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Aims and Scope:

Changing Societies & Personalities is an international, peer-reviewed quarterly journal, published in English by the Ural Federal University. *CS&P* examines how rapid societal-level changes are reshaping individual-level beliefs, motivations and values – and how these individual-level changes in turn are reshaping societies. The interplay of personality traits and sociocultural factors in defining motivation, deliberation, action and reflection of individuals requires a combination of theoretical and empirical knowledge. Since an interdisciplinary approach is needed to understand the causes and consequences of the contemporary world's changing socio-political institutions, moral values, and religious beliefs, the journal welcomes theoretical and empirical contributions from a wide range of perspectives in the context of value pluralism and social heterogeneity of (post)modern society.

Topics of interest include, but are not limited to

- value implications of interactions between socio-political transformations and personal self-identity;
- changes in value orientations, materialist and post-materialist values;
- moral reasoning and behavior;
- variability and continuity in the election of styles of moral regime and/or religious identity;
- the moral bases of political preferences and their elimination;
- social exclusion and inclusion;
- post-secular religious individualism;
- tolerance and merely "tolerating": their meanings, varieties and fundamental bases;
- ideologies of gender and age as variables in political, moral, religious and social change;
- educational strategies as training for specific social competences;
- social and existential security.

The journal publishes original research articles, forum discussions, review articles and book reviews.

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Special Issue: **Social Participation as a Factor That Changes Societies and Personalities**

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EDITORIAL

Social Participation as a Theoretical Concept and Social Phenomenon

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As well as serving as a theoretical framework for considering topics in sociology, psychology, anthropology, and economics, the concept of social participation informs interdisciplinary studies. Whether at the level of local spaces or different countries, the various interaction practices of different social groups occurring in the context of contemporary changes in the globalized world can be captured according to this theoretical paradigm. While there are a number of concepts and definitions of social participation, we rely here on its broad interpretation as human interaction with other people in the course of their joint actions based around certain goals. According to this version, social participation can be associated with various processes to help explain how the interaction of people in communities leads to certain results. The diversity of approaches in the study of this phenomenon can be reduced to its definition as the participation of human actors to meet almost any conceivable collective aspiration (Cornwall, 2008). On the one hand, such a broad research optics is not always conducive to developing a common language for researchers working in different fields, leading to problems in the development and selection of tools for measuring social participation, as well as blurred or incomplete efforts in the field of social policy (Levasseur et al., 2010). On the other hand, the indicated basis of social participation provides a flexible theoretical framework for empirical studies into different practices of participation in order to assess their

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structure and action, changes occurring at the level of personality and society, as well as the subjectivity of participants and organizers of participation in the increasingly complex context of everyday life.

The concept of participation is in many ways a central concern of sociology and social science. Social participation describes how a person participates in the activities of formal and informal groups, including clubs and voluntary societies, arts and sports, congregational activity, outdoor and productive activity, hobbies, study, and general cultural interests (Parker, 1983). In political sciences, the considered phenomenon is often labeled as public participation, narrowed to civil (citizen) or political participation in a citizen group or in other local political voluntary action, whether group or individual, conventional or deviant (Smith et al., 2017, p. 41). Such participation either takes place outwith or at the boundaries of the private and economic relations spheres (Nikovskaya & Skalaban, 2017).

What unites many the approaches and concepts of participation beyond disciplinary boundaries? Firstly, this may be considered in terms of the potential for changes that may occur in society as a result of social participation, which are generally viewed in terms of the behavior and quality of life of diverse social groups, along with the individuals that constitute them. All group initiatives that aim to solve different social problems also lead to changes in the actors themselves and other people, including wider society (Barnes at al., 2003). In some cases, social participation can influence improvements to the mental health, general well-being, and life satisfaction of participants, improving social competencies and thus resulting in the social integration of individuals (Schormans, 2014). In other cases, changes may occur in the structure of the provision of services to different population groups in terms of their effectiveness; here, improvements in management and organization are reflected in decisions made to improve the living conditions of residents. In terms of public administration, the purpose and result of citizen participation can include the solution of socio-economic issues through the adoption of laws, the formation of local agendas, settlement planning, regional and economic development, as well as reconciling the conflicting interests of social groups. While such changes may indeed be brought about, they are often ambiguous in their consequences. For example, they may not be fully implemented due to organizational actors' deliberate co-optation of citizens in order to advance their own positions (Hodge, 2005). Otherwise, in terms of the interaction between the authorities and NGOs, changes may not occur due to the reluctance of officials to interact with social activists (Arkhipova, 2023).

Secondly, research into the different manifestations of social participation has incorporated theoretical ideas about the social capital of individuals or communities. Of course, theories of social capital and social participation overlap. Indeed, social participation is one of the integral components of social capital (Guillen et al., 2011). Social participation involves the formation of social trust and cooperation as key elements of civil society (Dekker & Uslaner, 2003). A number of studies demonstrate that changing patterns of social participation are determinative of the accumulation of social capital. In economic terms, social participation increases productivity in the private sector, just as social interaction in the market can itself be a source of social

capital (Antoci et al., 2007). However, there is little doubt about the growing success of initiatives that involve social participation, which takes into account the human dimensions of development, with values, norms, culture, motivation, and solidarity among others (Uphoff, 2000).

Thirdly, social participation in all its manifestations is invariably localized. Thus, it manifests itself as practices of citizen activity in a certain territory (country, region, city, neighborhood, etc.), in a separate sphere (culture, provision of social services, sports, education, health, science, etc.), or a particular organization. As a result, social participation enters the public sphere, where collaborative interactions can intensify public discussion on possible solutions across the range of problems, at which they are aimed. At the same time, the localization of participation is also a determinant of the culture of participation in different communities. This culture influences prosocial behavior, the nature of social interactions between community members, and their involvement in various social participation practices (Khvorostianov & Remennick, 2018).

Fourthly, all manifestations of social participation are underpinned by the organizational principle. Even in the case of the self-organization of citizens, someone in the community invariably finds themselves in a leadership role. Such leaders set and coordinate with others the rules of interaction, indicating the goals and results of social participation and representing the interests of self-organizing communities in interaction with other communities, stakeholders, and power brokers. According to Russian scholarly tradition, social participation is considered as a controlled process of social communication in order to organize joint activities of citizens and population groups with the proper authorities or to provide communicative feedback control (Bogdanov & Merzlykov, 2018). The development of social participation as a process of interaction often leads to the formalization of emerging relationships between people in so-formed communities. Under these conditions, an important role is played by the organizational base of civic non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are vital mechanisms for self-organization, as well as providing for the involvement of other people and representation of interests of different groups. In terms of civil society, the forms of social participation produced by non-profit organizations include the empowerment of vulnerable and excluded groups to strengthen their effective control over decisions that affect their health and quality of life, as well as increasing their access to health services (Della Queva, 2017).

One of the most verifiable forms of social participation in areas associated with helping behavior is volunteering. Numerous studies of volunteers and their work recognize an increase in the variety of types of volunteer participation in society. According to the Charities Aid Foundation, there is a general increase in the number of volunteers working across diverse countries and societies. In 2020, 55% of residents of different countries over the age of 15 participated in activities that helped strangers, while 19% of citizens worked as volunteers in non-profit organizations. Based on the World Giving Index, 62% of citizens or three billion people helped other people for free in 2022, while 23% worked as volunteers (Charities Aid Foundation, 2022).

Changes in prosocial behavior, involving different forms and types of social activity that include their horizontal and vertical interaction, drive the quest for new

ways to conceptualize social participation, including the development of unique strategies for studying the different participation practices that make up the repertoires of the various social groups. Thus, the present issue demonstrates the possibility of combining various theories of social participation in modern studies along with the different approaches to its study. The theoretical framework of the presented research varies from the conceptualization of social participation as a broad scientific category to the definition of highly specific practices of volunteer activity or civic participation. The content and structure of the current issue questions are determined by the questions posed by the authors. It includes articles focusing on social activity of different age groups residing in various countries and regions, features of horizontal interaction in the civil sphere, social participation as a form of vertical interaction between citizens and officials, and the case of social participation as volunteering in the scientific sphere.

In the ARTICLE *Factors Influencing Social Participation of Older People in Russia: Study of Practices of Delayed Ageing,* Irina A. Grigoryeva, Oksana A. Parfenova, and Lyudmila A. Vidiasova highlight factors that influence the extent, to which older people engage in social participation seen in terms of their social activity in the broadest sense. The study presented in the article is based on a conceptualization of the social participation of the seniors as the preservation of social statuses and roles of independent individuals participating in the life of society. The trajectory of the study is built according to the logic of extending adulthood or development of "active ageing." With the acknowledgment of the socially-determined nature of aging, the authors analyze the changes in the social activity of older people in the context of digitalization and during the post-pandemic period. The researchers found that the involvement of older people in various forms of social participation and inclusion depends on their age, financial situation, and marital status. Based on the research results, the social activity of the older people is shown not to be fundamentally limited by their state of health; moreover, the use of the Internet and other activities contribute to a positive perception on the part of respondents in terms of their age-related status. Following the logic of active aging, such factors contribute to the psychological well-being of older people by supporting their role behavior, including their involvement in various forms of social participation. The study revealed the age threshold at which the restructuring of the social participation of the older people generally takes place. At the age of 75, there is a transformation of social participation from an external social interaction to a more local form that is structured around family. The authors' conclusions are based on the results of a quantitative survey of 210 older people aged 60 and over that includes an analysis of their medical documents. These data are supplemented by the materials of 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews with informants from the studied age cohort.

The ARTICLE "*You are Needed and You Exist": Motivation for Social Participation of Older Activists, Rostov Oblast, Russia* by Tatyana S. Kienko expands the theory of social participation of older people. Here, the sociological meaning of social participation is interpreted in its broadest sense. This describes the participation of older people in a wide range of practices of sharing of individual, group, and community resources in the course of various activities, including public and non-public, formal and informal.

The article identifies the social participation characteristics of older activists and leaders. In accordance with the grounded theory, the author identifies and describes factors contributing to the sustainability of active social participation, determining the change in human role behavior from non-participation or sporadic involvement to constant activity with a certain motivation. The latter describes the involvement of older Russians in socially significant activities. The qualitative study shows that the basis for the motivation of older leaders and activists consists in the moral duty, value, necessity, and vocation of their involvement in socially significant activities. This is generally the result of life experience, the professional one in particular. The active social participation of the older people becomes their resource for improving the quality of life and maintaining vitality through making rewarding efforts that recognizes their competence. The orientation of older leaders towards integration with like-minded people opens up new opportunities for their self-realization in communities, delaying aging and maintaining active longevity. The article analyses 18 semi-structured interviews by senior social activists aged 65 to 90 from the Rostov Oblast, which were carried out in 2021.

