



FUNCTIONS OF YOUTH COUNCILS IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT COMMUNITIES IN POLAND: EMPIRICAL RESEARCH RESULTS*

FUNKCJE RAD MŁODZIEŻOWYCH W LOKALNYCH
WSPÓLNOTACH SAMORZĄDOWYCH W POLSCE:
WYNIKI BADAŃ EMPIRYCZNYCH

*Dominik Boratyn** 

— ABSTRACT —

The article is part of a series of publications on the activities of youth councils in local self-government communities. It focuses on describing the functions performed by such entities and attempts to answer the question about which of the functions performed by youth councils is of key importance in the opinion of councillors. The article is based on empirical research (quantitative research) conducted using a questionnaire. The research was carried out in 18 voivodship cities in Poland, and its aim is to expand the discussion on the functioning of youth councils as structured entities within local self-government units.

— ABSTRAKT —

Artykuł stanowi część cyklu publikacji poświęconych działalności rad młodzieżowych w lokalnych wspólnotach samorządowych. W niniejszej pracy skoncentrowano się na przedstawieniu funkcji pełnionych przez tego typu podmioty oraz próbie odpowiedzi na pytanie, która z funkcji realizowanych przez rady młodzieżowe, w opinii radnych, pełni kluczowe znaczenie. Artykuł został opracowany na podstawie badań empirycznych (badań ilościowych) z wykorzystaniem kwestionariusza ankiety. Badania zrealizowano w 18 miastach wojewódzkich w Polsce, a ich celem jest poszerzenie dyskusji na temat funkcjonowania rad młodzieżowych jako podmiotów ustrukturyzowanych przy jednostkach samorządu terytorialnego.

* The article has been created as part of the project entitled “The Importance and Role of Youth Councils in the Functioning of Local Self-Government Communities” implemented from the funds for research and development work and related tasks, serving the development of young scientists and doctoral students at the Faculty of Sociology and History of the University of Rzeszów. Project No. INoP-01/2019/MN.

** University of Rzeszów, Institute of Political Sciences.

Keywords: youth councils; youth policy; local self-government; local policy; youth

Słowa kluczowe: rady młodzieżowe; polityka młodzieżowa; samorząd terytorialny; polityka lokalna; młodzież

INTRODUCTION

Considerations on the issues of youth councils can be found in many English-language publications. The numerous researchers include Barry Checkoway (2011), who has described youth participation in various areas of social life, and Mary Elizabeth Collins, Astraea Augsberger and Whitney Gecker (2016), who studied youth councils and their impact on local communities, as well as the barriers to action for youth councils in municipal self-governments. Moreover, the work by Dana Feringa and Evelien Tonkens (2017) should be mentioned, in which the authors discussed how the style of participation in local youth councils contributes to the growth of civic involvement among young people. It is also worth recalling the work authored by the aforementioned Astraea Augsberger, Mary Elizabeth Collins and Whitney Gecker, published with Meaghan Dougher (2018), which has characterised whether youth councils reduce or increase social inequalities. Moreover, other authors have pointed out how consultation with children and young people influences the policy pursued in Ireland (Horgan, 2017), discussed the educational nature of youth councils (Nir & Perry-Hazan, 2016), and examined the creation of youth councils in the United States of America (Cushing & van Vliet, 2017).

In Polish literature, considerations on the essence of the functioning of youth councils have been undertaken by individual researchers, public institutions, and foundations. Particularly noteworthy are the studies carried out by the Civis Polonus Foundation (Napiontek & Grabarek, 2009; Napiontek, Pietrasik, & Szaniawska, 2009; Owczarek, Pietrasik, & Radzewicz, 2012) and the Children and Youth Council operated by the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Poland (Wasilewski et al., 2018). Individual researchers include in particular: Ewelina Gierach (2009), Michał Brol (2013), Marek Ćwiklicki (2013), Piotr Maciaszek (2015, 2016), Daniel Bojarski (2016), Dawid Mik (2018) and Dominik Boratyn (2019, 2020a, 2020b, 2021). The vast majority of studies include institutional and legal analyses and concern the issue of youth participation in local politics. The analysis of the literature clearly shows the lack of publications based on empirical research.

According to the definition proposed by D. Boratyn (2020a, p. 146), youth councils can be defined as entities operating at local government units, of an opinion-making and advisory nature, representing the youth of a given local community, shaping and developing it, educating and creating a forum for cooperation and co-governance between local authorities and young people. In addition, youth councils legitimize the actions of local authorities in the field of young people by consulting their decisions. Thanks to the activities undertaken, youth councils activate local potentials of young people.

