

Youth Political Participation in Russia: Influence of Voluntary Associations

Irina Gukova, Dmitry Nechaev, Ludmila Polovneva, Alla Krivets, Ekaterina Berdnik, Dmitry Gukov

Abstract: Studying the reasons for youth political participation, and how young people get involved in political activities is an important issue for both developed and developing countries. Research in this area started from general tendencies and then moved to specific country factors. The purpose of this research is to determine the relationship, in Russia, between participation in voluntary associations during education and political participation during adulthood. Previously, there was no research in this field for Russia. In the research non-parametric tests for K independent samples, descriptive statistics, logistical regression, and factor analysis were applied. The main data source is the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey. The key result is that involvement in voluntary associations during education, especially in political ones, positively affects future youth political participation. Education and income also have positive effects. Russia is generally similar to other countries, including developed, developing, and post-soviet ones. In post-soviet countries, the key interdependencies are similar to Russia, but not so clearly expressed. In Russia, employed young people vote with less probability than unemployed ones, whereas in Belarus we see the opposite.

Index Terms: political participation; voluntary association; extracurricular activities; political involvement; youth; voting; political opinion expressing; logistics regression; factor analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Youth political participation is an important issue for many countries all over the world. Young people are the future of any society and their opinions and behavior determine prospect development. Therefore, the elder generation makes significant efforts to form proper political opinions in children, adolescents and young adults (Wringe 2012). The main cause of this issue is the desire of current politicians and typical citizens to last in time through generations (Fieulaine and Martinez 2010, Eysenck 2018). Simultaneously, sharing key values among generations, including political ones, provides sustainable development and national culture preservation.

Why is youth political participation as a form of social engagement so important? There are many reasons. However, one of the most important is that policy is one of the most

major spheres of social development. Undoubtedly, policy, its philosophy and key ideas, as far as distinct political decisions, significantly influence or even determine many spheres of social development and economy growth (McFarland and Thomas 2006). If some people or groups do not express their opinion, it will never be heard. Political participation is a legal form of expressing opinion and, moreover, it is a way to support the ideas by actions. Previous studies have shown that politics itself is understood differently by elder and younger generations. Thus, older people, even if they view politics in a rather cynical way, suppose that it is very relevant to their daily lives, whereas younger people echo their cynicism and, simultaneously, supposes it is largely irrelevant to their everyday lives (Andolina et al 2002). Therefore, engaging young people in political participation is a very important process. It is strongly connected with the understanding of the importance of policy in everyday lives. These statements raise several additional issues. What exactly is political participation? How do young people develop an understanding of the importance of policy in their everyday lives?

Political participation, according Oxford research encyclopedias, can be loosely defined as citizens' activities affecting politics (Deth 2016). However, this definition is quite short and does not include many specifics of political participation. Therefore, Deth provides a broader definition and even an algorithm of what determines political participation (Figure 1).

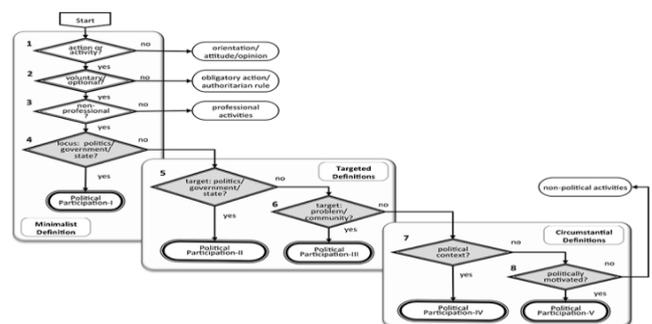


Figure 1. Algorithm of what determines political participation (Deth 2016)

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Firstly, according to the algorithm, political participation should be an action or activity. If it is not so, it is not political participation. It can



be opinion, orientation or attitude. This distinction is important for the current study. Thus, publishing posts, messages or comments is an action, whereas having an opinion without expressing it is not an action, and is correspondingly not a form of political participation. Secondly, political participation is a voluntary activity. In this article, obligatory actions are not discussed. Thirdly, it is non-professional activity. Actions that are a part of professional activities are not counted. Undoubtedly, political participation should be related to politics. There are several ways to define this relation. Politics can be a locus or a target; moreover, a particular issue, problem or community in politics can be a target. These two contexts are the most widely spread in discussions dedicated to political participation. However, in this study, circumstantial definition is important as well. This definition includes political context or motivation. According to this criterion, posts, messages and comments on the Internet were divided into two groups: political participation and non-political activities (Kahne, Middaugh, and Allen 2015).

