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THE PHENOMENON OF POLITICAL CULTURE: THEORETICAL REFLECTION AND PRACTICAL APPLICABILITY IN SLOVAKIA¹

Barbora Krištofová – Peter Ondria*

ABSTRACT

Our scientific study is of theoretical and empirical nature. The dominant aspect is the term political culture, characterising fashion and at the same time persistent phenomenon. This concept is a kind of socio-political agent, a priori associated with reciprocal action of culture and politics. In the primary theoretical and methodological part of work, we attempted to summarise and synthesise knowledge about political culture focusing on its rise, progress and subsequent naturalisation in the society, based on the published theories of major authors, and implied descriptive and comparative method. In the second part, we described and classified the term socialisation, relating to the political culture. For that reason, we focused mainly on secondary socialising agents, characterised by its implementation's importance for the formation of personality, as well as for the reproduction of social relations. In the third empirical and analytical part of work, we integrated quantitative research methods, through deductive method, based on the following objectives constitutive. This section of work includes the interpretation of results, evaluation and subsequently recommendations, findings and identified generalised research results. On the basis of acquired and exact data, we tried to test our hypotheses concerning key points of work, by process of methodological testing.

Key words: political culture, socialisation, socialising factors, media, media literacy, empirical analysis, sociological research

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Introduction

The political culture presents fashionable and at the same time persisting phenomenon, which oscillates at two distinct scales of interdisciplinary and reductionist way of investigation, a priori linked with reciprocal influence of culture and politics. This continuity was expressed, by charming words by **Léopold Sédar Senghor**, the significant Senegalese politician: "The policy must be in cultural operation and not culture in the service of policy".

In our scientific study we tried to synthesise knowledge about political culture, focusing on its rise, progress and subsequent domestication in society.

In the first theoretical and methodological part of study, we implemented the following methods of examination: descriptive method that was used to clarify relations and occurrence, and comparative method as statistical analysis and study selection to explain the selected notion. In the primary part we tried to identify the notion of political culture, distinguish it from sociological, anthropological, ethnic, psychological and modern definition of culture. We focused on potential of political culture for the development of political system with emphasis on its fundamental character and priorities, by comparison of selected conceptions and concepts.

Our principal intention was to create the knowledge base for explication and application of findings of the second section of our work.

Secondary methods, used in the accumulation of exact knowledge, needed to clarify key points of work were also specialised literature, including book publications related to the researched topic.

In the second part of our paper we tried to characterise and define the term socialisation in relation to political culture.

For that reason we focused our attention on secondary socialising agents, characterised by the importance of their implementation for the formation of personality, but also for the reproduction of social relations.

The purpose of our paper was to find and determine the influence of the media as the secondary socialisation factor in contemporary society. The studied attribute was coexistence, convergence and possible impact of two spectrums - political culture and media as the instrument of communication.

In the third, empirical and analytical part of the paper, we integrated quantitative research methods, through deductive method, based on the following constitutive objectives:

1. Determine whether young people consider the media as a source of information by the change of communication method and new technologies.
2. Determine whether contemporary youth has a high degree of media literacy and the therefore is able to distinguish objectivity of the information, presented in the media.
3. Determine the kind of media through which young people are most aware of the political life.
4. Determine what kind of media is the most used during the day by young people.
5. Determine whether Slovakia has a sufficient number of media and media coverage, which would serve to spread the politicisation among young people.

In the empirical part of work we used a survey questionnaire as the most adequate form of sociological research, due to effective and pragmatic incorporation of large group of respondents and acquisition of cumulative data for statistical processing.

Analytical part of work comprised the interpretation of results, evaluation and subsequent recommendations, findings and generalisation of the results. On the basis of acquired and exact data, we tried to verify the formulated hypothesis, concerning key points of work, by process of methodological testing. In this process statistically processed summary results were used in form of tabular outputs, respectively graphs, compiled through program MS Excel, and based on mathematical and statistical methods.

A sample of respondents consisted of specific social and demographic group of the citizens of the Slovak Republic, aged between 17 and 19 years, defined as *Youth*. This sample was selected on the basis of its characteristics, properties, specific interest and requirements, value orientations, significantly differentiated from other age groups. Young people are the potential fundament for the development of society, and they are drawn to the secondary socialisation process, and can be indicated for their aspects of political socialisation.

1 The Political Culture as the Interest of Modern Political Science

"Political culture is one of the most popular and seductive concepts in political science; it is also one of the most controversial and confusing."

David J. Elkins, Richard E.B. Simeon

The concept of human society as civilisation and natural system is characterised by apparently discreet artefact of social existence, namely culture. By the view of **Raymond Williams**, the term of culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the language (Williams, 1983).

In modern anthropological concept, which was created in zone of examination to anthropologist, sociology, ethnography, psychology and other emerging specialised science disciplines, it is possible to determine the term - culture as a system, respectively above-biological environment, in which a human being is adapted to external environment.

The definition of **Edward Burnett Tylor** is considered the first global scientific definition of culture: "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1889, s. 3).

In contemporary society the term culture is mostly determined in analogy with the art as a quasi synonym of artistic activity or a specific way of life that differentiates individual communities.

The notion of political culture is a significant aspect of every human society, reflecting certain state, or progress. In particular, in the analysis of political life focused on that issue, it is not easy to define precisely the term political culture.

From the point of view of an adequate definition, an important attribute is the ability to specify this term at least so precisely that it could be construed as a starting base from which further considerations can be derived.

The essence of political culture can be seen as "nebula" which is distinguished from different points of view located inside the boundaries, but at their core can be imagined content that is common to all. This core is political culture within the meaning of subjective political process. (Skovajsa, 2006, p. 32)

"Political culture is generally defined as the subjective counterpart of "internal" political structures and processes, can offer their explanations, which

are unobtainable, and this is sufficient reason for scientific interest in the political culture or culture in general” (Skovajsa, 2006, p. 32).

“Nowadays, political culture is mostly presented as a set of knowledge, values and habits of large groups, notably government congregation and nations, affecting the political situation. The political system creates a reference assembly of political culture, which itself became a representative system. The political culture presents a political and psychological physiognomy of state, nation, elites, political parties and movements.” (Krejčí, 2004, p. 99)

This view of the political process is characterised by the lowest common denominator, in which all concepts overlap.

“According to precision and understanding of the value elements we can distinguish three ways to use of the term civic culture: publicist, moralising and social science.” (Skovajsa, 2006, p. 22)

2 Historical and Ideological Sources of Political Culture

The origins of political culture can be traced back to the ideas of the greatest ancient philosophers, **Plato** and **Aristotle**, who in their writings put the emphasis on values, knowledge, attitudes, but also traditions, and investigated the effect of these factors on the formation of political system.

A lot of classical thinkers of social and political philosophy pointed out the relations of the general connection of culture with political power.

Mainly **Jean Jacques Rousseau**, in his work *The Social Contract*, regarded as the “greatest welfare”, as the goal of all legislative systems, freedom and equality. **J.J. Rousseau**, emphasising the moral and spiritual values, claimed that they represent a specific law, which is the real substance of a State.

The essential contribution of **Charles Louis Secondat de Montesquieu** for political science was the differentiation of state power into the legislative, executive and judicial power, while in his work *The Spirit of Laws* he exactly described the necessity of laws: “Laws, in their most general meaning, are the necessary relations arising from the nature of things. In this sense all beings have their laws: God has his laws, material world has its laws, the beings superior to man have their laws, the animals have their laws, and the man has his laws” (Montesquieu, 1989, p. 113).

In attempts to create universal concepts of political culture there are not any notable differences that would incorporate the complexity of the term political culture.