In the ARTICLE *Impact of Citizen Participation on Solving the Social Problems of Small Regional Towns in Russia,* Yulia V. Ukhanova, Ekaterina D. Kopytova, and Sergei G. Zhestyannikov focus on the issue of the social participation of citizens as residents of a specific country, region, or city. Here, civic participation is considered as a resource for the development of a region and its population, confirming the logic of the theory and conclusions of Robert Putnam. The researchers state that boosting the development of small towns largely depends on the participation of local communities in regional development, as well as on the state policy of the country and regions. The civic activity of the population intensively contributes to the development of regional identity. According to the results of sociological research carried out in small towns of the Vologda Oblast in Russia, the level of activity of citizens has been growing significantly in recent years. As well as taking a charitable form, this activity has the character of constructive forms of interaction with official representatives, thus representing a dialogue between society and the state. Such a process leads to relations between the population and the authorities that increasingly take the form of a partnership. In their reliance on empirical research data, the authors make the convincing case that the population acquires the attributes of agency in social development through various civic participation practices. In small towns, social networks represent a particularly valuable resource for expanding civic engagement, since it is by this means that citizens create communities to form an agenda for the discussion of local problems. Such communities are characterized by their increased rates of participation. Self-organization in small towns is better seen in terms of social participation practices that are aimed at joint solving the problems of landscaping and providing charitable assistance. One of the most interesting conclusions of the authors touches upon the changes that occur due to civic participation actions. Through their interactions with the authorities, some individuals, groups, organizations, and communities gain publicity, allowing them to shape public opinion and thus determine changes in their groups and organizations in the local community as a whole. The

authors' conclusions were obtained on the basis of the questionnaire survey of the population in the region (*N* = 1900) and supplemented with focus-group interviews with 47 experts from government, business, "third sector," media, and science. The study was conducted by the authors in the Vologda Oblast in 2023.

The ARTICLE *Subjective Well-Being and Participation in Volunteering in Russia* by Irina V. Mersianova, Natalya V. Ivanova, and Aleksandra S. Briukhno aims to provide insights into the nature of the relationship between volunteering (representing one of the better-studied forms of social participation) and the subjective well-being of volunteers. The authors describe the relationship between volunteering as a prosocial activity and the subjective well-being of volunteers in terms of psychological and health-related effects experienced by people as a result of their social participation. The authors analyze the causal relationship between social capital and the social well-being of Russians who give their time without payment, i.e., voluntarily, to activities carried out either through an organization or directly for the benefit of other people outside their family or household. The empirical research of sociologists is based on the provisions of "warm glow" giving theory and the concept of social capital. The analysis shows that financially secure and healthy people living with a family really feel happier. The feeling of happiness is also associated with the confidence of Russians in their immediate environment, as well as their perception of social cohesion. The authors argue that helping behavior and volunteering have an "external effect" meaning that people feel happier if they observe social solidarity. The research findings are based on data from an All-Russian survey conducted by the Centre for Studies of Civil Society and the Nonprofit Sector (HSE University, Moscow, Russia) in September 2022. Telephone interviews were conducted with 2,015 respondents, including urban and rural citizens aged 18 and older.

In the ARTICLE *From Informal to Formal: Features of Volunteering in Arab Countries,* Viacheslav A. Ivanov and El Sayed El Eryan focus on the potential of Arab volunteers in solving social problems. The authors explore the activity of volunteers as a form of helping behavior, a type of social participation that relies on the initiative of the volunteers themselves to empower citizens at the same time as benefiting society. The possibility of engaging in unpaid work in a formal organization or on an individual basis in different countries is realized within the informal networks of their immediate environment. However, organized volunteering is stronger in some countries than others. In other cases, informal interaction and mutual assistance predominate. The study presented in this article discusses the changes in the institutional conditions for volunteering in the countries of the Arab region. The transforming relationship between volunteers and other members of society is understood in terms of the identification by volunteers of the social impact of their activity and work on communities, which in turn is largely determined by the development of non-profit organizations in these countries, representing an infrastructure for volunteer activity. The recognition of volunteering by the governments of the countries of the Arab region, as well as state support for non-profit organizations and the activity of volunteers, has led to the expansion of formal volunteering in those countries where centuries-old traditions of mutual assistance to others based on religious and humanitarian values were already strong. According

to the results of an online survey of 768 volunteers aged 18 years and older from 20 countries of the Arab world carried out in 2023, there is convincing evidence of an increase in trust in people in the countries of this region due to volunteer participation and citizen involvement in non-profit organizations. Citizens with volunteer experience in an organized format appreciate the social significance for society of this type of social participation of citizens in their communities.

The ARTICLE *Youth Participation in Citizen Science: Problems and Opportunities of Engagement in Russian Context* by Gulnara F. Romashkina, Elena V. Andrianova, and Marina V. Khudyakova draw the reader's attention to the volunteering in the scientific field, a relatively new social participation practice in modern Russia, which represents a horizontal form of public participation in progressivist action. The authors study scientific volunteering, one of the unique manifestations of social participation, as a collective action aimed at the common good through the involvement of volunteers in solving scientific problems. Such manifestations are defined in the research as "citizen science", representing a horizontal form of public participation that encourages people to work for the benefit of scientific progress. Based on the data of 11 in-depth interviews with the organizers of citizen science and a formalized survey of 530 scientific volunteers aged 18–35, the authors analyze the motives for participation and types of volunteer activities in citizen science, as well as organizational schemes for involving scientific volunteers. It is shown that the involvement of scientific volunteers in scientific projects constitutes a purposeful organized process. Youth participation in citizen science is significantly increased by the personal interest of young people in science, as well as their experience of volunteering. This interest turns out to be especially pronounced among high school students. The motivation of scientific volunteers is focused on the achievement of some significant results in the future through their participation in citizen science and in the volunteer movement as a whole. The study reveals not only an expansion in social interaction as a result of the activity of scientific volunteers, but also a change in the configuration of science itself at institutional and epistemological levels. Due to the activities of scientific volunteering, horizontal ties between young people and scientists are expanding, along with increased confidence in science and volunteering.

In the ARTICLE *Experiences in "Letting the Public in": Tentative Conclusions on the Administration-Public Tango for Co-Responsible Local Governance* Mariana Cernicova-Buca investigates the approach of "co-creation." On the basis of this theory, social participation is revealed to consist in the participation of citizens in the management of their own communities. Within this theoretical framework, it is possible to consider social participation as an interactive process that penetrates into all spheres of public life. The production of public value is achieved through the cooperation of local public administration and citizens in the course of constructive exchange of knowledge, resources, competencies, and ideas. In her research, the author applies a participatory methodology for studying the case, analyzing the context of civil participation of the population in the management of various projects taking place in Timișoara, the largest city in the western part of Romania. The article shows how EU standards were integrated into the formation of an appropriate regional management policy in a country with

a communist background. In the past twenty years, the concept of "co-responsibility" in public administration scenarios has been implemented along with the allocation of resources and engagement of public and academic organizations. The author identifies and then analyzes some difficulties in expanding the participation of citizens in governance due to limited civic competences and awareness of such opportunities. While considering the difficulties inherent in the expansion of citizen participation, the author warns that the trust of the community can easily be lost due to a failure to apply the practice of co-creation in decision-making and generating feedback. Due to the limited influence on decision-making officials, public fatigue and frustration arise regardless of the format of co-creation: advisory councils, group consultations, local coordination groups, participatory budgets. The author emphasizes the role of political actors in the organization of citizen participation, which, in determining the policy of accepting or not accepting the context of constant interaction with citizens, brings harm or benefit to the involvement of different groups of the population in addressing various problems. The research data reflected in the article were collected according to the participant observation method during the author's monitoring or steering of citizen participation processes and/or participation as a member of target groups in processes curated by administrative bodies since 1990.

The BOOK REVIEW section includes a review by Arthur V. Atanesyan of M. V. Pevnaya (Ed.), *Sotsial'noe Uchastie Molodezhi v Sotsiokul'turnom Razvitii Gorodov Rossii i Postsovetskikh Stran: Potentsial i Model' Upravleniia* [Social Participation of Youth in the Sociocultural Development of Russian Cities and Post-Soviet Countries: Potential and Management Model], 2023. In the book under review, Ural sociologists explore a multitude of issues related to the social participation of youth in the contemporary context.

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

Factors Influencing Social Participation of Older People in Russia: Study of Practices of Delayed Ageing

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ABSTRACT
The article presents the study results of the social participation of Russian citizens aged 60 and over. The analysis is based on the concept of extended adulthood or delayed ageing, which is a continuation or development of "active ageing." Extended adulthood is understood from a sociological perspective as the preservation of the social status and role of an independent person participating in the life of society. Our main research question is "What factors and how do they influence the social activity of older people in modern Russian society?" Our research is based on a quantitative survey, consisting of a corpus of 210 questionnaires collected in a medical institution from older people aged 60 and over, supplemented by data from their medical records. For data triangulation and thick description, we use the material from 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews. All material was collected in 2022–2023. The data are strictly anonymous. Among the various forms of social participation and involvement of older people in activities, the most important is employment, which increases income. Internet use helps to prolong social participation and not to feel old. After the age

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of 75, the range of activities decreases and focuses on family and relatives. The very concepts of "ageing" and "elderly" themselves have predominantly negative connotations for both respondents and informants and are associated with inactivity, illness, loss of interests and abilities, etc. This allows us to consider the concept of extended adulthood/delayed ageing as the most effective and appropriate for studying ageing and changes in ageing policies.

KEYWORDS
ageing, delayed aging, social participation, older people, Russia

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Introduction

Sociologists rightfully point to the lack of sociological definition of old age and the impossibility of defining old age without ageist undertones (Smol'kin, 2022). In fact, different sciences consider ageing as a negative process, as something irreversible that incurs losses, as something that should be counteracted and slowed down, and, where this is impossible, as something that should somehow smooth out the negative consequences and alleviate the inevitable and natural process. In various approaches, we notice the lack of a theoretical conceptualization of ageing. Ageing "just happens," and studies devoted to it view this process from an essentialist perspective. The analysis rarely includes the approach of Parsons (1951), who turned away from the objectivist view of illness and proposed the concept of the "sick role" and different ways of playing this role, including the "sick role" as not the only possible one. It seems that we can look at the "old role" from a similar perspective, as there are also different ways of playing it. Recently, biologists have increasingly supported this sociological approach or hypothesis, noting that there is more control over ageing than it was previously thought, when the process of ageing was seen as a biologically inevitable fact of life (Khalyavkin, 2013; Kirkwood, 2017).

However, many researchers are reluctant to abandon the "crisis lens" in the study of ageing and to adopt a new perspective on the changing age structure of society. In the Russian language, the word "starenie" [ageing] has a mostly negative semantic meaning. Therefore, it has been replaced in official and academic discourses by "dolgoletie" [longevity], e.g., active longevity, healthy longevity, etc. Otherwise, a direct translation of "active ageing" would imply a faster, accelerated ageing (Sidorenko & Zaidi, 2013). Therefore, both active and healthy ageing are predominantly defined by the term "longevity". We see a similar problem with referring to ageing not only as a process, but also as a period of life. For instance, the renowned psychologist O. Strizhitskaya seems to have been the first in Russia to work on the topic/approach of delayed ageing, but, unfortunately, returned to the analysis of "productive ageing"

(Strizhitskaya & Petrash, 2022). In this case, the negative connotations are even stronger. The first thing that comes to mind is the saying "old age is not a blessing." We can avoid these connotations by addressing periods of life or older people as a single group: "late life," "silver age," "third age," "senior generation," etc. The English-speaking psychological tradition has evolved the concept of lifespan development, which includes eight age stages, the last of which is late adulthood beginning after the age of 65. At the same time, social gerontologists, who elaborated the theory of activity that became the cornerstone of the concept of active ageing, saw the extension of activity and attitudes in middle age as the main condition for successful ageing (Havighurst, 1961). In this way, ageing is delayed or replaced by late adulthood. From a purely biological and medical perspective, researchers have attempted to present delayed ageing as a new paradigm for the healthcare system, in contrast to the concept of delayed disease. However, a renewed focus on prolonging healthy life at older age (delayed ageing) by preventing disease and reducing disability rates may not only provide more years of healthy and active life, but also be economically beneficial in the long run (Goldman & Olshansky, 2013). In many respects, we can state that this idea underlies the concept of active ageing, which implies measuring the relevant index, with employment as one of its four main domains. In this article, we consider extended adulthood from a sociological perspective, as the preservation of social status and roles of an independent person participating in the life of society both within the proposed institutional framework and individually chosen. At the same time, from a conventional perspective, an "older" person is precisely the one who has lost status, social roles, and independent activity, since the age limit for the beginning of ageing is also blurred today and the interpretative potential of "age" is reduced.