Literature review of determinants and predictors of political participation in adulthood

The development of understanding of the importance of policy by young people is one of the key issues of the research. In this study, authors suppose to cultivate it with the help of participation in voluntary associations. These associations include political and non-political ones, such as athletic or musical. Young people can be involved in them during school, secondary vocational or university education. Moreover, in this research, voluntary associations can be officially affiliated with educational organizations or not. Regardless of the type of voluntary association, young people who participate in these types of activity during their education will be more involved in political participation when they older compared to people who do not take part in such activities (Hanks 1981). Hanks has provided the first significant research in this particular field. He indicated that 'independent of social class background, ability, academic performance, and self-esteem, participation in voluntary organizations in adolescence is related to the form and extent of people's participation in political activities in adulthood'. The relation was positive. Hanks analyzed such ways of political participation as discussion of the issues, campaign participation, and voting. Since that research, study of the relation between participation in voluntary organizations and participation in political activities in adulthood has been developed by many scientists (Wicks et al. 2014).

Andolina et al. (2002) found that participants of their research 'included a wide range of activities under the rubric of volunteering, many of which fall outside the boundaries of traditional definitions. Valid measures of volunteer behavior will want to consider providing respondents with a prescribed definition that purposefully excludes informal assistance to friends. With youth, researchers may be especially interested in determining if "volunteer" efforts were actually required activities. Probing for motivations behind volunteer activities (altruistic or self-interested) may also help illuminate the pathways to this form of civic participation.' Thus, participation in voluntary associations is usually understood as engagement in school or non-school organizations in social,

political, sporting or musical fields.

Campbell has made a significant contribution to the study of political engagement. He has found that both educational level and educational environment have had stable influences on political activity, and interpersonal and institutional trust, according to mixed-effects maximum likelihood regression (Campbell 2006). Simultaneously, the same variables have quite small effect on voting in adulthood. Thus, he has concluded that education is quite important for social and civic engagement, particularly voter turnout, political tolerance, and political attentiveness; however, it is not so for political participation in terms of voting and expressing opinions (Rogers, Mediratta, and Shah 2012).

Simultaneously, Hart et al. (2007) studied possibilities of predicting adult voting and volunteering through extracurricular participation in high school. Scientists have shown that, for local and presidential voting, participation in civic and youth voluntary associations during education is a more significant predictor than any other social or economic characteristic of the respondents. Thus, the vast majority of social and economic indicators, except gender, are variables that have influenced the result by less than 10%, whereas extracurricular participation has had an effect of more than 50%. The research has shown that a leading role in a voluntary association is significantly less important than active participation in such an organization. This research improved the approach to studying the relation between political participation and extracurricular activities as a prediction regression model. The main feature of this model is the possibility of predicting the future behavior of each individual. The prediction is based on his or her previous activities and other controlled characteristics.

One more important issue has been studied by Holland and Andre (1987). They found a 'positive relationship between activity involvement with members of another race and improved race relations and attitudes in desegregated high schools.' Thus, specifics of participation in voluntary organizations at school and in university determine political opinions in adulthood. Individuals are not simply involved in political activities – they have their own position based on previous experience.

In 2008, Quintelier analyzed the significance of the exact form of participation in voluntary organizations and organization type. He divided organizations according to their field and key actions. Moreover, the role of the individual was controlled. The result of the research was that any type of voluntary organization positively influences political participation in adulthood. Joining more than one organization increases political activity in the future. A similar result was found by McFarland and Thomas (2006). Moreover, the researches have stated that 'the heart of voluntary associations, even in adolescence, is self-selection. This greatly complicates any attempt to compare those who participate in them with those who do not.' In other words, they believe that distinctions between people who participate in voluntary associations and those who do not had been determined before their actual engaging (Glanville 1999). These distinctions are

far from the basic social or economic characteristics of each respondent. The key difference between the researches of Quintelier (2008) by McFarland and Thomas (2006) is that the former was based on longitude data, and the latter on current data and surveying of the respondents about their previous participation in voluntary organizations. Moreover, Quintelier used the OLS method, whereas McFarland and Thomas used logistic regression.

Previously, McNeal (1999) has stated that school structure, such as size and pupil/ teacher ratio, and contextual characteristics, including general school climate, mean socioeconomic status and the percentage of students from single-parent households, influence student participation in extracurricular activities. Thus, participation in voluntary associations is determined by social structure and the context of school, or even society (Kahne, Crow and Lee 2013). In different countries it can have significant distinctions. However, inside a particular country, or even a particular culture, participation in voluntary associations does not depend on individual socioeconomic characteristics. Therefore, it is important to study different countries and cultures in issues of the relations between political participation and engagement in voluntary associations.

