

THE CULTURE OF COMMUNICATIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN POLAND, ARMENIA AND RUSSIA FOR THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: RESEARCH RESULTS

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Abstract

The subject of the study is the impact of the development of information and communication technologies and the digitalization of social space on the culture of young people's social participation in post-communist countries (Poland, Armenia and the Russian Federation). The central concept of the implemented research is that today's youth, who have ample opportunities for social participation in the development of the territory of their residence, are poorly included in these processes. It happens due to the uneven formation of an communicative participation culture. Authors present a comparative analysis of the Polish, Armenian and Russian youth's sociological study results. Based on this analysis, authors demonstrate the formational specifics of communicative participation culture of students in the cities development, identify common factors that determine the level of such participation. The following classification of youth participation levels in the promotion of their city is proposed: zero, elementary, advanced and professional.

Keywords: *social participation, youth, culture of information and communicative participation, development of the Internet, digital divide, communicative competence*

Introduction

State governments, representatives of regional or city government structures are interested in the versatile development of youth potential. In real life, this goal is realized in strategic programs aimed at promoting cooperation with young people and expanding their participation in social development processes. Hence, the research interest in the peculiarities of the formation of the territories' human capital in the practice of working with the young generation of citizens receiving higher education is an urgent scientific and practical task.

Understanding the practices of young people's social participation, their involvement in social projects, as a research problem, is associated with international trends in globalization and digitalization that are changing the social environment. There is a need to study digital practices of social participation of young people in the development of cities, understanding the level of their involvement in civic activity in the new conditions of a digital society. So, for example, describing the phenomenon of "slacktivism", Joyce M. says that this is a new step on the "ladder of involvement" (this form of activity lowers the "threshold of participation" in social activity) (Joyce, 2010). Accordingly, the practices of working with information in social networks: posting texts, photos, videos, evaluating posts posted by others are new boundaries for the social participation of young people.

In the context of digital transformation, researchers assessing the involvement of young people in the development of society record high readiness to participate in the public life of their countries among the young generations of the post-socialist space. (Ideas about the future of the youth, 2019).

The social participation of young people is realized in constructive daily social practices, which are aimed at meeting the needs of both the youth themselves and their social environment, study and work transformation. Youth participation in theoretical terms can be characterized as a continuum of socially significant practices of the young people's participation as responsible citizens, in which their social and political actions are in a certain conjugation (Pevnaya, Shuklina, Tarasova and Asoyan, 2020).

It seems expedient in such a managerial context to direct youth activity towards solving public issues of local spaces in the context of everyday life. Social participation as an activity in this setting is associated with the spatial boundaries of the territory as a place of residence, work or recreation, which largely determine the structure and nature of social relations (Pevnaya, Kostina, Cernicova-Bucă, Kazmierczyk and Asoyan, 2022). Social participation in the life of local territories, where friends, acquaintances, neighbors, townspeople are active and doing something together, forms a bond through a sense of community involved and passionate about common ideas and values of people associated with a particular space. The expansion of urban spaces and

increasing mobility around the world determine the transformation of traditional ties in communities (Putnam, 1995). At the same time, the digital communication environment, which has been actively expanding and intensively penetrating people's daily lives since the end of the 20th century, erases spatial boundaries and allows the formation of a new type of network interaction between people (Castells, 2009). Thus, the conditions of digitalization, in which a whole generation of young people has already grown up, allow us to formulate a number of research questions. How do digital opportunities and communication technologies affect youth social participation? Are there differences by geographic or spatial criteria in everyday social communication practices in the context of the cultural and historical development of cities and the readiness of student youth for social participation in the development of the territories where they were born and raised?

The purpose of the article is to study the specifics of the practices of youth's communicative participation (including digital involvement) in the development of cities (based on the materials of three post-communist countries - Russia, Armenia and Poland).

To achieve this goal, the article discusses the methodological provisions of the theories of social participation and the information society, the basic ideas of digital natives, the theory of "volunteering infrastructure", "co-productivity" and "co-creativity". The central concept of the implemented research is as follows: modern youth, born and socialized in the conditions of digital transformation, have ample opportunities for social participation in the development of their surrounding space and habitat. The younger generation has specific skills necessary for the socio-cultural development of the cities in which they were born or live, due to the innate characteristics of perception and inclusion in everyday life of communication practices based on modern information exchange technologies. However, since the processes of digital transformation occur unevenly in the social space of public relations, creating the so-called digital lags at the level of national states or intrastate territories, the culture of a new type of communicative participation of young people from different countries in the local communities' social life is unevenly formed.

