The Net Generation, the Internet, and Political Communication and Participation

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Abstract

The Net Generation, a generation which grew up with digital media, differs from older generations which entered the world of digital media and the Internet afterwards. The Internet itself opened new possibilities of communication and participation in the sphere of politics as well. Research was conducted among students at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb and Baltazar Zaprešić Polytechnic in order to establish the degree to which students, the so called "digital natives", use the Internet for the purposes of political information, communication, and participation. Over two thirds of participants, young voters, voted in the parliamentary elections in Croatia in 2015, and in order to obtain information on political matters, they prefer using the Internet, but also use television to almost the same extent. According to the research results, the majority of the participants are ready to express their political opinions over the Internet. Half of the participants in no way show readiness to engage in political life by joining a political party, and a very small percentage of them are ready to take part in protest gatherings. In the segment of political participation, members of the Net Generation do not show a statistically significant difference when compared to older students of a non-teacher education polytechnic.

Key words: *civic education; digital media; E-government; political awareness; young voters.*

Introduction

Is there truly a so called Net Generation with clearly defined specificities which are clearly visible and recognisable in almost all spheres of life? There are numerous and mutually opposed opinions on whether the Internet offers us new and at the same time

useful and desirable possibilities in the segment of politics, political communication, awareness and political participation. Among the many titles dealing with this subject, as an illustrative example, we shall state two books which appeared on the market in the time span of two years. The first is a book by German psychiatrist, Manfred Spitzer, *Digitale Demenz* (2012), where he advises children to avoid, i.e. limit their use of digital media in order to prevent, as the title suggests, "digital dementia". The authors of the second book, published in 2014, Klaus Hurrelman and Erik Albrecht, gave their book a provocative title – *Die heimlichen Revolutionäre: Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert*. In this book, the authors speak about how Generation Y has changed our world. In this generation they include people between 15 and 30 years of age for whom the Internet is especially important, but as they are "healthy *Upsilonians*, they use media in a smart way and do not let themselves be abused by them" (Hurrelmann & Albrecht, 2014, p. 166). At the same time, the authors call this Generation Y secret, subtle revolutionaries in the title of the book. This is, of course, just a single example showing how opposed the positions on digital media and their influence on every segment of today can be. This paper shall begin with the definition of the term Net Generation, i.e. related terms, the features possessed (or not possessed) by members of this generation, and the possibilities and boundaries that the Internet offers in the domain of politics. The second part of the paper presents and analyses the results of the research conducted among the students of the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb and Baltazar Polytechnic in Zaprešić.

The Net Generation

Tapscott mentions the term Net Generation in 1998, whereas Howe and Strause (2000) use the term *Millenials*, both describing people born after 1980. However, one of the more famous divisions is the one differing *Digital Natives* from *Digital Immigrants* (Prensky, 2001a), stating that *Digital Natives*, people born in the global world of the Internet, behave differently than *Digital Immigrants*, their parents, who have entered this world afterwards. Generation Y is also often mentioned, defined by most authors as people born in the early, i.e. mid-1980s to the end of the 20th century, who grew up with computers, the Internet, and the first mobile phones. Following is Generation Z, growing up in the abundance of technical gadgets connected to the Internet, with virtual reality, information sources such as Google, and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. These are just some of the names among numerous others, and certain temporal variations among authors on when a generation stops, i.e. begins can also be noticed. In this paper, for purposes of clarity and without wanting to derive (new) terminology, we shall include all the generations which grew up with digital media under the term Net Generation. They possess the following features (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005; Prensky, 2001b; Tapscott, 1998): faster reception of information and quick reactions, multitasking, preferring to acquire information via hyperlinks instead of linearly, capability to quickly change subjects, but at the

same time the freedom to decide which subjects they will focus on, and inductive discovery, readiness to try out something new. For the Net Generation, the computer is not technology, it is an elementary, integral part of life, where digital connections and networking are essential. Because of constant networking, the *Net Genners* prefer working in groups, and teamwork is their strong suit. The most mentioned dangers for this generation are isolation and seclusion in front of the screen (*Screen-people*), cherishing "remote" contacts instead of deeper relationships, constant trying out of new roles, short attention span, growing nervousness, rapid change in subjects at work and in their private lives, and the domination of images, the reduction of written language to information and text processing (Carr, 2010). Jureit (2006) stresses that the Net Generation is just a metaphor and that this age group lacks all the features that make a generation: homogeneity, identity, common experience, historical events and a collective sense of life, and that the Internet is not a sufficient common factor to speak about a generation. Buckingham (2008) and Jenkins (2009) refer to the opinion that the source of such behaviour is technical rather than psychological – technological determinism. Of course, when speaking of a generation, we must not forget that a generation is always comprised of individuals, and that there are as many differences between members of a single generation as there are between the generations themselves. However, we cannot agree with the claim that digital media as technology do not influence the behaviour of young, but also middle-aged and elderly people. From the abundance of statistical data on using the Internet, we can single out several: for example, in 2014, there were 2.9 billion people around the world using the Internet (http://de.statista.com), out of which about 257.26 million people were in the United States (http://de.statista.com). Furthermore, in 2012, there were 1.27 million people in Germany aged 14 – 69 who estimated their daily use of the Internet to be over six hours per day. Moreover, regarding social networks, in the United States of America, over half of the population (56%) use Facebook, there are 34 million Facebook users in Great Britain, and 28 million in Germany. Croatia had 1 740 000 Facebook users in 2013 (http://allfacebook.de; http://www.slideshare.net). The Internet, as an extremely important medium, due to the large number of users has opened new possibilities of communication and participation in the sphere of politics as well, which we shall examine in more detail.

The Internet and Politics

In its beginnings, the Internet was predicted a bright future in the sense of revitalising democracy. Many authors have started with the thesis that the Internet possesses a huge democratising potential. American authors, e.g. Nicholas Negroponte (1995) and Howard Rheingold (1993), in the mid-1990s, believed that the Internet shall significantly modernise political participation, complete the elements of representative democracy, i.e. even replace the representative processes with civic self-government. For example, Rheingold (1993) believed that the Internet shall modernise the capability

of a citizen to take part in political processes to a greater extent, and he predicted the most significant contribution of the Internet to politics, namely, making direct decisions electronically, i.e. *e-voting*, *e-petitions*, and *e-referenda*. Moreover, outlines of a new model have been formed, a *cyber*-democracy, a virtual ecclesia through which the Athenian ideal of citizens' rule could be realised. However, the Internet is a neutral medium, it is not inclined or disinclined toward democracy. Whether the Internet will have a positive effect on democracy, or an extremely negative one in the sense of repressive control of democratic powers, whether it will encourage alternative methods of political participation for the generally politically disinterested citizens to use, or whether inequality will rise even higher since a number of citizens lack Internet access or media competence, depends on several factors. The primary factor is the context, form, and character of the messages and goals, and the type of participants who initiate and conduct such communication. Undoubtedly, the Internet offers new possibilities in public administration and politics, leading to the term *e-government*, but we must point out that there are numerous definitions of this term. Lucke and Reinermann (2002) include the conducting of business processes related to governing and administration using electronic media in the term *Electronic Government*, whereas Kubicek and Wind (2002) concisely define *E-Government* as a catchword for attempting a more efficient forming of administrative processes with technical support. *E-government*, in the sense of using information and communication technology in order to increase efficiency, accessibility, and democratic responsibility of the state administrative bodies, represents the weakest form of including the Internet in political processes, as it deals with executing internal and external administrative tasks with the support of the Internet, with greater speed and interactivity (Grunwald, 2006). That is, citizens are primarily viewed as users who are granted the possibility to conduct certain administrative tasks on the Internet. A study by the United Nations and the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) differentiate between the terms *E-Government* and *E-Governance* (United Nations & American Society for Public Administration, 2002). *E-Governance* describes "the interaction between citizens, government organisations, public and elected official bodies, including democratic processes and transparent decision-making". Riley and Sheridan (2006) also consider *E-governance* effects such as transparency, openness and citizens' participation in political processes. However, using information and communication technology (ICT) can strengthen democratic processes as they decrease the amount of obstacles on an individual level, since those with Internet access can participate in politics more easily (Norris, 2001, 2005). The United Nations has been measuring the so called development of *E-Government* for years, based on indicators such as telecommunication infrastructure, human capital, and online services offered by state institutions. This led to the formation of EGDI (*E-government Development Index*) which does not measure *E-Government* "…in an absolute sense; rather, it aims to give a performance rating of national governments relative to one another" (United Nations