The main instrument for measuring activity and social participation of older people is the Active Ageing Index (AAI). However, there are several criticisms of its performance. For instance, researchers criticize the AAI for its insufficient conceptualization and the prioritization of some key assumptions such as the potential and preferred areas of activity of older people (de São José et al., 2017), despite the fact that the developers of the AAI emphasize the flexibility of the frameworks for different countries. The testing of some parameters for active ageing based on the material of the SHARE project (Survey of Health, Ageing, and Retirement in Europe) shows that only some types of activity (volunteering, physical activity, and participation in clubs) improve the quality of life, while caring for family members may have a negative effect. Quality of life is also affected by age, health, and economic conditions (Lakomý, 2021). Another important aspect concerns the individual interpretation of activity and its role by older people. A legitimate question is why older people should be involved in prescribed activities, if they prefer some other forms of activities and participation that, from the conceptual point of view, do not improve the integration of older people into the life of society, communication, and interactions?

The social activity of older people was also drastically reduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. The identification of older people as a vulnerable group during the pandemic brought biological age to the fore, thus contributing to the growth of ageism and the decline in social activity among older people (Kienko, 2021; Sinyavskaya, 2020).

In this article, we examine the social participation of older people focusing on the variety of its forms and the factors that influence the level of participation. Our main research question is "What factors and how do they influence the social activity of older people in modern Russian society?" This article is a continuation of our research on the social activity of older people (Parfenova & Galkin, 2023) complementing it with new empirical data and results.

Conceptual Framework of Research

Widely discussed approaches to active ageing are based on several earlier concepts and approaches. These include the concept of successful ageing introduced by the American researcher Robert Havighurst (1961); the concept of maintaining activities that bring pleasure and satisfaction, which implies maintaining activities and attitudes of middle age for as long as possible (Lemon et al., 1972).

A further development of the theme was to explore ways of maintaining middle age activities, thereby prolonging adulthood and delaying ageing, which was seen as a success in life. The term *successful ageing* has gained popularity in the 1980–1990s with the work of American gerontologists John Rowe and Robert Kahn. They suggested that successful ageing is the preservation of middle age activity patterns and values in old age (Rowe & Khan, 1987, 1997). This preservation is possible by replacing the lost relationships, activities, and roles of middle age with new ones with a view to maintain activity and life satisfaction (Walker, 2002).

High numbers of the Baby Boomers and their ageing, together with concerns about the decline in pension support for older people, which Kotlikoff has termed the *pension tsunami* (Kotlikoff & Burns, 2004), has stimulated theoretical developments and brought the issue of active ageing to the political level. The concept of active ageing was formulated in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, or MIPAA (United Nations, 2002). The main provisions of the International Plan actually challenge the first international instrument on the elderly's rights, that is, the Vienna Plan of 1982 (United Nations, 1982). In particular, the approach to the rights of older persons has changed from "the right to pension and rest after a period of work" to the right to "employment and active life, social participation and integration." The Madrid Plan took a sharp turn away from the idea of old age free of work commitments towards the values of active ageing and participation in the labor market, and not only in housework and caring for grandchildren. These regulatory documents set the tone for understanding the very process of ageing itself and established a more or less stable international status quo on this issue.

Later, the MIPAA approach has undergone several conceptual changes that have brought older people's activity to the structural level of the theory of activities and introduced its practical instruments in relation to older people (Formosa, 2019; Versey, 2015). The measurement of the results of the active ageing approach has also changed. It is based on the concept that any form of activity promotes social participation, i.e., the integration of older people into different levels of society. In 2012, for international monitoring of the ageing process the Active Ageing Index (the Active Longevity Index in the Russian context) was introduced, which included four key areas:

employment, participation in society, independent, healthy and safe living, capacity and enabling environment for active ageing (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, n.d.).

In this context, we should note that employment is regular paid work, implying the labor relations between an employee and an employer, as well as certain working conditions and taxes. In other words, not only an individual who can support themselves in other ways, but also the society/state can benefit from employment. However, although this type of employment guarantees a pension to an employee, older people in Russia often prefer various forms of self-employment (including informal employment), as they provide more convenience for them and independence from the employer.

There are also significant differences in the understanding of participation. For instance, volunteering in Western countries is more avocational and grassroots than in Russia, where the state has a regulatory and managerial role in the process. In addition, lists of volunteers involved in projects are required for subsidies or grants from the Presidential Grants Fund (PGF). In Russia, participation is more in line with neighborly mutual aid or with part-time activities such as landscaping courtyards and communal entrances. Helping children, grandchildren or older people in Russia is associated with family relationships rather than social participation, unless it involves helping older people who are complete strangers. Finally, the political participation of older people today is regulated and can hardly be seen as a manifestation of activism.

Independence, health, and safe living include physical exercise and access to health services, independent living, financial security, physical security, and lifelong learning. The logic of such an association is not obvious to a person from a "non-Western" culture, although in Russia it is also difficult to receive any service without having compulsory health insurance policy or a taxpayer identification number. Finally, the fourth key area comprises life expectancy over the age of 55 years, prolongation of healthy life after the age of 55, mental well-being, ICT use, social cohesion, and educational attainment (UNECE Statistics Wikis, n.d.).

Over the years, it has been recognized that in some cases the AAI needs to be modified due to regional specificities. A possible solution to this problem can be the development of flexible policies that take into account regional specificities within a country (Principi et al., 2023), for example for the Eastern countries (Liang & Luo, 2012). In Russia, this has taken some time, although the number of statistical indicators of ageing has been expanded since 2020. Currently, there are guidelines for the use of the AAI in countries outside the EU (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe & European Commission, 2018).

The theory of activity, as mentioned above, implies a "delay" in the ageing of older people and an extension of middle age activities, thereby preserving the living conditions and motivations characteristic of middle age (Bengtson et al., 2009; Formosa, 2019). In particular, this implies the prolongation of professional employment, independence, mobility, and education of older people, as well as communication and access to ICT, which provide basic opportunities to maintain middle age activity. Our team has studied the opportunities and barriers for continued employment of older

people (Grigoryeva & Ravchik, 2023; Parfenova, 2023). In 2023, the number of offers on the labor market began to grow rapidly, but the working conditions that older people could be interested in were rarely offered. Based on data from Russia, we have shown that employment and social participation are the main parameters of active ageing, which correlates with international documents. Continued employment, maintenance of social ties, and communication both in person and remotely generally have a positive effect on the self-perception of older people (Vidiasova, 2023).

The development of communication and access to ICT are the main opportunities for maintaining activity in middle age (Kornilova, 2018). Older people need at least basic ICT skills to access medical services, order medicines and other services, including food delivery, not to mention find employment. In Russia, the state has already transferred all citizens' data to personal accounts on the portal *Gosuslugi*[1] [Public Services Portal of the Russian Federation], regardless of whether this is convenient for people, especially the older ones, or not. In fact, in recent years, the state has created conditions for teaching the basics of digital literacy to older people. The websites of Russian regions have mandatory sections with educational programs, many NGOs also develop such courses, while public libraries provide access to computers. For instance, the ITMO University in St. Petersburg has developed and maintained an educational website, the Third Age University (TAU),[2] with free access and a range of engaging courses. Nevertheless, there are also many prejudices about the learning abilities of older people and other manifestations of ageism (Grigoryeva, 2022). At the same time, we believe that techno-optimism about the accessibility of telemedicine for older people during the COVID-19 pandemic has been exaggerated, if only because of poor Internet coverage in many regions (Galkin, 2022). However, we can agree that such inclusion is essential for older people being an important form of their social activity (Vidiasova et al., 2022).

Naturally, many older people, especially in the senior age groups, do not want to replace the types of activity that they have lost due to retirement or health conditions, and they seek activity either in new occupations or in other, more mundane activities (Biggs et al., 2020; Wild et al., 2013). These types of activity are very diverse and differ from the mainstream perceptions of older people's activities, which are counted as statistically significant in the AAI.

In the current situation, activity can be "decoded" in different ways. For instance, Kienko et al. consider the activity and self-organization of older people within the framework of empowerment approach. They note that the process of ageing is particularly complicated, heterotropic and heterochronic, in which age limits are arbitrary (Kienko, Pevnaya, & Ptitsyna, 2022). In studying the participation of older people, the authors introduce a notable innovation by emphasizing that it is important to study not only the different forms of participation and capabilities of older people, but also the reasons for "non-participation" (Kienko, Ptitsyna, et al., 2022).

Other characteristics of older people's work are also changing. Psychological and emotional tensions of working older people require rest and relaxation. However, it is recommended that older people engage in active leisure, use resources on the Internet

[1] https://www.gosuslugi.ru

[2] https://u3a.itmo.ru/

and in community centers, and take part in various educational activities. The decision to focus only on grandchildren or a household no longer seems like the right way to grow old (Bogdanova & Grigoryeva, 2021). In addition, older people are encouraged to participate in community activities and attend social events. At the same time, they do not necessarily view the experience of loneliness as emotionally negative. Instead, when being alone, older people look for interesting activities, use this time for reflection and rest, go for walks, and read newspapers (Elutina & Trofimova, 2017; Versey, 2015).

These changes were confirmed by the latest All-Russian Census that was carried out in 2021. According to its results, there were 27.6 million single-person households (Degot'kova, 2023). This type of household accounted for the largest share of all household types, namely 41.8% out of 66.1 million. Since the turn of the century, the share of single-person households has almost doubled from 22.3% in 2002. This census was the first in the Russian Federation to record the predominance of this type of household. On this indicator, Russia has caught up with European countries. Among the reasons for this increase are late marriage, and for older people, mostly women, widowhood and a preference not to enter into new relationships or the impossibility of doing so, since statistically women outnumber men in this age group.

At present, the issues of social activity and the search for new practical solutions and theoretical insights are connected to generational change. The Baby Boomer generation can be described as the first generation to be active in older age. Thus, upon reaching the retirement age, Baby Boomers (as a rule, in big cities and metropolitan areas) are at the peak of their careers and are often considered to be valuable professionals with enormous capacity for development and continued employment (Zacher et al., 2018). Another important criterion characteristic of Baby Boomers is their savings and thus greater financial independence (North, 2019). This allows them to be autonomous, plan their lives, and choose between different types of activity. These generational and demographic changes define two main challenges for social policies and the concept of active ageing. The first challenge is linked to the search for a new model for delaying one's ageing and, consequently, to the development of individual conceptions of activity. The second challenge is linked to the search for a new interpretation of age and ageing as a stage in life, and is a nonlinear and indefinite category.