Some scientists seek reasons for political participation in social or psychological origins (Settle, Bond, and Levitt 2011), (Smith 1999). These studies are not observed in this research. Other scientists study digital media shapes of political participation (Kahne and Middaugh 2012). They found that one of the most important forms of political participation in the modern world is expressing opinions on the Internet and social networks. Therefore, one of the indicators of political participation in this study is posts, messages or comments on the Internet dedicated or related to politics, created by individuals. Many researches have previously found relations between behavior on digital media and voting in elections (Ekström, and Östman 2015).

In developing countries, such as India, educational level is very important for political participation in adulthood (Acharya et al. 2010). The cause of the interdependence of these two variables is the low median educational level in the country (Herrera 2012). Moreover, gender variable distinguish society into two groups, due to significant differences in education for males and females. This fact is not true for other countries (Ødegård and Frode 2008). For studying these two gender groups, factor analysis was used. In developed countries, individual characteristics are also not as important as cultural specifics (Stolle and Cruz 2005). In other words, cultural and national specifics, or the particular country, are more significant for political participation prediction than individual characteristics of respondents. Some scientists specify cultural phenomena through national motivations for political participation (Marta, Guglielmetti, and Pozzi 2006). However, their studies are more - or - less close to previously observed ones. One more important issue for studying national specifics or relations between engagement in voluntary associations during education and political participation in adulthood is specifying different groups with the help of factor analysis. In developing countries, the basis of differentiation is educational level, whereas in developed ones it is frequency Internet use (Pasek

et al. 2006). Nevertheless, in each country some specifics dividing society into several groups can be highlighted.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to specify the relation between participation in voluntary associations during education and political participation during adulthood in Russia. Previously, there were no researches in this field for Russia. The work of McAllister and White (1994) was dedicated to the constitutional crisis of 1992 and concentrated on mass protests, which is far from this research. The authors assume that Russia has its own specifics for studying relations, like other mentioned countries. These specifics make it dissimilar even to other post-soviet countries. For comparison, the example of Belarus is given as the closest country to Russia that was observed. The main hypothesis is that young people in Russia involved in voluntary associations are significantly more likely to engage in political participation as adults. There are four main research questions (RQs):

- RQ 1: What are the main school and non-school political voluntary associations in Russia for pupils and students?
- RQ 2: What is the level of political participation in Russia for young adults?
- RQ 3: Is there any relation between participation in voluntary associations during education and participation in politics during adulthood?
- RQ 4: Is Russia similar in the relationship between participation in voluntary associations during education and political participation in adulthood to other post-soviet countries? (Example of Belarus)

The research will provide a better understanding of political participation of young adults in Russia. It is important due to the high involvement of Russia in global politics. Finding reasons for political participation will provide possibilities for managing this activity, on the one hand, and prediction, on the other. Moreover, this research can be repeated for other countries, including in the context of the similarity of the origins of political participation.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research sample includes young adults between the ages of 18 and 30. The authors specified this age group for two main reasons. The first reason is that the official definition of youth in Russia: people aged between 14 and 30. However, people under 18 are not permitted to vote in elections. Therefore, they cannot be respondents for this research. The second reason is that previous studies (Hart et al. 2007), (Holland, and Andre 1987) have used a period of 8 years after school or university graduation for investigating the effect of extracurricular activities.

The sample for Russia includes 6272 respondents from 8 Federal Districts. Previously, Quintelier (2008) has used a sample of 6330 respondents for her research. Thus, this sample size is supposed to be sufficient. In order to provide a representative sample, it has to have an equal structure to the statistical population, according to gender, Federal District and age. In the Russian population, the percentage of women is 53.6%. For the age group of 18 to 29 years old,



the percentage of 18-19-year-olds is 12.9%, the percentage of 20-24-year-olds is 34.6%, and the percentage of 25-29-year-olds is 52.5%. Data about allocation of the population among Federal Districts is represented in Table 1.

TABLE 1. ALLOCATION OF RUSSIAN POPULATION AMONG FEDERAL DISTRICTS.

Federal District	Population (mil)	Respondents in sample
Central	39.2	1676
Volga	29.6	1266
Siberian	19.3	825
Southern	16.4	701
Northwestern	13.9	594
Ural	12.3	526
North Caucasian	9.8	419
Far Eastern	6.2	265

Data about the Russian population is taken from the official website of Federal State Statistics Service of Russian Federation (<http://www.gsk.ru>). Data about voting, political participation and interest in politics is taken from the website of Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (<http://www.cikrf.ru>) and Russian Public Opinion Research Center (<https://wciom.ru/>). Information about political organizations for young people, including school, university and non-affiliated ones, is presented on the official website Rosmolodezh (<https://fadm.gov.ru/>). Data about respondents is presented in the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (<https://www.epc.unc.edu/projects/rlms-hse>). A sample of 6272 was randomly selected from the database.

