

Przegląd Badań Edukacyjnych Educational Studies Review

ISSN 1895-4308

nr 40 (2/2022), s. 159–177



Magdalena Cuprjak

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland

e-mail: mcuprjak@umk.pl

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0927-4927>

Celina Czech-Włodarczyk

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

e-mail: cczech@amu.edu.pl

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1134-7021>

Levels and Forms of Political Participation in Selected Youth Organisations Operating in Poland*

<http://dx.doi.org/10.12775/PBE.2022.023>

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to present the results of research concerning contemporary levels and forms of political participation of young people involved in selected youth organisations operating in Poland. The research was qualitative. Data collection involved a search of secondary data sources. All the available documents posted on the websites of the investigated organisations, including their statutes, rules and regulations, and reports and accounts covering activities and operations, as well as social media (FB) posts, were analysed. An induction method was used to provide an analysis of the content of the data for the “participation” category. Our results show that the main forms of political

* The part of the project: Heterotopias of Citizenship. Educational Discourse and Pedagogies of Militarizing in the Spaces of Youth Organizations. A Critical-Analytical and Comparative Approach. Financing by the National Science Centre in Poland under Grant no. 2019/35/B/HS6/01365.

participation that the youth organisations demonstrate in the analysed documents are social and educational campaigns, demonstrations and notifications of important dates with different intensities on the local, national, and international levels.

Keywords: political participation, youth organisations, search of secondary sources, content analysis, Poland.

Introduction

Defining the concept of participation has proved challenging for researchers not only in terms of specifying its scope but also determining the subjects that take part in the process. The concept of participation is used in various contexts, in the field of different social sciences, and using distinct adjectives like public, political, social, civic and individual.

Political participation in this article is understood as not just the political participation of citizens intended more or less directly to influence the representatives of public authorities or their decisions (Kijewska, 2014) but, first and foremost, as the establishment of individual paths of activities in areas like local voluntary service, consumer activity, support for human rights and environmental protection organisations, and participation in symbolic international protest actions (Kijewska, 2014) unconnected with the intent of exerting a political influence (Siwko, 2013).

For this article, three research questions were posited, framed based on the adopted conceptual framework to provide information about 1) the areas, 2) the levels, and 3) the manners of political participation of selected youth organisations operating in Poland, based on a content analysis of all the documents of these organisations available on their official websites and posted by them on social media like Facebook (FB).

In contemporary research, a change is evident in the levels and ways of political participation of youth. Thus, the youth organisations get involved in actions they consider important at a given time and try to resolve their problems through demonstrations, protests, the signing of petitions, or boycotts. Further, youth are becoming increasingly politically involved in campaigns or social actions conducted by the youth organisations operating in Poland,

creating networks of influence, and getting involved in social movements on the local, national and international levels. This article aims to verify whether the aforementioned levels and ways of political participation are present in the organisations studied by us or whether other areas, levels and manners of participation too exist that have not yet been recorded in the literature.

This article comprises the theoretical underpinnings, research methodology, presentation of research results, and conclusions.

Theoretical underpinnings

In Polish research, political participation is defined as “all forms of action aimed at supporting political continuity (i.e., the current state of affairs) or change” and, according to the author of the quote, “it seems to be the most accurate and relatively clear” (Pająk-Patkowska, 2017, p. 10). All researchers who wonder whether a given activity or behaviour can be defined as a manifestation of political participation should check whether it falls within the following very broad definition: “action; voluntary, not imposed by law or the ruling class; displayed by non-professionals or amateurs; concerns the actions of government, politics, or a country or community” (Weiss, 2020, p. 3). It is noteworthy that no definition has included non-participation as a manifestation of political action, implying that the existing definitions are too narrow (Weiss, 2020, p. 4).