In addition to individual perceptions of what activity should look like and what daily tasks should be involved, the structural framework of ageing prescribed by society is of great importance. These perceptions are largely determined by belonging to a particular age group, and by the history and culture of a country or community. Research data from European countries show an increase in the happiness that people aged 50 and over derive from various activities, formal (volunteering) and informal (communicating with relatives and friends), with informal activities having a bigger positive impact (Sinyavskaya et al., 2019). We can expect to see similar results in Russia, although it will not be an exact comparison, as in Russia older people are less involved in volunteering and more engaged in caring for elderly relatives (Pevnaya, 2016). The public expectations mentioned above are likely to prescribe scenarios of active and successful ageing that differ from those in Europe.

Research Methodology

In this research, we have used a mixed methodology. While we continue to study the social participation of older people with a qualitative method, in this article we mainly use data collected through a quantitative survey. In order to triangulate the data and provide a thick description, we use the data from 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews with informants aged 60 and over. However, we do not aim to present a detailed analysis of both datasets in a single article. The survey results are considered as the main dataset and the interviews as the auxiliary dataset. A detailed analysis of the interviews on social activities can be found in our companion study (Parfenova & Galkin, 2023). The interviews were analyzed using thematic coding with the identification of semantic blocks. The validity of the data was ensured by the researcher triangulation method. When working with the interviews, several researchers with different professional backgrounds analyzed the narratives, which allowed us to obtain verifiable and reliable conclusions about the range of activities of older people (Denzin, 2017).

The quantitative part of the research in the form of questionnaires was carried out from May to June of 2023. The survey was conducted in person at the premises of the North-Western District Scientific and Clinical Center named after L. G. Sokolov of Federal Medical-Biological Agency in St. Petersburg[3]. The sample comprised 210 respondents, of whom 62% were women and 38% were men. The age of respondents ranged from 60 to 91 years old. The age range of respondents was as follows: 22% were 60–64 years old, 29% were 65–69 years old, 28% were 70–74 years old, 14% were 75–79 years old, 5% were 80–84 years old, and 2% were 85 years old or older. Almost half of the respondents have university or academic degree, 8% have incomplete secondary or general secondary education, 42% have vocational education. About 8% estimate their income as very low, 16% as low, 75% as medium, and just under 1% as high. Just over a half of the respondents (54%) are officially married, 29% are widowed, 11% are divorced, 3% are in unregistered relationships, 3% have never been married. Of the respondents, 57% live with a spouse or partner, 13% live with their children or grandchildren, and 27% live alone, 3% – unclassified others. The study sample is continuous and unstratified, as it is limited to patients of the medical institution aged 60 years and over. The choice of this health facility was motivated by the unique opportunity to combine data on the opinions of older patients collected through questionnaires with data on patients' health from the health information system. The study thus provided an opportunity to compare subjective assessments with what are traditionally considered objective indicators of patients' health and established diagnoses.

Before the survey, we completed the necessary paperwork to regulate our research on the premises of the medical institution. We used questionnaires to collect information on respondents' health, attitudes to ageing, access to medical services, and demand for digital health services.

[3] Federal State Budgetary Organization "North-Western District Scientific and Clinical Center named after L. G. Sokolov of Federal Medical-Biological Agency" is a large medical institution that consists of a 560-bed multidisciplinary hospital, Central polyclinic with 1500 visits per day, five on-site industrial polyclinics, and two branches.

We then analyzed anonymized data on diseases and rehabilitation periods in St. Petersburg medical institutions, as well as the respondents' commitment to annual preventive medical check-ups. Data collection and transfer was carried out through the healthcare information system (HIS) of the St. Petersburg regional segment.

In our research, we assessed the indicators according to six components:

- professional activities;
- social activity;
- delayed ageing;
- health saving practices;
- digital health services;
- data on health conditions from the healthcare information system.

This article focuses on a detailed analysis of two of the indicators presented. The list of studied categories for each indicator is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Categories for Assessing Social Activity and Practices of Delayed Ageing Among Older People

Social activity	Delayed ageing
Age restrictions on activities	Feeling old
Freedom of choice of activity	Assessment of age limits of old people
Restrictive family obligations	Capabilities to delay ageing
Overall emotional state	Improvement in vitality through work activity
Engagement in different types of activities	
Practices of communication with relatives, friends	
Satisfaction with life	

Note. Source: methodology adopted by the authors.

The following statistical methods were used to analyze the data collected: pairwise correlations using Spearman's method and factor analysis. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table A2 (see Appendix).

In order to build models, the entire set of criteria was tested in each case, and then the most optimal parameters of the models were compared, while excluding individual criteria. Only rank variables were used to compute factor models.

The qualitative part of the research involved in-depth semi-structured interviews with informants aged 60 and over. One of the main thematic blocks of the interview was social participation in its various forms. In 2022–2023, we conducted 50 semi-structured interviews with older people, of whom 38 were women and 12 were men. Most informants have a university degree and are (or have been) engaged in intellectual labor. Most of the informants live in cities (mainly St. Petersburg, some in Petrozavodsk, Tuymen, and Salekhard), and some in the countryside (the Republic of Karelia).

Research Results

Employment as a Form of Social Participation

In the research, we focus mainly on non-labor forms of social participation. However, we cannot completely exclude employment both as a form of activity and as a factor influencing social participation. According to the results of the survey, over a half of respondents (62%) are unemployed pensioners, while 38% remain in employment. Of those who continue to work, 93% are satisfied with their job, 59% do not think that their job requires physical effort, and 84% think they are well paid for their work. In addition, 62% feel that their work provides them with new opportunities, while 80% feel they have enough support at work in difficult situations.

Interestingly, the opinions of older people in terms of their assessment of necessity to continue the employment do not differ between different age groups (Table 2). At the same time, the proportion of retired people is 47% in the group of 60–69-year-olds, 68% in the group of 70–79-year-olds, and 87% in the group of 80-year-olds and over.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents' Agreement With the Statement About the Need to Continue Working by Age Groups of Respondents, %

"To maintain vitality, you should not retire"	60–69 years old	70–79 years old	80 years old and older
Yes	19.5	19.1	12.5
Rather yes	39.8	36.0	37.4
Rather no	25.0	27.0	31.3
No	15.7	17.9	18.8

The respondents believe that in order to maintain vitality they should not retire (56%) or at least maintain part-time employment (65%). Overall, older respondents think that delayed ageing depends on the actions of the individual (89%). Moreover, 65% indicated that most employers do not consider part-time work for their employees or do not allow older people to continue working. These findings confirm that the institutional framework personalized by employers largely limits the employment of older people, rather than their health or ICT skills. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the interviews, which shows that older people prioritize flexible working conditions and seek jobs with more convenient schedules/part-time work. For more on employment after the age of 60, see Parfenova (2023).

At the beginning of the research, we suspected that there would be considerable differences between the activities of employed and unemployed older people. So, one of our first tasks was to compare the range of activities of employed and unemployed informants (two equal parts of the interview). The analysis revealed that there was little or no significant difference in the range of activities between employed and unemployed people. Perhaps, to clarify the differences, we need to introduce another parameter of the "time spent on activities," which will show the differences, but this

hypothesis should be tested. At the same time, we discovered differences with increasing age. We therefore created two groups, not by employment, but by age. The first group included respondents aged from 60 to 75 (including both employed and unemployed people). We conventionally labeled this group as 60+. The second group consisted of informants aged 75 and over, which we labeled as 75+. In the data collected, 75+ represent about one-third of the total number of informants (14 out of 50). In the interview data, we compare the results for the two age groups 60+ and 75+.

Variety of Forms of Activity and Its Affecting Factors

Research at the all-Russian level demonstrates the diversity of forms of social activity of older people[4]. Our research based on the survey and interviews also shows a wide range of activities of older people. The social activity of our respondents and informants takes various forms. For instance, our survey showed that last year 88% of senior citizens of St. Petersburg read books and magazines, 54% played board games, 38% landscaped the residential courtyard or renovated communal hallways, 33% visited theaters, museums, and exhibitions, 27% traveled across the country and abroad, 23% traveled across their region, 13% visited sports and wellness centers, 11% transferred money to help children, the seriously ill, and victims of armed conflicts, 9% participated in the collection of humanitarian aid, 6% attended various educational courses or hobby groups, and 4% studied foreign languages.

According to the survey, 43% of respondents feel that their age prevents them from doing what they would like to do. About 12% feel that family commitments prevent them from doing what they would like to do, and 54% feel that lack of money is the reason.

The interview material allows us not only to learn more about the forms of activities, but also to analyze the links between activities, the professional status, and age of the informants.

The range of activities of the 60+ group is quite diverse and includes working in a country house (gardening, vegetable gardening); socializing with family, friends, and coworkers; informal help and care for relatives or friends; leisure activities (theaters, museums, concerts, etc.); traveling (across the country and abroad); charity (donations); landscaping residential courtyards; interacting with housing and other services to solve housing and communal problems; caring for grandchildren and older relatives; online and offline educational courses; fitness or special exercises (in organized groups or independently); participating in volunteer organizations; interaction with various organizations as an informal volunteer; participating in environmental campaigns (garbage collection, recycling, etc.); fishing.

[4] In May 2021, the VCIOM (Russian Public Opinion Research Center) presented the following data on the lifestyle of the Russian citizens of the silver age. Each third Russian citizen (35%) is retired. Among citizens aged 60 and over, each fifth person continues to work after retirement (19%). Among the most popular occupations of Russian citizens aged 60 and over are caring for children and grandchildren (62%); outdoors activities, for instance, fishing, gardening, clubs (58%); physical exercise and sports (36%); indoor leisure activities, i.e., painting, model building, etc. (27%); attending cultural events, such as theaters, museums, exhibitions, etc. (24%). Moreover, 12% of older citizens are regularly engaged in volunteering, while 8% participate in trade unions, political parties, public committees, etc. (Aktivnaia zhizn' na pensii, 2021).

Professional employment does not significantly affect the range of activities. The peculiarity of the 60+ unemployed informants is an emphasis on involvement in communication with former (as a rule, recent) colleagues and specific one-off work projects (on a voluntary basis). The employed informants, with rare exceptions (one older man working on a rotational basis) do not justify the low level of social activity through employment. On the contrary, their non-work activities quite naturally complement their participation in the labor market. The exception is special courses for older people usually organized in libraries, social centers, etc. The employed informants usually do not attend them. Thus, the respondents' participation in work activities and their income levels contribute to a wider range of the respondents' activities.

Communication as an Essential Part of Social Activity

In the research, we consider communication and interaction with the outside world as an essential part of social participation. Close relatives and friends make up the social circle of unemployed older people. Older respondents communicate relatively often with their relatives, both in person and remotely, and 63% spend time with their grandchildren. In addition, 82% of respondents communicate more or less regularly with relatives in person, and 91% communicate with relatives remotely. Finally, 58% communicate with their friends more or less regularly in person, and 76% communicate with their friends remotely.

The interview material clearly shows age-specific communication. For older people aged 75+, deficits in communication and socialization become apparent, as well as the regret of not being able to replace the former communication, which mainly took place in the workplace and became inaccessible with retirement. The informants note that their current communication is limited to socializing with relatives and friends and is often episodic rather than regular.

> What friends? House neighbors. There are no neighbors, as everyone rushes back home, closes the door, starts feeding someone, washing, cleaning. There is no time for a chat. All that remains is the communication with friends you made at work, or friends from college. It is fortunate if they are alive. I, for instance, do not have any college friends left. They are dead. Although, two have left the country, and three have died. I'm not even talking about school friends. Not everyone lives to be 80 years old. I still have a social circle. Very small. (Interview 2, woman, 88 years old, St. Petersburg)

For people aged 75 and over, communication practices clearly show that socializing with friends and acquaintances does not bring the usual satisfaction and tends to play the role of background communication. At the same time, there is a natural reduction in the circle of communication with peers (due to illness and death), which changes communication patterns.