The aim of the article is to indicate the key functions of youth councils and determine which of them is the most important in the opinion of youth councilors. The article formulates the following research questions:

1. How important is it for youth councils to participate in local public life?
2. How important is it for youth councils to influence decisions made by city authorities?
3. How important is it for youth councils to implement their own social projects, such as concerts and sports competitions?
4. How important is it for youth councils to support local self-government bodies?
5. How important is it for youth councils to represent young people in the local community?
6. How important is it for youth councils to give participants the opportunity to gain experience for further public-political activity?

For the purposes of this article, a research hypothesis has been formulated that the most important function of youth councils is to represent the young people in the local community.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to verify the hypothesis presented in the introduction and answer the formulated research questions, empirical research (quantitative research) was carried out from March 1 to March 31, 2020. The research was conducted using a questionnaire containing 34 questions. The questions concerned, among others: the role and functions of youth councils; their influence on decisions made by local self-government bodies; relations between the councils and these bodies; representing the young people in a particular local self-government community; the possibility of gaining experience for further public and political activity;

projects undertaken within the local environment; charity activities; and the impact on the functioning of a local community and cooperation with other public entities.

The research was carried out using the computer-assisted web interview (CAWI) research technique (online surveys). This research technique was chosen due to its low cost and the ease of distributing the research tool. The survey was carried out among members of youth councils in 18 Polish voivodship cities, that is, cities where voivodship assemblies and/or voivodship offices are located. The distribution of the research tool was carried out using communication channels appropriate for the young generation, particularly Facebook (official Facebook pages of individual youth councils and groups of youth councillors from all over the country).

In total, 471 councillors (members of all the surveyed youth councils) were invited to participate in the research, and 147 respondents (slightly over 30% of all councillors invited) took part. The numbers of questionnaires returned by individual youth councils are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Participation of Youth Councils by City

City	Number of councillors	Number of completed questionnaires	% share of councillors in empirical research	City	Number of councillors	Number of completed questionnaires	% share of councillors in empirical research
Białystok	14	6	43	Olsztyn	11	7	64
Bydgoszcz	31	12	39	Opole	18	8	44
Gdańsk	30	12	40	Poznań	35	9	26
Gorzów Wlkp	35	5	14	Rzeszów	35	6	17
Katowice	37	4	11	Szczecin	No council during research	1	-
Kielce	17	10	59	Toruń	No council during research	1	-
Kraków	39	10	26	Warszawa	24	19	79
Lublin	45	4	9	Wrocław	42	12	28
Łódź	34	18	53	Zielona Góra	24	3	12

Source: Author's own study.

As can be seen from the data presented in Table 1, the highest number of questionnaires was returned by the youth council in the capital city of Warsaw. Here, the percentage of completed questionnaires was nearly 80%. The lowest percentage of completed questionnaires was recorded in Lublin – less than 10%. Youth councils from Szczecin and Toruń did not participate in the survey as youth councils were not functioning in these cities during the period of the research. However, it should be noted that one questionnaire was returned in each of these cases. This could have resulted from the fact that the questionnaire was completed by members of previous youth councils in these two cities or could have been a result of a mistake made by councillors from other cities when filling out their questionnaires.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In the introduction to considerations on the functions of youth councils, it is worth noting that the concept of a function is often equated with the concept of a role. Therefore, it should be clarified that a role is what a given entity performs. For example, youth councils consult on the resolutions, ordinances or decisions of local self-government bodies (Article 5^b of the Act of 8 March 1990 on Municipal Self-Government). A function, on the other hand, indicates what a given entity can be used for.

To begin with, the respondents were asked if they agreed with the statement that participation in local public life is the most important factor in the functioning of a youth council. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Participation in Local Public Life Is the Most Important Factor in the Functioning of a Youth Council

No.	Respondent's answer	% of answers obtained
1	I strongly agree	55.1
2	I agree	33.3
3	I have no opinion	4.8
4	I disagree	6.1
5	I strongly disagree	0.7

Source: Author's own study.

As can be seen from the data presented in Table 2, the vast majority of respondents (88.4%) agree with the statement that participation in local public life is the most important factor in the functioning of a youth council: 55.1% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed with this statement. Almost 5% of the respondents indicated that they had no opinion on this matter, and approximately 7% of the respondents answered in the negative: 6.1% disagreed and 0.7% strongly disagreed with this statement.