1. Theoretical and methodological foundations of the study

The potential of youth in social development has been a research object of economists, sociologists, and psychologists for the past few decades. In the study of youth participation, research questions affect the types and areas of participation that allow developing and testing models of youth social participation in various social practices and how the potential of youth participation in various areas of social development is measured. The subject of a critical assessment is the practical issues of developing and implementing a youth policy aimed at advancing the potential of young people, and the main problems of how to extract individual social groups formed in the institutional space. The problematization of youth participation in the context of state,

territorial development is an issue related to the qualitative aspects of human capital in general, with the pace and nature of its development, with the environment or conditions that stimulate the economic, political and social activity of young people. Younger generation's alienation from the processes taking place in particular cities not only hinders the social and economic integration of this group into traditional social practices, but also slows down the systematic development of these territories and increases the risks of living there.

The position of young people in society and the level of their participation in the development of the social environment depends both on state policy and on their active life. Students as a youth cohort can be considered as an underestimated and, consequently, underutilized source of territorial development.

Researchers distinguish between four types of youth participation: civic participation, participation in intergroup dialogue and socio-political development, and youth participation in the activities of local non-profit organizations (Checkoway, Aldana, 2013, p.1984). In empirical studies, it is customary to single out such practices of social participation of the population as political and social. The latter include: "volunteering in online and offline formats; organizing online events with the participation of young people from different countries on the global international agenda; online youth journalism (news reports, reports on cultural events and projects, documentaries); organization of events supporting cultural diversity; organizing activities that shape young people's responsible behavior; youth activism to help express political views; media literacy" (Bachen, Raphael, Lynn, Mckee and Philippi, 2008, p.290).

In European research projects, social participation is defined as the interaction of individuals, social groups and communities within the framework of the non-profit sector activities and various associations, both formal and informal (Andersson, 2016). In the interpretation of European and American researchers, civic and social participation turn out to be identical, which is largely due to the development of the third sector and a certain maturity of civil society in the countries where sociologists live and work (Pevnaya, Shuklina, Tarasova and Asoyan, 2020). In Russian sociological science, civil and social participation are interpreted as different practices, but implemented in the same area, which is identified and defined as the public sphere, where state institutions, citizens and civil society institutions interact. In the practices of social participation, it is important to distinguish specific gratuitous activities aimed at solving a socially significant problem, helping people through the development of any service. The theory of "co-productivity" and "co-creativity" allows us to consider the social practices of youth participation in public programs as an individual action that directly or indirectly affects the effectiveness of any social services. Participation as an action and assistance to social professionals is viewed through the prism of the public good, taking into

account the benefits not only for society, a certain organization or group of people, but also for those who participate in social practices, helping professionals from the public or non-profit sector (Brandsen, Steen and Verschuere, 2018).

Participation in "co-creativity" by young people takes place in a certain socio-cultural environment, where the basis for the production of public goods are cultural values and cultural practices common to interacting organizers and voluntary assistants. Modern digital culture, which generates common values for certain social groups and communities, becomes not only a source of new opportunities, but also produces new risks, many of which are determined by technological conditions and the level of social and technological competence of people interacting with each other (Baeva, 2020, p.300). One of these factors is the multimodality of digital communication. According to researchers, modern communication is implemented not only in text format, but in the form of non-stop streams of video conference messages (Panova, Shumakova, 2019, p.359).

Young people are a more mobile part of the population, which makes it difficult to assess the set of their social identities, including in relation to the place. The formation of local identities of young people is a process greatly complicated by globalization, migration (Nijman, 2007), and local cultural and linguistic practices (Dovchin, 2011). I. Samarkina and I. Bashmakov talk about the actualization of the local identity of young people through their participation in social and political activity (Samarkina, Bashmakov, 2021), including through "co-participation", "co-creativity" and "co-productivity". The youth of the 21st century are looking for new ways of forming identity and belonging that can be creative and contradictory at the same time (Epstein, 2009), which is due to the context of digitalization. It is young people who fall under the globalization of culture in the local context. The globalization of the cultures in the local context is directly affected by the international business culture, the English language, the mass culture, the global consumer culture, the global music, the computerization, the digitization, and the different media cultures (Drakulovska Cukalevska, Dragovic, 2019). The conception of civic knowledge acquires a global meaning. It includes not only knowledge that people create, use and preserve when they act as members of a civil society - knowledge about democratic institutions, processes, but also elements of national and local history (Levine, 2011). The urban community environment place in people's lives as major concerns. Moreover, this place is not only about the built environment, but also about the ways in which those structures are interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined (Sinkiene at al., 2017).

Given the digital context of the modern socio-cultural environment, one of the prerequisites for mastering it is the level of information culture. It is determined by the presence of the following personal qualities in the subject of communicative interaction: empathy, benevolence, authenticity, concreteness,

immediacy and initiative. The readiness to open one's inner world to others and the firm conviction that this contributes to the establishment of healthy and strong relationships with others is another important quality for the information culture of the individual (Kurakina, 2013).