Scholars in international comparative research emphasise that the political participation of young people, especially in Europe, depends on many different factors, including not only the inception of the democratic state in which the surveyed youth live but also on socialisation and education, and the political maturity of youth. It is common among youth, especially from the EU countries, to practise new forms of political participation, such as membership of various organisations, participation in cultural organisations and activities, signing of petitions, contacting politicians, participation in protests and, above all, attempting to change the definition of political participation, the goal of which, according to youth, is to directly influence the process and final political decisions (Kitanova, 2020, p. 820). A form of political participation

very important to youth (especially in the 18–24 age group), as emphasised by Kitanova (2020, p. 822), is “organizational membership”, that is, being a member, participant, and/or a sympathiser of various organisations. We have found this concept very useful in our research involving closer scrutiny of youth organisations, and how they operate on different levels and exercise different forms of participation.

Canadian researchers have suggested that the pattern of engagement among youth reveals a shift towards more individualised and private forms of activity, due in part to their increased political sophistication and cognitive mobilisation. The relative withdrawal from traditional forms of political engagement might be due to the hierarchical, long-term, and relatively unsatisfying nature of such activity (O’Neill, 2007, p. iii).

Polish research by Kijewska (2014) emphasises for example, that nowadays, citizens express their political participation by focusing on specific political issues and problems, applying political consumerism, signing and collecting petitions in support of specific causes, and organisation of demonstrations and protests. Concerning their political participation, Polish youth “[...] use mixed strategies of impacting the government, which combine traditional repertoires like contacting politicians using online communication channels, street protests, and consumer boycotts [...]” (Kijewska 2014, p. 8).

New forms of youth political involvement are not only perceived as novel because they did not exist earlier (e.g., participation through the internet), but also because youth attribute new meanings to traditional forms of participation (e.g., demonstrations, protests, and the signing of petitions and boycotts), thereby redefining their role. The political activities of youth are currently assuming a more individualised, *ad hoc* nature, which is problem-oriented and associated less often with traditional social divides (EACEA, 2012, p. 2).

The European Commission’s reports on research on the participation of youth in member states have revealed that: “New modes of political engagement and communication have attracted young Europeans’ interest. Frustration with traditional and institutionalised forms of political participation has motivated young people to use the internet and its applications (e.g., social

media, podcasts, wikis, blogs and online networks) as a vehicle for expressing their opinions, establishing communities of like-minded citizens and initiating organized actions” (European Commission, 2018, p. 93).

As reported by Gozzo and Sampugnano (2016, p. 756), there is a change in the ways of expressing political participation from traditional to non-traditional forms. Further, O’Neil’s (2007, p. 11) study among Canadian youth indicates more non-traditional forms in their political participation, like political protests and demonstrations, the signing of petitions and engagement in consumer boycotts and buycotts.

In this article, the political participation in youth organisations operating in Poland was analysed. Geiser and Rijke (2010) typology indicates that “the first form of participation occurs in the context of the traditional institutionalized areas of the “intermediate system”, i.e., large organizations and associations” (Rijke, 2012, p. 99). A difficulty that we encountered was specifying what a ‘youth organisation’ essentially is, the scope of this term, and the collection of its designators. Karpowicz (2009, p. 93) underlines that youth organisations “[...] belong to the group of entities called social organisations, non-governmental organisations, and associations”. The youth organisations investigated by us are structured ones requiring membership, dedication and involvement. Their members are characterised by a strong sense of belonging and loyalty. They represent the interests of a specific social group, viz, youth. Belonging to youth organisations in Poland is prompted by the desires and needs of the modern young generation of Polish society who “[...] are clearly characterised by both a tendency to individualism as well as searching for a community of living through things together and of gaining new experiences” (Karpowicz, 2009, p. 89).