The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2003) indicates that the participation of young people in the life of a given local and regional community must be part of the general policy for the participation of citizens in public life. To this end, the participation of young people should be promoted and enabled through: participation training, provision of regular and appropriate information, sharing means of communication, supporting the projects and social activities of young people and their willingness to work for others (Jarosz, 2016, p. 74).

It is worth noting that youth councils are among the few entities that ensure their members' participation in local public life. Others include, for example, senior citizens' councils and public benefit activity councils. Youth councils most often include both primary and secondary school students (up to the age of 19). Additionally, youth councils are the only representative body of young people in local self-government units. Thanks to the involvement in the activities of youth councils, young people have the opportunity to shape the surrounding reality and create it according to their own needs. Another important aspect of the functioning of youth councils and their impact on local public life is the fact that such entities energise the local environment of young people. Through youth councils, young people (not just council members) can implement their own ideas, projects, and ventures. Youth councils shape civil society (not only among young people) and are a testimony to the development of democracy.

As shown in the data presented in Table 3, over 63% of the respondents agree with the statement that influencing decisions made by city authorities is the most important factor in the functioning of youth councils. The answers 'I strongly agree' were given by 25.9%, and 'I agree' by 37.4% of the respondents. Over 17% of the respondents had no opinion on this matter. A total of 19% of the respondents replied negatively – 17.0% indicated that they did not agree with this statement and 2% chose the answer 'I strongly disagree'.

Table 3. The Influence on Decisions Made by City Authorities Is the Most Important Factor in the Functioning of Youth Councils

No.	Respondent's answer	% of answers obtained
1	I strongly agree	25.9
2	I agree	37.4
3	I have no opinion	17.7
4	I disagree	17.0
5	I strongly disagree	2.0

Source: Author's own study.

Article 5^b of the Act of 8 March 1990 on Municipal Self-Government indicates that municipal youth councils are of a consultative nature. Pursuant to the provisions of the law, these entities are to influence decisions made by local self-government authorities.

Understanding the space and resources for implementing the participation of young people in the decision-making process at the local level is clearly formulated in *The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* of 2003. The preamble to the document includes the following: "The active participation of young people in decisions and actions at local and regional level is essential if we are to build more democratic, inclusive and prosperous societies. Participation in the democratic life of any community is about more than voting or standing for election, although these are important elements. Participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society".

Standards for the Functioning of Municipal Youth Councils and Poviats Youth Councils in Poland (2003) is another document that emphasises the essence of the consultative function. Chapter 3 indicates that: "A very important task facing a youth council should be to conduct consultative activities with regard to decisions made by local authorities" (Point 1) and that "Self-government authorities should ensure the conditions necessary for the unhindered fulfilment of consultation tasks by a youth council, which shall be clearly defined in its statute" (Point 2).

It can therefore be noted that participation in the decision-making process (particularly if this decision concerns matters directly related to young people)

is an important element of the functioning of not only youth councils, but also of young people in a given local community in general.

Table 4. The Possibility for Implementing Their Own Social Projects, Such as Concerts and Sports Competitions, Is the Most Important Factor in the Functioning of Youth Councils

No.	Respondent's answer	% of answers obtained
1	I strongly agree	36.7
2	I agree	47.6
3	I have no opinion	8.2
4	I disagree	6.1
5	I strongly disagree	1.4

Source: Author's own study.

The data presented in Table 4 show that over 84% of the respondents agree with the statement that the possibility for implementing their own social projects, such as concerts and sports competitions, is the most important thing in the functioning of youth councils. The answer 'I strongly agree' was given by 36.7% and 'I agree' by 47.6 % of the respondents. Over 8% of the respondents had no opinion on this matter. Negative answers, that is, 'I disagree' (6.1%) and 'I strongly disagree' (1.4%) were given by a total of 7.5% of the respondents.

Organisational, charity and enterprise activities are an important element of the functioning of youth councils. These entities undertake a number of their own activities and ventures. To illustrate what these activities are, it is worth presenting individual examples.