E-Government Survey 2014, p. 13). Out of the total 25 countries with very high EGDI in 2014, the first five were South Korea, Australia, Singapore, France, and the Netherlands. Croatia is not among the leading countries with a high EGDI, but rather in the High EGDI list (0.50 – 0.75), among European Union countries such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovenia. Of the European countries which are not members of the European Union, there are, for example, Albania, Serbia, and Switzerland. Of the non-European countries, in this group we can find, among others, China, Russia, and Brazil. In the Medium EGDI group (0.25 – 0.50), are, for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and India, whereas in the Low EGDI group (less than 0.25), we find many African, South American, and Asian countries (United Nations E-Government Survey 2014, p. 16). The *United Nations E-Government Survey* also implies, among other things, that *E-Government* can help motivate citizens to increase their participation in politics. The Internet enables e-participation, that is e-democracy, in the sense that it provides the central functions of democratic process, these being information availability / awareness, communication, articulation of interests, and the possibility of voting. The term *e-participation*, according to the study mentioned above, consists of three parts: *e-information, e-consultation,* and *e-decision-making* (UN, 2014, p. 83). Gathering information, interactive communication with politicians, and participating in the processes of political decision-making can have different goals, and can be, looking at time and effort, extremely long and demanding. The Internet, in this segment, certainly offers new possibilities. However, the question – to which extent do the citizens actually use those? – is raised and it opens a new area for further research. Do citizens prefer the Internet as a source of gathering political information, or do they still do it through, let us provisionally call them, classical media: television, print, promotional billboards etc.? In the segment of gathering political information, is there a difference between the abovementioned Net Generation and citizens of middle and senior age? A study by Köcher and Brutell (2011) showed that the young generation uses the Internet significantly more often as a means of gathering political information. According to the results of this research, less than a third of the participants use the Internet for gathering political information, but when speaking of the young generation, the percentage is significantly higher and reaches 50% (Köcher & Brutell, 2011, p. 24). Regarding interactive communication with politicians, the Internet offers numerous possibilities here as well, at least hypothetically – from having political discussions on social networks and forums, to the already common practice of writing e-mails to representatives in the Parliament. Furthermore, the Internet also offers new possibilities in the segment of political decision-making. For example, petitions can be conducted online, with greater effect and speed. Online petitions have been gaining popularity for a while now, as forms of e-democracy, which, in principle, enables "completely new possibilities of political participation such as blogs and online petitions, but also subversive protest actions (*flashmobs*) and virtual political sabotages"

(Schulz, 2011, p. 34). Using online petitions is often connected with terms of negative connotations, such as *Slacktivism* and *Clicktivism*. *Slacktivism* "relates to political activities that have no impact on real-life political outcomes, but only serve to increase the feel-good factor of the participants" (Christensen, 2011). The user's feeling that they did a good deed is of primary importance. Possible forms of *Slacktivism* include wearing political emblems, boycotting certain products, etc. In this regard, political participation and successful influence on political events are rather inefficient. *Clicktivism* denotes signing online petitions, which can be seen as a form of political participation. A study conducted by the Center for Social Impact Communication (2012) showed that people who participated online in a political problem, and in a non-virtual life, i.e. offline, indeed participate in political gatherings, demonstrations and protests more often. The readiness for offline political participation was half as high among people who did not participate in politics online, compared to people who have been politically active online. However, overall, we should not expect online forms of political participation to replace traditional forms in the near future. Some existing models of a more intense use of the Internet in the process of political decision-making, such as the *Liquid Democracy* of pirate parties, whose programmes are centred on free and unlimited access to digital communication, show considerable deficiencies in political practice (Velički, 2012). The Internet is a neutral medium, insofar it offers equal opportunities for political participation to everyone, but only under the conditions that, firstly, it can be used (with regard to technical prerequisites), and secondly, that it is used as a medium for the exchange of political ideas. The Internet is used by many users for other purposes, and those who use it as a medium for political discussions often do so communicating with users sharing a similar mindset, in the sense that, even though they may have different political notions, they use the Internet for the same purpose. Therefore, apart from the *digital divide*, a term used to describe the gap between people and geographical areas that have or that lack access to modern technologies, a *participatory divide* is evident in the segment of political participation and engagement using the Internet (Ritzi, Schaal, & Kaufmann, 2012, p. 29). More specifically, it is about the difference between citizens who "…are engaging in politics explicitly *online* i.e. *offline*, … who believe in the impact of their political actions (outside the Internet), and those who are also (with the help of the Internet) politically engaged, but do not expect their actions to have a political impact" (Ritzi, Schaal, & Kaufmann, 2012, p. 29). Concisely put, the Internet can have a positive effect on democratic processes, but only with the active participation of both sides, those who offer new possibilities – these being state institutions, political parties, politicians and others, and those who are offered these possibilities – these being citizens, i.e. voters. We must also take into account that a part of the citizenry, i.e. voters, belongs to the Net Generation who grew up using digital media, so the question is raised whether their expectations of the Internet in the segment of politics, starting from acquiring political information, to the readiness to participate in political decision-making, are any different from the body

of voters belonging to the group of so called "digital immigrants"? In order to gain new knowledge regarding these questions, at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, research was conducted among students of the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb and Baltazar Polytechnic in Zaprešić. However, before presenting the results of the research, we need to explain why this research was conducted with students from the two colleges.

In the 2015 parliamentary elections, members of the Net Generation, i.e. Generation Z (and partly Y), most often defined as the generation born in the mid-1990s who grew up with the Internet, the generation of "digital natives" had the right to vote. It was precisely the mid-1990s when the Internet influenced culture with amazing speed, including a rapid increase of new ways of communication: e-mail, interactive video calls, and the *World Wide Web*. The aim of the research was to establish the extent to which members of the Net Generation acquire political information through "classical media", that is, through print, television, radio, promotional posters, etc. – or if they prefer the Internet as their primary source of information. Apart from that, we wished to acquire data on whether the participants had informed themselves about political party programmes on their own accord. We also wanted to establish the extent to which the participants are prepared to actively participate in politics. Furthermore, students of the Faculty of Teacher Education, particularly students in the Department of Teacher Education Studies, should one day, despite the uncertain status of the subject Civic Education in Croatian schools at the moment of writing this paper, teach Civic Education in the first four years of primary school (whether as an interdisciplinary activity or an independent subject). These students should transfer civic competences to their future pupils, including, among others, familiarity with civil rights and their country's constitution, the election process, and critical analysis of information published by mass media. Apart from the above mentioned, the aim of the research was to establish the extent to which the students who will transfer civic competences to their pupils have themselves used their voting rights. These young participants, voters, members of the Net Generation, were at the same time, politically speaking, young voters, and they also partly included members of the Net Generation who had the opportunity to exercise their voting rights for the very first time in their lives. The term *young voters* is not unique, there are several interpretations of it. For American authors Iyengar and Jackman (2004) this group of voters includes those aged 18 to 24, whereas for some German authors, the group is defined as voters aged 18 to 21 (Stöss, 1997). Young voters, in certain cases, can even be sixteen-year-olds, if the active voting right has been lowered to this limit. As examples, we can use Austria, or the elections for certain regional parliaments in Germany. In Croatia, a voter is a citizen of the Republic of Croatia who is eighteen years of age and above. At the same time, we must stress that the term *youth* does not coincide with the term *young voters*. Statistically, the lower youth limit is most often defined as 15 years of age, whereas the upper limit varies, ending most often at 24, and sometimes at 29, or even 34 years of age (Ilišin, Bouillet, Gvozdanović, & Potočnik, 2013, p. 10).

Methodology

Aim

The aim of the research was to examine the place and the role of media, especially the Internet, in political communication and participation, as well as differences in these features with regard to age, type of study, and year of study of the students. Differences with regard to sex were not examined because of a relatively small and often inconsistent gender variety (Zarevski, Matešić, & Matešić Jr., 2010). Regarding this general primary aim, additional goals (tasks) of the research were set:

1) Examination of voter turnout and turnout differences with regard to specific features of the research participants,
2) Examination of the frequency of the place (medium) of noticing promotional political messages,
3) Examination of the frequency and differences of being informed about political programmes of their own accord with regard to specific features of the participants,
4) Examination which media the participants prefer for acquiring information of their own accord, and the differences between the media preferred with regard to specific features of the participants
5) Examination of the preferred way of political participation and the differences between the preferred ways with regard to specific features of the participants.

Sample

The research was conducted among students (*N*=314) of the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb (*n*=266) and Baltazar Polytechnic in Zaprešić (*n*=48). The breakdown of participants from the Faculty of Teacher Education was 206 (65.6%) students of Teacher Education Studies, and 60 (19.1%) students of Preschool Education Studies. There were 48 (15.3%) students from Baltazar Polytechnic. Regarding gender, there were 28 (8.9%) male and 286 (91.1%) female students. With regard to age, the youngest student was 18, and the oldest 51 (*M*=22.55; *SD*=5.31). We need to point out that the participants from Baltazar Polytechnic were aged 31 – 51, therefore older than participants from the Faculty of Teacher Education. There were 127 (40.4%) students of the first year, 108 (34.4%) of the second year, and 72 (25.2%) of the fifth year of study.

Instrument

Data were gathered by a two-part survey questionnaire. The first part was related to the demographic features of participants, in which gender, age, type of study, and year of study were given.

The second part was related to data on the use of new media in voting and gathering information on political programmes, as well as the ways of expressing political thought. This part included five questions. The first question was whether the participants have

voted (*Yes / No*). The second question asked was where they noticed promotional pre-election campaign messages, i.e. political messages the most, and they were asked to rank (from 1 to 7) seven media (newspaper texts, texts on web pages, posters / billboards / photographs of candidates with corresponding messages, video content on the Web and social networks, discussions and opinions on social networks, TV programmes, and radio programmes). The third question was about whether the participants sought additional information on political party programmes of their own accord (*Yes / No*). The fourth question was connected to the previous one, i.e. we wished to find out what media the participants have used to inform themselves of their own accord. The participants could circle multiple media (daily newspapers, Web pages of political parties and candidates, Facebook pages of political parties and candidates, Twitter pages of political parties and candidates, radio programmes, and TV programmes). The fifth question was directed to their opinion about the way in which they feel ready to politically participate. We offered four ways (signing a petition, participating in protest gatherings / demonstrations, participating over the Internet and Twitter, and actively participating as a member of a political party / group), and their opinions were measured on a three-degree scale (1=Never (*I would never consider it*), 2=Perhaps (*I may consider it*); 3=Certainly (*I would certainly consider it*)).