The organisations were selected by us based on two criteria applied separately: the criterion of status (a sense of belonging to PCYO) and visibility (media presence, especially in the internet space). The organisations belonging to the Polish Council of Youth Organisations (*Polska Rada Organizacji Młodzieżowych* – PROM) are, at the same time, public benefit organisations. PCYO is the largest and most differentiated federation of non-governmental organisations representing the opinions and needs of youth, through contacts

with national policymakers. Six organisations were selected based on two criteria: AIESEC Poland, ATD Fourth World, Youth Initiatives Center Horizons, UNESCO Initiatives Centre, All-Polish Youth, and the National Radical Camp. The first four organisations belong to PROM, while the other two do not, but all are visible in the internet space.

Methodology

The studies were conducted within a broader research project. The research was qualitative and underpinned by a constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 196). Data collection involved a search of secondary data sources. All available documents posted on the websites of the investigated organisations, including their statutes, rules and regulations, and reports and accounts covering activities and operations, as well as social media (FB) posts, were analysed.

The content analysis method (Rapley, 2007, p. 111) was used to analyse the data for the “participation” category, viz., the methods, historical context, and pragmatic context. The analyses were also supplemented by an inductive analysis aimed at adding new categories based on empirical material which were not present in the definitions adopted by us (Katz, 2002; Szczepaniak, 2012, p. 99). Atlas Ti was used to facilitate data coding.

All the content created by the organisations, like documents (statutes, reports, newsletters and entries on websites) and social media posts – on Facebook, were used for the analysis and were collected between January 2021 and May 2022. Totally, 369 documents and 332 Facebook posts were analysed. The materials collected within the Atlas Ti research tool were encoded according to the organisation name and document type. For example: “APY, FB posts” means that the document concerns the All-Polish Youth organisation and is a Facebook post.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the areas of participation of the youth in the studied organisations?

2. What are the levels of participation of youth in the studied organisations?
3. What are the ways of political participation of the youth in the studied organisations?

The areas of youth participation are directly related to the goals and objectives set by the organisation published in the statute. The statute and origins are also helpful in specifying the organisation's areas of activity. International organisations possibly have a different area of participation than those operating in Poland. In the literature concerning contemporary youth organisations, the most commonly mentioned are the so-called new areas of activities related to volunteering, consumer activity, human rights and ecology, as well as traditional ones where the youth contribute to the debate about government action or participate in planning the future of the country or the world.

The levels of participation, however, are understood by us as the reach of the actions being undertaken – from local (the community of the district, city, voivodeship, or region) through the national level, right up to the international level. Three of the organisations studied by us have international status, with representative branches in Poland, with a presumably global level of participation. Another interesting aspect of our research was its attempt to identify whether the organisations studied by us undertake actions only in the local community and for its sole and exclusive benefit or globally–by implementing projects carried out in other countries but in a local context, based on the principle of “we think globally, but act locally”.

Research results

Areas of participation

Based on an inductive analysis, three principal areas of participation were identified: international volunteering, participation in projects for sustainable development, and involvement in the state's policies. We understand international volunteering not as involvement in the everyday activities of the

organisation but as going abroad to assist people and/or the development of personal competencies. Participation in projects for sustainable development includes projects to change environmental policies or related to respect for human rights. This also includes the implementation of the United Nation's Sustainable Development Objectives. The last area is closely related to the participation of the organisation in taking policy decisions on all levels – from local to international. The organisations take part in debates and also support or criticise the ongoing actions of the government.

Three of the six organisations are of international origin, which has a direct impact on the goals and objectives and areas of activities with global reach. Horizons CII, despite its Polish roots, sets itself the goal of building intercultural dialogue, which results from the globalisation processes, but it expresses this mainly through local actions. The National Radical Camp and the All-Polish Youth are organisations that bring together only Poles with specific viewpoints (Ostrowicka & Wolniewicz-Slomka, 2022) to quote the NRC: “who identify with such values as God, Honour, Fatherland, Family, Tradition, and Friendship” (NRC Website, nd.). All the studied organisations are oriented towards specific goals, and focused on new social movements related to volunteering, consumer activity, human rights, and ecology.