Independent and dependent variables are based on data from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey. Thus, dependent variables have to represent the political participation of young people. These variables include voting in elections of any level in the last 12 month and publishing any posts, messages or comments on the Internet dedicated or related to politics in the same period. These two variables are selected due to their high level of representation of political participation. The first of them is the key action of political participation, according to previous researches, whereas the second one is the most important in the digital age. Independent variables include gender, age, years of education, work status, family composition (living with parents or not), income, involvement in any voluntary associations during school, college or university, and education level of respondents. Due to the fact that the Survey monitors the longitude, previous data about activity of the respondents during adolescence is available. Voluntary organizations, according to previous studies (McFarland and Thomas 2006), (Quintelier 2008) were divided into three groups: school or university political affiliation, non-school political affiliation, and athletic and musical organizations.

SPSS 23 was used for data analysis. In this research study, non-parametric tests for K independent samples were applied, including the Kruskal–Wallis H test, Jonckheere–Terpstra test and median test, descriptive statistics, logistical regression, and factor analysis. The last three methods are often used for studying determinants of political participation. Several non-parametric tests for K independent samples were used to

find significant differences between representatives from different Federal Districts. The Kruskal–Wallis H test, Jonckheere–Terpstra test, and the median test were applied to define the differences between parts of the sample. These tests were applied to all independent variables; however, none of them indicated any significant differences. Thus, the sample for Russia is supposed to be sufficiently homogenous for the analysis.

Data about political participation and participation in voluntary associations participation in Belarus was taken from government statistics for this country, previous researches (which are mentioned further on), and open official sources, such as state newspapers (<http://www.naviny.by>). Only 274 respondents were interviewed in Belarus due to the pilot format of the research. In this study, this part is presented just for identifying similarities or dissimilarities to Russia. Nevertheless, the sample for Belarus is proportional to the statistical population of the country.

III. RESULTS

3.1. RQ 1: What are the main school and non-school political voluntary associations in Russia for pupils and students?

In Russia involvement of youth into political voluntary associations is one of the priorities. At present the system of these associations includes three levels: school political voluntary associations, university political voluntary associations and non-school political voluntary associations in form of consultative-advisory structures for state and municipal authorities. Examples of these structures are youth representative or a youth parliament. In 2015 school political voluntary associations were created in 80 percent of educational organizations. The number of their members was more than 1 million pupils.

University political voluntary associations have been created in 80 percent of higher education institutions. There are 3000 such associations, involving more than 400,000 participants. The key purpose of involving youth in these associations is to provide practical experience of social process and civil activities management. Non-school political voluntary associations are the best opportunity for young people to gain personal growth and development since they provide affiliation to real government structures. According to Rosmolodezh data, non-school political voluntary associations have been created for legislative authorities in 75 regions of the Russia Federation, which is 88 percent of regions. These associations have a total of 4627 members. In contrast, non-school political voluntary associations for municipal authorities is 1200, with over 20,000 members. Non-school political voluntary regional associations in the form of consultative-advisory structures for state authorities have been created in 55 regions - this is 65 percent of regions, involving 1226 participants. The number of associations in the form of consultative-advisory structures for municipal authorities is over 1700, with 30,000 participants. Thus, young people involved in different political voluntary associations in Russia is



about 1.5 million. Participation in any of the above voluntary associations develops understanding of the importance of policy because young people are personally involved in discussion, preparation and making decisions (including stage of realization and control under results). Since 2012, youth political voluntary associations in Russia have done over 30,000 projects.

Another form of young people's involvement in voluntary political associations is youth public chambers. The youth public chamber of the Russian Federation is a non-governmental organization that was founded in 2001 for the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. This organization is for 18-35-year-olds, and its main purpose is to study youth problems in Russia and assist the State Duma with norm-setting activities in the field of youth policy.

3.2. RQ 2: What is the level of political participation in Russia for young adults?

This data spans 2011-2018, when the youth public chamber for the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation had been working for many years and three types of political voluntary association had been founded.

The overall dynamics of the political participation of Russian citizens was positive during 2011-2018 (Table 2).