However, there are certain definitions focusing on specific central components which generate political culture. These are the components that emphasise the fact that the political culture is a product of the collective history of a certain political system or the result of the individual member's development in particular system (Pye, 1968).

In Marxist theory, the political culture is conceived as a part of the "superstructure" of the society, in which cultural norms and values were determined by the social and economic level (Gibbins, 1989).

Max Weber considered political culture as a way of strengthening politics and define the political, economic and social order, which refers to culture created by individual orientations of particular rational interest of the individual.

Systematic theory considers politics as a kind of structure that persists depending on the implementation of outputs that influence the defined system. According to this concept, the political culture is situated out of political environment or active centre (Easton, 1965).

Functionalist theory defines political culture as a set of logical links among necessary preferences, interests and opinions (Welch, 1993).

T. Parson and functionalist approach of political culture can be seen as a means of social cohesion. However, this concept does not include the relations between specific values, beliefs, opinions and attitudes of human beings. In addition, it contains some uncertainties about explanations of conflict and social change (Morá, 1996).

Talcott Parson defined political culture as an integrative mechanism, which in sphere of political socialisation guarantees certain way of integration.

From the perspective of *cultureless theory* it is possible to define four distinctive elements of culture. In the first sense, culture is associated with the society and consists of a certain way of thinking and acting. From the second point of view, culture is regarded as a kind of "social life," consisting of the following aspects: faith, knowledge, law and customs. In the third case culture is a particular factor that separates one society from another. The fourth meaning of culture is seen as a variable component, because it connects the common ways of thinking and regulating social position (Eckstein, 1987).

Other concepts are mainly based on determination of the different values and attitudes and consequently passed by generation process (Inglehart, 1999), while other definitions put into categories of different values those which have different political consequences (Lane, 1992) or those which define certain social practices (Wildavsky, 1987).

The political culture can be seen as an integrative and auto identifying factor, because it requires a creation of collective identity. However, some authors deny the fact that the political culture might have had the unifying function, and prefer the belief that it can be seen as a way of integration and as well as a way of disintegration, because by the guiding of political activity it can generate conflict, but also cooperation.

Other authors believe that culture plays a role in the activities of human beings, is able to cause conflicts, and it is socially disintegrated (Eder, 1996).

Other concepts related to political orientations articulate the importance of assumptions and consider the political culture, based on acquisition of the attitude of the political world, respectively the centre of attention, as an element related to events, institutions and ways, which defines what is realistically possible, identifies potential problems, requires the formation of decisions and foresees the arrangement in possible order. The spectrum of attitudes and assumptions that coexist with each other in one culture may be very consistent and mutually correlated (Elkins and Simeon, 1979).

The period when the concept of political culture reached the largest progress were two decades of 1950s and 1960s, throughout the following works: *Comparative Political System* (1956) by a pioneer **Gabriel Abraham Almond** and *The Civil Culture* (1963) by authors **Gabriel Abraham Almond** and **Sydney Verba**.

The term of political culture was introduced into verbal usage in political science by **Gabriel Abraham Almond** in 1956, in the article *Comparative Political System*.

According to **G. Almond**, the political culture was defined as distinctive tendency orientation of political activity, in which the entire political system is permanent (Almond, 1956). He also pointed out that a particular model of political orientation does not overlap with the political system or culture, but it extends beyond their definition. This American political scientist has implemented primarily quantitative-empirical research on attitudes and international comparisons in his work. Based on the methods of investigation of political science and sociological spectrum, he created his own terminology of investigation.

Gabriel Almond under the influence of **Talcott Parsons** implied the principle of orientations to political action, which are clamped by policy objects. Referred orientation can be categorised into three groups: cognitive, affective and value.

Each one of the well-defined orientation presents the result of knowledge, feelings and values, and refers to the inside of political objects or relations between them. In their shaping, the socialisation has a huge impact (Mateos, 2012).

The concept of political culture in general can be defined as a compound of series of personal opinions, the perception that prevail in society. Political culture includes cognitive, affective and value components. Its content is the result of political socialisation and experience. It also affects the structure and political, or, more precisely, governmental power (Almond, 1999).

In the second half of the 20th Century the new concepts derived from the initial concepts defining the term political culture emerged. One of them was a "*secular concept of political culture*," which persisted in emphasising the intriguing routine and ordinary conversations, in the body of changes considering the results and what individuals interpreted as something political. *Secular political culture* focused also on the stability of politics, which could be based on the inhibition of its own citizens through political participation in the political institutions.

Along with the mentioned concept of referring culture, the terms "*new political culture*" and "*postmodern culture*" (Merelman, 1998) also appeared. *New political culture*, as well as *post-modern culture*, came in a close relationship with the emergence of new post-modern values and changes in social preferences.

At the end of 1980s, a major political scientist **Ronald F. Inglehart** said that incomplete models that ignore cultural factors are still more obvious. Since then, many studies have focused on political culture as the original and remarkable aspect, through which it is possible to explain political progress. A new political culture, therefore, should be viewed as a sort of explicit analysis of socio-structural characteristics.

According to **T. Clark** and **R. F. Inglehart** (1989, 1999), the concept of a new political culture indicated the existence of seven key points that define a certain difference in society:

1. The classic dimension of left-right parties has undergone a transformation. Definitions and characteristics that create the characteristic elements of left parties and right parties are different in those acquired in traditional development.

2. Social and economic-fiscal assumptions were clearly chosen. There is no longer "super structural ideology," which would stake out differences in the relationship of social determinants
3. Social background got to the most important role in the reciprocal relation to economic and fiscal attributes.
4. Increasing of individualism and social prosperity of trade.
5. The question of welfare state is moved forward
6. Increase in the growth of political aims and expansion of civic participation. Recording of progressivity of a hierarchical organisation.
7. New political cultures has brought changes in the economic sector and in the family, while both environments reflecting the loss of influence in the social and economic hierarchy, increase the values of consensus and disseminating information via media. (Clark, 1989; Inglehart, 1999)

3 Process of Socialisation as the Principal Determinant of the Character of Political Culture

Socialisation is the process of social education, in which the human individual acquires, or, more precisely, internalises values, norms and methods of action, understandable and applicable in a given culture or subculture.

In the second section of our paper we tried to describe and define the term "socialisation", or, more precisely, the term "political socialisation" which is closely related to the problem of political culture. For that reason, we focused mainly on secondary socialising factors, characterised by the importance of their implementation for the formation of personality, but also for the reproduction of social relations.

The chief purpose of our paper is to identify and determine the influence of the media as the secondary socialisation factor in the contemporary society. The studied attribute was coexistence, convergence and possible impact of two spectrums – the political culture and the media as the instrument of communication.

Socialisation as a primary phase and base of a political system is characterised also in other sectors. In political science this term is mainly used in political psychology and sociology of policy.

One of the most significant political scientists, **G. Almond**, defined the term

socialisation as resulting in a set of beliefs, values and attitudes to the political system, its roles, officials (Almond, Coleman, 1960).

"Understanding of socialisation was affected by the American society, especially in the second half of the 20th Century. These theories can be defined as an interactive model of socialisation. Here we could include in particular the theory of human development, the theory of development of the social environment, even the society as well, as they influence each other "(Ondria, 2007, p. 112).

The process of socialisation is important for formation of personality, but also for the reproduction of social relations. The process of socialisation is not only process of individual accommodation in society, but it is a process of personality formation, the so-called *personalisation*. In this process there is, in particular, a sequence and convergence of two phases: *primary and secondary socialisation*.

Primary socialisation is characterised by an *anticipatory socialisation*. This type includes learning, adaptation of values, norms and patterns of the group or society, whose member the individual, usually a child, is going to become. In this phase, the influence of an individual's parents plays decisive role.