Implementation often takes the form of individualised paths leading to solving ongoing problems. International volunteering is a dominant area which, on the one hand, is the goal because it enables individual development, involvement and a sense of influence in a specific situation fulfilling an educational function concerning the participants. On the other hand, it is a way of implementing other goals, that is, human rights or ecology. Youth, when travelling abroad to do volunteer work, are working to effect changes, for instance, by joining forces to support the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Objectives. An example is the Women Empowerment project being implemented in India towards the implementation of one of its objectives – “Gender Equality” (AIESEC). For AIESEC, volunteer work is the main activity. The organisation participates in the Global Volunteer programme, which allows youth to travel abroad and work as volunteers, for instance, in China, Mexico, Romania, Ghana, South

Korea, or Georgia. CIM Horizons, on the other hand, has implemented a Polish-Israeli youth exchange project with the cooperation of the POLIN Museum Educational Centre and the UNESCO European Volunteer programme, *inter alia*.

Human rights are a very important area of participation. The organisations are involving themselves in improving the position of social groups suffering discrimination due to economic status, social and cultural status, gender (women's rights), religion, political opinions, etc.

The organisations also engage in ecological activities. CIM CII Horizons has become involved in a battery collection campaign or a "We Love Recycling" Valentine's Day campaign. Further, it has organised the "Po-Dzielni" [Around the District] campaign to talk about SMOG and programmes combating it. AIESEC encourages the drinking of MIO MIO tea, because of support for the Polish economy (AIESEC, FB posts).

Despite the changes in the areas of youth political participation in organisations, the "traditional" area is also important, which is related to involvement in politics and the matters of the state. This is an expression of the youth's viewpoints to exert a direct impact on the shape of the state or of Europe. The organisations get involved in the debate on the future of Europe, for instance, by taking part in the European Economic Congress in Katowice (AIESEC) or working for the appointment of an Ombudsman as a guardian of the rights of the poor and excluded people (ATD). Organisations that are not part of PCYO are becoming actively involved in the debate on the ongoing actions of the government or other non-governmental organisations. In 2018, All-Polish Youth demonstrated its critical stance on the labour immigration of Poles and support to the Polish government vis-a-vis Ukraine.

What is interesting is that the areas of political participation of the organisations belonging to PCYO and outside it are similar in the traditional scope but express different values. This can be very clearly seen in the example of the approach to diversity. AIESEC invited the participants of the Open'er Festival to "solve the most important problems" through a FB post and a photograph clearly depicting smiling youth with signs displaying three sustainable development goals of UN: 4 Quality of Education; 5 Gender

Equality, 10 Reducing Inequalities. The teenage boy holding a sign saying “Gender Equality” is wearing a pink wig. All this is presented in the form of having fun, but it signals that young people are open and support gender diversity. The All-Polish Youth, however, in their social media posts, clearly criticise the so-called “Rainbow Fridays” in schools, appealing to parents to express their opposition to the “Campaign Against Homophobia”.

The levels and ways of participation of young people in youth organisations operating in Poland

The analyses providing answers to the research questions concerning the levels and ways of political participation are presented below. The results have been presented by describing adequate ways of participation on each level, for instance, the local level. Such a perspective allows specific categories to be identified and compared.

While the studied organisations participate on every level, there are differences between them. For instance, global and glocal participation dominates the activities of AIESEC, whereas local and domestic participation is foremost in the National Radical Camp. These differences, as mentioned, result from the areas of participation. There are also differences between the organisations related to the manner of participation on specific levels.

• Local level

On the local level, the organisations participate politically through social and educational campaigns, building a network of mutual influences, marches/manifestations, and information campaigns.

The most common mode of participation is conducting numerous social and educational campaigns for instance, in a specific district or even a specific street. These activities are always aimed at supporting the local community, providing access to culture and education mainly through inclusive campaigns that prevent exclusion due to the level of wealth or age, less often due to sex or race.