TABLE 2. THE DYNAMICS OF RUSSIAN CITIZEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION (PERCENT OF POPULATION OLDER THAN 18)

Forms of participation	2011	2012	2018
Voting in elections	37	47	56
Participation in election campaigns	2	4	5
Participation in official rallies	1	3	3
Participation in strikes	1	0	1
None of the above	61	46	40

Thus, voting in elections has grown by 21 percent - this is significant for the Russian political system. Participation in election campaigns has grown 3 percent, and participation in official rallies also 3 percent. Participation in strikes during this period has been about 1 percent and the share of politically non-active people reduced by 21 percent. Citizens can be involved in several forms of political participation simultaneously, excluding 'none of the above'.

The dynamics and key figures of political participation are not the same for each age group. People older than 30 are more active political participants than younger people. In 2011, 45 percent of older citizens voted in elections compared to just 34 percent of youth. In 2012, these percentages rose to 51 and 42 respectively, and in 2018 they reached 75 and 48. Thus, in each year older people were more likely to participate in voting. However, youth political participation increased significantly during the period and the share of young people who do not participate in any political activities reduced by 14 percent (Figure 2). Data correspond to each group size.

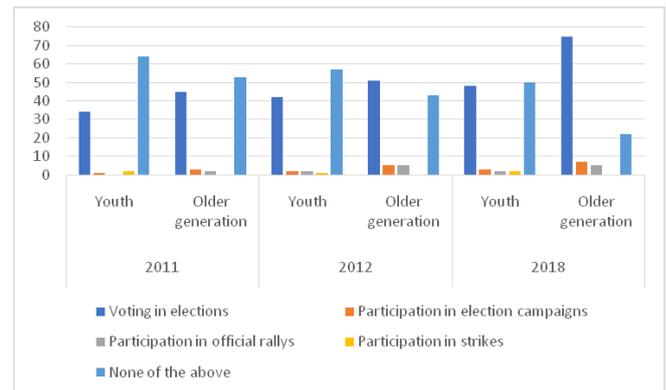


Figure 2. The dynamics of Russian citizen political participation in percentage, corresponding to age group size

In other political activities, such as participation in official rallies and election campaigns, the older generation is consistently more active than the younger. Though for strikes, youth were more active over the period analyzed. However, the level of participation in any of these activities is too low for further deep study.

The growth of political participation is significant, but interest in politics has grown even more. For 18-24-year-olds, such interest grew from 27 percent in 2011 to 44 percent in 2018, and for 25-35-year-olds it grew from 37 to 51 percent. These figures are still less than the average political interest in Russia (42 and 55 percent over the same period of time). However, young people's interest is approaching the average level (Table 3).

TABLE 3. ARE YOU INTERESTED IN POLITICS? (PERCENT OF POPULATION FOR EACH AGE GROUP)

Age	I am interested or rather interested			I am not interested or rather not interested			Do not know		
	2011	2012	2018	2011	2012	2018	2011	2012	2018
	18-24	27	37	44	67	58	50	6	5



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25-29	37	46	51	59	48	43	4	6	6
Average for country population (older than 18 years old)	42	51	55	54	42	39	4	7	6

The data for citizens who are not interested in politics confirms the results. The percentage of 18-24-year-olds who are not interested in politics has reduced by 17 % during the observed period, and for 25-29-year-olds, by 16 %. Each of these figures exceed the average value of reduction: 15 %. Thus, political interest in young people is growing more rapidly than the average level of interest in the country, and lack of interest is reducing correspondingly.

3.3. RQ 3: Is there any relation between participation in voluntary associations during education and participation in politics during adulthood?

Factor analysis provides a sufficient number of groups among young people in Russia according to their participation in voluntary associations at school and university, both for voting and expressing opinions on the Internet. The four groups are:

- people who were not involved in any voluntary association at school (non-involved);
- people who participated in voluntary political associations at school or university (school political associations);
- people who participated in non-school political voluntary associations in the form of consultative-advisory structures for state and municipal authorities (non-school political associations);
- people who participated in sporting or musical

organizations at school or university (athletic and musical).

For voting in elections, females are a bit more active than males for all groups. The most significant distinction between the two genders is observed in the group of athletes and musicians. The median age of voters is the lowest for the group of non-school political associations (26.9) and the highest for the non-involved group (28.9). In other words, people who were involved in non-school political voluntary associations in the form of consultative-advisory structures for state and municipal authorities start to vote in elections significantly earlier than people who did not take part in any extracurricular activity at school. Moreover, people who were active at school have a higher level of education. Thus, it can be concluded that people who are better educated are more politically active in Russia. Young citizens who were affiliated to any political association at school vote independently of their current work status, whereas others vote more if they are employed. In terms of family status, there is the opposite situation. Voting people from groups 2 and 3 are more likely to not be living with their parents. The same observation is correct for the other two groups, but is not so clearly expressed. The highest median income among voting young people is in the group of school political associations: 47,000 rubles; the lowest is in the non-involved group: 37,000 rubles. In other words, people who took part in any political organization at school or university end up having a higher income, at least up to the age of 30. Moreover, these people have a more active lifestyle, including not living with their parents, occupation and better education (Table 4).