Procedure

Data were gathered by a survey questionnaire, pen-and-paper method, during the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. Filling out the questionnaire was completely voluntary and anonymous, and the participants had the right to forfeit filling out the questionnaire at any time.

Results

Descriptive analysis, regarding parliamentary election turnout, showed that most of the students did vote, i.e. 71.7% of them, whereas almost a third of the students did not vote in the parliamentary elections (28.3%) (Table 2).

The Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference regarding voting with regard to the type of study (χ^2=2.664; *df* =2; *p*>.05). In other words, regardless of the type of study, about the same percentage of the students voted in the elections (Table 1).

Table 1

Difference in voting with regard to the type of study

Type of study	Voted		Total
	YES	NO	
Teacher Education Studies	145 (70.4%)	61 (29.6%)	206 (65.6%)
Preschool Education Studies	41 (68.3%)	19 (31.7%)	60 (19.1%)
Baltazar Polytechnic	39 (81.2%)	9 (18.8%)	48 (15.3%)
Total	225 (71.7%)	89 (28.3%)	

The Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference among students of different years of study regarding voting (χ^2=2.195; df =2; p>.05). That is, regardless of the year of study, over two thirds of the students voted in the elections (Table 2).

Table 2

Difference in voting with regard to the year of study

Year of Study	Voted		Total
	YES	NO	
First	93 (73.2%)	34 (26.8%)	127 (40.4%)
Second	72 (66.7%)	36 (33.3%)	108 (34.4%)
Fifth	60 (75.9%)	19 (24.1%)	79 (25.2%)
Total	225 (71.7%)	89 (28.3%)	

Regarding the ranking of specific media as places where they most often noticed political promotional messages, the participants most often attributed the first place to the Internet and posters or billboards, and the second and third places nearly evenly to newspapers, the Internet, posters or billboards, Internet videos, and discussions on social networks. The third place in the frequency of noticing was given to radio programmes. We should point out that, in general, they noticed political promotional messages on the Internet and posters or billboards most frequently, and on radio programmes the least frequently (Table 3).

Table 3

Ranking of media as places of noticing promotional messages

Medium	Ranking													
	Null		1.		2.		3.		4.		5.		6.		7.
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Newspapers	10	3.2	14	4.5	46	14.6	39	12.4	51	16.2	52	16.6	67	21.3	35	11.1
The Internet	9	2.9	65	20.7	48	15.3	55	17.5	39	12.4	43	13.7	34	10.8	21	6.7
Posters	8	2.5	80	25.5	52	16.6	37	11.8	42	13.4	43	13.7	27	8.6	25	8
Internet Videos	8	2.5	34	10.8	50	15.9	55	17.5	56	17.8	39	12.4	39	12.4	33	10.5
Social networks	8	2.5	29	9.2	41	13.1	50	15.9	44	14	62	19.7	54	17.2	26	8
TV	8	2.9	69	22	44	14	40	12.7	41	13.1	35	11.1	47	15	29	9,2
Radio	9	2.9	24	7.7	19	6.1	27	8.6	18	5.8	26	8	38	12.1	153	48.9

Regarding the frequency of becoming informed of their own accord about political party programmes in the election campaign of the parliamentary elections, the results showed that a little above one third of the students informed themselves about them, whereas almost two thirds did not (Table 4).

The Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference among students of different types of study regarding the frequency of looking for information on political party programmes of their own accord (χ^2 =2.645; df=2;

p> .05). In other words, regardless of the type of study, about the same number of students (approximately one third to one half of them) informed themselves of their own accord about the political programmes of specific parties (Table 4).

Table 4

Difference in acquiring information on political party programmes of their own accord with regard to the type of study

Type of study	Seeking information of their own accord		Total
	YES	NO	
Teacher Education Studies	70 (34%)	136 (66%)	206 (65.6%)
Preschool Education Studies	24 (40 %)	36 (60%)	60 (19.1%)
Baltazar Polytechnic	22 (45.8%)	26 (54.2%)	48 (15.3%)
Total	116 (36.9%)	198 (63.1%)	

The Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference among students of different years of study regarding the frequency of looking for information on the political party programmes of their own accord (χ^2=3.221; *df*=2; *p*>.05). That is, regardless of whether the students were from the first, the second, or the fifth year of study, about one third of them have, almost evenly, informed themselves of their own accord about the political programmes of specific parties in the election campaign (Table 5).

Table 5

Difference in acquiring information on political party programmes of their own accord with regard to the year of study

Year of study	Seeking information of their own accord		Total
	YES	NO	
First	47 (37%)	80 (63%)	127 (40.4%)
Second	34 (31.5%)	74 (68.5%)	108 (34.4%)
Fifth	35 (44.3%)	44 (55.7%)	79 (25.2%)
Total	116 (36.9%)	198 (63.1%)	

Furthermore, the results showed that if the students had informed themselves of their own accord about political party programmes, they have mostly done it through the parties' and candidates' Web pages or TV programmes (Table 6).

The Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference among students of different types of study regarding the choice of daily newspapers (χ^2=.962; *df*=2; *p*>.05), political parties' Web pages (χ^2=.395; *df*=2; *p*> .05), political parties' and candidates' Twitter pages[1](χ^2=2.046; *df*=2; *p*> .05) and TV programmes

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[1] The number of frequencies in a single category is less than 5.

(χ^2=2.892; *df*=2; *p*>.05) as the media of choice for acquiring information on political programmes of their own accord. In other words, regardless of the type of study, the above mentioned media were mostly not used to acquire information on political programmes of their own accord. On the other hand, there was a statistically significant difference between students of different studies in using Facebook pages of political parties and candidates (χ^2=12.712; *df*=2; *p*< .01) as the medium of choice for the purposes of acquiring political information of their own accord. That is, the students studying at Baltazar Polytechnic are somewhat more inclined to use Facebook pages of political parties, as well as radio programmes[2], for the purposes of gathering information about political programmes in the election campaign of their own accord (Table 6).

Table 6

Differences in the choice of specific media for the purpose of gathering information about political programmes of their own accord with regard to the type of study

Medium		Type of study			Total
		Teacher Ed.	Preschool Ed.	Baltazar	
Daily newspapers	Yes	26 (7.3%)	10 (11.7%)	8 (25%)	44 (14%)
	No	180 (92.7%)	50 (88.3%)	40 (75%)	270 (86%)
Political parties' and candidates' Web pages	Yes	49 (23.8%)	16 (26.7%)	13 (27.1%)	78 (24.8%)
	No	157 (76.2%)	44 (73.3%)	35 (72.9%)	236 (75.2%)
Political parties' and candidates' Facebook pages	Yes	15 (7.3%)	7 (11.7%)	12 (25%)	34 (10.8%)
	No	191 (92.7%)	52 (88.3%)	36 (75%)	280 (89.2%)
Political parties' and candidates' Twitter pages	Yes	1 (0.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (2.1%)	2 (0.6%)
	No	205 (99.5%)	60 (100%)	47 (97.7%)	312 (99.4%)
Radio programmes	Yes	5 (2.4%)	0 (0%)	5 (10.4%)	10 (3.2%)
	No	201 (97.6%)	60 (100%)	43 (89.6%)	204 (96.8%)
Television programmes	Yes	39 (18.9%)	15 (25%)	14 (29.2%)	68 (21.7%)
	No	167 (81.1%)	45 (75%)	34 (70.8%)	246 (78.3%)

The Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference among students of different years of study regarding the choice of daily newspapers (χ^2=.134; *df*=2; *p*>.05), political parties' Facebook pages (χ^2=1.134; *df*=2; *p*> .05), political parties' Twitter pages[3](χ^2=1.231; *df*=2; *p*> .05), radio programmes[4] (χ^2=.400; *df*=2; *p*>.05), and TV programmes (χ^2=.033; *df*=2; *p*>.05) as the media of choice for acquiring information on political programmes of their own accord. In other words, regardless of their year of study, each above mentioned media was mostly used very sparingly to acquire information on political programmes of their own accord (Table 10). On the other hand, there was a statistically significant difference between students

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[2] The number of frequencies in a single category is less than 5.

[3] The number of frequencies in a single category is less than 5.

[4] The number of frequencies in a single category is less than 5.

of different years of study in using Web pages of political parties (χ^2=6.443; *df*=2; *p*<.05) as the medium of choice for the purposes of acquiring political information of their own accord. That is, fifth year students are somewhat more inclined to use this medium for the purposes of gathering information about political programmes in the election campaign (Table 7).

Table 7

Differences in the choice of specific media for the purpose of gathering information about political programmes of their own accord with regard to the year of study

Medium		Year of study			Total
		First	Second	Fifth	
Daily newspapers	Yes	17 (13.4%)	15 (13.9%)	12 (15.2%)	44 (14%)
	No	110 (86.6%)	93 (86.1%)	67 (84.8%)	270 (86%)
Political parties' and candidates' Web pages	Yes	28 (22%)	22 (20.4%)	28 (35.4%)	78 (24.8%)
	No	99 (78%)	86 (79.6%)	51 (64.6%)	236 (75.2%)
Political parties' and candidates' Facebook pages	Yes	16 (12.6%)	9 (8.3%)	9 (11.4%)	34 (10.8%)
	No	111 (87.4%)	99 (91.7%)	70 (88.6%)	280 (89.2)
Political parties' and candidates' Twitter pages	Yes	1 (0.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (0.6%)
	No	126 (99.2%)	108 (100%)	78 (98.7%)	312 (99.4%)
Radio programmes	Yes	5 (3.9%)	3 (2.8%)	2 (2.5%)	10 (3.2%)
	No	122 (96.1%)	105 (97.2%)	77 (97.5%)	304 (96.8%)
Television programmes	Yes	27 (21.3%)	24 (22.2%)	17 (21.5%)	68 (21.7%)
	No	100 (78.7%)	84 (77.8%)	62 (78.5)	246 (78.3%)

Descriptive analysis showed that, regarding political participation, one half of the participants would in no way participate in protests / demonstrations, or become a member of a political party. On the other hand, one third of the participants believe that signing petitions and participating over the Internet is an appropriate way of political participation (Table 9).

