

***Topoi* in Neuromarketing Ethics**

Cristian Ducu

Centre for Advanced Research in Management and Applied Ethics, Romania

E-mail: cristian.ducu@etica-aplicata.ro

Forthcoming in Andrew R. Thomas, Nicolae Al. Pop, Ana Maria Iorga, Cristian Ducu (eds.), Ethics in Neuromarketing. Springer, New York.

Abstract Neuromarketing is one of those emerging fields that promise a lot, but are also surrounded in controversy. It promises to offer a privileged access to the most intimate emotions and unconscious thoughts, which should serve as an undisputed background for effective marketing practices. It promises to be successful where traditional market research techniques and tools failed. But this does not come cheap: a lot of public figures, philosophers and neuroscientists expressed multiple concerns regarding the ethical and legal implications of the neuromarketing research and applications. The aim of this study is to map these ethical concerns and provide a series of elements which can help both researchers and practitioners clarify the ethical limits of their work. The paper contains two major sections and some brief closing remarks. The first one contains two major distinctions which will serve as basis for the entire ethical discussion in the next section: neuromarketing as both a field of research and applications; neuromarketing ethics as research ethics and as ethics of brain research. The second section is dedicated to a quasi-comprehensive presentation of the ethical challenges of neuromarketing. These *topoi* are divided in three categories: ethics of neuromarketing *research* (overclaiming; research conduct – informed consent, protection of vulnerable research participants, paying participants; data practices – research design and scientific validity, confidentiality, research dual use; publication practices – authorship, cherry-picking and salami-slicing, research transparency); ethics of neuromarketing technologies (no harm; privacy; incidental findings); and ethics of neuromarketing applications (manipulative and deceptive marketing practices; exacerbating the emotional factor).

Keywords Neuromarketing ethics, research ethics, brain imagining, human dignity, consent.

Contents

1. Preliminary Distinctions
 - 1.1. Neuromarketing – from research to applications
 - 1.2. Neuromarketing Ethics – Neuroethics – Bioethics
2. Mapping the Territory
 - 2.1. Ethics of Neuromarketing Research
 - 2.1.1. Ethics in Neuromarketing Research Governance
 - 2.1.1.1. How Much Can We Really Say from a Neuromarketing Study?
 - 2.1.1.2. Governing Research Subjects' Participation in Neuromarketing Studies
 - 2.1.1.3. Informed Consent in Neuromarketing Research
 - 2.1.2. Ethics and Research Data Practices
 - 2.1.2.1. Research Design and Scientific Validity
 - 2.1.2.2. Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Data Security
 - 2.1.2.3. Dual-Use Research
 - 2.1.3. Ethics and Publication Practices
 - 2.1.3.1. Authorship Issues
 - 2.1.3.2. Cherry-picking and Salami-slicing
 - 2.1.3.3. Research Transparency
 - 2.2. Ethics of the Use of Brain Imaging Technologies in Neuromarketing
 - 2.2.1. The Use of Brain Imaging Technologies
 - 2.2.2. Privacy
 - 2.2.3. Incidental Findings
 - 2.3. Ethics of Neuromarketing Applications
 - 2.3.1. Manipulative Marketing Practices
 - 2.3.2. Exacerbating the Emotional Factor
3. Conclusions
- References