Secondary socialisation can be achieved through arbitrary persons, whereas subject which is mediated has a specialised nature, and is usually connected with preparation for professional occupations, respectively, to membership in some formal group.

During the socialisation process, young people move "from potential members of the society to its actual members, from non-productive to productive, from preparing to ready, from economically non-autonomous to economically autonomous, and from non-fully fledged to fully fledged members in the difficult dialectical interaction society versus youth." (Suchý, 1969, 2003, p.12)

"Political socialisation is the process of learning about politics, political system, political parties and democracy." (Ondrejkoč, 1997, p. 30) This term refers to difficult and continuous process, or more precisely to individual's disposition to exercise his or her political rights. The human individual is not acting in society only as a passive agent, but he/she is actively intervening in administration and influencing it by his/her own possibilities. The result of successful political socialisation is a condition where a human being feels some comfort in political regime, or more precisely a state of political conformity.

Gabriel Almond outlined the term of political socialisation as the process of bringing an individual into the political culture. Its result is a set of attitudes -

knowledge, value standards and sympathy for the political system (Almond, 1992).

The process of political socialisation is exposed and relevant attribute mainly to those "*sophisticated in the incorporation*" of young people into social processes. According to **Preiser**, young people "should be interested in politics, no later than achieving the electoral age, they should be able to evaluate the political situation independently and follow competently political objectives" (2002, p. 177).

4 Factors Determining Political Attitudes – Opinion forming Tools

Primary formative aspects that participate in the process of socialisation can be defined as "*socialising factors*". Considering the characteristics of socialisation as the unification of intentional, functional (intentional) and spontaneous (unintentional) effects involved in the creating of personalisation of human beings, it is possible to classify subjects on:

1. *Primary educational factors*, i.e., family, peer groups, university, educational institutions;
2. *Secondary non-educational factors*, i.e., the mass media, social institutions, colleagues, neighbourly relationships, army.

This research paper emphasises particularly the role of media as singular and distinctive secondary socialisation agent. "Information resources of various types have always played and will continue to play an important role in society. However, we must acknowledge that in socialisation process they have irreplaceable role for human being. They are essential for both the socialisation itself, as well as for the functioning of a democratic political system." (Ondria, 2007, p. 115)

"Although mass media are a market with political information, they have also become a "second-hand" in some way." (Krejčí, 2004, p. 126) They present powerful tool to influence the socialisation, but they are also a mean of individual presentation. Print media as well as electronic media are nowadays an essential source of information and method of education of individuals. Interest in political topics is supported by the public, precisely shaped and refined by modern mass media as primary factors appeal to the diffusion of communication in an international context.

Communication or, more precisely, the exchange of information between

individuals, presents the pillar of an interaction and coexistence of human beings in society. The concept of communication is also linked with the complexity of the definition of cardinal differences between conceptual plurality of media and mass media.

Media or, more precisely, *communication tools*, in general could be regarded as a medium, namely an intermediary, mediator, instrument or agent of factual information (Brestovanský, 2010).

They should be defined as communication tools, whose primary function is to communicate within the masses from the written word in newspapers to the speech on the radio or television.

Mass media or, more precisely, *the mass communication tool*, can be seen as a "subcategory" of principled set identified by the term media. From this perspective, they are implementers of mass communication, public information and announcement media. (Brestovanský, 2010)

"The mass media have historically been called a power tool for democratic development, which allowed to unite and educate the public and ultimately improve decision making within the political system" (Müller, 2008, p. 139).

We live in an "era of media" and from each side we are attacked by different information of various types and contents. World media operate with a personal desire hidden directly in every human being: to learn something new. The media or, more precisely, the means of communication, contain two basic elements: education and attraction/attention of the society. The media themselves are not good or bad they are the only tools that serve for something good, i.e. positive, or for something harmful, i.e. negative. Without public media publicity people remain uninformed, or, more precisely, would not be sufficiently aware of many facts.

Media literacy is a wide-spectrum range issue which includes the operational power of communication tools and their appropriate social importance. We can characterise it as a competence "to receive, analyse, evaluate and communicate a wide variety of media content" (Zettl, 1999, p. 51).

Media literate person is able to maintain a certain personal distance from media production. This individual human can evaluate the offer of communications tools from several aspects, whether ethical or aesthetic.

5 Empirical Analysis of Major Opinion-forming Tools

In the following empirical part of our research paper we tried to determine,

define and conclude the current state of media influence on the chosen sample of *Youth* as one of the most authoritative socialisation factors, but also point out the correlation between the means of communication and the phenomenon of political culture. In this part of investigation were integrated the quantitative methods, based on deductive method and methodological hypothesis testing in order to verify our hypotheses. Sociological research has been carried out through questionnaire method, and our principal intention was to acquire specific information from respondents.

During this process we applied mathematical and statistical methods of research. The answers were recorded by special and independent alternative choice of an individual from of a questionnaire.

The analytical part of our work was related to prediction, i.e. the interpretation of the results and their evaluation, followed by recommendations, generalisation of identified results by methodological testing of hypotheses. The completed questionnaires are differentiated into different groups (sex, place of residence, etc.) and consequently analysed. The questionnaire's results were processed by a computer program MS Excel, based on mathematical and statistical methods. This process has been concluded with the statistical accumulation of the summary results in the form of graphs that allow a good visual comparison.

The principal base of our sociological process was created by the media as the one of the most reflected secondary socialisation factors. We tried to characterise the influence of media coverage on the process of politicisation of young people and diffusion of political occurrences. We focused on the possibility of coexistence, convergence and possible impact of two spectrums - political culture and media. Political interest is one of the most significant indicators of level of civic and political participation. It is evident that it partially expresses political preparation of young people to participate in political life and decision-making processes.

A sample of respondents consisted from specific social and demographic group of citizens of the Slovak Republic, in the age range from 17 to 19 years, defined as *Youth*. The specific research sample consisted of 121 respondents, i.e. randomly chosen students of the Mikuláš Kováč Grammar School in Banská Bystrica.

5.1 Research Questions

Constitutive research questions used in our scientific study are the following:

1. Do young people consider the media as the source of information, based on the change in the way of communication via new technologies?
2. Do the young people nowadays have high level of media literacy and, consequently, are they able to recognise and evaluate the objectivity of information presented in the media?
3. What kinds of the media are most often used to inform young people about political issues?
4. What kinds of the media are the most frequently used by the young people during the day?
5. Does Slovakia have a sufficient number of the media types and media coverage which would serve to spread the politicisation among young people?

5.2 Formulation of Hypotheses

Based on the acquired empirical data we have methodologically tested the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (question 7, 9, 10, 12, 13): The mass media communication tools and new technology changed the way of communication and young people mostly consider them as the source of information.

Hypothesis 2 (question 10, 14): The young people have high level of media literacy, and therefore, a young person is able to receive, analyse and evaluate broad range of media content, and believes that the media do not provide objective information and prefers vaudeville-creative way of communication.

Hypothesis 3 (question 5, 6, 8): The young people have interest in political process mainly by the means of electronic media.

Hypothesis 4 (question 4, 8): More than one half of respondents use primarily the Internet during the day, and, therefore, politicisation of young people has the highest potential via Internet, especially though social networks.

Hypothesis 5 (question 3, 5, 11, 15): In Slovakia, there are enough media types and adequate level of mediatisation to spread the politicisation.

For purposes of sociological research and specific research, there are several kinds of exact research methods. In our study we have chosen as the most adequate alternative just a questionnaire, which specifically indicates the

social relationship between the respondent and researchers.