Furthermore, the Chi-square test showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the students from the Faculty of Teacher Education (both Teacher Education Studies and Preschool Education Studies) and the students from the Baltazar Polytechnic in their preferred methods of political participation: signing petitions (χ^2=4.314; *df*=4; *p*>.05), participating in demonstrations (χ^2=3.146; *df*=4; *p*>.05), participating over the Internet[5](χ^2=6.01; *df*=4; *p*>.05), and active participation through political parties (χ^2=3.879; *df*=4; *p*>.05). In other words, regardless of the programmes the students are enrolled in, the students evenly estimate that they would not participate in demonstrations or actively work in political parties, but they largely deem it appropriate to sign petitions and participate over the Internet (Table 8).

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[5] The number of frequencies in a single category is less than 5.

Table 8

Differences in political participation with regard to the type of study

Preferred way of expressing political beliefs		Type of study			Total
		Teacher Ed.	Preschool Ed.	Baltazar	
Signing petitions	Never	28 (13.6%)	11 (18.3%)	5 (10.4%)	44 (14%)
	Perhaps	104 (50.5%)	22 (36.7%)	25 (52.1%)	151 (48.1%)
	Certainly	74 (35.9%)	27 (45%)	18 (37.5%)	119 (37.9%)
Participating in protest gatherings / demonstrations	Never	111 (53.9%)	29 (48.3%)	22 (45.8%)	162 (51.6%)
	Perhaps	85 (41.3%)	28 (46.7%)	21 (43.8%)	134 (42.7%)
	Certainly	10 (4.9%)	3 (5%)	5 (10.4%)	18 (5.7%)
Being informed and participating over the Internet	Never	21 (10.2%)	4 (6.7%)	10 (20.8%)	35 (11.1%)
	Perhaps	116 (56.3%)	35 (58.3%)	23 (47.9%)	174 (55.4%)
	Certainly	69 (33.5%)	21 (35%)	15 (31.2%)	105 (33.4%)
Active participation through political parties	Never	88 (42.7%)	24 (40%)	25 (52.1%)	41 (43.6%)
	Perhaps	94 (45.6%)	27 (45%)	15 (31.2%)	136 (43.3%)
	Certainly	24 (11.7%)	9 (15%)	8 (16.7%)	41 (13.1%)

The Chi-square test showed that there were no statistically significant differences between students of different years of study in their preferred methods of political participation: signing a petition (χ^2=8.813; df=4; p>.05), participating in protests (χ^2=3.738; df=4; p>.05), participating over the Internet[6] (χ^2=8.646; df=4; p>.05), or active membership in a political party (χ^2=4.93; df=4; p>.05). In other words, regardless of whether the students were from the first, the second, or the fifth year of study, they were more inclined to believe that political beliefs are more appropriately expressed through the Internet and signing petitions, whereas they believe it less appropriate to take part in demonstrations or to join a political party (Table 9).

Table 9

Differences in political participation with regard to the year of study

Preferred way of expressing political beliefs		Year of study			Total
		Second	Second	Fifth	
Signing petitions	Never	17 (13.4%)	18 (16.7%)	9 (11.4%)	44 (14%)
	Perhaps	70 (55.1%)	51 (47.2%)	30 (38%)	151 (48.1%)
	Certainly	40 (31.5%)	39 (36.1%)	40 (50.6%)	119 (37.9%)
Participating in protest gatherings / demonstrations	Never	71 (55.9%)	50 (46.3%)	35 (44.3%)	162 (51.6%)
	Perhaps	47 (37%)	52 (48.1%)	35 (44.3%)	134 (42.7%)
	Certainly	9 (7.1%)	6 (5.6%)	3 (3.8%)	18 (5.7%)
Being informed and participating over the Internet	Never	22 (17.3%)	8 (7.4%)	5 (6.3%)	35 (11.1%)
	Perhaps	67 (52.8%)	60 (55.6%)	47 (59.5%)	174 (55.4%)
	Certainly	38 (29.9%)	40 (37%)	27 (34.2%)	105 (33.4%)
Active participation through political parties	Never	58 (45.7%)	42 (38.9%)	37 (46.8%)	137 (43.6%)
	Perhaps	48 (37.8%)	53 (49.1%)	35 (44.3%)	136 (43.3%)
	Certainly	21 (16.5%)	13 (12%)	7 (8.9%)	41 (13.1%)

[6] The number of frequencies in a single category is less than 5.

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the research showed that over two thirds of the participants (71.7%) stated that they had voted in the Croatian 2015 parliamentary elections, noting that in this group there were no statistically significant differences neither with regard to their type of study, nor to their year of study. In comparison, in the Croatian 2015 parliamentary elections, not counting the XI and XII electoral districts, the voter turnout ranged from the minimum of 59.66% (voters of electoral district V) to the maximum of 69.98% (voters of electoral district I) (www.izbori.hr). Out of all participants, the students at Baltazar Polytechnic represented the greatest voter turnout percentage (81.2%), although this difference is statistically insignificant in comparison with the students of the Faculty of Teacher Education.

It is interesting to note that, according to the results of the 2015 research on political literacy of final year students of secondary schools in Croatia (Bagić & Gvozdanović, 2015), out of all participants born in 1996 who were of legal age at the time of filling out the questionnaire, a total of 76.3% have voted in elections at least once.

The participants most frequently noticed political promotional messages on the Internet and on posters and billboards, and least frequently on radio programmes, while two thirds of the participants did not inform themselves about political party programmes of their own accord. The participants who wished to gather additional information on party programmes did so most often through reading Web pages of political parties and candidates, or by watching television programmes, and least often by listening to radio programmes. This result can also be compared to the 2015 political literacy research, according to which the young participants are very seldom informed about social events over the radio (11.3%). The radio, as a medium for acquiring information on social events and as a medium of political promotion is evidently used, i.e. perceived the least among the Net Generation, when compared to other media, among which the leading medium of choice is the Internet. In this regard, we can also mention the research by Ilišin et al. (2013, p. 109) about youth, in which the authors discuss the "collapse of radio" as a means of informing oneself about political events. However, it should be pointed out that students at Baltazar Polytechnic, who are older than the participants from the Faculty of Teacher Education, are often more inclined to use Facebook pages of political parties, as well as radio programmes, for the purposes of acquiring information on political programmes in the election campaign of their own accord. This difference was proven to be statistically significant. It should also be pointed out that, when speaking of being informed about political events, the participants used television to almost the same extent as the Internet.

Regarding political participation, one half of the participants showed a certain dissociation from institutional political participation, since they have in no regard showed readiness to engage themselves politically as members of a political party. Regarding non-institutional engagement, one half of the participants would not take part in protests under any conditions, while one third of them believes that

signing petitions and participating over the Internet are appropriate ways of political participation.

Finally, we deem it necessary to point out that researching the relations between youth – more specifically, the members of the Net Generation and politics, is a matter of high importance, because of, *inter alia*, examining the insight into the possibility of their integration in political affairs, since their disinterest of this generation can reflect negatively on democratic processes in society (Schizzerotto & Gasperoni, 2001). However, this research showed that the participants, students of the Faculty of Teacher Education, who are members of the Net Generation as we have defined it at the beginning of this paper, did not show a statistically significant difference when compared to their participant colleagues, older students of a non-teacher education polytechnic, in the segment of voter turnout and active political engagement.

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Net-generacija, internet i politička komunikacija i participacija

Sažetak

Net-generaciji, generaciji koja je odrasla s digitalnim medijima, pripisuju se značajke koje ih razlikuju od pripadnika starijih generacija koja su u svijet digitalnih medija i interneta ušle naknadno. Internet je pak otvorio nove mogućnosti komunikacije i participacije i u sferi politike. Među studentima Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu i Veleučilišta Baltazar Zaprešić provedeno je istraživanje s ciljem utvrđivanja u kojoj se mjeri studenti, tzv. „digitalni urođenici", koriste internetom s ciljem političke informiranosti, političke komunikacije i participacije. Nešto više od dvije trećine ispitanika, mladih birača, glasovalo je na parlamentarnim izborima u Hrvatskoj 2015. godine. Oni preferiraju internet kako bi se informirali o političkim zbivanjima, ali u gotovo istoj mjeri preferiraju i televiziju. Prema rezultatima istraživanja, ispitanici su u najvećem broju spremni iskazati svoje političko mišljenje putem interneta, polovina ispitanika nikako ne pokazuje spremnost da se angažiraju kao članovi političke stranke, a u vrlo malom postotku spremni su sudjelovati u protestnim okupljanjima. Pripadnici net-generacije u segmentu političke participacije ne pokazuju statistički značajnu razliku u usporedbi sa studentima neučiteljskog fakulteta starije životne dobi.