Key and regularly occurring local actions are undertaken by the ATD Fourth World organisation by holding meetings on the Dudziarska housing estate in Warsaw, aimed at integrating the community and providing support to those in difficult circumstances. Under the motto of “Dudziarska – A Meeting Place”, a picnic, workshop, games and sports activities were organised, involving both volunteers and residents. A similar inclusive campaign is being led by Horizons CII, celebrating the names day of Lazarus – as they put it – of “LAZARUS – Our District”. Not only is this an opportunity to undertake integrative actions for the local community but, also, most of all, to include the residents in social and cultural life and in taking decisions on matters of importance to them.

The National Radical Camp is highly active through its local branches, known as “Brigades” (Upper Silesian, Lower Silesian, Kuyavian-Pomeranian, and Opole, etc.). The organisation conducts many social campaigns, including regular blood donation under the banner of “Sweet Blood”, combined with a collection of chocolates which were then donated to a Children’s Home in Brzeg. Most actions and campaigns were set in a national context commemorating events from the Second World War, an example of which is the exhibition in Wielun commemorating the bombardment of the city (ONR, website).

The organisation conducted a series of campaigns to encourage people to participate in the march commemorating the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence, called the Independence Day March. Similar actions were taken by the All-Polish Youth. Besides, it organised the March of the Eaglets of Przemyśl and Lwów on 16th December 2018 in Przemyśl. The NRC organised a series of local marches like the one against “globalism, capitalism, and exploitation” in Radom.

The organisations also often create networks of local influences. Horizons CII, operating in Poznań, cooperates with the local authorities. An example is its participation in 2018 in the works of the Commission on Civil Society Dialogue under the Plenipotentiary of the President of the City of Poznań for Equality Policies and at the Department of Education, as well as the consultations of the Active Citizens Fund. The organisations are integrating

during joint picnics, that is, the Picnic of Local Self-Government Organisations.

- **National level**

On the national level, the organisations' participation is similar to the local level, although protests are being held here (in the form of appeals and manifestations) and marches are being given particular significance on this level. Further, a message also appears about significant dates, in this case, for Poland.

The All-Polish Youth and the National Radical Camp often use appeal and manifestation forms. As examples for the All-Polish Youth, we can provide the following: an appeal to Poles to travel down for the Independence Day March, regardless of whether it would be called off or not, an appeal to the Polish national youth regarding the situation of the white population in South Africa, to the government of the Republic of Poland with Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki; an appeal to parents to oppose the "Campaign Against Homophobia" referred to as the "Rainbow Friday"; and the "Poles Against Mass Immigration" manifestation. However, the standard form of political participation is the Independence Day March, which was organised on the 100th anniversary of Poland regaining its independence. The march takes place regularly and evokes diametrically opposite reactions among citizens. Moreover, the APY organised the Warsaw Uprising on March on 1st August 2018. NRC's activities are the March for Life and the Family under the motto of "In Your Footsteps", promoting the protection of human life and a traditional family, which was held in many cities across Poland.

Among the most important social and educational campaigns, there was the "RACE: HUMAN" project organised by AIESEC to "shed light on the problem of racism in Poland" (AIESEC website). ATD Fourth World organised the "Wrzesiński" workshop with the motto "The Rights of an Impoverished Person". The All-Polish Youth ran a campaign titled #KsiężaJakSamoloty [#PriestsLikeAirplanes], accentuating "how much good the #clergy do every day [...] among the flood of negative information about the clergy" (APY, FB posts) through a campaign describing good priests. The NRC organised many

aid campaigns like “Parcel for a Hero”, which is a regular social initiative mainly aimed at providing material and spiritual support to war veterans.

Information campaigns in social media play a prominent role on a country-wide scale. For example, ATD Fourth World monitored the degree of implementation by Poland of the first Sustainable Development Goal of the UN—that of reducing poverty, while AIESEC Polska made some graphics and a special report available that allowed the level of fulfilment of specific goals to be identified. Besides that, information campaigns also highlight people who made their mark on Polish history.