Conversely, for the 60+ group, we see a clear distinction between formal communication and activity at the current or former workplace and interaction

with colleagues, and informal communication with relatives and friends, which is personalized. We would like to emphasize that the recently retired informants maintain communication and interaction with colleagues, which in turn contributes to the preservation of previous activities, which, as the older people themselves note, remain important to them despite retirement. In this context, the unemployed informants aged 60 and over consider the communication with relatives and family to be secondary to the communication with colleagues and coworkers, since it brings satisfaction and replaces activities that existed before retirement.

Thus, the analysis of the narratives of the interviews with people aged 75 and over shows a deficit in communication and the phenomenon of family isolation, when older seniors are limited to communication within the family, which they often view as the only possible option. At the same time, there is a theme of regret in their narratives, mainly related to the fact that the opportunity for active communication and interaction is lost for people aged 75 and over. As a result, the presence of relatives and the opportunity to connect with them and to be involved in their lives becomes the dominant value. Regular communication sometimes involves socializing with one or two friends. An important part of communication for the 75+ group is the help and the opportunity to get advice or support, while for the 60+ group communication is related to professional activities and hobbies. Those who are retired may maintain some quasi-employment with attempts to give work-related advice.

Framing Old Age: Who are Older People?

The survey asked the question: "How would you describe someone you consider to be elderly; what habits, activities, clothes or anything else indicate old age?" When answering this open-ended question, the respondents mentioned the following characteristics: illnesses, talking about illnesses, boredom, disinterest, laziness, sedentary lifestyle, appearance, clothes, slovenliness, age over 65, grumpiness, wish to moralize, no sparkle in the eyes, no joy of living, dementia, inability to gain new knowledge, helplessness, loneliness, social withdrawal, reluctance to communicate and go out, dirtiness, hair-splitting attitude, stereotypical thinking, wisdom, frailty, languidness, no social activity, limited financial resources, and lack of optimism.

These data are fully consistent with the statements made by the informants in the interviews, in which they associated old age and the "elderly" with the characteristics listed. To illustrate this, we quote one of the interviews, in which the informant associates ageing with lifestyle:

> Question: And why lifestyle?
> Answer: Because if you sit on the couch, stare mindlessly at the TV and do nothing, do not communicate, since somehow with age some people retreat into themselves, stop communicating with other people in a friendly way. That's why they end up ageing faster. (Interview 17, woman, 64 years old)

In view of these attitudes, we looked for a correlation between the parameters of active ageing, delayed ageing, and health indicators of the older respondents. Interestingly, 41% of respondents considered themselves elderly, while 35% said they felt much younger. The correlation between these responses and the degree of life satisfaction is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Between the Respondents' Answers About Their Satisfaction With Life and Recognizing Themselves as Elderly, % by Row

How satisfied are you with your life?	Do you consider yourself elderly?		
	Of course, I am a pensioner after all	Not at all, I feel younger	I will be elderly later on
Completely satisfied	31	45	24
Somewhat satisfied	51	32	17
Somewhat dissatisfied	58	27	15
Dissatisfied	60	20	20

We also found that older people who are engaged in various forms of activity have higher levels of life satisfaction (see Table A2). The research revealed that maintaining social ties with children, relatives, and friends has a positive effect on overall life satisfaction level. Thus, among those who often communicate with friends and relatives, 66% are satisfied with their lives. Among those who maintain frequent online contacts, the figure is 62%. The research shows that older people who often spend time with their grandchildren are more satisfied with their lives (80% satisfied).

The Internet use as one of the forms of social activity also contributes to feeling younger and satisfied with life. Among those respondents who do not consider themselves advanced users of the Internet and computers, 54% consider themselves to be older. In the group of active users, this figure is 16%.

Three quarters of respondents believe that ageing can be delayed or slowed down. According to 88% of respondents, self-discipline and regular physical exercise can delay ageing.

The research discovered a correlation between the positive and negative attitudes of the respondents and their age. All respondents were divided into three groups: 60–69 years old, 70–79 years old, and 80 years old and over. We found that members of the eldest group were more likely to give low ratings to their satisfaction with life. At the same time, 39% of the respondents had not thought about old age. Some 28% started thinking about old age when they turned 70, 25% when they were 60, almost 3% when they were 50, and 5% after an illness. Overall, the respondents showed a fairly positive attitude, with 71% believing that life is full of opportunities and 65% feeling full of energy.

Correlation Between Social Activity and Health

This research examined the correlation between older people's activity and their health. According to the data obtained from the health information system, about a third of older people smoke, 48% drink alcohol, although the type and amount of alcohol was not specified. Almost a quarter are allergic to something and almost one in three has a disability. Only a third of respondents have an annual check-up, 48% have been treated for COVID-19, and 10% have had a thorough physical examination. In particular, almost 90% have chronic vascular disease, 24% have cancers, and 17% have non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

We discovered that disabilities do not play a decisive role in terminating one's employment: 27% of those who continue to work have a disability, compared with 29% of the retired group. Among those who continue to work, 91% suffer from chronic vascular diseases, compared to 87% of the retired group. There was also an almost equal share (24%) of older people with cancers. The proportion of older people with cancer was almost the same (24%) in the employed and retired groups.

Illness, however, makes older people feel that they cannot do what they would like to do. In particular, one third of those who feel this way have a disability, 92% have vascular disease, 24% have cancers, and 18% have diabetes mellitus. Among those who seldom feel this way, the percentages are lower: 14% have disabilities, 86% have vascular diseases, 14% have cancers, and 9% have diabetes mellitus.

Nevertheless, we found that older people with various health conditions (up to and including serious diseases) do not deny themselves different types of activity. Table 4 presents data on the proportion of respondents with different health conditions among those who commented on types of activity.

Table 4

Correlation Between Respondents' Answers to the Question "Have You Engaged in Any of the Activities Listed Below During the Last 12 Months?" and Diagnosed Health Conditions, % by row

Activities	Diagnosed Health Conditions			
	Disability	Chronic cardiac failure	Cancers	Diabetes mellitus
Took educational courses, including online	7.7	100.0	7.7	7.7
Attended sports clubs	29.6	85.2	22.2	7.4
Attended clubs and hobby groups	7.7	92.3	7.7	15.4
Studied foreign languages	37.5	100.0	12.5	0.0
Went to theaters, museums, exhibitions	31.4	90.0	27.1	17.1
Traveled across their region	30.0	88.0	16.0	14.0
Traveled across the country and abroad	24.1	91.4	27.6	24.1
Landscaped, did gardening	28.4	93.8	29.6	19.8

The research found a correlation between life satisfaction and perceived health. Respondents who feel restricted by their age have a poorer assessment of their health. In addition, there are more older people in this group who experience limitations due to insufficient financial resources (Table A1). There is a correlation between feeling restricted by age and having family responsibilities.

Among the factors related to the health of the respondents and affecting their activity, we noted such subjective ones as the feeling of satisfaction with life and the fact that they are doing what they want to do. Objectified and quite serious diagnoses, as our analysis has shown, do not play a decisive role in limiting the social activity of older city dwellers.

Impact of the Pandemic on Social Activity

The research examined the impact of the global pandemic on social activity. More than half of respondents (51%) said that they suffered from a lack of physical activity and 27% felt isolated and lonely. At the same time, 41% seized the opportunity to take a break from fast-paced lives and acquired new knowledge and skills, while 32% reported no change in their usual lifestyle. The dramatic reduction in opportunities for social participation during the pandemic continued to dampen activity in the post pandemic period. For instance, the informants from the 75+ group lamented the former and lost hobbies and reminisced about former interests and mobility that gave them satisfaction. At present, as the informants in this group noted, their former activities and hobbies have become virtually inaccessible owing to the pandemic and health issues, leaving them with nostalgia instead.

At the same time, one in four respondents started to use the Internet more often during the pandemic, including messengers, etc. According to the correlation analysis, engaging in online communication with relatives and friends is an important factor in increasing overall life satisfaction and maintaining a positive attitude, which in the long term contributes to a wider range of social activities among older people.

Conclusion

Our research allows us to talk about a wide range of social activities of Russian citizens aged 60 and over. In this respect, we can speak of the effectiveness of the delayed ageing concept, which in this case is supported by the desire of older people to seek and find different forms of social participation regardless of their professional employment and even health conditions. We interpret such activity as an increase in the subjectivity of older people and the realization of the desire to go beyond the institutional framework of employment and medicine. However, this is a contradictory process. The very concepts of “ageing” and “older people” themselves have predominantly negative connotations for both respondents and informants and are associated with inactivity, ill health, loss of interests and skills, etc. This suggests that the new institutional framework of ageing, i.e., active and delayed ageing is not yet a stable basis for individual ageing and subjective activity. This makes the concept of delayed ageing even more productive for analysis. The main factors influencing the diversity of forms of social participation and inclusion

are age, lack of financial resources, and family status. The provisional "threshold" of 75 years of age that we have discovered in our research is linked to the restructuring of forms and contents of activity, from mainly external to internal, individual, or family. We suggest that this is not conditioned by health issues, since, as our analysis has shown, diagnosed illnesses (including serious ones) do not interfere with many forms of activity. Rather, we should speak of a certain transition to the "fourth age" when, as many of our informants said in the interviews, "you want to do a lot of things, but you have little strength." Financial stability correlates with life satisfaction, a sense of life fulfillment, and the absence of restrictions on desired activities (Table A1). Sufficient financial resources allow older people to satisfy their needs in different ways, to travel, to attend cultural events, to do charity work, and to help their relatives. Our research also revealed a correlation between respondents' marital status and their perception of health, energy, and ability. The respondents who frequently communicate with their relatives, generally rate their health status higher. The presence of close relations and regular contact with them help to fill the gaps in activity after the age of 75. Finally, it should be noted that changing societies imply changing individuals. Increasing life expectancy, which is shaping multiple flexible and diverse ageing scenarios in the changing world, is leading to a shift in conventional age limits and their perceptions, as well as rapidly changing the perceptions of old age, ageing, the capabilities of older people, and their role in society. However, a significant obstacle to prolonging adulthood are the institutional norms of retirement age and medicine that are familiar to the Russian population. They play the role of a "dividing line," separating "adults" from "older people" and healthy older people from the sick at an early stage. All these changes in the structure of society, the perceptions, expectations, and practices are taking place before our eyes, and our research is helping us to capture them.