Ključne riječi: *digitalni mediji; E-government; građanski odgoj; mladi birači; politička informiranost.*

Uvod

Postoji li doista tzv. net-generacija s jasno izraženim specifičnostima koje su vidljive i prepoznatljive u gotovo svim sferama života? O tome pruža li nam internet nove i istodobno korisne i poželjne mogućnosti i u segmentu politike, političke komunikacije, informiranosti i političke participacije, postoje brojna i međusobno suprotstavljena mišljenja. Od brojnih naslova koja se bave navedenom tematikom, kao ilustrativan primjer navodimo dvije knjige koje su se pojavile na tržištu u razmaku od dvije godine. Prva je knjiga njemačkog psihijatra Manfreda Spitzera *Digitale Demenz* (2012) u kojoj on, posebno djeci, preporučuje izbjegavanje, tj. ograničenje uporabe digitalnih medija s ciljem prevencije, kako je iz naslova vidljivo, „digitalne demencije". Autori druge

knjige tiskane 2014. godine, Klaus Hurrelmann i Erik Albrecht dali su svojoj knjizi (provokativan) naslov *Die heimlichen Revolutionäre: Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert*. Autori u toj knjizi govore o tome kako je generacija Y promijenila naš svijet. U tu generaciju ubrajaju ljude između 15 i 30 godina za koje je internet naročito važan, ali da su „kao zdravi *ipsilonci* pametni korisnici medija i ne daju se od njih zlouporabiti" (Hurrelmann i Albrecht, 2014, str. 166). Istodobno autori tu Y-generaciju već u samom naslovu nazivaju i potajnim, neprimjetnim revolucionarima. To je, dakako, samo jedan primjer koji pokazuje koliko suprotstavljeni mogu biti stavovi o digitalnim medijima i njihovu utjecaju na sve segmente svakodnevice. U ovom radu krenut će se od definicije samog pojma net-generacije, odnosno srodnih pojmova, osobina koju pripadnici te generacije (ne)posjeduju, zatim o mogućnostima i granicama koje internet pruža u domeni politike. U drugom dijelu rada prezentirat će se i analizirati rezultati istraživanja koje je provedeno među studentima Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu i Veleučilišta Baltazar Zaprešić.

Net-generacija

Pojam net-generacija pojavljuje se još 1998. godine kod Tapscotta (1998), a valja spomenuti i pojam *Millennials* kod Howea i Straussa (2000). Njima se opisuju rođeni nakon 1980. godine. Međutim, jedna od poznatijih podjela je ona na *Digital Natives* i *Digital Immigrants* (Prensky, 2001a), koja polazi od toga da se *Digital Natives*, ljudi rođeni u globalnom svijetu interneta, ponašaju drukčije od *Digital Immigrants*, njihovih roditelja koji su u taj svijet ušli naknadno. Često se spominje i generacija Y koju većina autora definira kao ljude rođene od početka, tj. sredine osamdesetih godina pa do kraja 20. stoljeća i koja je odrasla s računalima, internetom i prvim mobilnim telefonima. Na njih se nadovezuje generacija Z koja je rasla u obilju tehničkih sprava vezanih uz internet, zatim s virtualnom stvarnošću, izvorima informacija poput Googlea i društvenim mrežama poput Facebooka i Twittera. To su samo neki od naziva, postoje i brojni drugi, a uočavaju se kod pojedinih autora i vremenska odstupanja kada prestaje, tj. počinje sljedeća generacija. Generacijama koje su odrasle s digitalnim medijima, a u ovom radu obuhvatit ćemo ih, radi preglednosti i bez namjere (novog) terminološkog određenja, pojmom net-generacija, pripisuju se sljedeće karakteristike (Oblinger i Oblinger, 2005; Prensky, 2001b; Tapscott, 1998): brže primanje informacija i brze reakcije, multitasking, preferiranje dobivanja informacija s pomoću hyperlinkova, a ne linearno, sposobnost brze izmjene tema, ali istodobno i sloboda odlučivanja na koje će teme obratiti pozornost, zatim induktivno otkrivanje, spremnost za isprobavanje novoga. Za net-generaciju računalo nije tehnologija, nego elementarna sastavnica života, digitalna povezanost i umreženost od esencijalne je važnosti. *Net Geners* zbog neprestane umreženosti daju prednost radu u grupi, a timski rad im je jača strana. Od opasnosti za tu generaciju koje se najčešće spominju možemo izdvojiti osamljivanje pred ekranom (*Screen- people*), njegovanje kontakata „na daljinu" umjesto dubljih odnosa, neprestano isprobavanje novih uloga, kratkotrajnost pažnje, rastuću

nervozu, brzu izmjenu tema i u poslu i u životu, zatim dominaciju slika, redukciju pisanoga jezika na informaciju i obradu teksta (Carr, 2010). Jureit (2006) naglašava da je net-generacija samo metafora i da dobnoj kohorti na koju se odnosi nedostaju sve značajke koje generaciju čine generacijom: homogenost, identitet, zajedničko iskustvo, historijski događaji i kolektivni životni osjećaj, a da internet kao zajednički faktor nije dovoljan da bi se govorilo o generaciji. Buckingham (2008) i Jenkins (2009) tvrdnju da je uzrok ponašanja tehnika, a ne psiha ljudi, nazivaju tehnološkim determinizmom. Naravno da, kad je riječ o generaciji, ne smijemo smetnuti s uma da se jedna generacija uvijek sastoji od individua i da među pripadnicima jedne generacije ima jednako tako mnogo razlika kao i među zasebnim generacijama. Međutim, nikako se ne bismo mogli složiti s tvrdnjom da digitalni mediji kao tehnika uopće ne utječu na ponašanje mladih, ali i ljudi srednje i starije životne dobi. Iz obilja statističkih podataka o korištenju interneta mogu se izdvojiti neki. Primjerice, 2014. godine širom svijeta se 2,9 milijardi ljudi koristilo internetom (http://de.statista.com), od toga primjerice u SAD-u oko 257, 26 milijuna (http://de.statista.com.). Nadalje, u Njemačkoj je 2012. godine bilo 1,27 milijuna ljudi u dobi od 14 do 69 godina koji su procijenili da se koriste internetom više od šest sati dnevno. Nadalje, što se tiče društvenih mreža, u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama više se od polovine stanovništva (56 %) koristi Facebookom, u Velikoj Britaniji ima 34 milijuna, a u Njemačkoj 28 milijuna korisnika Facebooka. U Hrvatskoj ih je 2013. godine bilo 1 740 000 (http://allfacebook.de;http://www.slideshare.net). Internet, kao iznimno bitan medij zbog velikog broja ljudi koji se njime koriste, otvorio je nove mogućnosti komunikacije i participacije i u sferi politike, što je potrebno podrobnije promotriti.

Internet i politika

Internetu je u počecima pripisivana svijetla budućnost u smislu revitalizacije demokracije. Mnogi su autori polazili od toga da internet posjeduje golem demokratizirajući potencijal. Posebno su američki autori, spomenimo primjerice Nicholasa Negropontea (1995) i Howarda Rheingolda (1993), sredinom 1990-ih godina smatrali da će internet znatno unaprijediti političku participaciju, nadopuniti elemente predstavničke demokracije, odnosno čak nadomjestiti predstavničke procese građanskom samovlašću. Tako je primjerice Rheingold (1993) smatrao da će internet unaprijediti sposobnost građana da u većoj mjeri sudjeluju u političkim procesima, a najznačajniji doprinos interneta politici predvidio je u donošenju direktnih odluka elektroničkim putem, dakle u *e-voting*, *e-petitions* i *e-referenda*. Štoviše, oblikovane su konture novog modela, *cyber*-demokracije, virtualne eklezije kojom bi se mogao ostvariti atenski ideal vladavine građana. Međutim, internet je neutralan medij, on nije sam po sebi demokraciji ni sklon, ni nesklon. Hoće li internet imati pozitivan utjecaj na demokraciju, ili krajnje negativan u smislu represivne kontrole demokratskih snaga, hoće li poticati drugačije metode političke participacije koje će koristiti građani koji inače ne pokazuju pretjeran interes za politiku, ili će se korištenjem interneta još