Information culture in the digital environment requires certain skills in the use of information and communication technologies in interaction with other people. The younger generation is constantly faced not only with an ever-expanding amount of information, but also with the task of reducing its ambiguous context in the interpretation of the surrounding actors into a consistent picture of the world for a particular person. According to the communicative theory of J. Habermas, the social exchange of information can only be considered rational when it is freed from any pressure, when the transmitted information is formed and transmitted by a free person within the ethical framework (Habermas, 2000).

The communicative environment of the internet responds to the fundamental human need for communication and the desire to have relationships with other people. Among the many communicative actions, there are several typical ones that make up the essence of the social practice of a particular social group. During the execution of these actions, a self-organizing community arises and begins to preserve itself. Without these communicative activities, communities cannot form in either real or virtual environments (Schare, 2013). In the social group of young people, such practices and actions become the involvement of the cohort in the social media environment, quick communication with like-minded people through the exchange of virtual messages, that is, virtual everyday interaction. M. Prensky characterizes such a generation as "digital natives", contrasting them with older age groups and identifying the latter as "digital immigrants". The researcher points out that "Modern students today are all digital speakers, speaking the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet. Those of us who were not born into the digital world but were later inspired and adapted to new technologies will always be compared to them as digital immigrants" (Prensky, 2001).

The quality of digital competence as the ability to use digital technologies and to adequately evaluate information in a digital environment largely determine the processes of social change (Meriläinen, Pietilä and Varsaluoma, 2018). At the same time, researchers also believe that the groups of young people can differ significantly from each other in terms of value orientations, needs and competencies. However, the majority of youth have a common behavioral practice associated with the public presentation of themselves in the virtual space, which often manifests itself through the formation of visual content (photos and videos) about their daily lives, posted online. Sociologists, for example, have found that posting photographs of their travels and life in a different sociocultural environment by foreign students on social networks allows them to demonstrate their practice of adaptation and acculturation. (Gunkel, 2014). Communication devices themselves are an

integral part of young people's lives and play an important role in how they interact with each other. (Mackey, 2007). Researchers prove that internet literacy, and not the level of advancement in digital technologies, is inextricably linked with young people's civic activity. A young person who can critically understand and effectively evaluate information on the internet is more likely to become an active participant in a self-organizing civil society (Kim, Yang, 2016). Differences in the means of implementing youth participation make it possible to distinguish between its real and virtual practices. The digital skills that young people implement in everyday life, coupled with a willingness to participate in the development of urban issues, can be considered as relevant prospects for expanding the social participation of young people, participation that corresponds with the characteristics of the younger generation and organically fit into the global context of urban development in different countries through social projects implemented by local non-profit organizations, city institutions of culture and education.

At the same time, it seems important to perceive the younger generation not as "adults in the process of becoming", but as independent social agents, active and creative (Literat, Kligler-Vilenchik, Brough and Blum-Ross, 2018), since, in the context of the digital environment, their creative potential and informational and communicative activities are even stronger. Taking into account the specifics of the information culture of the younger generation and the context of digitalization of people's daily lives, it is relevant to talk about the formation of a culture of communicative participation of students, defining practices of social participation in the formation of the digital space of the territories where they live and study.

So, let us designate the theoretical framework of our study. The culture of information participation in the study is considered as a practice of civic participation, as individual actions aimed at solving a socially significant problem and at the same time forming a local identity of young citizens as actors. In our case, young people solve the problem of information promotion of the city, realizing their skills in exchanging information (photo, video, text). Individual civic action and knowledge of local history are predictive of a culture of informational participation of young people in promoting cities.

In understanding the features of the information and communication technologies development influence on the formation of a culture of communicative participation of young people in the socio-cultural development of cities, it is important:

First, to assess the degree of digital technologies and the digital environment development in all three countries (Poland Armenia, Russia) in order to understand the presence or absence of a digital inequality factor that affects the information culture of youth participation.

Second, to identify basic features of the information culture of the student youth participation, manifested through certain social practices

associated with their local identity, involvement in the socio-cultural development of the city in the digital space.

Third, to highlight the factors that determine the students' willingness to participate and the levels of such participation in the information promotion of their native city in the digital space

The main hypotheses of the study were:

1) The experience of informational participation of the students of Armenia, Poland and Russia in the development of the city in the Internet space will have statistically significant differences by country.

2) The factors influencing the involvement of young people in the promotion of cities in the digital space are:

- information competence in relation to the culture and history of their city,
- life plans (desire to leave in your hometown or stay in it)
- experience of information participation

3) The most significant factor (with the highest level of correlation) among all is knowledge about the culture and history of hometown, which forms a subjective value attitude towards it.