The reason for organising the *W ŚWIĘTA #zostajewdomu* campaign (Figure 1) was the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic, which causes the COVID-19 respiratory disease¹. Due to the limitations and social restrictions aimed at reducing the risk of falling ill, many communities, including youth councils, organised their own actions (ventures) encouraging people to stay at

¹ On December 10, 2019, Wei Guixian, a 57-year-old shrimp saleswoman at a Wuhan market, felt unwell and went to the doctor at a local clinic with symptoms of a cold. It was this woman who was recognised as 'patient zero' in March. Over the next four months, the coronavirus hit every continent except Antarctica and almost every country in the world. The pandemic has halted public life in half the globe, primarily in the most populous areas of Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America (see: *Koronawirus. Rozwój pandemii dzień po dniu*, 2020).



Figure 1. A Graphic from the W ŚWIĘTA #zostajewdomu [ON CHRISTMAS #Istayathome] Campaign Posted on the Facebook Page of the Youth City Council of Wrocław

Source: Retrieved July 16, 2020 from: <https://www.facebook.com/ParlamentMlodziezyWroclawia/>.

home. This is an example of a nationwide initiative of youth councils resulting from the situation in which society found itself at the beginning of 2020.

Among other examples of social projects carried out by youth councils are charitable undertakings. Young people are willing to engage in various types of social campaigns having a 'noble goal'.

It should be noted that charity is an important element of the functioning of youth councils (more on this issue, among others: Boratyn, 2020a). What is more, when youth councils undertake charity activities, they organize help not only for their peers, but also for other people in need, including homeless. The Youth City Council of Opole organized a fundraiser for the homeless and social welfare centers providing assistance to the homeless. During the initiative, all city residents had the opportunity to donate clothing, bedding and sheets, food, as well as cleaning products, cosmetics and detergents to the homeless care centers.

It is also worth noting that youth councils undertake not only cultural and charity, but also sporting activities.



Figure 2. A Poster Encouraging Young People to Become Volunteers Posted on the Facebook Page of the Youth City Council of Kielce

Source: Retrieved July 16, 2020 from: <https://www.facebook.com/młodziejowaradamiastakielce/>.

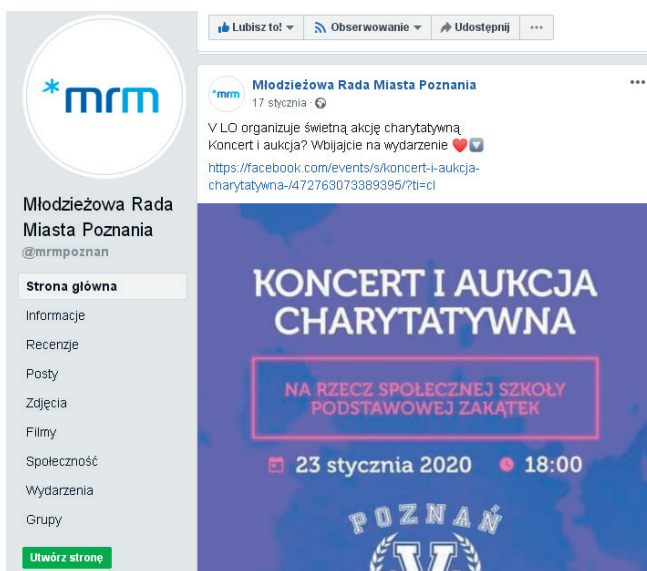


Figure 3. A Poster Promoting a Charity Concert with an Auction for a Social Primary School on the Facebook Page of the Youth City Council of Poznań

Source: Retrieved July 16, 2020 from: <https://www.facebook.com/mrmpoznan/>.



Figure 4. Photos from a Sports Competition Posted on the Facebook Page of the Youth City Council of Gdańsk

Source: Retrieved July 16, 2020 from: <https://www.facebook.com/MlodziejowaRadaMiastaGdanska/>.

Sport plays an important role in the life of every young person. Physical activity shapes the physical and mental development as well as the emotional sphere of teenagers. In addition, sport helps to develop leadership skills and empathy, which reduce the risk of emotional disorders that often appear in a difficult period of adolescence. Practicing sports by teenagers means that young people more often pay attention to their health, take care of their diet, balanced lifestyle and good habits, which result in a lower risk of, for example, heart disease or obesity in adulthood. By taking action in this area, youth councils popularize the ideas of sport, physical activity, proper nutrition and a healthy lifestyle.

The abovementioned examples are only a part of all the actions that youth councils undertake within their activities. Therefore, it should be noted that these are not only consultative entities, as indicated in the law, but they also serve a number of other functions, including implementing their own social projects.