This method of research was mainly applied because of effective and pragmatic reaching of large group of respondents and receiving cumulative data for statistical processing. The questionnaire consisted from three principal sections and 15 questions. The conduct of questionnaire took place in February 2013. The total return of questionnaires was above the standard, e. g. 100% because all 121 interviewed respondents returned and filled in completed questionnaires.

This questionnaire was carried out anonymously and separately by each of the respondents, through indicating one possible alternative to each question. The published data have been collectively prepared.

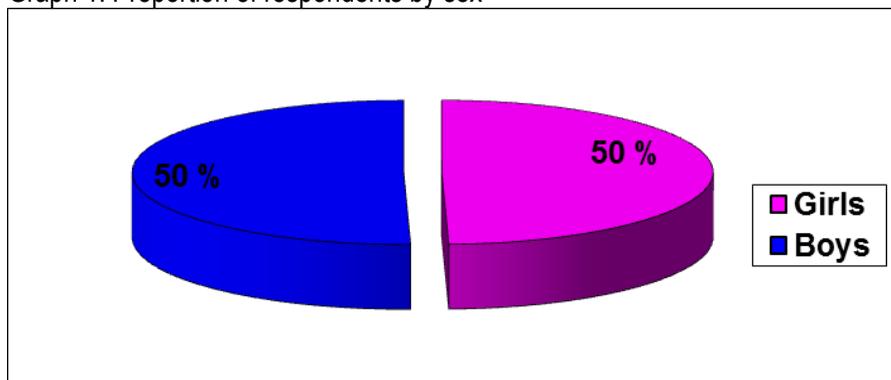
In the processing of the questionnaire we evaluated each specified item (question) separately, with the principal aim of the frequency response, which we consequently expressed absolute and relative value in percentage.

5.3 The Interpretation of Research Data

Question 1: **Sex.**

The specific research sample consisted of 121 respondents. The graph 1 shows demographic data, which represent the proportion of interviewed respondents. This sample comprised 60 girls and 61 boys.

Graph 1: Proportion of respondents by sex



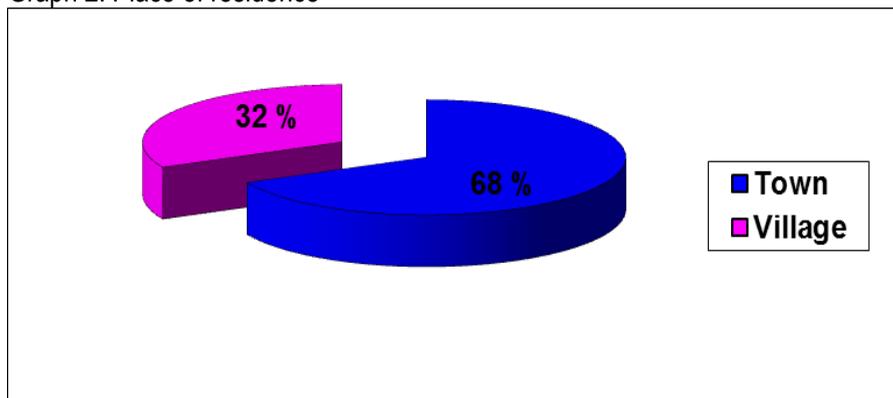
Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 2: **Residence.**

The graph 2 shows the place of residence. From all the interviewed

respondents were 82 (68 %) from town, and 39 (32 %) students reported village as their location of residence.

Graph 2: Place of residence

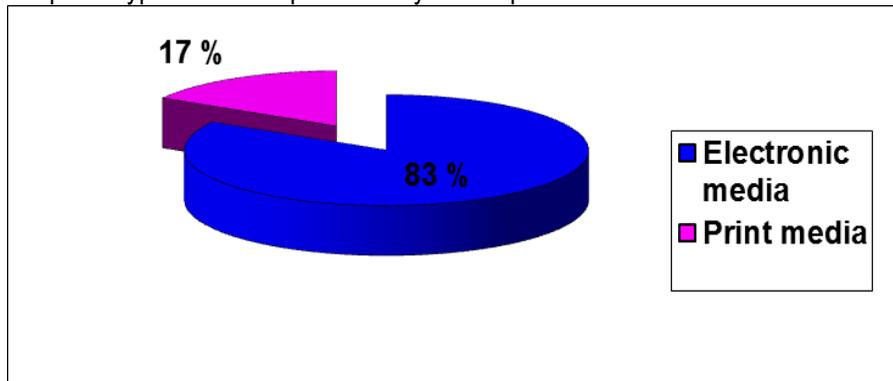


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 3: **What kind of following types of media do you prefer?**

In this question we investigated the primary and dominant source from which students acquire information for their personal development. This graph shows that 101 respondents (83 %) prefer electronic media, and only 20 respondents (17 %) use classic (print) media.

Graph 3: Types of media preferred by the respondents

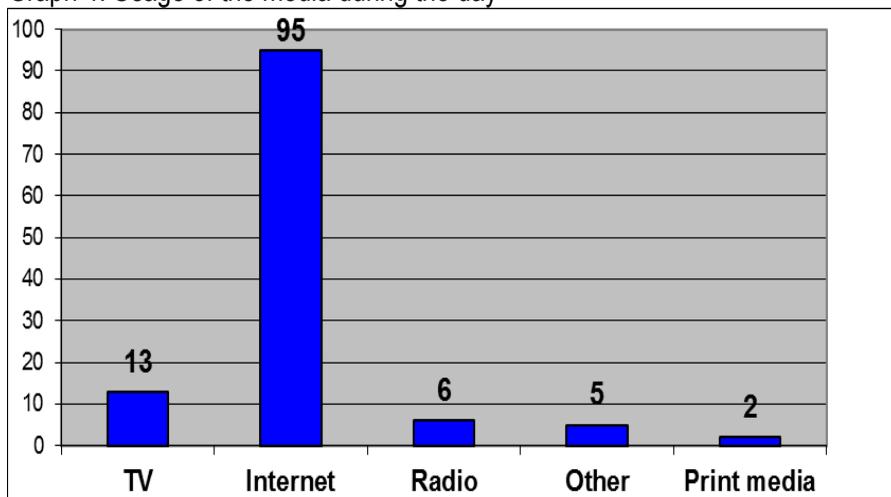


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 4: Which of the following media are you mostly using during the day?

In this question we examined the source from which students predominantly acquire information. From the results shown in graph 4 we can see that the most frequently used source of information is the Internet - 95 respondents (78 %). In second place is the television with 13 respondents (11 %) followed by the radio, counting 6 respondents (5 %). Possibility of adding another source of information has been indicated by 5 respondents (4 %). The least used are print media, chosen only by 2 respondents (2 %).

Graph 4: Usage of the media during the day

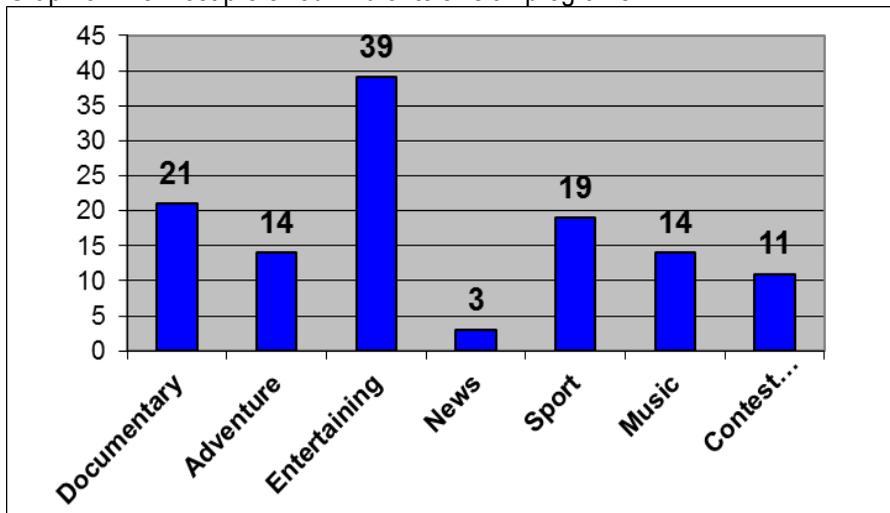


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 5: Which kind of the following television programs do you prefer?

