Description for the general public

Positive-negative asymmetry in preference judgements. Valence framing and contrast model of similarity in the evaluation of political and consumer brands.

Everyday observations as well as numerous psychological and economic studies show that people react to positive and negative information differently. Although some exceptions can be found, there is a wide body of evidence suggesting the so called negativity effect, that is the primacy of negative information and stimuli on decision-making in comparison to negative stimuli of similar value. In political marketing setting, studies on voting preferences and political candidates' evaluations revealed that candidates' vices had a greater effect on final evaluations than their virtues. The findings are important because they shed more light on how to present a candidate most favourably. One of such methods, used in image management, is so called framing which aim is to incline people to perceive a person or an event in a particular way.

The aim of the project is to investigate the effect of positive and negative information about a brand on the similarity between the brand and its ideal and worst versions. We want to test how brand attitude changes, depending on whether the object is compared to the ideal or anti-model. The project falls into the research area of political and consumer psychology; a political candidate and a consumer brand will be analysed. Furthermore, our aim is to investigate how adding and removing positive information about a brand will affect its similarity to the ideal and anti-model. Although negative information is generally stronger, it remains unclear whether the same negative brand characteristics will have the same effect on the judgments about the similarity of the pair: brand − anti-brand as the dissimilarity of the pair: brand − ideal brand. We expect that when a brand is compared to the ideal, negative information will push it further away from the ideal brand than positive information pull it towards it. However, when a brand is compared to the anti-model, negative features will have a stronger impact on the similarity of the brand to the anti-brand than positive information on the dissimilarity of two sets. Capturing and analyzing this effect constitutes the main goal of the project. Finally, we will analyse potential moderators of the observed asymmetry. We hope that our studies will add to the research in psychology and have a positive effect on communication strategies in political and consumer marketing.