The last mode of political participation that can also be considered as an information campaign is the creation of content about dates significant for Poland as a country. One of the most important anniversaries that the APY and NRC celebrate through a march is the National Day of Independence. AIESEC celebrates this day through a FB post and a message calling for mutual respect and tolerance.

Notification of important dates is actually an expression of political convictions. An organisation that draws attention to International Migrants Day, for instance, also expresses its care about the fate of migrants and stresses the positive aspects of the phenomenon. Moreover, it highlights famous people who were migrants, e.g., Albert Einstein, Maria Skłodowska-Curie, or Fryderyk Chopin (AIESEC, FB posts).

The All-Polish Youth posts information about the anniversary of 22nd November 1940, when “the first mass execution by firing squad was carried out in the Auschwitz camp (40 Poles)” (MW, FB posts). The organisation reminds the Polish nation of the death of thousands of other nationalities, especially Jews.

• **International level**

On this level, which usually has a European reach, these organisations are highly active, especially those with an international genesis. They usually operate within the framework of social campaigns, building networks of influence and communication about significant dates, as well as issuing appeals.

The social actions, campaigns and educational projects conducted by the organisations belonging to PCYO are focused on providing equal opportunities in access to education or the labour market, thus striving to include excluded groups in the social system. UNESCO IC was running an educational project for parents called MOMMAS Coffee to facilitate development and share experiences of parenting in international and intercultural contexts. Another campaign described earlier was the Inception 3 project that improved qualifications for work when it came to collaborating with people from the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) group (UNESCO IC, FB posts). The “New Way” training organised in the long-term project “New Way – Educated, Motivated, Employed!” was also very important, aimed at the development of initiatives addressed to young people with fewer opportunities (UNESCO CII, FB posts).

Horizons CII was recruiting for the Training Course “I. LAB – Intercultural Learning and Beyond!”, directed at educators, youth activists, volunteers and non-governmental organisation activists. Their key objective was developing innovative methods for creating intercultural dialogue, ways of eradicating exclusion and helping young refugees and immigrants integrate.

The organisations are also getting involved in the debate on the future of Europe, creating mutual networks of influence, in this case, in the international arena. These actions include participating in a discussion panel during the European Economic Congress in Katowice (AIESEC) and the “Support Poles in the Eastern Borderlands” campaign organised by the All-Polish Youth.

A key manner of political participation of youth organisations is directing attention to internationally significant events or feast days. Every mention has a commentary containing a message that directs to specific areas of participation. The All-Polish Youth draws attention to events associated with the Catholic Church, that is, the commemoration of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The remaining organisations also focus on the birthday of Hans Christian Andersen (ATD in Latvia), World Youth Day under the motto of: “Safe Space for Youth” (AIESEC), or International Volunteer Day.

- **Glocal level**

During the analyses, a fourth level of participation was identified, based on conducting activities in the local space while also harnessing ideas developed on the global level. Social actions, focusing attention on significant dates as well as actions or messages they carry are particularly important at this level.

Some examples of social actions include Intercultural Week at @UAM! (Horizons CII, FB posts) and the intercultural training organised by UNESCO IC. The “Youth4GlobalGoals Initiative” that encourages young people to get involved in implementing the 17 Sustainable Development Objectives, including climatic, economic and social objectives (AIESEC) should also be included in such actions.

Further, the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is celebrated in Poland in which ATD Fourth World holds numerous meetings, debates and events focusing on the problem of poverty. AIESEC, while celebrating the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, began implementing solutions in Poland serving to “build tolerance and openness to diversity in our country” (AIESEC, FB posts).

Among all the organisations, AIESEC is the one that informs people of important anniversaries and international feast days, affording those on the local or national level the chance to reflect, for example: “celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights” (AIESEC, FB posts). The All-Polish Youth also invites people to reflect on the topic in the context of the 2nd World Day of the Poor held annually in the Catholic Church on 18th November 2018.