In this question we focused on the exploration of television programs that students watch preferably. The present graph shows that as many as 39 respondents (32 %) prefer entertainment programs; 21 respondents (17 %) like documentaries; in the third place young people prefer sport programs – indicated by 19 respondents (16 %). In the fourth place they prefer adventure and music programs, each preference chosen by 14 respondents (12 %). Contest programs are preferred by 11 respondents (9 %) and 3 respondents (2 %) like to watch the news.

Graph 5: The most preferred kind of television programs

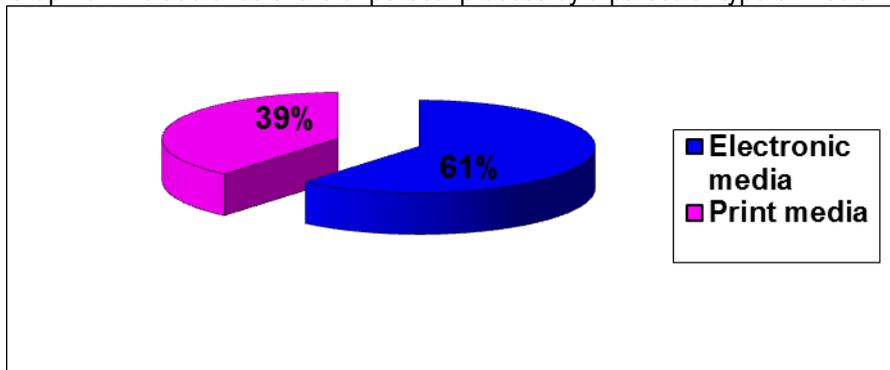


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 6: In which kind of media are you more interested regarding the political situation?

The question is related to the interest of young people in the political situation. The presented graph shows that 74 respondents (61 %) follow the developments of political situation in the electronic media and 47 respondents (39 %) follow political affairs just in print media.

Graph 6: The audience share of political process by a particular type of media

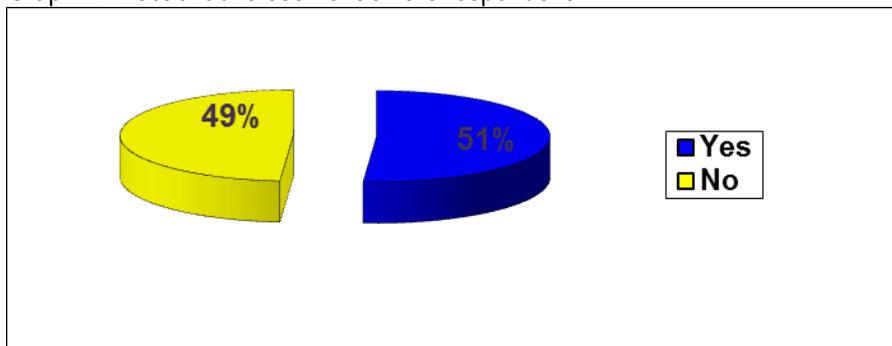


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 7: Has the advertising ever influenced your decision?

We investigated whether advertising has ever influenced a decision of respondents. In this question 62 respondents (51 %) answered positively and negative answer has been provided by 59 respondents (49 %).

Graph 7 Effect of advertisement on the respondent



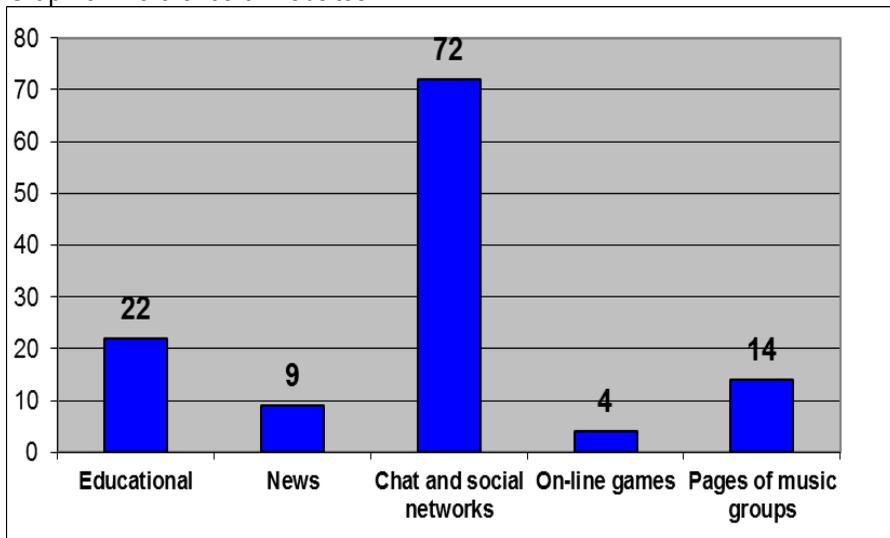
Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 8: Which kind of the following website do you prefer?

Taking into account that the graph no. 4 showed that 78 % of respondents prefer the Internet we were interested in which kind of websites do students mostly use.

As many as 72 respondents (60 %) prefer chats and social networks, and the second most visited category represent educational sites with 22 respondents (18 %). On the third position figured websites of musical bands indicated by 14 respondents (12 %). Only 9 respondents (7 %) are interested in news, and only 4 respondents (3 %) prefer online games.

Graph 8: Preference of websites

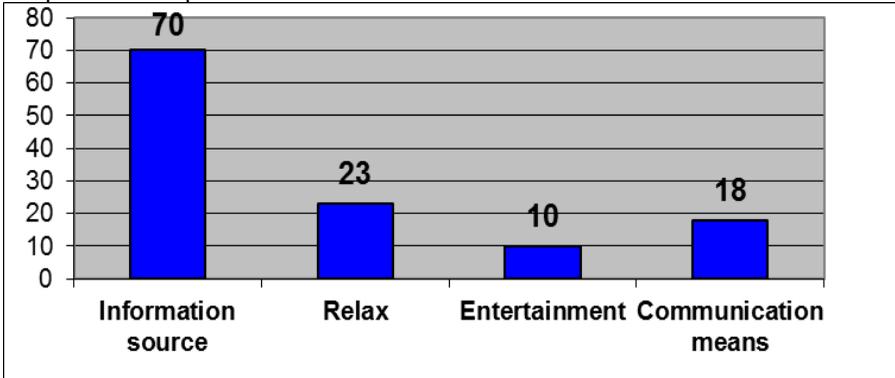


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 9: **What do media means for you?**

In this question we investigated the exact definition what the media mean for young people. The fact that the media are a source of information was confirmed by 70 respondents (58 %). On the other hand, 23 respondents (19 %) indicated that media serve as relax to them, 18 respondents (15 %) defined the media as a means of communication. Only for 10 respondents (8 %) the media represent a way of entertainment.