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Appendix

Supplementary Material—Correlation Tables

Table A1

Correlation Matrix of Social Activity Assessment Parameters and Socio-Demographic Parameters of Respondents

	Satisfied with their life	Feel restricted because of age	Feel they are doing exactly what they want to do	Family obligations do not allow doing what they want to do	Can't do because of lack of money	Feel full of energy	Feel that life is full of opportunities	Your health…	Gender	Income	Family status
Satisfied with their life	1.000	.229**	**394****	.128	.293**	**393****	**428****	**230****	–.118	**.355****	–.054
Feel restricted because of age	.229**	1.000	–.128	.332**	**.359****	**–.304****	–.281**	–.271**	–.137*	**.190****	–.096
Feel they are doing exactly what they want to do	–.394**	– .128	1.000	–.149*	–.256**	.342**	.280**	.090	.014	**–.282****	.047
Family obligations do not allow doing what they want to do	.128	**.332****	–.149*	1.000	**.282****	–.186**	**–.250****	–.055	–.072	**.183****	.084
Can't do because of lack of money	.293**	.359**	–.256**	.282**	1.000	–.150*	–.188**	–.038	–.095	**.318****	–.036
Feel full of energy	–.393**	–.304**	.342**	–.186**	–.150*	1.000	.593**	.447**	.155*	–.323**	.140*
Feel that life is full of opportunities	–.428**	–.281**	.280**	–.250**	–.188**	.593**	1.000	.274**	.214**	**–.233****	.194**
Your health…	**–.230****	**–.271****	.090	–.055	–.038	**.447****	.274**	1.000	.118	–.136*	**.159***
Gender	–.118	–.137*	.014	–.072	–.095	.155*	.214**	.118	1.000	–.044	**.411****
Income	.355**	.190**	–.282**	.183**	.318**	–.323**	–.233**	–.136*	–.044	1.000	.074
Family status	–.054	–.096	.047	.084	–.036	**.140***	**.194****	**.159***	**.411****	.074	1.000

Note. * The correlation is significant at the .05 level (bilateral correlation); ** the correlation is significant at the .01 level (bilateral correlation).

Table A2

Correlation Between Respondents' Answers About the Types of Social Activity and Their Satisfaction With Life, % by Row

Have you engaged in any of the activities listed below in the last 12 months	How satisfied are you with your life?			
	Completely satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Transferred money to help children, the seriously ill, victims of armed conflicts, etc.	34.8	43.5	13.0	8.7
Participated in the collection of humanitarian aid (brought items or food)	33.3	38.1	23.8	4.8
Landscaped residential courtyards, renovated communal entrances, staircases	32.1	48.1	18.5	1.3
Took educational or professional courses, including online	30.8	53.8	7.7	7.7
Visited sports and wellness centers	51.9	37.0	11.1	0.0
Attended various clubs or hobby groups	53.8	30.8	15.4	0.0
Went to theaters, museums, exhibitions, concerts	31.4	61.4	7.2	0.0
Traveled across their region	44.0	46.0	8.0	2.0
Traveled across the country and abroad	36.2	56.9	6.9	0.0

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

"You are Needed and You Exist": Motivation for Social Participation of Older Activists, Rostov Oblast, Russia

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ABSTRACT
The article aims to identify the sociological approach's perspective on the reasons behind the continued social engagement of older individuals. In 2021, leaders and activists of social participation practices in the Rostov Oblast aged 65 to 90 years (N = 18) were interviewed. These interviews were analyzed using grounded theory to identify the central motivation for socially significant activities as the desire to attain life satisfaction through contributing positively to others. The participants share comparable socio-demographic and biographical features, including higher education, managerial positions, leadership roles, and involvement in socially significant professions or activities throughout their lives. This indicates that their engagement in social participation is a culmination of their lifetime experiences, thereby supporting the concepts presented by "life course" theories. Motives that are commonly cited include fulfilling moral obligations, establishing connections with important individuals and communities, acquiring resources, gaining social approval and recognition, preserving identity and status, prolonging social life, and ageing postponement. This enables us to discuss the social participation of older adults as a means to combat the aging process, extend social engagement, and advocate for recognition within the frameworks of social exchange theories and the struggle for recognition. Through social participation, individuals accumulate goals and expand their motivational structure, which can result in generativity, i.e., a desire to contribute to improving the lives of others and future generations. This

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particular type of intrinsic motivation integrates various goals, including those for oneself, for others, with others, and for social change, leading to sustained motivation. The leaders and activists prioritize different motives for social participation. For the former, social recognition, freedom, generativity, and social participation are significant while community involvement is valued more by the latter group. The informants' motives for participation are consistent with V. Gerchikov's typological concept of labor motivation and the model of older people's motivation for social participation as an embodiment of values.

KEYWORDS
motivation, social participation, older people, seniors, Rostov Oblast, Russia

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Introduction

In both Russia and worldwide, there is a growing interest in the older generation and its social activity. Social policy in Russia is aimed at increasing life expectancy, improving the quality of life, stimulating labor productivity in old age and active longevity (Golubeva & Emelyanova, 2021). Simultaneously, older individuals desire to remain involved in their habitual and easily accessible activities for as long as possible (Grigoryeva & Kolosova, 2021, p. 919). Nevertheless, presumptions regarding the social inactivity of older individuals present a challenge in accepting them as active participants and agents of social transformation. In the field of gerontology and the sociology of aging, limited data exist on the reasons behind older individuals' involvement in socially significant activities. Researchers utilize diverse methods and classifications, reporting a range of motivations for later-life participation. Typical motivations of older activists include providing social service, helping others, interacting with peers, and earning respect and honor (Li, 2010). In addition, they desire to engage in selfless activities for the benefit of others (Kuznetsova & Kochina, 2022), to display mercy and kindness, to communicate, seek self-realization, acquire new knowledge, assume social roles, achieve meaningful leisure time, participate in social changes, apply their experiences, and seek new meanings in life (Prokhorova, 2019). In sum, the motives driving older activists are altruistic and socially-oriented (Socci et al., 2023). Some authors emphasize the preservation of self-esteem and pride (Witsø et al., 2012) noting that through participation older people experience happiness and social relevance (Li, 2010), gain skills and knowledge, get socialized (Martynova, 2023), overcome dyschronosis (Ambarova & Zborovsky, 2017). Others highlight the desire for cohesion

and social connections (Townsend et al., 2021), the desire to be part of communities (Hoyle et al., 2016), to engage with close and significant people, to feel a sense of belonging, care, support, and friendship (Dare et al., 2018; Franke et al., 2022). Some also insist that older volunteers do not pursue personal interests (Barnes et al., 2012), as they are civic-minded and caring (Lie et al., 2009).

Authors agree that participating in community activities can help older individuals realize their potential, maintain physical and mental health, promote inclusion and commitment, improve well-being and quality of life, boost self-esteem, and enhance enjoyment of time (Hoyle et al., 2016). However, the role of participation and active aging should not be absolutized. The risks and limitations of claiming activity as a successful, good, and the only correct ageing strategy need to be recognized. Timonen (2016) points out the risks of modeling "of what are good, appropriate, proper ways to age" (p. 88) offering a critique of the active and successful ageing paradigms that culminates with the theory of model ageing. Nonetheless, it remains unclear why some older individuals engage in these social activities regularly over a prolonged period, while others do so on a one-off basis or have no interest in such activities at all. Understanding the factors that promote sustainable participation and facilitate a person's transition from non-participant or occasional participant to a regular, self-motivated actor is crucial to boosting older Russians' involvement in socially significant activities. By doing so, we can overcome the age-based asymmetry of volunteering in the country (Ambarova & Zborovsky, 2017) and challenge negative stereotypes about aging.

Research Questions and Methodology

The article aims to determine the rationales for continued social engagement among older individuals utilizing a sociological approach. The empirical data provide insight into sustained social participation within this demographic. The investigation entails 18 semi-structured interviews with social participation advocates and leaders, aged from 65 to 90 (13 women and five men) from the Rostov Oblast. The interviews took place from April to August 2021, adhering to research ethics standards. Four interviews were conducted remotely and 14 in person, with 13 participants interviewed once and five interviewed multiple times, ranging from 32 to 206 minutes with an average of about 60 minutes. All participants had retired but had been involved in socially significant initiatives for at least five years. For more information on participant characteristics, see Appendix.

The hypotheses assume that the participants share comparable biographical and socio-demographic traits, characteristic motivations for continued involvement in socially relevant practices (with potential differences between leaders and activists), and particular motivations related to the age, status, and social roles of an aging individual. In order to test these hypotheses, the author presents a series of research questions:

1. What biographical and socio-demographic traits are common amongst senior leaders and activists involved in social participation practices?

2. What are the common motivations of older people involved in sustainable proactive socially significant activities?
3. Are there specific motivations which emerge due to an individual's age, social status, or role within the community?
4. What typological approaches to social participation motives align with those of the participants?

The research methodology utilized theoretical sampling, an inductive-deductive analysis strategy, the constant comparative method, and coding procedures for transcribed interview materials in accordance with grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 2001). Initially, the author conducted a "selective" coding procedure during the first stage. The matrix contains quotes that report on various aspects such as involvement in practices, reasons and factors for sustained involvement over several years, people and communities who realized or influenced participation in practices, significance of involvement, important values, goals, outcomes, duties, roles, functions performed during practices, connection of involvement to social and professional experiences, and the biographies of informants. Quotations with similar codes were categorized, with identifying key themes and selecting labeling statements. The theoretical sample was then analyzed comparatively, accounting for the identified key topics. Corrections were made and the author clarified relationships and reasons. In search of the main theme, the author moved from descriptive codes to theoretical codes and their corresponding groups, developing new hypotheses, making connections, and providing explanations.

Peculiarities and Approaches to Motivation of Older People's Social Participation

The term "older people" refers to individuals who are 60 years old or older, as per the guidelines of the World Health Organization (2017) and Russia's retirement age transition period. This definition includes all genders and does not consider factors such as social status, psychological conditions, family dynamics, employment, health, and living arrangements. The author selects the non-discriminatory terms "older/elder people," "seniors," "older/elder adults" interchangeably (Bowman & Lim, 2021). Let us define social participation among older individuals as their engagement and involvement in a wide range of public and non-public, formal and informal practices of sharing individual, group, and public resources in different activities and forms, both explicit and implicit, and through direct and mediated means (Bukov et al., 2002; Kienko, 2022, p. 230; Levasseur et al., 2022). Social participation is often conflated with volunteering, which refers to actively participating in unpaid activities that strive for public benefit and assistance (such as moral, material, domestic, socio-medical, informational, and educational). Nevertheless, gerontovolunteering is just one of many potential forms of such participation. Meanwhile, older individuals participate in socially valuable unpaid activities both directly and indirectly through various types and forms of social involvement. These include organizing educational, tourist, and sports activities within and outside their communities, passing on their knowledge and experience to children and young people, and performing in front of audiences without being called "silver volunteers."

Sugarhood et al. (2016) believe that for older adults, participation in society embodies the values of connecting with others, maintaining autonomy, affirming abilities, maximizing output, being useful, maintaining self-identity, and realizing interests. According to Lie et al. (2009), for older Britons, volunteering is a form of citizenship that requires a new approach and should not be considered as recreational or occupational activity. Instead, volunteering should be seen as an act of care and an embodiment of civic consciousness. European studies on volunteering initiatives of older people often implement the functional approach utilizing Volunteer Functional Inventory (VFI) methodology developed by Clary et al. (1998). Due to VFI, there are six domains, including Values, aligned with altruistic beliefs; Understanding, i.e., acquiring new skills and knowledge application; Social, that is opportunity to interact with others and conform to normative influences; Career, meaning advancement benefits, Protective, which is volunteering for protecting ego from negative problems; and Enhancement, seeking personal growth and development (Clary et al., 1998). When discussing the motivation of volunteers of all ages, it is necessary to distinguish between altruistic, instrumental, and external commitment motives (Anheier & Salamon, 1999). Additionally, compensatory and idealistic motives, as well as motives of benefit, personal growth, and expansion of social contacts should be taken into account (Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008). The author acknowledges the polymotivated and dynamic nature of social participation, involving a combination of altruistic, egoistic, and prosocial motivations (Cnaan et al., 1991; Pevnaya, 2015).

