is very difficult to stop the exponential growth of the messages, which can have very bad consequences for the business and reputation of the tourist organization and the destination itself. Better optimization of messages with a political connotation placed in the digital environment by tourism representatives can definitely be a good prevention of the crisis, which arose after the negative reactions of consumers.

83% of consumers believe that it is important to show support for companies that 'do the right thing' by buying products or using services from them.[65] This type of spending is called political consumerism. This term implies that educated consumers choose producers and products based on their environmental, ethical, but also political practices.[66] The preconditions of political consumerism are education and political interest. It is believed that younger consumers who are rich and educated will most likely be political consumers.[67] It is very difficult to explain with existing theories of political participation, the participation of consumers in these activities. However, political consumerism and the use of purchasing power in to express political views and influence changes in the market are present around the world. Political consumers may boycott products, companies or services because of their undesirable practices.[68] In any case, the motivation for political consumerism and the positive and negative effects that consumer activities can have on the business of organizations, especially in the tourism industry, are still unclear (to some extent) to marketing experts, which is a strong reason for neuromarketing researchers to investigate this phenomenon in the years ahead.

[65]   Battle of the Wallets. (2017): Battle of the Wallets: The Changing Landscape of Consumer Activism. Weber Shandwick + KRC Re-search, May 1. Date of access: 19/02/2022. https://www.webershandwick.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Battle_of_the_Wallets.pdf

[66]   Matos, Geraldo, Gema Vinuales, and Daniel A. Sheinin, (2017): The power of politics and branding. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 25: 125–40

[67]   Becker, Amy B., and Lauren Copeland, (2015): Networked publics: How connective social media use facilitates political consumerism among LGBT Americans. *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* 13: 22–36

[68]   Stolle, Dietlind and Michele Micheletti, (2013): Political Consumerism: Global Responsibility in Action. (New York: Cambridge University Press).

4. Conclusion

The development of digital technologies has influenced many spheres of modern society, so it has been implemented in political communication, as well. As electronic word of mouth (eWOM) has been used successfully for commercial purposes for many years, political experts are increasingly aware of its benefits, and with such communication they influence the behavior of the users of information and communication technologies. From the review of available literature, used in this paper, it can be concluded that in recent years, with great success, political communication has been used in a virtual environment. As this environment is perhaps the only communication channel that can reach the younger population of voters, a large number of political candidates are hiring social media influencers to convey political messages. Messages shared by influencers with their followers often have a viral effect. Such messages are characterized by exponential growth and Internet users are motivated to share them on social networking sites. When it comes to messages with a political connotation, the followers often leave their personal stamp (their attitude towards a specific political topic that is being discussed).

However, as traditional marketing methods are not able to recognize the subconscious motives and preferences of their voters, Neuromarketing methods provide a more accurate insight into this hidden information. Neuromarketing uses the same tools which are used in medicine for diagnostics (primarily structural magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), functional neuroimaging (fMRI), electroencephalography (EEG), and many more). By conducting experiments on participants, these methods can monitor various reactions and changes in brain activity (neural activities), in real time on the monitor, which can provide a better understanding of the effects of different emotions and help experts more accurately design political messages launched in the digital environment. This kind of new information saves the budget and communicates much more adequately with the target market.

With the development of digital capabilities, many company representatives have begun to share their political views in the digital environment through social media, as a form of marketing communication techniques in order to create a memorable brand personality. Consumers who share similar opinions have a positive attitude towards such brands and tend to develop a stronger connection with them, which may result in increased buying intent.[69] Nevertheless, this is considered a very risky business strategy and in case of mismatch of political posts can lead to loss of profitability and creation of a negative brand image.[70]

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[69]   Matos, Geraldo, Gema Vinuales, and Daniel A. Sheinin, (2017): The power of politics and branding. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice* 25: 125–40

[70]   Pfeffer, Juergen, Thomas Zorbach, and Kathleen M. Carley, (2014): Understanding online firestorms: Negative word-of-mouth dynamics in social media networks. *Journal of Marketing Communications* 20: 117–28.