Graph 9: The importance of media

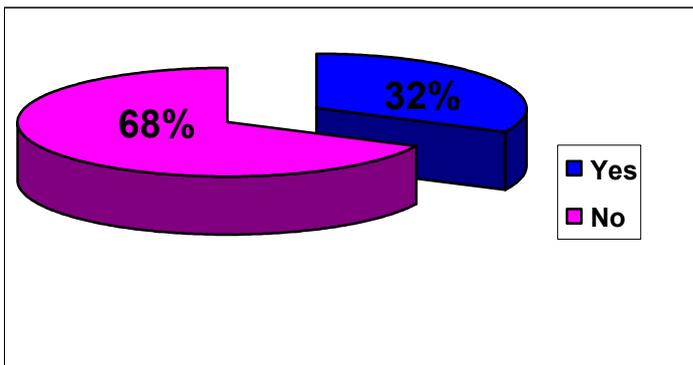


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 10: Do you think that media provide objective information?

The following graph has brought us the interesting fact, related to objectivity of the information provided by the mass media. As many as 82 respondents (68%) answered negatively, while 39 respondents (32 %) believe that the media provide objective information.

Graph 10: Media Objectivity



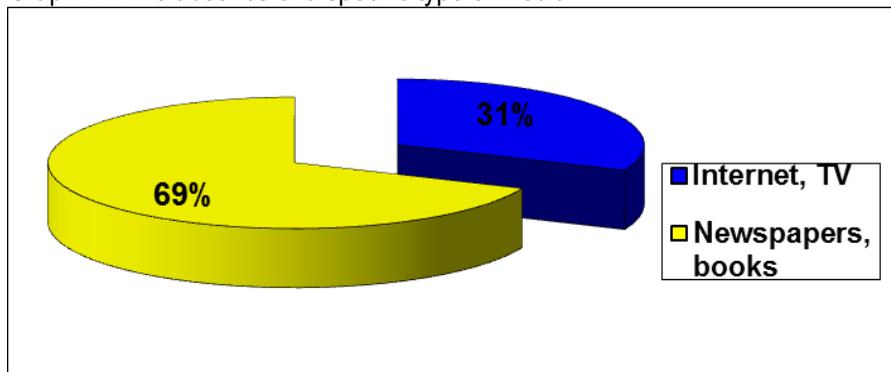
Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 11: Can you imagine your life without either print or electronic media?

In this question, students had to identify the type of media which they can

imagine living without. 83 respondents (69 %) affirmed that they would be able to live without print media, and 38 students (31 %) indicated that they would be able to find an alternative for the Internet and the television.

Graph 11: The absence of a specific type of media

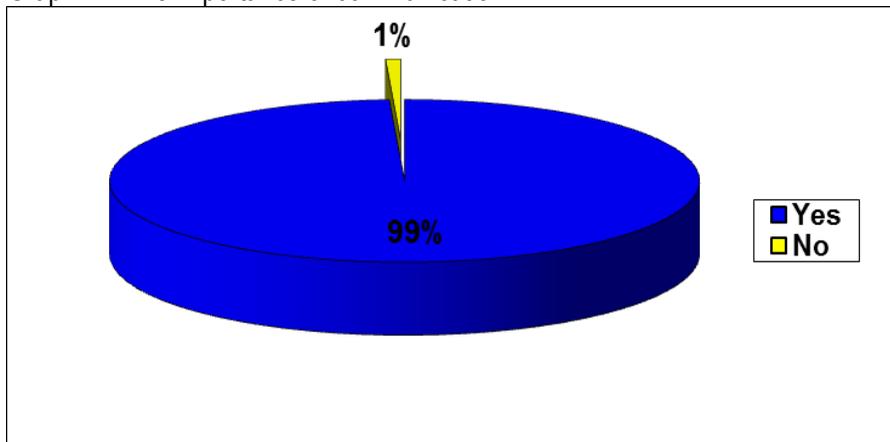


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 12: Do you think that communication is important?

The below presented graph related to the 12th question shows how important is the exchange of information and mutual interaction for the young people. The fact that communication is important was supported by 120 respondents (99 %), while only 1 respondent (1 %) indicated that communication does not have significant relevance.

Graph 12: The importance of communication

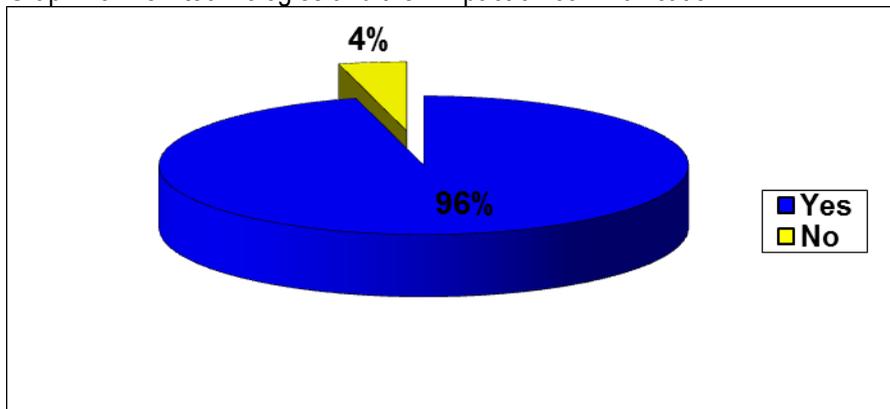


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 13: Do you think that new technologies have changed the way we communicate?

In this question we investigated the attitude of students to new technologies, whether they believe that these have changed the way of communication. From the collected data we can summarise that as many as 116 respondents (96 %) of the total number of students surveyed believe that the new technologies have changed the way we communicate. Much less, only 5 respondents (4 %) take the opposite view, arguing that new technology did not change the way of communication and interaction between people.

Graph 13: New technologies and their impact on communication.

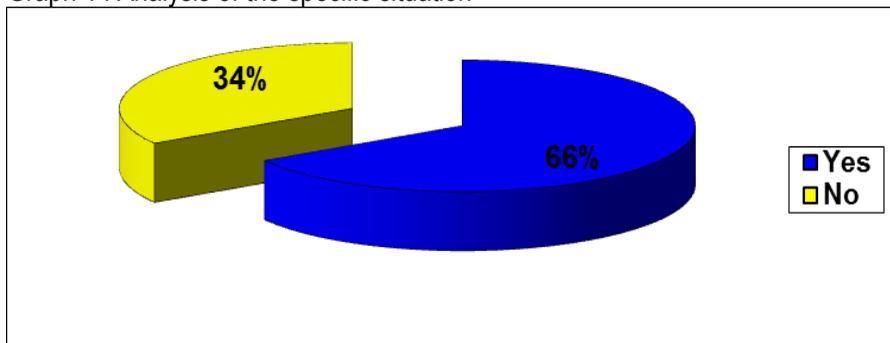


Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 14: Do you analyse the development of the particular situation?

In this question we focused on a more detailed analysis of students' thinking, namely whether young people tend to analyse and follow the development of a given particular situation. Option "yes" was chosen by 80 respondents (66 %) and the other option "no" was identified by 41 respondents (34 %).

Graph 14 Analysis of the specific situation



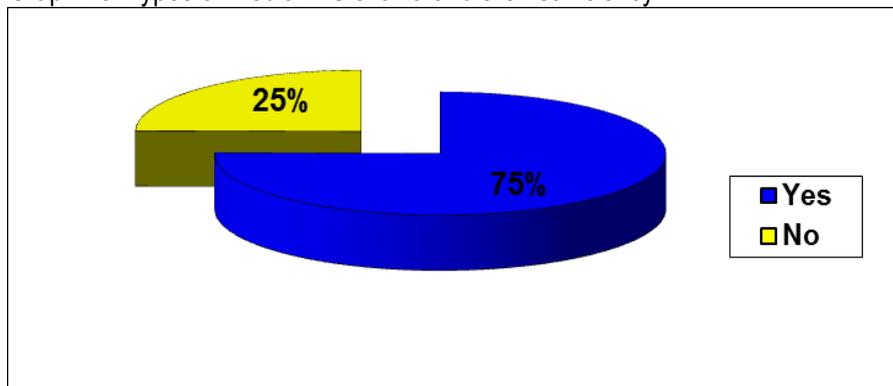
Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Question 15: Do you agree with the statement that in Slovakia there are enough different types of media?