2. Characteristics of the method and research

In 2020, a mass questionnaire survey was conducted among the student youth of the post-communist regime countries, particularly, Armenia, Poland and Russia (N = 997). The object of the study is student youth, the questionnaire was distributed in the social networks of the universities of Yekaterinburg (Russia, N = 465), Gyumri (Armenia, N = 268), Poznan and Zielona Gora (Poland, N = 264). These cities are not capitals, but are university centers of attraction for young people from adjacent territories. For 27% of the surveyed students, the city in which they study is their hometown, and 73% of the respondents changed the city to enter the university - these are students for whom the native cities are not administrative centers (cities with a university), but nearby small and medium-sized cities, the development of which in the conditions of modern civilization lags behind the potential, pace and quality of development of the largest cities, megacities. Gender structure of the sample: 47% men and 53% women.

A questionnaire survey in social networks was used as a method of collecting information. To analyze the collected data, descriptive analysis, correlation analysis (Spearman's coefficient) and non-parametric tests were used to assess the statistical significance of differences between different countries' subsamples. As an additional method, the analysis of statistical data is involved, which made it possible to give a detailed interpretation of the results obtained in the empirical study.

3. Results

Internet penetration in Russia, Armenia and Poland. The share of the youth cohort in the studied countries is approximately the same, with a slight upward difference in Armenia (see Table 1).

Table 1. Share of youth cohort in Armenia, Poland and Russia

Share of youth cohort	Survey country		
	Poland	Armenia	Russia
Population aged 15 to 24, thousand people	3 949	367	14 152
Share in total population, %	9.8	11.5	9.6

Data sources: (Unesco 2018a), (Unesco 2018 b), (Russia 2019).

According to the Digital 2021 report (Digital 2021, 2021), more than 4.66 billion people use the internet, it is 59,5% of the world's population. The average user spends more than 6.5 hours a day on the internet. The number of social network users today has exceeded 4.2 billion, the majority (53,6%) of the world's inhabitants used social networks (an increase of 13.2% in a year). Every internet user has an average of 8.6 social media accounts. In the countries of the European continent, internet penetration is 84%, social media penetration is 55%.

On average, in all countries of the world, the time that people spend on the internet per day is 6 hours 54 minutes, while people spend an average of 2 hours 25 minutes on social media, though this figure varies across countries. So, on average, a Russian aged 16 to 64 spends 7 hours 52 minutes on the internet, and a Pole - 6 hours 44 minutes (Digital 2021, 2021). The penetration rates of digital technologies in the compared countries are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Characteristics of digital penetration in Armenia, Poland, Russia (data as of January 2020 based on the Digital 2020 report)

Indicators	Survey country		
	Poland ¹	Armenia ²	Russia ³
Internet penetration rate, in % of the total population of the country	84,5	68,2	85
Penetration rate of social networks, in % of the total population	68,5	51	67,8

¹<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-poland?rq=Poland>

² <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-armenia?rq=armenia>

³ <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2021-russian-federation?rq=Russ>

Inclusion in social networks, share of social network users among all Internet users in %	62	78	59
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The level of Internet penetration in Poland and Russia is the same. There are slightly fewer social network users in Russia, but users spend more time daily on social networks. Armenia has a lower level of internet penetration compared to Poland and Russia, but significantly higher user involvement in social networks. In general, despite the differences between the countries under consideration, the level of digitalization in all of them corresponds to and even exceeds the global average. The initial conditions of the digital environment in these countries are similar when analyzing the information culture of student youth and their participation in the informational promotion of the city.

On the basis of the culture of communicative participation of students in the context of the cities socio-cultural development in the virtual space of communication. In studying the culture of information participation of students in the digital environment, certain everyday practices, such as search, creation and distribution of information, in which students implemented skills that are important for social participation in the virtual space and projects for the development of the socio-cultural environment of cities, were assessed. Respondents answered a multivariate question: “Have you ever searched for or posted information about your city on social networks or on any sites?”. The choice of alternatives included different practices of working with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment, allowing us to evaluate different characteristics of not only the information culture of student participation, but also information culture in the context of urban cultural and historical development in general. The distribution of respondents' answers is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Practices of working with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment of students from different countries (in % of respondents in each country)

Indicators	Survey countries		
	Poland	Armenia	Russia
Work with photos, including	32	47	43
I took photos of beautiful places, buildings and monuments and posted them on social networks.	13	37	29

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I sent photos of beautiful places to my friends and acquaintances from other cities.	25	19	22
Work with texts, including	16	14	12
I wrote notes about my city on websites	4	7	5
I commented on posts, photos of beautiful places, buildings and monuments in social networks.	14	10	8
Works with both photos and texts	8	9	6
Traditional information practices, including	59	59	30
I read about the sights and tourist places of my city.	45	28	15
I told others about the places that are necessary and important to visit in our city.	40	45	20

*The sum of the answers can be more than 100%, since several answers were allowed.