After a reckless move by representatives of tourist organizations in the digital environment, it is very important to respond adequately to the emerging crisis. The absence of reaction, which sometimes means only a sincere apology to consumers, can reduce the damage and pave the way for the recovery of the image.

Loyal consumers can help combat negative online postings, as well.[71] Such consumers usually have the trust of others and can help maintain a positive brand perception in times of crisis.[72] Loyal consumers often feel empathy and defend the brand during crises, ignoring negative publicity and other people's opinions. Consumers who have low brand loyalty and self-control abilities are more influenced by the opinions of others on attitudes towards the brand.[73]

Neuromarketing methods can also provide very important knowledge to the tourism industry. More precise communication with consumers and a better understanding of their needs and desires can improve the creation of long-term loyal relationships, better image and more successful business. In particular, knowledge from the field of neuromarketing could be used to reduce negative consumer reactions to messages in a digital environment with a political connotation at least to a reasonable extent.

In any case, the field of neuroscience is still insufficiently researched, and thus the methods of neuromarketing have a lot of room to be even more precise. Nevertheless, the results of the first research in this area are very encouraging, and the implementation of these methods in the digital environment gives impressive results, so it is indisputable that in the years to come, these methods will become part of the standard marketing practice.

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[71]   Ibid

[72]   Canhoto, Ana Isabel, Dirk vom Lehn, Finola Kerrigan, Cagri Yalkin, Marc Braun, and Nicola Steinmetz. (2015): Fall and redemption: Monitoring and engaging in social media conversations during a crisis. Cogent Business and Management 2: 1084978

[73]   Kim, Kyongseok, Jooyoung Kim, and Leonard N. Reid, (2017): Experiencing motivational conflict on social media in a crisis situation: The case of the Chick-fil-A same-sex marriage controversy. Computers and Human Behavior 71: 31–42

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Radoslav V. Baltezarević
Vesna Baltezarević

UTICAJ DIGITALNE POLITIČKE KOMUNIKACIJE PODRŽANE NEUROMARKETING METODAMA NA PERCEPCIJU POTROŠAČA PREMA TURISTIČKOJ DESTINACIJI

Sažetak: *Digitalna politička komunikacija razvija se paralelno sa modernizacijom informaciono-komunikacionih tehnologija. U nastojanju da se političke poruke osmisle što adekvatnije, sve više se primenjuju neuromarketinške metode, koje su već imale zapanjujuće komercijalne rezultate. Ove metode omogućavaju pronalaženje skrivenih podsvesnih informacija u glavama potrošača. Stručnjaci iz oblasti političkog marketinga, koji žele da komuniciraju sa mlađom populacijom, sve više zapošljavaju influensere na društvenim mrežama i koriste prednosti elektronske komunikacije od usta do usta (eWOM). Njihove objave se generalno smatraju verodostojnim izvorom informacija i obično su viralne (šire se eksponencijalno kroz digitalno okruženje). Influenseri imaju moć da podstaknu sledbenike da se uključe u diskusiju o određenom političkom fenomenu i podele takve informacije sa drugim korisnicima interneta. Influenseri društvenih medija mogu doprineti izgradnji pozitivnog imidža političkih kandidata predstavljajući ih kao harizmatične, obične ljude. U nekim situacijama potrošači mogu povezati politički motivisanu komunikaciju sa turističkom destinacijom, što može imati i pozitivne i negativne posledice u zavisnosti od stava potrošača prema određenom pitanju. Negativni politički komentari (na primer, poruke koje vlasnik turističkog objekta postavlja u digitalno okruženje) mogu izazvati krizu na sajtu, dovesti do talasa elektronske negativne komunikacije od usta do usta (eWOM), pa čak i bojkota od strane potrošača, što kao posledicu može značajno ugroziti imidž kompanije.*

Ključne reči: *Digitalna politička komunikacija, Digitalno okruženje, Neuromarketing, Elektronska komunikacija od usta do usta (eWOM), Influenseri društvenih medija, Turistička destinacija.*