povećati neravnopravnost, budući da dijelu građana nedostaje pristup internetu ili pak medijska kompetencija ovisi o nekoliko čimbenika. Kao najvažnije treba istaknuti kontekst, oblik, karakter poruka i ciljeva, zatim činjenicu koju akteri iniciraju i provode takvu komunikaciju. Internet nedvojbeno pruža nove mogućnosti u javnoj upravi i politici i tako dolazimo do pojma e-vladavine (*e-government*), ali valja istaknuti da postoje brojne definicije navedenog pojma. Lucke i Reinermann (2002) u *Electronic Government* ubrajaju odvijanje poslovnih procesa koji su u vezi s vladanjem i upravom uz pomoć elektroničkih medija, a Kubicek i Wind (2002) sažeto definiraju *E – Government* kao krilaticu za pokušaj učinkovitijeg oblikovanja upravnih procesa uz podršku tehnike. *E – government*, u smislu uporabe informacijske i komunikacijske tehnologije kako bi se povećala učinkovitost, dostupnost i demokratska odgovornost tijela državne uprave, predstavlja najslabiji oblik uključivanja interneta u političke procese, jer se radi o izvršavanju internih i eksternih administrativnih poslova uz podršku interneta većom brzinom i interaktivnošću (Grunwald, 2006). Građane se, naime, u prvom redu promatra kao korisnike kojima se omogućuje da internetom obave određene upravne poslove. Studija Ujedinjenih naroda u suradnji s American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) razlikuje pojmove *E-Government* i *E-Governance* (United Nations & American Society for Public Administration, 2002). *E-Governance* opisuje „interakciju između građana, vladinih organizacija, javnih i izabranih službenih tijela, u što se ubrajaju demokratski procesi i transparentno donošenje odluka." I Riley i Sheridan (2006) smatraju *E-governance* učincima poput transparentnosti, otvorenosti i sudjelovanja građana u političkim procesima. Međutim, korištenje informacijskom i komunikacijskom tehnologijom (ICT) može osnažiti demokratske procese jer smanjuje prepreke na individualnoj razini, budući da oni koji imaju pristup internetu lakše mogu politički participirati (Norris, 2001, 2005). Ujedinjeni narodi već godinama mjere takozvani razvoj *E-Governmenta* na temelju indikatora kao što su telekomunikacijska povezanost, ljudski kapaciteti i *online* usluge koje nude državne institucije. Tako nastaje EGDI (*E-government Development Index*) koji ne mjeri *E-Government* „... u apsolutnom smislu, nego mogućnost da se nacionalne vlade međusobno usporede" (United Nations E-Government Survey 2014, str. 13). Od ukupno dvadeset i pet zemalja s vrlo visokim EGDI-em 2014. godine, na prvih pet mjesta bile su Južna Koreja, Australija, Singapur, Francuska i Nizozemska. Hrvatska se ne nalazi među vodećim zemljama s vrlo visokim EGDI-em, nego u grupi zemalja s visokim EGDI-em (High EGDI, 0,50 - 0,75) u kojoj se, od zemalja Europske unije nalaze još Bugarska, Češka, Mađarska, Litva, Poljska, Portugal, Rumunjska i Slovenija, a od europskih zemalja koje nisu članice Europske unije primjerice Albanija, Srbija i Švicarska. U toj se grupi od neeuropskih zemalja nalaze, između brojnih drugih, primjerice još Kina, Rusija i Brazil. U grupi zemalja sa srednjim EGDI-em (0,25-0,50) nalaze se primjerice Bosna i Hercegovina, Makedonija, Indija, a u grupi s niskim EGDI-em (manje od 0,25) brojne afričke, južnoameričke i azijske države (United Nations E-Government Survey 2014, str. 16). *United Nations E-Government*

Survey također implicira, između ostaloga, da *E-Government* može imati i funkciju poticanja građana da pojačano participiraju u politici. Internet omogućuje e-participaciju tj. e-demokraciju u smislu da omogućava središnje funkcije demokratskog procesa, a to su dostupnost informacijama/informiranost, komunikaciju, artikuliranje interesa i mogućnost glasovanja. Pojam e-participacija se, prema navedenoj studiji, sastoji pak od tri dijela: *e-information, e-consultation* i *e-decision-making* (UN, 2014, str. 83). Prikupljanje informacija, interaktivna komunikacija s političarima i sudjelovanje u procesima donošenja političkih odluka mogu imati različite ciljeve te biti, gledano s aspekta vremena i truda, jako dugotrajni i zahtjevni. Internet u tom segmentu nedvojbeno pruža nove mogućnosti. Međutim, pitanje je koliko se tim mogućnostima građani doista i koriste, i tu se otvara prostor za brojna istraživanja. Preferiraju li građani internet kao izvor prikupljanja političkih informacija, ili to još uvijek čine putem, nazovimo ih uvjetno, klasičnih medija: televizije, tiska, promidžbenih plakata i sl.? Postoji li u segmentu prikupljanja političkih informacija razlika između spomenute net-generacije i građana srednje i starije životne dobi? Istraživanje Köchera i Brutella (2011) pokazalo je da se mlada generacija znatno češće koristi internetom kao sredstvom prikupljanja informacija o politici. Prema rezultatima tog istraživanja manje od trećine ispitanika koristi se internetom kako bi se politički informirali, ali kad je riječ o mlađoj generaciji, postotak je znatno viši i dosiže 50 % (Köchera i Brutella, 2011, str. 24). Što se interaktivne komunikacije s političarima, internet i tu, barem hipotetski, pruža brojne mogućnosti. Od vođenja političkih rasprava preko društvenih mreža, foruma, pa do danas već uobičajene i očekivane mogućnosti pisanja e-maila parlamentarnim zastupnicima. Internet, nadalje, pruža nove mogućnosti i u segmentu donošenja političkih odluka. Primjerice peticije je moguće efektivnije i brže provesti *online*. Već neko vrijeme raste popularnost *online*-peticija kao oblika e-demokracije, koja, načelno gledano omogućuje „potpuno nove mogućnosti političke participacije kao npr. blogovi i *online*-peticije, ali i subverzivne protestne akcije (*flashmobs*) i virtualne sabotaže s političkim ciljem" (Schulz, 2011, str. 34). Upotreba *online*-peticija često se dovodi u vezu s negativno konotiranim pojmovima *Slacktivism* i *Clicktivism*. *Slacktivism* „se odnosi na političke aktivnosti koje nemaju stvarni utjecaj na ishode nekog političkog pitanja, već samo služe za povećanje vlastitog dobrog osjećaja" (Christensen, 2011). Primaran je korisnikov osjećaj da je učinio nešto dobro. U moguće oblike *Slacktivisma* ubraja se nošenje političkih poruka na odjeći, bojkotiranje određenih proizvoda i sl. Utoliko su politička participacija i uspješno utjecanje na politička događanja prilično neučinkoviti. *Clicktivism* označava, između ostaloga, potpisivanje *online*-peticija, što se može označiti kao oblik političke participacije. Studija koju je proveo Center for Social Impact Communication (2012) pokazala je da osobe koje su *online* participirale u nekom političkom pitanju, i u nevirtualnom životu, dakle *offline*, doista češće sudjeluju u političkim okupljanjima, demonstracijama ili peticijama. Spremnost za političku participaciju *offline* bila je upola manja kod osoba koje ni *online* politički ne participiraju nego kod osoba koje

su već *online* bile politički aktivne. Međutim, ukupno gledano, ne može se očekivati da bi *online* oblici političke participacije u skoroj budućnosti mogli zamijeniti tradicionalne oblike. Neki postojeći modeli intenzivnije uporabe interneta u procesu donošenja političkih odluka, poput primjerice tzv. tekuće demokracije (*Liquid Democracy*) piratskih stranaka u čijim programima središnje mjesto zauzima tema slobodnog i neograničenog pristupa digitalnoj komunikaciji, u političkoj praksi pokazuju znatne deficite (Veličkí, 2012). Internet utoliko jest neutralan medij koji svima pruža jednake šanse političke participacije, ali samo pod uvjetom da ga se, kao prvo, uopće može koristiti u smislu tehničkih preduvjeta, a zatim da se i koristi kao medij za razmjenjivanje ideja vezanih uz politiku. Internetom se brojni korisnici koriste u druge svrhe, a oni koji se njime koriste kao medijem za političke rasprave to čine u komunikaciji s korisnicima koji su im istomišljenici, u smislu da se, iako možda imaju i različite političke predodžbe, i oni koriste internetom s istim ciljem. Utoliko je, osim digitalne podjele (*digital divide*) pojma kojim se opisuje jaz između ljudi i geografskih područja koji imaju odnosno nemaju pristup modernim tehnologijama, i u segmentu političkog sudjelovanja i angažmana uz pomoć interneta vidljiva i *participatory divide* (Ritzi, Schaal, i Kaufmann, 2012, str. 29). Konkretnije, radi se o razlikovanju građana koji se „…isključivo *online,* tj. *offline* politički angažiraju, … koji vjeruju u utjecaj svog političkog djelovanja (izvan interneta) i onih koji su također (uz pomoć interneta) politički angažirani, ali i ne očekuju da bi time mogli izvršiti politički utjecaj" (Ritzi, Schaal, i Kaufmann, 2012, str. 29). Sažeto rečeno, internet može pozitivno utjecati na demokratske procese, ali uz aktivno sudjelovanje obiju strana, kako onih koji pružaju nove mogućnosti, a to su državne institucije, stranke, političari i dr., tako i onih kojima su te mogućnosti ponuđene, a to su građani, odnosno birači. Pritom valja uzeti u obzir da dio građana, tj. birača pripada net-generaciji koja je odrasla s digitalnim medijima, pa se postavlja pitanje jesu li njihova očekivanja od interneta u segmentu politike, počevši od prikupljanja informacija vezanih uz politiku, pa sve do spremnosti sudjelovanja u procesu donošenja političkih odluka, drugačija od dijela birača koji pripadaju grupi tzv. „digitalnih imigranata"? Kako bi se dobile nove spoznaje u vezi s tim pitanjima, potkraj 2015. godine i početkom 2016. godine provedeno je istraživanje među studentima Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu i Veleučilišta Baltazar Zaprešić. Međutim, prije prezentacije rezultata istraživanja, potrebno je ukratko objasniti zašto je navedeno istraživanje provedeno upravo među studentima, i to navedenih fakulteta. Naime, na parlamentarnim izborima u Hrvatskoj 2015. godine pravo glasovanja imali su i pripadnici net-generacije, tj. generacije Z (dijelom i Y), koja se najčešće definira kao generacija rođena sredinom 90-tih godina 20. stoljeća i koja je odrasla s internetom, generacija „digitalnih urođenika". Naime, internet je upravo od sredine 1990-ih godina nevjerojatnom brzinom utjecao na kulturu, uključujući i brz porast novih načina komunikacije: *e-maila*, interaktivnih videopoziva i *World Wide Weba*. Cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi u kojoj mjeri pripadnici net-generacije informacije vezane uz politiku prikupljaju putem „klasičnih medija",