As shown by the data presented in Table 5, more than half of the respondents agree that supporting local self-government bodies is the most important factor in the functioning of youth councils. In total, the affirmative answers: 'I strongly

Table 5. Supporting Local Self-Government Bodies Is the Most Important Factor in the Functioning of Youth Councils

No.	Respondent's answer	% of answers obtained
1	I strongly agree	17.7
2	I agree	45.6
3	I have no opinion	18.4
4	I disagree	16.3
5	I strongly disagree	2.0

Source: Author's own study.

agree' and 'I agree' were given by 63.3% of the respondents. Over 18% of respondents had no opinion on this matter. It is worth noting that among all the statements presented in this article, in this case, the largest number of respondents indicated answer 3, that is, 'I have no opinion'. This could have been caused by the fact that the respondents to some extent do not regard youth councils as entities supporting local self-government units and may not have sufficient knowledge about what form such support may take. A negative answer of 'I disagree' was given by 16.3% of the respondents and 'I strongly disagree' by 2%.

When discussing these results, it is worth paying attention to the benefits of the functioning of youth councils in local self-government communities. These benefits should be understood as benefits for local administration and local self-government bodies. They include:

1. activities carried out for the benefit of young people are more effective thanks to being able to consult their representatives about planned actions;
2. local authorities' actions for young people are more legitimate;
3. officials of local self-government public administration better understand young people's needs;
4. young people are better informed about the work of local authorities and its effects;
5. district (housing estate) authorities gain a partner in the implementation of their own initiatives, projects, and undertakings (Napiontek, Pietrasik, & Szaniawska, 2009, p. 11).

Bearing these benefits in mind, it should be noted that youth councils can support local self-government bodies in many ways. Consulting about planned

projects and decisions legitimises the actions of local authorities in public opinion, including in the opinion of young people. On the other hand, the activities of youth councils may have a positive impact on the administration of public offices, which may be more 'accessible' to other people interested. Additionally, thanks to the flow of information between the authorities and citizens, and in this case between local self-government bodies and young people, public life and knowledge about the functioning of local public authority structures become more transparent.

Table 6. Representing Young People in the Local Community Is the Most Important Factor in the Functioning of Youth Councils

No.	Respondent's answer	% of answers obtained
1	I strongly agree	62.6
2	I agree	33.3
3	I have no opinion	2.0
4	I disagree	0.7
5	I strongly disagree	1.4

Source: Author's own study.

The data presented in Table 6 show that nearly 96% of the respondents agree with the statement that representing the young people in a local community is the most important factor in the functioning of youth councils: 62.6% strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed with this statement. Moreover, 2% of the respondents had no opinion on this matter. A similar number of the respondents replied in the negative. Answer 4, that is, 'I disagree', was indicated by 0.7% of the respondents, and answer 5, that is, 'I strongly disagree', was indicated by 1.4%.

Considering that youth councillors are elected to youth councils (elections are most often organised at school, but this is not the rule), persons performing the functions of councillors represent not only themselves or their schools (voters), but also, and perhaps above all, they represent all young people in a given self-government community in contacts with local authorities. Therefore, the basis for representation should be seeking the interests of one's own community (in this case, the community of young people) and acting for its needs and expectations. At the same time, it should be noted that the needs and expectations of the young generation are completely different to those of the elderly. Therefore, if young people themselves will not act for their needs, they will have to accept the fact

that someone else will do it for them (not necessarily in accordance with their expectations).

Table 7. The Opportunity to Gain Experience for Further Public-Political Activity Is the Most Important Factor in the Functioning of Youth Councils

No.	Respondent's answer	% of answers obtained
1	I strongly agree	32.7
2	I agree	36.1
3	I have no opinion	10.2
4	I disagree	15.0
5	I strongly disagree	6.0

Source: Author's own study.

As the data presented in Table 7 show, more than half of the respondents (68.8%) agree that the opportunity to gain experience for further public-political activity is the most important factor in the functioning of youth councils: 32.7% strongly agreed and 36.1% agreed with this statement. Moreover, 10.2% of the respondents had no opinion on this matter. More than one in five of the respondents (21%) answered in the negative: 15% – ‘I disagree’, and 6% – ‘I strongly disagree’.