It is useful to consider the motivation for older people's social participation in terms of goals: socially significant (social change, being useful) and personally significant (self-realization and development, inclusion, belonging). Bukov et al. (2002) identified three types of social participation among older adults based on their goals and available resources: Collective Participation focusing on the interests of the group; Productive Participation that involves providing services and support; and Political Participation, which aims to distribute power. Piškur et al. (2014) distinguish such approaches as Social Consumerism (participation for personal needs, resources), Inclusion and Participation (participation with others for social inclusion and fulfilment), Tiered Approach to participation through levels of involvement in society, and Empowerment (participation for the benefit of others and social change).

Based on the integration of the approaches (Bukov et al., 2002; Piškur et al., 2014) the author proposes four types of social participation of older people:

1. *Social consumer participation* is defined as acquiring resources in order to achieve personally significant goals. The participation is focused on oneself.
2. *Collective participation* is focused on social inclusion and self-realization through the process of creating and utilizing resources in collaboration with others.
3. *Productive (helping) participation* aims to generate goods, resources, creative products, assistance, and care for others.
4. *Civic (political) participation* is intended to produce, transfer and redistribute resources for social change.

In this paper, the described approaches and the author's model are applied to analyze empirical data as well as to verify its validity for qualifying the motivation for continuous social engagement among the seniors.

Results and Discussions

The analysis of the interviews revealed a diverse range of motivations and interpretations.

"Being Needed and Do Something": Participation as an Embodiment of Values and Motives of Moral Duty

The primary motivation for older leaders and activists is the chance to participate in socially significant endeavors. This is a moral obligation, a value, a necessity, and a calling for the individuals involved.

> Participant 6: *Helping people. This is where I see my vocation.* (Trans. by Tatyana Kienko—T. K.)
> Participant 9: *There are no random people.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 17: *I just wanted … to be needed and do something.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The desire to be active and do good reflects the value system of the older generation, or mobilised generation, thaw's generation (Levada, 2001; Radaev, 2018). They had gone through the school of responsibility, they are used to limiting themselves, they have a sense of duty (Levada, 2001). Furthermore, this generation values camaraderie and mutual aid.

> Participant 10: *This is ... a characteristic that defines the quality of our country's population, of our generation. It is ingrained in us from childhood—to help others.* (Trans. by T. K.)

At the same time, it is the result of life experience, especially professional experience. The majority of informants were leaders, public figures, representatives of socially important professions. They have spent most of their lives solving complex tasks, setting personal examples and taking responsibility; they have got used to living with an "I care" attitude and doing what is useful for others.

> Participant 3: *It's not what you want to do. It's what's necessary, useful, worthwhile.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 15: *I used to be a school principal, I had to serve as an example to others.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Sometimes, compensation in the form of help is provided as a return for the effort and resources that informants previously received from other people, organizations, or institutions.

Participant 3: *I took a course there, learnt some of the basics, and when there was no one else to lead ... decided to pass on what I had learnt to others.* (Trans. by T. K.)

This provides a basis for rethinking ageing as an exchange (Dowd, 1975). Duty motives reflect the goals of participation (helping) of the "for others" type, the Values domain (VFI), the desire to "do one's best" and "be useful," as addressed by the typology of Sugarhood et al. (2016).

"Sponsors Come to Us": Participation as a Way to Obtain Resources

The start of activities often begins with the provision of resources. Information, organizational, material, educational, and moral support strengthens and stimulates practices. Participation in the work of initiative groups, communities, and organizations brings what may be called "side benefits." This participation enables them to be included in programs such as food aid, social tourism, health improvements, training and development, as well as the receipt of gifts and discounts on passes to gyms, museums, and more.

Participant 6: *We now have 60 people recovering, their courses are paid for by the Presidential Grants Fund ... theatres, museums, concerts ... we are going to Adygea as part of a Grant ... our sponsors meet our needs ... we work with a travel agency,* Zabota Riadom *[Caring Nearby] coalition, the* Rus' *[Russia] food fund ... we have received help from them.* (Trans. by T. K.)
Participant 14: *We go on pilgrimages; we live in the monastery ... absolutely for free.* (Trans. by T. K.)
Participant 18: *And what an inventory we have! ... a gym like no other ... lots of machines.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Resources can encompass various forms of assistance from organizations such as training, photo sessions, vacations, excursions, costumes, thank-you notes, and gifts. Other resources include developing new interests and skill sets, establishing relationships and contacts, intergenerational relations, creating a friendly atmosphere, and showing respect and attention.

Participant 8: *Participation in our organization's projects ... promotes intergenerational communication ... helps to solve leisure and communication problems and improves the quality of participants' lives.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participation for the sake of resources is important for each participant and reflects the goals of the social consumer type ("for oneself"). This category of motives is expounded upon in approach of Sugarhood et al. (2016), in which the pursuit of interests is referred to as instrumental motives (Anheier & Salamon, 1999) or profit motives (Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008). The resources themselves are diverse and can be a tool for developing practice, improving the quality of life and maintaining the volunteers' vitality, a reward for effort, a form of recognition, confirmation of status and

competence, a factor of commitment to the community and its values, i.e., a basis for transforming and expanding the motivational structure, shifting motives to purpose-oriented (Leontiev, 1975).

"When You Receive Gratitude, You Really Feel Needed": Participation as a Pathway to Social Approval and Recognition

Activists require recognition, positive evaluations, acknowledgment, and contribution. This affirms their competence and validates their practices, justifies efforts, enhances self-confidence and skills, increases self-esteem and self-respect. When participants achieve their goals and receive recognition, it generates positive emotions and encourages them to continue activism.

> Participant 1: *Those who had glimpsed what I was doing said, "Wow, it's great!" Well, one person liked it, then another, so I decided to make an exhibition.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 4: *When you receive gratitude for the work you have done, see the return and some positive results, you really feel needed ... It is very motivating.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 17: *Some cry with happiness that we come to visit them, do not forget them ... it is an indescribable feeling of happiness.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The forms and sources of recognition are numerous and diverse: the gratitude of spectators, the respect of neighbors, the familial pride, the trust and growing number of supporters, the attention of authorities and the media, the provision of resources, involvement in worthy causes and communities.

> Participant 6: *People around notice, pay attention, and even the grandchildren feel a sense of pride ... that their grandparents are so active.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 12: *People trust me, come to me hoping that we can help them in some way ... Even children come to me and they all call me by my first name and patronymic.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 16: *I got presents ... I was on TV all week, in the papers.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The role of recognition is significant in understanding social participation as a way of gaining influence and a "stamp of approval" (Blau, 1986, p. 63) or the struggle for recognition (Honneth, 1991, 2009, 2010). The desire for recognition reflects the goals of the social consumer type ("for oneself"). This motive is commonly referred to as "affirmative abilities" in traditional typologies proposed by Sugarhood et al. (2016).

"We Agreed to Get Together Like We Used to": Participation as a Way of Integrating With Significant Others

A substantial number of participants seek social integration and self-actualization "with others." They join the activities by following their friends, neighbors, or relatives,

or by discovering a "second family" within the communities. Participants value the compassionate and cooperative atmosphere, cherish the skills and personal traits of their community members.

> Participant 14: *I always participate and invite everyone ... There are many people I know, whom I have invited ... we agreed to get together like we used to ... young, middle-aged, and old ... There are no conflicts! When you go to the mountains, the young people help you.* (Trans. by T. K.)

In later life, informal participation frequently occurs among a tight-knit group of acquaintances and close individuals focused on creating resources, spaces, and infrastructure that benefit friends, colleagues, neighbors, family members, children, and grandchildren.

> Participant 6: *We also do intergenerational projects, taking our grandchildren with us.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 10: *… targeting specific people in the social circle, former classmates, colleagues.* (Trans. by T. K.)

In the experience of inclusive social participation with others, new goals for others and for social change (such as co-creating meaningful products, caring for others, and developing the community) emerge through sharing interests and support, exchanging resources and experiences, and showing approval and recognition. At the same time, individuals acquire resources and benefits for themselves such as competencies, connections, recognition, and approval, and participating in the search for resources for both oneself and others can foster the development of communities. Sugarhood et al. (2016) refer these motives as "connection with others", in VFI of Clary et al. (1998) they are named "social motives" (1998); Azarova and Yanitsky (2008) use the term "expansion of social contacts." In the model proposed in the article, they are referred to as motives of the inclusive type ("together with others").

"I Do Not Feel Retired at All": Participation as a Tool for Preserving Identity, Social Life, and Postponing Ageing

The informants are part of the pensioners' group but do not associate themselves with their status as retirees. They seek to maintain their prior way of living, explore their abilities, and discover themselves through familiar social, charitable, and artistic pursuits.

> Participant 2: *My whole life is musical ... I started when I was eight … Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday, there is a band on the dance floor, me and an accordion.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 12: *I have been and still am a manager of an organization working with families ... I have an attitude and I know what it is like ... Are the children properly dressed? Are they eating well?* (Trans. by T. K.)

In situations of "transitions" in old age (retirement and social ties' weakening, change of residence, loss of spouse, change of mobility), one has to "find oneself" and the meaning of life anew.

> Participant 1: *I have been living in a residential care home since 2018. For a year I was searching for myself and, in the end, I came to the conclusion that I had to do something, had to live a full life. So, I started doing creative work, that is, painting.* (Trans. by T. K.)

By selecting avenues of participation in familiar areas, individuals maintain professional longevity, fullness and solvency of active life, its quality and style, make plans. They also lead communities, win competitions, and embody the image of an active and successful older person.

> Participant 3: *As long as you are active, doing something, you are living.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 11: *This was my way of life ... I do not feel retired at all ... I continue to live the way I have been living.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Participation is increasingly viewed as a socially desirable method for delaying aging and maintaining a lifestyle consistent with trends in active longevity.

> Participant 15: *Because I was active, I decided not to stop. For me, retirement doesn't mean what it is commonly thought to mean. My age means nothing.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 16: *I am 90 years old. Despite my age, I do not feel, you see, I do not feel old. I hear well. I read somehow, I work, I remember everything, I play the accordion, I sing, I ski well, I shoot and I drive a car.* (Trans. by T. K.)

Active longevity trends can exert pressure on older people to adhere to models of successful aging, but can also offer opportunities to unlock their potential, gain recognition, and turn their age into an advantage. Participation becomes a tool to overcome identity crises, prolong social life, and postpone aging in a socially acceptable way. In the author's model, these motives represent the objectives of the social consumer type ("for oneself"), reflecting the aim to preserve self-identity and independence, confirm abilities (Sugarhood et al., 2016), social and enhancement motives (Clary et al., 1998), instrumental (Anheier & Salamon, 1999), personal growth (Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008).

"You Have Fulfilled Your Mission on This Earth": Participation as Realization of Generativity

Senior activists engage in helping, communication, development, and creative practices, including mentoring. By participating in activities they find compelling and familiar, they feel valuable, recognized, and fulfilled through meaningful social and status motives.

> Participant 3: *It is important to pass on knowledge ... I am not just a teacher, I am a senior mentor, it is important for me to talk, to teach children to be active and persistent, to build character. And it is to my advantage: I am in demand and I can be useful.* (Trans. by T. K.)

But above all, assisting others and sharing one's resources and experiences allows for the discovery of purpose beyond one's individual existence.

> Participant 11: *In fact, all this fuss is so that when you die, you know that you have fulfilled your mission on this earth ... people find the meaning of life, the opportunity to pass on something of their own, even if not to a loved one, then close in spirit, you know?* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 17: *If your activity is useful, then you are needed and you exist.* (Trans. by T. K.)