As can be seen from the data in Table 3, students from Armenia are the most active in forming informational content on urban issues in social media. Students from Polish universities more often than young Russians and Armenians implement traditional practices that characterize their information competence. They are more likely than others to read about their city, tell others about it, and comment on social media posts dedicated to the urban environment. Among Russian students, there is a much smaller proportion of those who work proactively with information about their city, read it and then tell other people about it. Russians are slightly more likely than young people from Armenia and Poland to practice self-presentation on the internet, expose their photos to a wide audience on social media, sending the created information content to their friends, trying to share what they see, but this difference is not statistically significant. But the fact that in Russia almost a third of the students surveyed is not interested in taking any part in shaping the information environment that attracts other people to the city where they were born and raised is very different from the situation in Armenia and Poland (marked statistically significant differences at the level <0.01).

There is reason to believe that the identified difference is not related to the spread of information technology and the penetration of the internet in different countries. Although the involvement in social networks among internet users in Russia is lower than in other countries under consideration, the

differences with Poland are minimal. Though there are similar conditions of the digital communication environment, the development of digital skills among students from different countries may be different. For example, E. Dolgikh and T. Pershina note that despite the rapid pace of development of the digital economy, the digital competencies of students in Russia are less developed than in the countries of the European Union (Dolgikh, Pershina, 2019). However, this explanation for such a low participation of Russian students in the information promotion of their city seems to be rather contradictory for two reasons. First, the gap in the digital competencies of student youth is shrinking very quickly, even if these skills were initially less developed in Russia. Second, inclusion in the practice of posting information about your city does not require any unique skills in the digital environment.

It seems to us more appropriate to explain such a low level of informational participation of students from Russia by other factors. For example, political: in the Russian Federation, legal regulation of behavior on the Internet restricts the opportunities for young people more severely. The reduced interest of Russian student youth in participating in the formation of an information environment that attracts other people to the city where they were born and grew up is explained by the limitations in the information competence of young Russians in relation to the culture and history of their cities and the attachment of the younger generation to their hometowns.

To test this statement, a secondary variable, “experience with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment”, was constructed. The study revealed the presence of weak, but statistically significant relationships between this variable and the variables “perceptions of urban objects of cultural and historical heritage valuable for young people”, “self-assessment of the city history knowledge”, “assessment of the city’s tourist attractiveness” and “the presence of life plans related to their city”.

Table 4. Connection of the experience of any activity on informational promotion of the city with indicators of information competence in relation to the culture and history of their cities

	Experience with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment	
	correlation coefficient	Significance (2-sided)
Ideas about valuable city objects of cultural and historical heritage for young people	0.166	< 0.00 1

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Self-assessment of the city history knowledge	0.191	< 0.00 1
Evaluation of the city's attractiveness for tourists	0.160	< 0.00 1
Connection of the future with the hometown	0.099	0.002
City type	0.102	0.001

If young people are not aware of and are not interested in the history of their hometown, they do not have any memorable and significant cultural, historical or natural objects in that city, do not plan to live in that city in the future. It is then quite natural that they do not have much interest and experience in the informational promotion of his city. Even in Armenia, which is characterized by an overall high level of communicative participation, among those who do not know anything special about their city, half (50%) have never engaged in posting information about their city and do not intend to do so. Thus, one of the main factors determining the communicative participation of young people in the practices of cities socio-cultural development in the virtual space of communication is their attitude towards their city, interest in its history and culture. It is not surprising that these indicators show statistically significant differences between countries. So, if in Armenia 57% of students noted that they know the history of their city, while 75% of respondents show an active interest in studying about it (especially, looking for new information by meeting with local historians), in Poland only 38% know and 69% seek to learn about interesting monuments, parks, museums and sights of their cities. In Russia, only 30% of students showed awareness of the history of the city, and 50% demonstrate an active interest in it.

An interesting fact is that in Poland the proportion of students who plan to live in their hometown in the future is much lower than in Russia or in Armenia. Only about a quarter, (26%), of Polish youth connects their future with their hometown while 43% do so in Russia, and 59% in Armenia. But despite the departure to another city, interest in the history of one's homeland remains, the activity in communicative participation in the promotion of the hometown almost does not change, in contrast to Russia, where communicative participation immediately decreases by 11% (see Table 5).

Table 5. Subgroups of young people in Poland, Armenia and Russia with different experiences of information participation and plans in relation to living in their hometown, in % of resp.

	Survey countries		
	Poland	Armenia	Russia
Plan to stay in their city, in %			
Experience with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment			
Have	81	92	73
Do not have	19	8	27
Total	100	100	100
Plan to leave their city, in %			
Experience with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment			
Have	82	87	62
Do not have	18	13	38
Total	100	100	100

The absence of a significant difference in communicative participation between those who plan and those who do not plan to live in their city is explained by the fact that it is among Polish students that the indicator of “perceptions of urban objects of cultural and historical heritage valuable for young people” is the highest with 92% of the students surveyed noting the presence of a building or place in the city which they consider the most beautiful, deserving special attention. In the questionnaire it was an open-ended question: “Which historical building in your city do you consider the most beautiful, deserving special attention of residents and guests of the city?”. In Armenia, 71% of the young people surveyed were able to identify significant cultural and historical objects, and in Russia only 58% of the respondents were able to do so. It can be assumed that in Poland, the transformation of traditional ties in the community into a new type of interaction is most pronounced, when social participation, including informational participation, is associated not with plans to live where one was born, but with the knowledge and attitude of young people to the culture and history of their cities.