Despite the fact that youth councils are apolitical entities², that is, they are not associated with any political party or political group, it does not mean that young people are not involved in social and political matters. The involvement of the youth community was clearly visible, for example, during the Youth Strike for Climate. The event took place on September 20, 2019, in 60 Polish cities and was part of an initiative that covered 37 European countries as well as the United States of America and India. The Youth Strike for Climate preceded the United Nations Climate Summit, which took place in New York on September 23, 2019. During the protests, young people put forward six postulates:

1. conducting climate policy based on the current position of science;
2. announcing the state of the climate crisis;

² This results directly from the statutes of the youth councils surveyed (see, e.g., *The Statute of the Youth City Council of Cracow*, 2019; *The Statute of the Youth City Council of Gorzów Wielkopolski*, 2019; *The Statute of the Youth City Council of Opole*, 2016).

3. including comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge about the mechanisms of the climate crisis in the core curriculum;
4. giving the media the responsibility for making the society aware of the immediate threats related to the climate crisis;
5. adopting, by the Parliament of the Republic of Poland, the act establishing an expert and independent Climate Council to develop a strategy for achieving Poland's climate neutrality by 2040 and to control the implementation of this strategy;
6. taking immediate steps leading to a just transformation of the economy in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (*Strajk klimatyczny...*, 2019).

The initiator of the school strike for climate was a Swedish girl named Greta Thunberg, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 (*Greta Thunberg nominowana...*, 2019) and in 2019 she was honoured with the title of the person of the year according to the *TIME* magazine (*Greta Thunberg człowiekiem roku...*, 2019).

It is also worth noting that some of the youth councils surveyed actively supported activities under the climate strike.

Activity in a youth council can therefore be the first step for those who wish to actively participate in public life. A young person involved in the functioning of this type of entity can gain valuable experience and acquire social competences invaluable in further political activities, including the abilities to perform ably in public, to formulate and argue one's views and to work in a team. At the same time, there are many examples of young persons who have actively participated in a youth council and then been elected to a city council or a municipal council. One example is Alicja Wiśniewska from Opole, who was elected to the City Council of Opole in 2018 at the age of 18. Previously, Wiśniewska had been the Chairperson of the Youth City Council of Opole (Matlak, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

Summarising the research results described in this article, several conclusions can be made. Firstly, the research hypothesis presented in the introduction, which assumes that representing the young people in a local community is the most important (key) function of youth councils, has been partially confirmed. The analysis of the statements shows that the number of respondents who indicated this function as the most important was the largest. In total, the answers 'I

strongly agree' and 'I agree' were given by almost 96% of the respondents. It should be noted, however, that in the case of the remaining statements, the results for 'positive' responses, in which the respondents agreed with the indicated statements, were lower but always exceeded half of the respondents (this result was never lower than 63%). Secondly, over four-fifths of the respondents indicated that participation in local public life (88.4%) and the possibility of implementing their own social projects, such as concerts and sports competitions (84.3%), were no less important in the functioning of youth councils. It is also worth emphasising that for the members of youth councils, the possibility of gaining experience for further public and political activities (68.8%), influencing decisions made by city authorities (63.3%), and supporting local self-government bodies (63.3%) were of significantly less importance (compared to previous statements) in the functioning of youth councils. The difference between the latter two statements (influencing decisions... and supporting local self-government bodies) and the 'key' function, that is, representing the environment of young people, is over 30%. However, it cannot be denied that more than half of the respondents gave positive answers in each case and so the hypothesis put forward in the introduction cannot be fully confirmed.

Additionally, an important conclusion from the research is that, in the opinion of respondents, youth councils are not only perceived as entities whose purpose is to influence local politics (participation in decision-making, supporting local self-governments), and that they do not constitute the so-called 'springboards' for further social and political activities (opportunity to gain experience for further activities). It cannot be denied that most of the respondents indicated that these functions were important, but they were classified much lower than the others. Thus, it can be indicated that young people are more willing to engage in social and charity projects, and also want to represent their schools, friends and colleagues, and only some of them plan a further 'career' in politics.

Another conclusion from the research is that only some youth councillors are actively involved in the work of councils. The problem of involvement is clearly visible when we analyse Table 1. Slightly over 30% of all surveyed respondents returned the questionnaire. This may result, for example, from a lack of information flowing between councillors or a lack of interest in the research subject. Another difficulty in carrying out the research was related to determining the number of members of individual youth councils. Such information was not published on the websites of city offices, or the websites contained archival information. In order to determine the number of youth councillors in particu-

lar councils, it was necessary to seek information from the chairmen, boards (presidium), or councillors themselves, who were also unable to provide a precise number of all members.