TABLE 4. FOUR GROUPS OF VOTERS AMONG YOUNG CITIZENS ACCORDING TO FACTOR ANALYSIS

Characteristics	Non-involved	School political associations	Non-school political associations	Athletic and musical
Gender (female = 0)	0.44	0.46	0.42	0.39
Median age	28.9	27.1	26.9	27.4
Median years of education	13.2	16	15.4	14.7
Current work status (unemployed = 0, employed = 1)	0.64	0.53	0.57	0.61
Family composition (live with parents = 0, do not live with parents = 1)	0.58	0.62	0.65	0.59
Median income (among employed)	37,000	47,000	45,000	40,000
Number of positive answers	574	495	313	2437

N	1729	593	354	4077
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p < 0.05, the number of groups is sufficient

The highest percentage of voting citizens was among people who were involved in non-school political voluntary associations in the form of consultative-advisory structures for state and municipal authorities. The second highest was people who were involved in school or university political organization. The lowest was people who were not involved in any association at all.

Generally, the same statements are true for expressing opinions on the Internet, such as posts, public messages or comments dedicated or related to politics. In each group, except the fourth one, females are dominating. People, who were active at school or university usually start expressing their opinions younger than members of the other groups. It is important to highlight that only posts, messages and comments that are not connected with work or an

association's activity are counted. Due to the fact that people start to express their opinions on the Internet earlier than voting, median years of education are lower than for the first result variable. However, people affiliated to any political association are better educated than the other ones. Unemployed young people express their opinions on the Internet more often than employed ones, which is also interconnected with their age. However, people who do not live with their parents are more active in this political action. The highest median income is in the second group, and the lowest is in the first. Thus, political participation is positively correlated to income. The level of political participation in expressing opinions on the Internet is the highest among people who were involved in any voluntary political associations and is the lowest for people who were not involved in any activity (Table 5).

TABLE 5. FOUR GROUPS OF PEOPLE EXPRESSING THEIR POLITICAL OPINION ON THE INTERNET AMONG YOUNG CITIZENS ACCORDING TO FACTOR ANALYSIS

Characteristics	Non-involved	School political associations	Non-school political associations	Athletic and musical
Gender (female = 0)	0.48	0.45	0.51	0.47
Median age	23.4	20.9	22.7	23.2
Median years of education	12.7	13.8	13.4	13.1
Current work status (unemployed = 0, employed = 1)	0.46	0.39	0.41	0.45
Family composition (live with parents = 0, do not live with parents = 1)	0.62	0.65	0.73	0.75
Median income (among employed)	31,000	43,000	40,000	35,000
Number of positive answers	614	578	347	1973
N	1729	593	354	4077

p<0.05, the number of groups is sufficient

Logistic regression provides probabilities of changing the dependent factor according to changes of independent ones. In other words, the probability of political participation will change due to changing the key variables. Being female raises the probability of political participation by 5 % for voting and 3 % for expressing opinions. Each additional year adds 1% to the probability and voting and reduces the probability of expressing opinions by 0.5%. Thus, older people prefer to vote, whereas younger people prefer to express their ideas in less formal ways. Each additional year of education adds 1% and 1.5% percent respectively. These figures proved the idea that better educated people are more politically active. Both for voting and expressing opinions, it is true that employed people are less active than unemployed ones. People who do not live with their parents express their political opinion on the Internet more freely than those who live with their parents, whereas for voting the situating is the opposite. Each additional thousand rubles of income adds 0.7% and 0.3% to the probability of political participation respectively (Table 6).