The remaining days mentioned by the organisation that are a part of the glocal level include International Migrants Day, World Tolerance Day, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the commemoration of St. Hubert – the patron of foresters, riders and mathematicians. All of them are celebrated on the international level but are set in a country context.

Conclusions

When answering the research questions on the levels and forms of political participation of youth in the studied organisations, we infer that contemporary Polish youth manifest their political engagement in a very differentiated and non-traditional manner. Young people, instead of expressing their political preferences at the ballot box, undertake political activity online or communicate their approval or disapproval of the actions of politicians directly, on the street. Further, they get involved in the activities of social movements or interest groups more often than through enrolling as a member of the youth wing of a political party. The research results covering Polish youth indicate a certain shift from the forms and ways of their political participation reported in research to date, including worldwide research (Allaste & Cairns, 2016) to new forms—for instance, from consumer policy to local campaigns and international networks, from the ballot box to the street and the internet and from political parties to social movements, interest groups, and social media.

The political participation of youth expressed solely and exclusively in the traditional form of taking part in elections has proved to be an ineffective method of controlling politicians and youth are resorting to other ways of exerting an influence on them increasingly or at least articulate their own needs or assessments of the actions of those in power.

The political participation of youth is currently taking on the form of activities undertaken online. It also includes actions like political discussions, online petitions or becoming organised through online channels, searching for news and content of political nature, manifesting personal political convictions, and participating in online voting, public consultations, etc. (Pająk-Patkowska, 2017, p. 11).

It is worth emphasising that Polish youth involved in the activities of the organisations are implementing both their personal goals and the objectives of the local, national and international communities where they live: “Organizing brings people together and enables them to generate power to accomplish their purpose. It is a process that builds their own sense of power, their perceived or actual power with others, and their ability to affect power relationships in

the community. Adult political organizations learned this lesson years ago.” (Checkoway, 2011, p. 341).

Many of these forms are visible in the documents of the studied organisations. An inductive analysis enabled the identification of several forms of political participation yet to be described in the literature, viz., social and educational campaigns and informing of important dates. Social and educational campaigns are particularly important and common on the local level. The organisations involve communities of certain specific and often neglected housing estates, giving them a voice and empowering them to speak out which, in the broader perspective, opens up opportunities to change state policies towards excluded people.

In the analyses carried out, we failed to observe any interest among the young people involved in the different youth organisations operating in Poland in traditional forms of expressing political participation such as elections, belonging to political parties’ youth factions, or taking part in referendums. The activities undertaken by Polish youth are non-traditional only to a small extent, being an attempt to exert a direct impact on the political sphere, expressed through demonstrations, protests, or boycotts. What is most visible is that political activity is being undertaken mostly online or using the tools offered by it. Moreover, the actions of young people consist of attempting to exert an influence on the regional, national or transnational level directly and/or indirectly by exerting an impact on the creation and implementation of policies. Polish youth operating in youth organisations are more focused on helping others, especially marginalised groups, contribute to the development of local communities, foster the common good, and get actively involved in the problems of the national and global community.

Many of the actions undertaken by young Poles in youth organisations typically involve a critical analysis of social, political, and economic power, and emphasise collective concerns identified by youth and actions led by young people to improve their everyday lives. Many projects draw from youth culture and educate young people about the history of civil rights activism.