The Facebook social networking sites of individual youth councils were a valuable source of information on their activity. Thanks to the analysis of the Facebook content, it was possible to present some of the initiatives and undertakings, particularly those of a social nature.

This research broadens the discussion on the functioning of youth councils as structured entities in local self-government units. It is clear that the practice of councils is not limited to consulting and that youth councils perform a number of different (other) functions.

REFERENCES:

- Augsberger, A., Collins, M.E., Gecker, W., & Dougher, M. (2018). Youth Civic Engagement: Do Youth Councils Reduce or Reinforce Social Inequality? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 33(2), 187–208. DOI: 10.1177/0743558416684957.
- Bojarski, D. (2016). Młodzieżowa rada gminy jako przykład zaangażowania młodych ludzi w sprawy publiczne na poziomie lokalnym. In: K. Perużyńska (Ed.). *XLV Międzynarodowe Seminarium Kół Naukowych „Koła Naukowe–Szkoła Twórczego Działania”* (pp. 13–16). Olsztyn: Instytut Historii i Stosunków Międzynarodowych, Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie.
- Boratyn, D. (2019). Aktywność rad młodzieżowych na portalu społecznościowym Facebook – analiza porównawcza. *Edukacja – Technika – Informatyka*, 4, 192–197. DOI: 10.15584/eti.2019.4.25.
- Boratyn, D. (2020a). Charytatywna działalność gminnych rad młodzieżowych – analiza zagadnienia. *UR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3, 141–155. DOI: 10.15584/johass.2020.3.8.
- Boratyn, D. (2020b). Rola rad młodzieżowych w lokalnym życiu publicznym (wyniki badań empirycznych). *Polityka i Społeczeństwo*, 3, 48–62. DOI: 10.15584/polispol.2020.3.4.
- Boratyn, D. (2021). Rola opiekuna w działalności rad młodzieżowych – wyniki badań empirycznych. *Colloquium*, 13(1), 19–33. DOI: 10.34813/02coll2021.
- Brol, M. (2013). Młodzieżowa rada gminy jako przykład uczestnictwa młodzieży w życiu społeczno-politycznym. *Studia Politicae Universitatis Silesiensis*, 10, 30–52.
- Checkoway, B. (2011). What Is Youth Participation? *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(2), 340–345. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.017.
- Collins, M.E., Augsberger, A., & Gecker, W. (2016). Youth Councils in Municipal Government: Examination of Activities, Impact and Barriers. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 65, 140–147. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.04.007.

- Cushing, D.F., & van Vliet, W. (2017). Children's Right to the City: The Emergence of Youth Councils in the United States. *Children's Geographies*, 15(3), 319–333. DOI: 10.1080/14733285.2016.1244602.
- Ćwiklicki, M. (2013). Młodzieżowe Rady Gmin. In: M. Ćwiklicki, & M. Frączek (Eds.). *Partycypacja społeczna w Polsce. Atlas dobrych praktyk* (pp. 119–129). Kraków: Fundacja Gospodarki i Administracji Publicznej.
- Facebook Social Network. (n.d.). Retrieved from: <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/>.
- Feringa, D., & Tonkens, E. (2017). How the Participation Style in Local Youth Councils Contributes to the Civic Engagement of Young People. *Journal of Social Intervention: Theory and Practice*, 26(2), 43–59. DOI: 10.18352/jsi.527.
- Gierach, E. (2009). Rola samorządu terytorialnego w tworzeniu warunków uczestnictwa młodych ludzi w życiu społeczności lokalnych. *Studia Biura Analiz Sejmowych*, 2, 115–130.
- Greta Thunberg człowiekiem roku magazynu „Time”. (2019, December 11). Retrieved from: <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/greta-thunberg-czlowiekiem-roku-time-ra992427-2567737>.
- Greta Thunberg nominowana do Pokojowej Nagrody Nobla. (2020, February 3). Retrieved from: <https://www.tvp.info/46479120/greta-thunberg-nominowana-do-pokojowej-nagrody-nobla>.
- Horgan, D. (2017). Consultations with Children and Young People and Their Impact on Policy in Ireland. *Social Inclusion*, 5(3), 104–112. DOI: 10.17645/si.v5i3.959.
- Jarosz, E. (2016). Partycypacja dzieci a rozwój zaangażowania obywatelskiego. *Pedagogika społeczna*, 15(2), 67–87.
- Koronawirus. Rozwój pandemii dzień po dniu. (2020, October 7). Retrieved from: <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kraj/koronawirus-jak-rozwijala-sie-epidemia-w-polsce-i-na-swiecie-kalendarium/xgt8wcd>.
- Maciaszek, P. (2015). Partycypacja społeczna młodzieży na przykładzie młodzieżowych rad gmin – część I. *Rocznik Samorządowy*, 4, 258–273.
- Maciaszek, P. (2016). Partycypacja społeczna młodzieży na przykładzie młodzieżowych rad gmin – część II. *Rocznik Samorządowy*, 5, 171–187.
- Matlak, J. (2018, October 24). Niedawno odebrali pierwszy dowód, dziś mają mandaty radnych. Oto najmłodszy rajcy Opolszczyzny. Retrieved from: <http://radio.opole.pl/100,255613,niedawno-odebrali-pierwszy-dowod-dzis-maja-manda>.
- Mik, D. (2018). *Reprezentacje młodzieży w samorządzie terytorialnym oraz rola młodzieżowych organów doradczych w aktywizacji społecznej młodzieży*. Retrieved from: http://tarnowskiedialoginaukowe.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/06_Mik.pdf.
- Napiontek, O., & Grabarek, M. (2009). *Dobre Praktyki Młodzieżowych Rad Gmin, Miast i Dzielnic*. Warszawa: Fundacja Civis Polonus.
- Napiontek, O., Pietrasik, J., & Szaniawska, M. (2009). *Młodzieżowa Rada Gminy. Aktywność obywatelska młodzieży w społeczności lokalnej*. Warszawa: Fundacja Civis Polonus.