Readiness to participate in informational activities for promoting sights and cultural places of their city on the internet among young Russians, although lower than among Armenian youth, is even slightly higher than in Poland. In

Russia, the answer to the question of readiness for such activities was “yes” or “rather yes” by 63% of respondents, while in Poland the number is 57% and in Armenia – 92%. The lower involvement in the practice of working with information about urban culture and history in the digital environment can be explained by the fact that such activities are not perceived by Russian students as socially useful. In Armenia, on the other hand, students are characterized by a higher level of territorial rootedness, as well as developed traditions of including young people in the socio-cultural environment of its urban community in comparison with Poland and Russia. Therefore, it is natural that participation in various urban development practices both online and offline is higher in Armenia.

To assess the potential of student youth, which can be realized when promoting the city in the internet space, the vector of readiness for participation and real experience was evaluated. Willingness to participate is assessed by the question “Are you ready to tell on the internet about the sights and cultural places of our city to the best of your ability?” with a response scale from 1 - no, to 4 - yes, transformed into a new dichotomous variable with groups 0 - not ready to engage in city promotion (options "no", "rather not", "difficult to answer") and 1 - ready to engage in city promotion (“rather yes”, “yes”). Table 6 presents the resulting distribution of responses by country.

Table 6. Readiness to the best of their ability to talk on the internet about the sights and cultural places of their city, in % of respondents by country

	Survey country		
	Poland	Armenia	Russia
Yes	13	46	17
Rather yes	35	37	31
Totally ready to engage in the promotion of the city	48	83	48
Probably not	25	2	20
Not	10	4	11
Difficult to answer	17	11	21
Total not ready to promote the city	52	17	52

By comparing the general indicator of readiness for social participation, it can be noted that students' readiness for offline activities to promote the city on the internet is generally slightly higher than their readiness for online

activities. These differences are statistically significantly higher in Poland⁴ ($Z = -2.562$, asymptotic significance (2-sided) = 0.010) and Russia ($Z = -2.167$, significance = 0.030, which is <0.05 , but >0.01), but not significant for Armenia ($Z = -0.762$, significance=0.446, i.e. >0.05).

The experience of real participation was measured by the question “Have you ever posted information about your city on social networks or on any sites?”. Its distribution by country is given in table 7.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question "Have you posted information about your city?", in % of respondents

	Survey country		
	Poland	Armenia	Russia
I have experience in informational promotion of the city	73	88	66
I don't have experience of any activity on information promotion of the city	27	12	34

Based on the grouping of answers to the question about the experience of real activity in the internet space, the following levels of participation in the information promotion of their city were identified:

0. *zero level*, at which the answer “did not do any of the above and will not do anything” is chosen⁵, or no answer was given to this question at all;
1. *initial level (simulation)* involves activities within the framework of the usual behavior of an internet user; this level includes respondents who chose at least one of the options: “take photos of beautiful places and post them on social networks”, “read about the sights of their city” (with in this case, options specific to a higher level are not selected);
2. *advanced level (informing)*, which is characterized by activities aimed at disseminating information about your city, but not involving active promotion, at least one of the options is selected: “send photos of beautiful places to friends and acquaintances from other cities”, “commented on posts, photos of beautiful places in social networks”, “told others about the places that are necessary and

⁴The test was carried out using the Wilcoxon signed rank test for related subsamples.

⁵Due to the given possibility of choosing several answers there is a small proportion of respondents who chose some of the options for action, but at the same time noted that they did not do anything and will not do anything. All of them are assigned to the 0-level.

important to visit in our city”, while at the same time, options characteristic of a higher level were not selected;

3. *professional level* (participation / co-productivity / co-creativity) suggests that a person is an active subject in the formation of content about his city, those who “wrote notes about their city on websites” are referred to this level ⁶.

The distribution of respondents from different countries according to the levels of participation in the information promotion of the city is visualized below in Figure 1.