Final question enquired whether the students believe that there are enough

types of media present in Slovakia. From the acquired data we found out that 91 respondents (75 %) consider existing types of media in Slovakia as sufficient. On the other hand, 30 respondents (25 %) are unsatisfied with current lower number of the types of media in Slovakia.

Graph 15: Types of media in Slovakia and their sufficiency



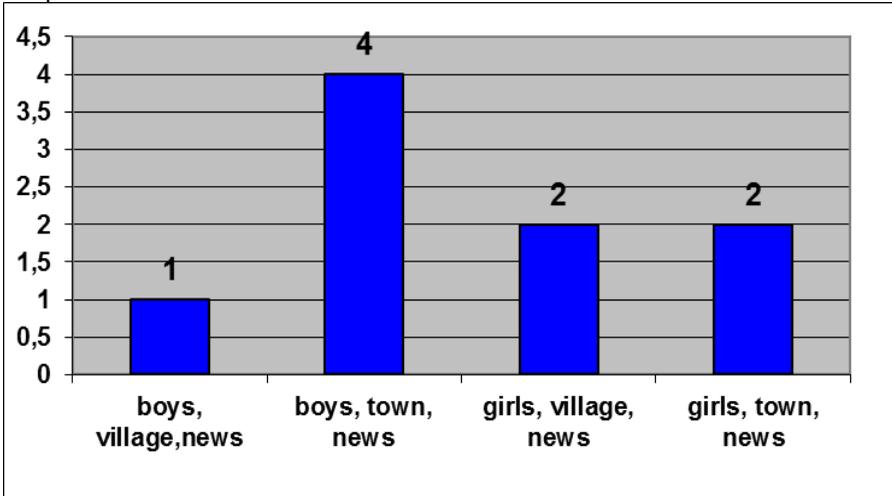
Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

The acquired electronic database contained as much as 1 815 different information. This quantum of data was then applied to identify other facts by usage of appropriate filters.

To illustrate that, we created five combined graphs:

Graph 16: The combination of demographic factors, namely sex, residence and interest in the theme of the news (question 1, 2, 5). The graph shows that news is mostly watched by boys from cities.

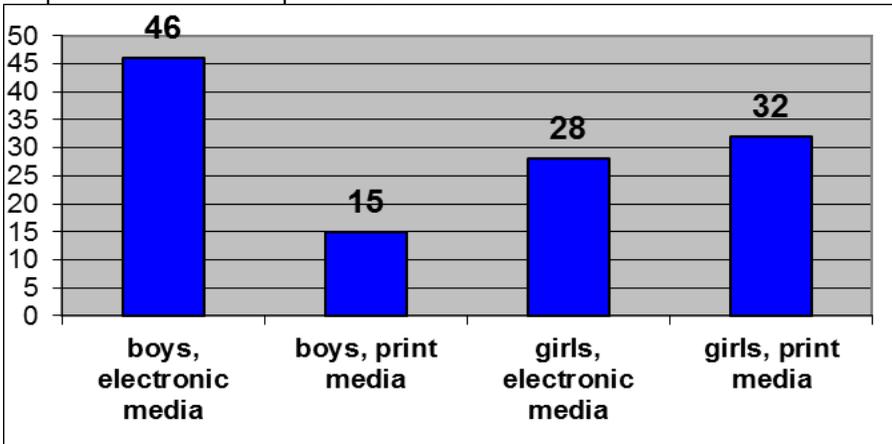
Graph 16: Interest in news



Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Graph 17: The combination of sex and media type (question 1, 6). We found out that boys prefer electronic communication tools, while girls are to a larger extent using print media.

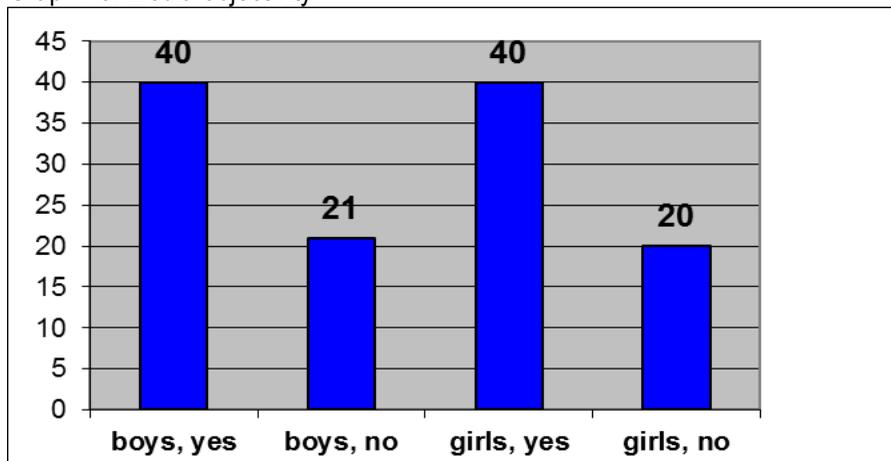
Graph 17: Interest in the political affairs in the media



Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Graph 18: The combination of sex and objectivity of information provided by the media (question 1, 10). The graph shows that both girls and boys think that the media do not provide objective information.

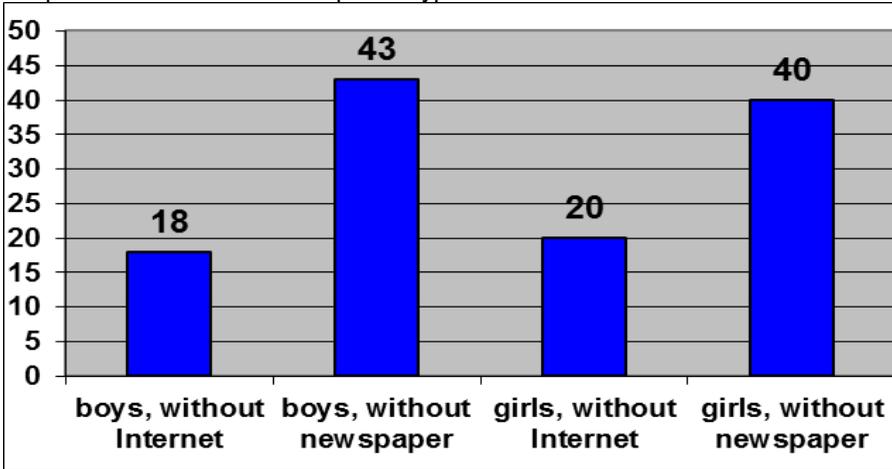
Graph 18: Media objectivity



Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Graph 19: The combination of sex and media types which young people are able to imagine living without (question 1, 11). The graph shows that both girls and boys can imagine their life without print media.