TABLE 6. LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS FOR VOTING AND POLITICAL OPINION EXPRESSED ON THE INTERNET

Characteristics	Voting	Opinion expressing
Gender (female = 0)	-0.05 ¹	-0.03 ²
Age	0.01 ²	-0.005 ¹
Years of education	0.015	0.01
Current work status (unemployed = 0, employed = 1)	-0.11 ¹	-0.05 ¹
Family composition (live with parents = 0, do not live with parents = 1)	-0.09	0.13 ¹
Income (among employed)	0.007 ²	0.003 ²
Non-involved	-0.21 ¹	-0.14 ¹
School or university political associations	0.24 ¹	0.27 ¹
Non-school political associations	0.3 ¹	0.25 ¹

Athletic and musician	0.14 ¹	0.18 ¹
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The most important result is that involvement in any voluntary association during school or university significantly increases the probability of both voting and political opinion expressing in youth - increasing the probability of voting by 24 percent and of opinion expressing by 27 percent. Involvement in non-school political associations is slightly more significant for voting and a bit less significant for posting on the Internet. Participation in athletic or musician voluntary associations is about twice as significant for future political activeness. However, it still has a positive effect. Lack of involvement in any associations at school and university reduces the probability of future political participation from 14 to 21 percent.

3.4. RQ 4: Is Russia similar in the relationship between participation in voluntary associations during education and political participation in adulthood to other post-soviet countries? (Example of Belarus)

At present, many voluntary political associations have been created in other post-soviet countries. However, their number is significantly lower than in Russia. In Belarus, there are less than 1000 such organizations. According to Naviny.by (official Belarus newspaper), they number fewer than 500. There is a similar situation with regard to political participation in Belarus (Figure 3).

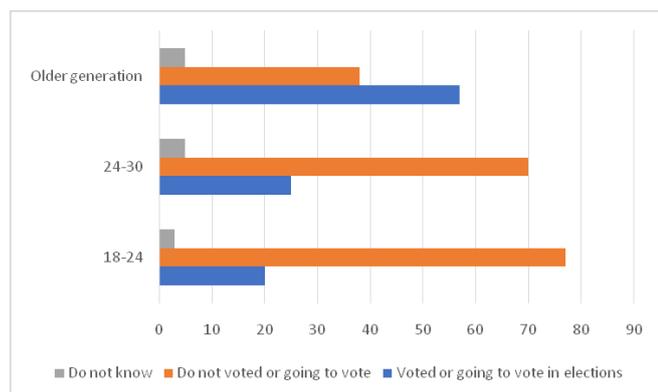


Figure 3. Percent of politically interested citizens in Belarus in different age groups in 2017 (percent of the group size) (Starosotskaya 2017)

The majority of older people Belarus are voting in elections, whereas the majority of young people are not voting: among 18-24-year-olds, less than 20 percent voted in the last elections. Among those aged 24-30, only 25 percent voted. These figures are low, and about twice as much lower than in Russia. This is the first key difference between the political participation of youth in Russia and other post-soviet countries.

The second key difference is the lower level of effect of the vast majority of independent variables. Thus, each additional year adds just 1.2 percent and 0.8 percent to the probability of voting and opinion expressing. Living without parents reduces the probability of voting by 3 percent and increases the probability of expressing opinion on the Internet by 7 percent. Each additional thousand rubles (prices were converted into Russian rubles for comparison) adds 0.3 percent to voting and 0.5 to expressing opinion. Thus, the

forementioned independent variables have a slightly lower effect than the same for Russia. The most significant change is observed with participation in voluntary associations. Non-involvement in any voluntary associations reduces the probability of political participation by 10 and 18 percent respectively. For Russia, these figures are 21 and 14 percent. Involvement in school or university political associations adds just 12 percent to voting in the future, and 8 percent to opinion expressing (25 and 27 percent for Russia). The same issue concerns participation in non-school political associations, athletic and musician organizations (Table 7).

TABLE 7. LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS FOR VOTING AND POLITICAL OPINION EXPRESSED ON THE INTERNET IN BELARUS

Characteristics	Voting	Opinion expressing
Gender (female = 0)	-0.02 ¹	-0.05 ²
Age	0.01	0.005 ¹
Years of education	0.012 ¹	0.008 ¹
Current work status (unemployed = 0, employed = 1)	0.1 ¹	0.05 ¹
Family composition (live with parents = 0, do not live with parents = 1)	-0.03	0.07 ¹
Income (among employed)	0.003 ¹	0.005 ²
Non-involved	-0.1 ¹	-0.18 ¹
School or university political associations	0.12 ¹	0.08 ¹
Non-school political associations	0.1 ¹	0.09 ¹
Athletic and musician	0.07 ¹	0.05 ¹

1 p<0,05, 2 p<0,01

Besides independent variables with generally less influence on political participation, there are others with more or less equal to Russia. Each additional year adds 1 percent to voting and 0.5 percent to opinion expression. In Russia people become less politically active on the Internet with age, which is opposite to Belarus citizens' behavior. Moreover, in Russia employed people are less politically involved, whereas in Belarus it is opposite. Employed people are 10



percent more likely to vote in Belarus and 5 percent more likely to express their political opinion on the Internet than unemployed ones. Thus, there is the third distinguishing factor between Russia and Belarus.