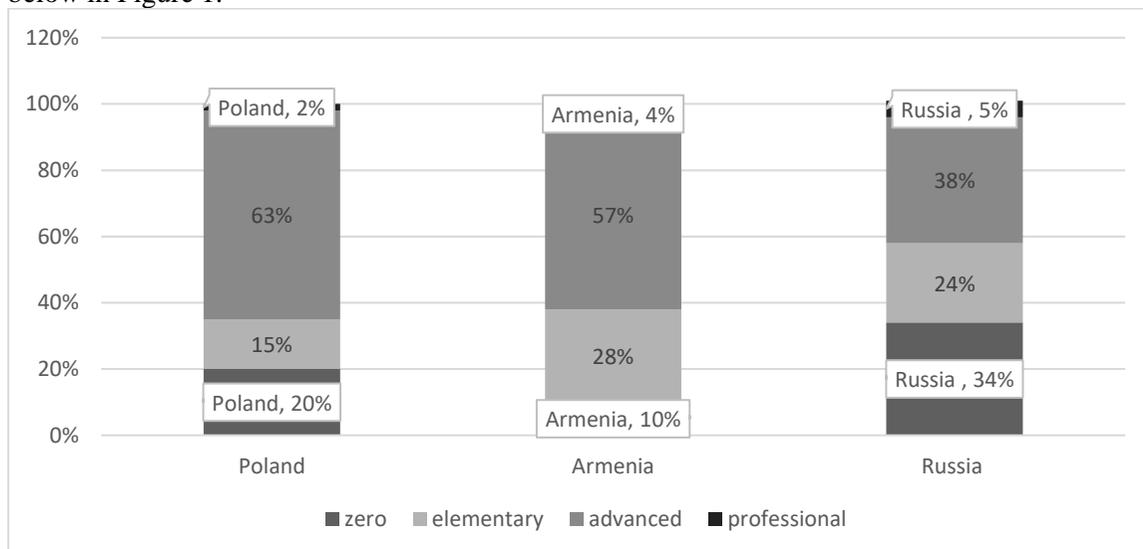


Fig. 1. The level of participation in the information promotion of your city in different countries (in % of respondents)

Figure 1 shows that the structure of involving young people in the practice of informational promotion of their cities differs by country. Zero level of participation is “non-participation”, i.e. this is a group of those students who have not done anything for the informational promotion of the city and are not going to do anything. At the zero level of participation there are almost a third of students from Russia, each fifth from Poland and each tenth from Armenia.

The next level – elementary – is the level of imitational participation, i.e. young people act simply as users, performing those actions that require neither special efforts nor any professional skills. With participation at this level, the effects of the informational promotion of the city are rather accidental than

⁶In determining the level of participation, the higher level rule was applied, i.e. when a respondent chose several different answer options, he was assigned to the highest possible level. Exception level 0: if the answer was “did not do anything and will not do anything”, then no matter what other actions the respondent had chosen, he was assigned to level 0.

actually planned by users. In Russia, approximately every fourth (24%) respondent is at this level, in Armenia – 28%, in Poland – 15% of respondents.

The advanced level presupposes already purposeful activities to promote the city, but this more frequently considers dissemination of information, rather than the formation of fundamentally new content. This level of participation is typical for the majority of surveyed students from Poland (63%) and Armenia (57%).

And, finally, the highest level – the professional level, includes the active involvement of a person in the formation of content about the city, respectively, this requires certain skills, knowledge, and efforts. In all the countries under consideration, the group of young people involved in the informational promotion of their cities at the professional level is very small (2-5% of students can be attributed to this level of participation).

In Russia, the proportion of those who did nothing at all to promote their city in the internet space is the highest, almost every third student noted that he did not post and will not post information about their city on social networks or on any sites. On the other hand, a fairly significant percentage of students (40%) are ready to promote the city on the internet and even do something for this, and one in ten does it at a professional level, preparing notes about their city on websites.

4. Discussion

The analysis showed that digitalization has an impact on the expansion of communication practices of social participation of young people, and the conditions for the implementation of digital opportunities and spreading of communication technologies in the daily lives of people in the countries of the post-communist bloc are gradually leveling out. However, despite this, the practices of youth informational participation in urban development are formed in different ways. By themselves, digital opportunities and communication technologies do not affect the social participation of young people, they are only a new channel for the implementation of their own activity.

Our study confirms the findings of K. Szafraniec, the social and cultural space in which the socialization of the young generation in post-communist countries occurs is rather specific. Not only does it reveal the effects of globalization—the clash between global trends, ideas, and values and local determinants—but also the individual trajectories (which are unique for each country) of the departure from communism, observed in the broader historical perspective. (Szafraniec, 2017). Nor digitalization neither digital resource, but much more significant factors of influence are important to highlight in this context, such as political, socio-economic, historical and cultural features of the country's development. For example, only 26% of Polish youth plan to stay in their hometowns. It is obvious that such intentions of young people correlate

with the consequences of globalization in the form of the free borders of the European Union. In Armenia and Russia, 59% and 43% of young people, respectively, plan to stay in their hometowns - they have fewer opportunities for “limitless” mobility. It is in the behavior of Polish students that one can see “the presence of the global processes in the local leads to social changes in the local socio-cultural milieu” (Drakulovska, Cukalevska and Dragovic, 2019).