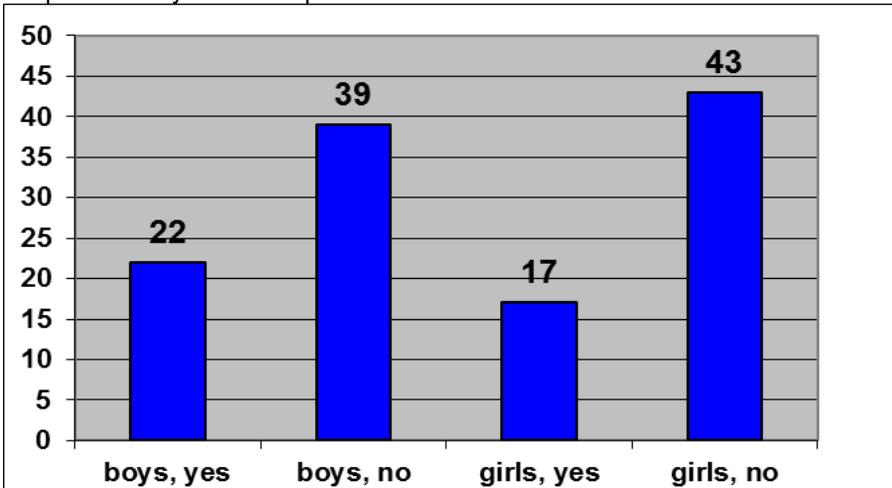
Graph 19: The absence of a specific type of media



Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

Graph 20: The combination of sex and analysis of particular situation (question 1, 14). We found that both girls and boys usually analyse development of the particular situation.

Graph 20: Analysis of the specific situation



Source: Author, based on self-collected research data.

On the basis of these findings we may conclude that the formulated hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 have been confirmed, but the hypothesis 3 has been invalidated by the respondents.

A more detailed analysis of these hypotheses indicates that:

Hypothesis 1: The young people consider the media to be an instrument of communication and they perceive the new technologies as an effective tool which has changed the way of communication in the contemporary era. The interviewed responders principally consider them as a source of information, while they are aware of their subjectivity.

Hypothesis 2: The young people nowadays have high level of media literacy, and so are able to receive, analyse and evaluate a wide range of media content, while they suppose that the media does not provide objective information.

Hypothesis 3: The young people are not interested in current political situation. From introduced television programs, young people prefer entertainment programs (32 %), the news are preferred only by a few interviewed respondents (2 %). From indicated websites, young people prefer chats and social networks (60 %). Interesting finding is a fact that news portals are attended by a relatively small number of interviewed respondents (7 %). If young people watch the news, they prefer electronic media (61 %).

Hypothesis 4: Up to 78 % of respondents use the Internet during the day, while 60% of interviewees indicated that they socialise mainly by chats and social networks.

Hypothesis 5: Up to 75 % of respondents indicated that in the Slovak Republic there is a sufficient number of the types of media, while young people prefer entertainment programs and they could imagine their life without print media. This is evident from the fact that they prefer to follow political situation in the electronic media.

6 Summary of the Research Results

Based on the summarising of the most constitutive aspects of the research related to key terms, i.e. political culture, socialisation and the media, we have created a knowledge base for the explanation and application of the third part of our research paper, based on which it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

1. In general, young people prefer electronic media (83 %), in detailed

analysis it is evident that girls are in favour of print media.

2. Internet is the most used type of media during the day (78 %) and it has become more and more accessible, “the on-line generation“ spends more time by using it.
3. From the indicated television programs young people prefer entertainment programs (32 %), and the news are preferred only by a few interviewed respondents (2 %), while news are preferred especially by boys residing in town.
4. If young people watch the news, they prefer electronic media (61 %).
5. The advertising has already affected their decision (51 %).
6. From the indicated websites young people prefer chats and social networks (60 %) and these networks have become “a civil society” of teenage culture. An interesting finding is a fact that news portals are followed only by a relatively small number interviewed respondents (7 %).
7. The media is a source of information for young people (58 %).
8. Young people, mostly boys, can imagine living without print media (68 %), whereas girls could imagine their lives also without electronic media.
9. Young people, mostly girls, believe that the media do not provide objective information (69 %).
10. Young people consider the process of communication very important (99 %).
11. Young people assume that new technologies have changed the way of communication (96 %).
12. Young people usually analyse the development of the particular situation (66 %).
13. In Slovakia there is a sufficient number of the types of media (75 %).

These findings show that the political interest is one of the most significant indicators of the level of civic and political participation. It is evident that it partly reflects political maturity and readiness of young people to participate in political life and decision-making processes. The interest of current young generation in politics is relatively low, that is obvious by the irregular interest in obtaining information concerning the political process.

The media belongs to the secondary socialising factors and the youth

comprehend them as a notable source of information, but they are strongly aware of their subjectivity. Based on these findings it is possible to claim the following statement:

If someone person wants to attract the attention of young people, he or she should appeal to young people via electronic media, primarily by the Internet and especially by social networks and new technologies, which have changed the way and the process of interaction between the human beings. The young of nowadays have a high level of media literacy, and therefore they are able to receive, analyse and evaluate wide range of media content, while they assume that the media does not provide objective information and prefer entertaining-creative way of communication.

Conclusions

Political culture may be considered as wide-ranging space, where also the world of media oscillates. It is therefore only a question of an appropriate constellation of opportunities when they can connect and interact. Media as communication tools are used in political sphere as the way to education and attraction of society, or more precisely achieving its attention, in order to intensify and improve political beliefs.

The principal aim of our research paper was to systematise and analyse knowledge about political culture with interest in its rise, progress and subsequent introduction to verbal use in society, and demonstration to relevancy qualified notion in the context of socialisation process.

In first, theoretical and methodological part of our paper, we used the following research methods: description, which was used to clarify a particular notion of civic culture from general view advisable for description of relations, occurrence, and comparative method as statistical analysis for explication of inscribed notion.

In this part of our research paper we devoted to the potential of political culture in development of political system, with accent to its fundamental character and priorities, by comparing selected conceptions and concepts.

In the second part of our paper we focused our attention on two terms, i.e. socialisation and political socialisation.

In the third empirical and analytical part of our paper we integrated quantitative method, based on deductive method. On the knowledge base dedicated to explanation and application of findings, we attempted to

characterise the influence of mediatisation to politicisation of young people and diffusion of political occurrences through media as the one of the most important secondary socialisation agents. In this section we used sociological investigation.

We focused on the possibility of coexistence, convergence and possible influence of two spectrums - the political culture and the media as secondary socialisation agents.

In our research paper we used a questionnaire as the most adequate means of the research. It comprised fifteen close-ended questions. The sample of respondents consisted of specific socio-demographic group of citizens of the Slovak Republic aged between 17 and 19 years, defined as *Youth*. The specific research sample represented summary of 121 respondents, randomly chosen out of students of the Mikuláš Kováč Grammar School in Banská Bystrica.

Our constitutive approach was the methodological hypothesis testing. On the base of introduced conception, acquired from the empirical data and further investigation, we may conclude:

Political interest is one of the most considerable indicators of political participation. It is evident that it partially expresses political preparation of young people to political live and decision-making processes. The interest in politics of contemporary generation is situated in relatively low level, which can be illustrated by irregular interest in political information.

The media presents secondary socialisation agent and young people classify them as the instrument of communication that in contemporary society changed the way of communication. Respondents consider them as the principal source of information, although young people perceive their subjectivity. Young people have high level of media literacy, and therefore they are able to receive, analyse and evaluate broad spectrum of media content, and at the same time they believe that the media do not provide objective information.

Young people in general prefer electronic form of communication, especially the Internet, mostly chats and social networks, which are often described as relatively new forms of media in contemporary society. New technologies changed the way of interaction between individuals, but customer is not only formed in the role of passive spectator, which only receives information, but can be active, i.e. he or she may complete the knowledge about specific topic.

The way how to stimulate the interest of young people in political events and to draw their attention primarily lies in the art to connect social-technological-

creative attributes. This fact was expressed by **Karel Taige**, Czech critic and theorist of art, in the following quotation: "The culture is not inherited, the culture is conquered".

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