dakle tiska, televizije, radija, promidžbenih plakata ili preferiraju internet kao glavni izvor informacija. Osim toga željeli smo dobiti podatke o tom jesu li se ispitanici uoči parlamentarnih izbora samoinicijativno informirali o stranačkim programima? Također smo željeli utvrditi u kojoj su mjeri ispitanici spremni aktivno participirati u politici. Nadalje, studenti Učiteljskog fakulteta, posebno studenti Odsjeka za Učiteljske studije, trebali bi, usprkos u trenutku pisanja ovog rada neizvjesnog statusa predmeta Građanski odgoj u hrvatskim školama, jednog dana predavati Građanski odgoj (bilo kao međupredmetni sadržaj, bilo kao samostalni predmet) od 1. do 4. razreda osnovne škole. Studenti bi učenicima trebali prenijeti građanske kompetencije, a u njih ulaze, između ostalog, primjerice i poznavanje građanskih prava i ustava zemlje, glasovanje na izborima i kritičko prihvaćanje informacija koje objavljuju masovni mediji. Osim već navedenog, cilj istraživanja bio je utvrditi u kojoj su mjeri studenti koji bi učenicima trebali prenijeti građanske kompetencije iskoristili sami primjerice svoje biračko pravo. Istodobno, ti su mladi ispitanici, birači, pripadnici net-generacije bili istovremeno i u politološkom smislu mladi birači, a dijelom se radi o pripadnicima net-generacije koji su po prvi put uopće imali mogućnost ostvariti svoje biračko pravo. Pojam *mladi birači* nije jedinstven, o njemu postoje nekoliko tumačenja. Tako npr. američki autori Iyengar i Jackman (2004) u tu skupinu ubrajaju birače u dobi od 18. do 24. godine, a neki njemački autori u mlade birače ubrajaju birače u dobi od 18. do 21. godine života (Stöss, 1997). Mladi birači u pojedinim slučajevima mogu biti i šesnaestogodišnjaci, ako je aktivno biračko pravo spušteno na tu granicu. Kao primjer možemo navesti Austriju odnosno izbore za pojedine pokrajinske parlamente u Njemačkoj. U Hrvatskoj je birač građanin Republike Hrvatske s navršenih 18 godina života. Istodobno treba istaknuti da se pojam *mladi* ne poklapa sa sintagmom *mladi birači*. Kao donja granica mladosti statistički je najčešće određena 15. godina života, a gornja granica varira zaustavljajući se najčešće na 24., a ponekad na 29. ili 34. godini života (Ilišin, Bouillet, Gvozdanović, i Potočnik, 2013, str. 10).

Metodologija
Cilj

Cilj je bio istražiti mjesto i ulogu medija, posebno interneta u političkoj komunikaciji i participaciji, kao i razlike u tim obilježjima s obzirom na starosnu dob, vrstu i godinu studija studenata. Razlike s obzirom na spol nisu istraživane zbog razmjerno male i nerijetko nekonzistentne spolne razlike (Zarevski, Matešić, i Matešić ml., 2010). S obzirom na taj općeniti glavni cilj, postavljeni su dodatni ciljevi (zadaci) istraživanja:

1. istražiti izlaznost na izbore i razlike u izlaznosti s obzirom na pojedina obilježja ispitanika
2. istražiti učestalost mjesta (medija) primjećivanja promidžbenih političkih poruka
3. istražiti učestalost i razlike samoinicijativnog informiranja o političkim programima s obzirom na pojedina obilježja ispitanika

4. istražiti koje medije ispitanici preferiraju za samoinicijativno informiranje i razlike u preferiranom mediju s obzirom na pojedina obilježja ispitanika

5. istražiti preferirani način političke participacije i razlike u preferiranom načinu s obzirom na pojedina obilježja ispitanika.

Uzorak

U istraživanju su sudjelovali studenti (*N* =314) Učiteljskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu (*n* =266) i Veleučilišta Baltazar u Zaprešiću (*n*=48). Studenata učiteljskog studija na učiteljskom fakultetu bilo je 206 (65,6 %), studenata redovnog odgojiteljskog studija 60 (19,1 %), a 48 (15,3 %) studenata Veleučilišta Baltazar. S obzirom na spol bilo je 28 (8,9 %) studenata i 286 (91,1 %) studentica. U pogledu starosne dobi najmlađi student je imao 18, a najstariji 51 godinu (*M* =22,55; *SD*= 5,31). Treba istaknuti da su ispitanici s Veleučilišta Baltazar u dobi od 31. do 51. godine, dakle stariji od ispitanika Učiteljskog fakulteta. Studenata prve godine je bilo 127 (40,4 %), druge 108 (34,4 %) i pete 72 (25,2 %).

Instrument

Podaci su prikupljani anketnim upitnikom koji se sastojao od dva dijela. Prvi je dio bio vezan uz demografska obilježja ispitanika, pri čemu su se ispitivali spol, starosna dob, vrsta studija i godina studija.

Drugi se dio odnosio na podatke o upotrebi novih medija u glasovanju i informiranju o političkim programima i načinu izražavanja političkog mišljenja. Taj se dio sastojao od pet pitanja. Prvo pitanje bilo je jesu li ispitanici glasovali (*Da / Ne*). Drugo se pitanje odnosilo ne to gdje su ispitanici najviše primjećivali promidžbene predizborne poruke, tj. poruke političkog sadržaja, pri čemu su ispitanici trebali rangirati (od 1 do 7) sedam ponuđenih medija (tekstovi u tisku, tekstovi na internetskim stranicama, plakati i fotografije kandidata s pripadajućim porukama, videosadržaji na internetu i društvenim mrežama, rasprave i mišljenja na društvenim mrežama, televizijske i radijske emisije). Trećim se pitanjem željelo saznati jesu li se ispitanici tijekom predizborne kampanje dodatno samoinicijativno informirali o stranačkim programima (*Da / Ne*). Četvrto pitanje se nadovezalo na pitanje o samoinicijativnom informiranju, odnosno željelo se ustanoviti pomoću kojeg su se medija ispitanici samoinicijativno informirali. Ispitanici su mogli zaokružiti više ponuđenih medija (dnevni tisak, internetske stranice stranaka i kandidata, Facebook stranice stranaka i kandidata, Twitter stranice stranaka i kandidata, radijske emisije i televizijski program). Peto je pitanje bilo usmjereno na mišljenje o tome na koji način su ispitanici spremni politički participirati. Bila su ponuđena četiri načina (potpisivanjem peticije, sudjelovanjem u protestnim okupljanjima/demonstracijama, sudjelovanjem preko interneta i Twittera te aktivnim suradnja kao član političke stranke/grupe), a mišljenje se mjerilo na trostupanjskoj skali (1=*nikako ne bi došlo u obzir*, 2=*možda bi došlo u obzir*; 3=*svakako bi došlo u obzir*).

Postupak

Podaci su prikupljani anketnim upitnikom, metodom papir-olovka, potkraj 2015. i početkom 2016. godine. Ispunjavanje upitnika bilo je u potpunosti dobrovoljno i anonimno te su ispitanici mogli u bilo kojem trenutku odustati od ispunjavanja anketnog upitnika.

Rezultati

Deskriptivna analiza je u pogledu izlaska na parlamentarne izbore pokazala da je većina studenata izašla, tj. njih 71,7 %, a da gotovo trećina studenata nije izašla na izbore (28,3 %) (Tablica 2.).

Hi kvadrat testom se pokazalo da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika u izlasku na glasovanje s obzirom na vrstu studija (χ^2=2,664; *df*=2; *p*>,05). Drugim riječima, bez obzira na vrstu studija, otprilike jednak postotak studenata je izašao na glasovanje (Tablica 1.).

Tablica 1

Hi kvadrat testom se pokazalo da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika među studentima različitih studijskih godina u izlasku na glasovanje (χ^2=2,195; *df*=2; *p*>,05). Odnosno, bez obzira koja su godina, preko dvije trećine studenata je izašlo na glasovanje (Tablica 2.).

Tablica 2

U pogledu rangiranja pojedinih medija kao mjesto na kojem su najčešće primjećivali političke promidžbene poruke ispitanici su na prvo mjesto stavljali internet i plakate, na drugo i treće mjesto podjednako tisak, internet, plakate, videosadržaje na internetu i rasprave na društvenim mrežama. Na zadnja mjesta po učestalosti mjesta primjećivanja ispitanici su stavljali radijske emisije. Valja naglasiti da su, općenito, najčešće primjećivali poruke na internetu i plakatima, a najmanje u radijskim emisijama (Tablica 3.).

Tablica 3

Po pitanju učestalosti samoinicijativnog informiranja o stranačkim programima u predizbornoj kampanji parlamentarnih izbora pokazalo se da se informiralo nešto malo više od trećine studenata, da da se gotovo dvije trećine nije informiralo (Tablica 4.).

Hi kvadrat testom se pokazalo da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika studenata različitih vrsta studija u učestalosti samoinicijativnog traženja političkih programa strana (χ^2=2,645; *df*=2; *p*>,05). Odnosno, bez obzira na vrstu studija otprilike se podjednak broj studenata (otprilike trećina do polovina njih) samoinicijativno informirala o političkim programima pojedinih stranaka (Tablica 4.).