- Nir, T., & Perry-Hazan, L. (2016). The Framed Right to Participate in Municipal Youth Councils and Its Educational Impact. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 69, 174–183. DOI: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.07.012.
- Owczarek, M., Pietrasik, J., & Radzewicz, J. (2012). *Partycypacja obywatelska młodzieży. Przykład Młodzieżowych Rad Gmin*. Warszawa: Fundacja Civis Polonus. Retrieved from: http://civispolonus.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Partycypacja-obywatelska-m%C5%82odziezy_przyk%C5%82ad-m%C5%82odziejowych-rad-gmin.pdf.
- Standards for the Functioning of Municipal Youth Councils and Powiat Youth Councils in Poland*. (2003). *Standardy funkcjonowania w Polsce młodzieżowych rad gmin, młodzieżowych rad powiatu*. Adopted by the VI General Assembly of the National Federation of Youth Local Self-Governments Based on Resolution No. 32/VI/03 of 27 April 2003. Retrieved from: <http://stop-klatka.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/standardy.pdf>.
- Strajk klimatyczny. Młodzież protestuje w 60 polskich miastach*. (2019, September 20). Retrieved from: <https://businessinsider.com.pl/wiadomosci/mlodziejowy-strajk-klimatyczny-protesty-w-polsce-20-wrzesnia-2019/h3dxssm>.
- The Act of 8 March 1990 on Municipal Self-Government. (1990). Ustawa z dnia 8 marca 1990 r. o samorządzie gminnym. Journal of Laws 2019.0.506, Consolidated Text.
- The Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life*. (2003). Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from: http://www.mlodzielowarada.pl/files/bank_wiedzy/06.pdf.
- The Statute of the Youth City Council of Cracow*. (2019). Retrieved from: <http://mrk.krakow.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Statut.pdf>.
- The Statute of the Youth City Council of Gorzów Wielkopolski*. (2019). Constituting an Annex to Resolution No. VI/114/2019 of the City Council of Gorzów Wielkopolski of 27 March 2019 on the Appointment of the Youth City Council of Gorzów Wielkopolski and Granting Its Statute.
- The Statute of the Youth City Council of Opole*. (2016). Constituting an Annex to Resolution No. XXIX/525/16 of the City Council of Opole of 7 July 2016.
- Wasilewski, P., et al. (2018, April 17). *O Młodzieżowych Radach. Analiza Młodzieżowych Rad w Polsce na rok 2018*. Warszawa: Rada Dzieci i Młodzieży RP przy Ministrze Edukacji Narodowej. Retrieved from: <https://wschowa.info/storehouse/2018/07/Publikacja-O-m%C5%82odzie%C5%BCowych-radach-.pdf>.