Country differences in the culture of communicative participation of students demonstrated the predisposition of students from Poland and Armenia to traditional practices of working with information and social participation, characterizing the information competence of the latter in relation to the culture and history of their cities, their interest in expanding and promoting this information in the digital environment.

The study showed that the culture of communicative participation of students is to a greater extent associated with the level of informational culture of students as citizens, which is determined by certain knowledge, formed value attitudes towards the territory where they were born, and determines their readiness to participate in the informational promotion of their cities in the digital environment.

I. Samarkina says that a component of the local identity of young people is their awareness of the city and its socio-political life, attitude towards representatives of other communities, a sense of their involvement in life in the city, the desire to stay and live in the city, the desire to work for the benefit of the city, to participate in its social and political life (Samarkina, Bashmakov, 2021). Our study showed that, indeed, knowledge of the city in which the student’s socialization takes place, their attitude to the city and local memory, the desire to stay or leave, the level of civic engagement - are the factors that determine the community of young active urban residents. However, we are talking about additional opportunities for expanding the participation of such a youth community in urban development through information and communication culture in the digital space. On our point of view, the readiness of young people to be involved in various types of social co-productive participation depends on knowledge of history and culture tours of the city and can be an indicator of the value system and local identity formation.

The results of the study show the differentiation of the youth of the three countries in terms of their level of communicative participation in the development of the city and their “desire to stay / leave”: in Poland, young people have a higher level of communicative participation, regardless of their desire, in Armenia, the highest level of communicative participation is in that part of the youth who plans to continue to live in this city. Russian youth have the lowest level of communicative participation among respondents from the three countries for both groups of young people, but at the same time the lowest level is for the group of young people who are planning to leave the city. This may indicate the presence of identity gaps, the search by young people for other ways to form their belonging (Epshtein, 2009).

These new practices of local self-identification are beginning to take shape in the context of increasing youth “co-productivity” (Brandsen, Steen and Verschuere, 2018). So far, in the post-communist space, the share of creative, involved youth is not high (these are the students whom we in our study referred to the professional level), but this is a certain potential for growth, which can be supported by the appropriate state policy. The communicative participation of students in this direction is a managerial resource that can be implemented in a certain logic within the framework of youth policy. If the youth policy is structured in such a way that it contributes to the inclusion of young people in the socio-cultural environment of the city, then this inclusion will manifest itself not only in real participation in the life of the city, but also in the digital space. We agree that the role of power relations and differences in youth skills in the field of digitalization is of great importance for youth participation in social change processes (Meriläinen, Pietilä and Varsaluoma, 2018).

A certain distancing of young people from informational participation can be considered a feature of Russia. A quarter of respondents demonstrate passive behavior in internet promotion, and in terms of social participation, more than one third of respondents demonstrated passivity. There is a dependence of the readiness of young people for social participation on the presence of a city’s attractiveness in terms of tourism.

In modern conditions of globalization and increasing mobility, spatial boundaries are being erased. Previously, a person was often involuntarily included in the life of a local territory; now, with the development of new information and communication technologies, such automatic involvement does not occur. If the issue of participation in the socio-cultural development of the hometown is removed from the agenda of youth policy, then young people's interest in the history and culture of their hometown decreases, and the level of participation in the practices of promoting the city in the virtual space of communication decreases too.

Conclusion

In this article, the authors tried to scientifically comprehend the peculiarities of the communicative participation practices of young people in the development of cities (based on the materials of three post-communist countries – Russia, Armenia, Poland).

According to the results of the study, the countries - the objects of study have approximately the same conditions for the development of digital technologies and the prevalence of their use among the youth (the share of young people, the level of penetration of the Internet and social networks). However, the experience of information participation of young people in the development of their hometown in the Internet has country differences, which confirms the first hypothesis. Thus, the young people of Armenia have more experience, and the students from Russia have the least experience.

This experience, together with young people's awareness of the culture and history of their hometown, their life plans (to stay or leave), forms the involvement of young people in the promotion of cities in the digital space. Thus, 34% of the youth of Russia and only 10% of the youth of Armenia are at the zero level of involvement, informational participation. 71% of Armenian students and 38% of Russian students know and can identify significant cultural and historical objects in their hometown. At the same time, 92% of Armenians and only 73% of Russians plan to stay in their hometown.

The information participation of Polish students differs from their peers in Russia and Armenia. A possible reason is the integration of the country into the European space, which literally expands the boundaries for the social mobility of Polish students. For them, the main factor of involvement and participation is awareness of the cultural and historical heritage of their native city - 92% of students know about the culture, history of the city and can name objects of cultural and historical development. At the same time, the connection between their life plans and their experience of informational participation is statistically insignificant. So, only 26% of students are going to stay where they were born, but at the same time, more than 80% of both "leaving" and "remaining" are ready to take an informational part in the development of their native city.

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