Tablica 4

Hi kvadrat test je pokazao da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika između studenata različitih godina studija u učestalosti samoinicijativnog traženja informacija o političkim programima (χ^2=3,221; *df*=2; *p*>,05). Odnosno, bez obzira na to jesu li studenti na prvoj, drugoj ili peta godina, njih se oko trećine podjednako samoinicijativno informiralo o političkim programima u predizbornoj kampanji (Tablica 5.).

Tablica 5

Nadalje, pokazalo se da, ako se studenti i jesu samoinicijativno informirali o stranačkim programima, onda su to većinom radili preko internetskih stranica stranaka i kandidata ili televizijskih programa (Tablica 6.).

Hi kvadrat testom se pokazalo da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika između studenata različitih vrsta studija u izboru dnevnog tiska (χ^2=,962; *df*=2; *p*>,05), internetskih stranica stranaka (χ^2=,395; *df*=2; *p*>,05), Twitter stranica kandidata i stranaka[1] (χ^2=2,046; *df*=2; *p*>,05) i TV programa (χ^2=2,892; *df*=2; *p*>,05) kao medija za samoinicijativno informiranje o političkim programima. Odnosno, bez obzira na kojem studiju studiraju, spomenutim se medijima studenti uglavnom ne koriste za samoinicijativno informiranje o političkim programima. S druge strane, pokazala se statistički značajna razlika između studenata različitih studija u korištenju Facebook stranica stranaka i kandidata (χ^2=12,712; *df*=2; *p*< ,01) i radijskih emisija[2] (χ^2=10,499; *df*=2; *p*< ,01), kao medija za samoinicijativno informiranje. Odnosno, studenti koji studiraju na Veleučilištu Baltazar nešto su se češće skloniji koristiti Facebookom stranice stranaka i radio-emisije za samoinicijativno informiranje o političkim programima u predizbornoj kampanji (Tablica 6.).

Tablica 6

Hi kvadrat testom se pokazalo da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika između studenata različitih studijskih godina u izboru dnevnog tiska (χ^2=,134; df=2; p >,05), Facebook stranica stranaka (χ^2=1,134; df=2; p >,05), Twitter stranica strana[3] (χ^2=1,231; df=2; p >,05), radijskih emisija[4] (χ^2=,400; df=2; p >,05) i TV programa (χ^2=,033; df=2; p >,05) za samoinicijativno informiranje o političkim programima. Drugim riječima, bez obzira na to koja su studijska godina, studenti su svaki spomenuti medij veoma malo koristili za samoinicijativno informiranje o političkim programima (Tablica 10.). S druge strane, postoji statistički značajna razlika među studijskim godinama u korištenju internetskih stranica političkih stranaka za samoinicijativno informiranje (χ^2=6,443; df =2; p <,05), tj. peta se godina u u nešto većoj mjeri koristila spomenutim medijima za informiranje o političkim programima u predizbornoj kampanji (Tablica 7.).

Tablica 7

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[1] Broj frekvencija u jednoj kategoriji manji je od 5.

[2] Broj frekvencija u jednoj kategoriji manji je od 5.

[3] Broj frekvencija u jednoj kategoriji manji je od 5.

[4] Broj frekvencija u jednoj kategoriji manji je od 5.

Deskriptivna je analiza pokazala da u pogledu političke participacije polovina ispitanika nikako ne bi sudjelovala u protestima/demonstracijama ili postala član političke stranke. S druge strane, trećina ispitanika misli da je potpisivanje peticije i sudjelovanje preko interneta odgovarajući način političke participacije (Tablica 9.).

Nadalje, hi kvadrat testom se pokazalo da ne postoji statistički značajna razlika između studenata Učiteljskog fakulteta (učiteljskog i odgojiteljskog studija) i studenata s Veleučilišta Baltazar u participaciji potpisivanjem peticije (χ^2=4,314; *df*=4; *p*>,05), sudjelovanjem u demonstracijama (χ^2=3.146; *df*=4; *p*>.05), sudjelovanjem preko interneta[5] (χ^2=6.01; *df*=4; *p*>.05) i aktivnom suradnjom putem političkih stranaka (χ^2=3.879; *df*=4; *p*>.05). Drugim riječima, bez obzira na to koji studij studiraju, studenti jednako procjenjuju da ne bi sudjelovali u demonstracijama ili aktivno djelovali u političkim strankama, ali u većoj mjeri smatraju primjerenim potpisivanje peticija i sudjelovanje na internetu (Tablica 8.).

Tablica 8

Hi kvadrat test je pokazao da ne postoji statistički značajnih razlika između studenata različitih studijskih godina u političkoj participaciji potpisivanjem peticije (χ^2=8,813; df=4; *p*>,05), sudjelovanjem na protestima (χ^2=3,738; df=4; *p*>,05), sudjelovanjem preko interneta[6] (χ^2=8,646; df=4; p >,05) ili aktivnim članstvom u stranci (χ^2=4,93; df=4; *p*>,05). Drugim riječima, bez obzira na to jesu li studenti na prvoj, drugoj ili petoj godini oni su skloniji mišljenju da je političko mišljenje primjerenije izražavati sudjelovanjem na internetu i potpisivanjem peticije, a da je manje primjereno sudjelovanjem na demonstracijama ili stranačkim članstvom (Tablica 9.).

Tablica 9

Rasprava i zaključci

Rezultati istraživanja su pokazali da je više od dvije trećine ispitanika (71,7%) izjavilo da je izašlo na parlamentarne izbore u Hrvatskoj 2015. godine, s napomenom da u toj grupi ne postoje statistički značajne razlike ni s obzirom na vrstu studija, ni s obzirom na godinu studiranja. Za usporedbu, na izborima za zastupnike Hrvatskog sabora 2015. godine glasovalo je, ne računajući XI. i XII. izbornu jedinicu, od najmanje 59,66% birača u V. izbornoj jedinici do najviše 69,98% birača u I. izbornoj jedinici (www. izbori.hr). Od ispitanika upravo su studenti Veleučilišta Baltazaru najvećem postotku glasovali na izborima (81,2%), iako ta razlika u odnosu na studente Učiteljskog fakulteta nije statistički značajna.

Zanimljivo je spomenuti da je, prema rezultatima istraživanja iz 2015. godine o političkoj pismenosti učenika završnih razreda srednjih škola u Hrvatskoj (Bagić i Gvozdanović, 2015), od ispitanika koji su rođeni 1996. godine i koji su u trenutku ispunjavanja upitnika bili punoljetni, ukupno 76,3% barem jednom ili više puta glasovalo na izborima.

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[5] Broj frekvencija u jednoj kategoriji manji je od 5.

[6] Broj frekvencija u jednoj kategoriji manji je od 5.

Ispitanici su političke promidžbene poruke najčešće primjećivali na internetu i plakatima, a najmanje u radijskim emisijama, a dvije trećine ispitanika nije se samoinicijativno informiralo o stranačkim programima. Ispitanici koji su se željeli dodatno informirati o stranačkim programima, činili su to putem internetskih stranica stranaka i kandidata ili televizijskih programa, a najmanje putem radijskih emisija. I taj rezultat možemo usporediti s istraživanjem o političkoj pismenosti iz 2015. godine prema kojem se mladi ispitanici o društvenim događajima preko radija informiraju vrlo malo (11,3 %). Radio kao medij informiranja o društvenim događajima i kao medij za političku promidžbu kod net-generacije očigledno se najmanje koristi, tj. percipira u usporedbi s ostalim medijima, među kojima prednjači upravo internet. Utoliko možemo spomenuti i istraživanje Ilišin, Bouillet, Gvozdanović i Potočnik (2013) o mladima u kojem se govori o „kolapsu radija” kao sredstva informiranja o političkim događajima (Ilišin, Bouillet, Gvozdanović, i Potočnik, 2013, str. 109). Međutim, svakako treba istaknuti da su studenti koji studiraju na Veleučilištu Baltazar, dakle studenti koji pripadaju u dobno stariju grupu ispitanika od ispitanika Učiteljskog studija, češće skloniji koristiti se Facebook stranicama stranaka i radijskim emisijama za samoinicijativno informiranje o političkim programima u predizbornoj kampanji. Ta se razlika pokazala statistički značajnom. Isto tako treba istaknuti da su ispitanici televiziju, kad je riječ o informiranju o političkim događajima, koristili u gotovo istoj mjeri kao i internet.

Što se tiče političke participacije, polovina je ispitanika pokazala distanciranost prema institucionalnoj političkoj participaciji, budući da nikako nisu pokazali spremnost angažmana kao članovi neke političke stranke. Što se tiče izvaninstitucionalnog angažmana, isto tako polovina ispitanika nikako ne bi sudjelovala u protestima, a trećina ispitanika misli da je potpisivanje peticije i sudjelovanje preko interneta odgovarajući način participacije.

Na samom kraju potrebno je istaknuti istraživanje odnosa mladih, konkretnije pripadnika tzv. net-generacije i politike, između ostaloga, bitno i radi uvida u mogućnosti njihove integracije u politička zbivanja, budući da se nezainteresiranost te generacije može negativno odraziti i na demokratske procese u društvu (Schizzerotto i Gasperoni, 2001). Međutim, istraživanje je pokazalo da ispitani studenti Učiteljskog fakulteta, pripadnici net-generacije kako smo je definirali u uvodu ovog rada, u segmentu izlaznosti na izbore i aktivnijeg uključivanja u politiku ne pokazuju statistički značajnu razliku u usporedbi sa svojim kolegama, ispitanim studentima neučiteljskog fakulteta starije životne dobi.

Napomena