The last issue compared between these two countries is the number of political actions and predicted numbers from previous models. In Belarus 73 young individuals voted and according to the model for Russia, their number should be 127; 65 people expressed their opinion on the Internet, and the predicted number based on the Russian model is 119. Thus, Russian youth are more politically active than Belarussian one.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the research are concerned with previous studies. In Russia and other post-soviet countries (using the example of Belarus), the relationship between involvement in political activities during education and youth political participation has remained. These results are similar to Hanks (1981), Glanville (1999), Hart et al. (2007), Holland and Andre (1987), Kahne, Crow, and Lee (2013), McFarland and Thomas (2006), and Quintelier (2008). Russia is thought to be a generally regular country according to conformity between participation in political and non-political school and university voluntary associations. Whereas, in Belarus the same dependencies are not as prominent. In other words, Russia is more similar to other countries than other post-soviet countries.

In Russia the importance of education for youth political participation is rather high, which is similar to previous studies (Campbell 2006). In Russia years of education are clearly linked with level of education, therefore variables for educational level such as school, bachelors, masters or Ph.D. were excluded from the research to avoid duplication. Regarding the influence of education on youth political participation, Russia is similar to India. The results are consistent with previous results from Acharya et al. (2010). However, in Russia, females are more politically active and more educated, which is opposite of India. Excluding gender, these two countries are quite similar in interdependence of educational level and youth political participation.

Russian society is rather involved in the digital age. Behavior of youth on the Internet is more or less general in political context and consistent with the findings of Ekström and Östman (2015). Growth of political involvement and interest and inclusion in the digital age took place in Russian society simultaneously, which conforms with the results of Kahne, Middaugh, and Allen (2015). Moreover, Russian society is more equal than American society. Several non-parametric tests for K independent samples were used to find significant differences between representatives from different Federal Districts. The Kruskal-Wallis H test, Jonckheere-Terpstra test, and the median test were applied to define the differences between parts of the sample. As a result, the sample for Russia is sufficiently homogenous for the analysis. However, American society has more internal inequality in different characteristics (Pasek, et al. 2006).

Current research has shown that Russia in general has the same dependencies between involvement in voluntary

political associations during education and youth political participation; leadership in voluntary political associations is not so important as involvement in general; better educated, employed people with higher incomes are more politically active than average young men. Nevertheless, Russia is more similar to developing countries such as India than to developed ones such as USA, especially in terms of the importance of educational level. The study does not provide reasons for similarity or dissimilarity – they should be analyzed further.

Moreover, the study provides findings about similarity in examining the issue between Russia and other post-soviet countries. More or less similar tendencies were found. However, Russian citizens are more politically active, and dependencies between independent and dependent variables are not so clearly expressed in post-soviet countries. Thus, it can be concluded that Russia, according to the presented data, is more similar to developed countries such as USA, Norway and Italy than to post-soviet countries in the field of ability to affect youth political participation with the help of voluntary political associations for the development of pupils and students.

Future studies of the relation between involvement in political voluntary associations in Russia and youth political participation can study issues such as age of first involvement, frequency of Internet usage, type of education (humanitarian, economic or technical) and family wealth. Moreover, reasons of internal society inequality should be found, as in some studies dedicated to American society. One more important research question for future studies is why education level is so important for youth political participation in Russia and India, and less important in developed countries.

V. CONCLUSIONS

An important specific factor that has been found in the research is that Russian young people are less politically involved in case of employment, whereas in Belarus the situation is the opposite. The authors suppose that employed people in Russia are busy in private companies and have to work a lot due to the economic situation in the country. In Belarus, more people are working for the government or in private companies with government support. So, it is supposed that Belarussian employed citizens have to support the government by political participation, whereas in Russia these two spheres of life are more separated.

One more interesting finding is that older people in Russia, even in age group of 18-30 years old, are less likely to express their political opinions on the Internet. The authors suppose that the reason is that younger people are generally more active on the Internet for non-working or studying activities. However, this statement should be specified in further researches.

There are several key limitations of the research. The first is small sample for Belarus, which does not provide deep research for this country. Data for other post-soviet countries were not presented in the research. Moreover, political participation in Russia was

considered in terms of voting and expressing opinions on the Internet – participation in rallies, strikes, or political parties was not analyzed due to the lack of a reliable sample of adequate size. Nevertheless, the presented research helps to understand key dependencies and trends in youth political participation in Russia nowadays.

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