References

- Allaste, A.A., & Cairns, D. (2016). Youth Political Participation in a Transition Society. *Studies of Transition States and Societies*, 8(2), 1–9. Retrieved 16 June 2022 from: <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/62531>.
- Checkoway, B. (2011). What Is Youth Participation? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(2), 340–345, doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.017.
- Denzin, E., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California–London–New Delhi–Singapore: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- De Rijke, J. (2012). Youth and Participation in Europe. In: Youth. Future Agents of Change or Guardians of Establishment? *Panorama. Insights Into Asian and European Affairs*, 1, 99–108. Retrieved 18 June 2022 from: https://www.kas.de/documents/252038/253252/7_dokument_dok_pdf_32176_2.pdf/cdb3480a-e111-9cc5-64db-15573049e87d?version=1.0&t=1539656715951.
- Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) (2012). *Political Participation and EU Citizenship: Perceptions and Behaviours of Young People. Evidence from Eurobarometer Surveys*, European Commission, Brussels. Retrieved 10 June 2022 from: https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/policy/documents/perception-behaviours_en.pdf.
- European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2018). In: G. Paolini, A. Motiejūnaitė, & A. Horváth, A. (Eds.). *Situation of Young People in the European Union: Commission Staff Working Document*, Publications Office. Retrieved 10 June 2022 from: <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/370313>.
- Gozzo, S., & Sampugnaro, R. (2016). What Happens? Changes in European Youth Participation (PARteecipazione e CONflitto). *Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies*, 9(3), 748–776, doi: 10.1285/i20356609v9i3p748.
- Karpowicz, E. (2009). Aktywność społeczna młodzieży [The Social Activity of Youth]. *Studia BAS*, 2(18), 85–114. Retrieved 20 May 2022 from: (PDF)Aktywnośćspołecznamłodzieży|Lena Arkhireyeva – Academia.edu.
- Katz, J. (2001). Analytic Induction. In: N.J. Smelser, & P.B. Baltes (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 480–484). Vol. 1. Oxford, U.K.: Elsevier, doi: 10.1016/B0-08-043076-7/00774-9.
- Kijewska, B. (2014). Partycypacja polityczna młodzieży w Unii Europejskiej [Political Participation of Youth in the European Union]. In: M. Boryń, B. Duraj,

- & S. Mrozowska (Eds.), *Polityka młodzieżowa Unii Europejskiej* [European Union Youth Policy] (pp. 103–116). Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- Kitanova, M. (2020). Youth Political Participation in the EU: Evidence from a Cross-National Analysis. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 23(7), 819–836, doi: 10.1080/13676261.2019.1636951.
- NRC Website [Oficjalna strona ONR]. Retrieved 30 June 2022 from: <https://www.onr.com.pl/czym-jest-onr/>.
- O’Neil, B. (2007). *Indifferent or Just Different? The Political and Civic Engagement of Young People in Canada. Charting the Course for Youth Civic and Political Participation*. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Ostrowicka, H., & Wolniewicz-Slomka, K. (2022). Heterotopias of Nationalist Youth Organisations in Poland: Communitarisation and Entry/Exit System. *The Qualitative Report*, 27(11), 2528–2545. doi: 10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5708.
- Pająk-Patkowska, B. (2017), Przesłanki aktywności politycznej jednostki i jej konsekwencje [Premises of the Political Activity of an Individual and its Consequences]. In: M. Rachwał (Ed.), *Uwarunkowania i mechanizmy partycypacji politycznej* [Determinants and Mechanisms of Political Participation] (pp. 9–7). Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe WNPiD UAM.
- Rapley, T. (2007). *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*. Los Angeles–London–New Dehli–Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Siwko, M. (2013). Aktywność polityczna młodzieży w ujęciu teoretycznym [Youth Political Activity – A Theoretical Approach]. In: M. Górka, & J. Prokopiuk (Eds.), *Młodzi i polityka* [Youth and Politics] (pp. 41–55). Koszalin: Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Politechniki Koszalińskiej.
- Szczepaniak, K. (2012). Zastosowanie analizy treści w badaniach artykułów prasowych – Refleksje Metodologiczne [The Application of Content Analysis of Newspaper Articles – Methodological Considerations]. *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Sociologica*, 42, 83–112.
- Verba, S., & Nie, N.H. (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Weiss, J. (2020). What is Youth Political Participation? Literature Review on Youth Political Participation and Political Attitudes. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 2(1), 1–13, doi: 10.3389/fpos.2020.00001.