By engaging in the project, participants forget their own problems, they feel happy, free, and capable of changing the world. By helping others, learning new, expanding their circle of acquaintances, progressing towards their objectives, and realizing their creative potential, the participants can then share their experiences to create benefits and provide resources for their immediate environment, strangers, city, region, country, and future generations, thereby gaining power and control over their own ageing and mortality.

> Participant 4: *In the process of social activity, I become happier ... I want to live and continue to make people happy.* (Trans. by T. K.)
> Participant 17: *If a man wants to live, bring joy and benefit to people, he will not just sit on a bench saying, "Oh, how bad it is!" Everything depends only on us ... as I want, I will have such a life, and no one can harm or hinder me ... when you feel that people need you ... the energy you receive from them and you give it away, it ... will be with you until your last days.* (Trans. by T. K.)

The desire to help others and contribute to future generations characterizes all of our study's participants and is associated with generativity motives. Erikson (1980) introduced the term "generativity," which entails the yearning to create an enduring legacy (Warburton & Gooch, 2007) and possessing skills to invest in subsequent generations (Polyakova, 2019). Generativity is present in individuals with a background in volunteering and social service (Kramer, 2020), and is a defining trait of older volunteers (Warburton & Gooch, 2007). Additionally, generativity can be observed through leisure activities driven by a desire to make a difference and help others (Maselko et al., 2014). The author describes generativity as a sustained form of intrinsic motivation that integrates personal and socially significant goals, including goals "for oneself," "for others," "together with others," and "for social change." This type of motivation is formed through experiences of participation. Thus, as the author believes, the experience of participation indirectly relates this particular type of

self-motivation to age and forms it throughout the life course. This motivation stems from identification with the status of a social subject and a subject of care, leading individuals to seek out or initiate socially significant activities. As long as this identity persists, a person remains driven to engage in such activities.

Conclusion

In the analysis of the interview material, research questions were answered, as well as a multitude of hypotheses were confirmed. Older leaders and activists involved in sustainable social participation practices in Rostov Oblast are united by higher education, managerial status, leadership, involvement in socially important activities or professions throughout their lives. The participation of older adults in activities is the result of their entire lifespan, thus supporting life course theories.

A diverse range of participation motives were discovered, including moral obligation, available resources, interaction with important individuals and groups, acknowledgment and social validation, elevated status, inclusion, extending social interactions, delaying the effects of aging, and transference of experience for the benefit of others and future generations (generativity). The core motivation of 60+ activists is the desire to be needed and active, to be useful in order to feel their own importance, recognition, and fullness of life. As one quote goes, "if your activity is useful, it means you are needed and you exist," while another highlights the idea that "as long as you are active, doing something, you are living."

Some disparities exist in the motivations of leaders and activists. Specifically, activists place great importance on the role of communities and social ties, whereas leaders tend to focus on recognition, status, leadership, freedom, and generativity. The author defines generativity as an integrated form of sustained intrinsic motivation. It emerges from participating in experiences that involve the integration of personal and socially significant goals, such as those accomplished "for oneself," "for others," "together with others," and "for social change." Generativity is not dependent on age, but is instead linked to socially significant activities that shape a person's social agency, responsibility, and sense of identity as an activist or helper for the subject of care. As long as this identity is maintained, individuals are driven to participate based on their own self-motivation, fulfilling a moral need, duty, and calling.

For the typology of older activists' motivations, the model of older people's social participation motivation as an embodiment of values by Sugarhood et al. (2016) was found to be the most effective. Our data align with the motives highlighted by Prokhorova (2019). The typology model based on participation goals by the author is promising in terms of explanatory potential, but requires further examination. Other typologies are partially confirmed (Anheier & Salamon, 1999; Azarova & Yanitsky, 2008; Clary et al., 1998, etc.). It transpired that they do not pay enough attention to the motives of preserving social identity, status, fulfilling social life, obtaining resources, generativity. However, the identified motives fit into Gerchikov's typological concept of labor motivation (Gerchikov, 2005a, 2005b). This analysis does not pertain to volunteering, but among the surveyed individuals, the majority reported feelings of

mastery motivation (a desire for independence and the ability to organize their own and others' activities) and patriotic motivation (the importance of feeling needed, being involved in a meaningful cause, and benefiting their country). There are also professional (a desire to maintain or confirm one's own competence) and instrumental (seeking resources, prizes, other assets) kinds of motivation. Gerchikov's model reflects the values of the older generation of Russians and provides valuable insight into both the motivation for achievement and avoidance of failure. In old age, "failure" is not limited to dismissal or reprimand, but also encompasses the likely approach of old age, weakness, lack of demand, inactivity, unsuccessful aging, and social death. The desire to postpone ageing, gain recognition, and prolong social life through practices of social participation is seen as a specific older people's motive is viewed as a distinct motivation. Given that social identity becomes established in old age, and being a leader or activist holds higher status than being a retiree, individuals strive to maintain their previous status, way of life, and level of activity to overcome any identity crisis. Thus, for an aging person who has experience of participation and identity with the status of an active person, social subject (agent, actor), participation becomes a socially desirable way to delayed aging, overcome dyschronosis (Ambarova & Zborovsky, 2017) and identity crisis.

Given the polymotivation and overlap between different types of motives, older activists' participation can be viewed as a way of acquiring benefits, such as obtaining resources, gaining recognition, prolonging social life, and delaying aging, in line with exchange theory. According to Honneth (1991, 2009, 2010) and Fraser (2004), social participation is a way of gaining recognition. Through socially significant activities, older activists overcome the risks of reducing contacts and functionality, barriers of "invisibility" and neglect, acquire the opportunity to act as subjects rather than objects of social relations, and gain recognition that is not ascribed but deserved. Participation offers independence, self-expression, and protection against devaluation, on the condition of *parité de participation* [participation parity] (Fraser, 2004, p. 161). It provides opportunities to share stories, enter the realm of symbolic culture, and cultivate one's sense of self by contributing to family, community, and culture (Zakovorotnaia, 2016, p. 34).

Through the process of social participation, the integration and accumulation of goals and motivations can result in a more intricate structure of motivation because of its dynamic and activity-based nature. Reciprocity is necessary when participating for resources, status, recognition, or moral obligation. The more resources and effort are dedicated to an activity, the greater sense of identification with the activity, community, and the status of helper, activist, and subject is established. Recognition encourages integration with people and communities. The acquisition of goals and motives through participation fosters continued engagement, whereas a lack of participation experience during youth and adulthood is likely to result in disengagement during old age. Consistent with current research on the role of participatory experience (Pevnaya et al., 2023), this finding highlights the need for adaptable tools to involve individuals in socially significant activities. Such activities offer lifelong commitment, integration,

and acknowledgement, while considering participants' unique personal goals, requirements, and familiar surroundings (family, friends, neighborhood care, work, etc.) as exemplified by volunteers with professional knowledge (Obukhov, 2023).

Promising goals for further studying this problem include testing the author's motivation model based on participation goals and Gerchikov's typological work motivation concept on larger sample sizes, analyzing generativity formation mechanisms and their connection to age, and conducting comparative studies on the goals, motives, and values of participation and non-participation, as well as the motivation of older volunteers and individuals without participation experience.

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Appendix

Basic Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants
(gender; age; role in practice, form, type of participation; education; labor status; family status and living arrangements; occupation and previous employment)

Participant 1: male; 70; Artist, author of a permanent art exhibition at a residential care home; higher education; retired; widower, lives in a residential care home; teacher of drawing and construction disciplines.

Participant 2: male; 88; Musician, initiator of weekly concerts in a retirement home; higher education; retired; widower, lives in a retirement home for the elderly and disabled; musician, composer, music school principal.

Participant 3: female; 70; Master of weaving, activist of the craftsmen community "Volgodonchanka," leader of a children's needlework club, volunteer teacher of mental arithmetic courses, health group participant; higher education; retired; lives with her husband; director of the Social Service Centre.

Participant 4: female; 67; Activist of the Union of Pensioners of the Don and the Council of Veterans, organizer of exhibitions, educational programs, coordinator of interaction with leaders of local self-government bodies; higher education; retired; lives independently; commodity specialist, individual entrepreneur, specialist of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, public activist.

Participant 5: female; 70; Head of a local self-government body, member of the District Veterans' Council, Women's Council, leader of a veterans' choir; secondary vocational education; retired; lives with her spouse.

Participant 6: female; 65; Founder and director of the "Sodeistvie" Civic Initiatives Foundation and the Active Longevity Community, implements health-saving, health-improving, development and voluntary projects in the industrial settlement; higher education; retired; lives with her husband; teacher.

Participant 7: female; 65; Journalist, author, editor, TV presenter of a regional channel; higher education; retired; lives with her spouse; journalist, editor.

Participant 8: female; 68; Founder and leader of the public organization for assistance in protecting the rights of the victims of the terrorist attack in Volgodonsk (September 16, 1991), initiator of development and health-promoting practices and volunteer activities; higher education; retired.

Participant 9: female; 72; Director of supplementary education, social and legal counselling programmes for people of pre-retirement and retirement age; higher education; working pensioner; lives with her spouse; university lecturer and rector.

Participant 10: male; 67; Member of a self-organized support group of former classmates; retired; living with his wife; university lecturer.

Participant 11: male; 68; Organizer of the Don community of inventors and craftsmen for the development and improvement of technical devices, mentor for children and youth, environmental and political activist; secondary vocational education; retired; lives with his wife; craftsman, inventor.

Participant 12: male; 67; Initiator and leader of the public organization "DOM," searching for resources and support for large families in the region since 1991, leader of the District Veterans' Council; higher education, retired, lives with his wife; cinema director, factory worker, father of many children, public activist.

Participant 13: female; 69; Activist of the Orthodox spiritual-educational center, participant of educational, health and pilgrimage practices; secondary vocational education; retired; builder, pension fund specialist.

Participant 14: female; 72; Activist of the Orthodox spiritual-educational center, participant and co-organizer of educational, health and pilgrimage practices; higher education; retired; head of the pension fund department.

Participant 15: female; 76; Leader of "silver" volunteers, initiator and coordinator of educational and developmental, health-saving, creative, voluntary practices, member of the Veterans' Council in the rural settlement; higher education; retired; widow, lives alone; school principal, community leader.

Participant 16: female; 90; Choirmaster, director of choirs at a boarding facility; higher education; retired; widow, lives in a boarding facility for the elderly and disabled; choirmaster, musician.

Participant 17: female; 68; Activist of the "University of the Third Age" in a rural area, artist of a singing and dancing group, participant of educational, health, and creative initiatives; higher education; retired; head of a department of a social service center.

Participant 18: female, 73, Activist of the "University of the Third Age" in a rural area, participant of educational, developmental, health and creative initiatives, tourist trips; retired.

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

Impact of Citizen Participation on Solving the Social Problems of Small Regional Towns in Russia

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ABSTRACT
The social contradictions of small regional towns in Russia remain a controversial issue. In the official discourse, the proponents of eliminating and consolidating small towns and villages argue their position in terms of the economic efficiency of cost reductions. However, the role and importance of small territories are great as they constitute the country's spatial, mental, and historical basis. This article aims to identify the potential of citizen participation in resolving social contradictions to ensure the sustainability of small towns. In the first stage of the study, a proprietary methodology was proposed for calculating an integral index that aggregates a set of initial statistical indicators of socio-economic development in small towns (the Vologda Oblast), with their subsequent grouping to assess social contradictions. It was established that of 13 small towns in the region, six belong to the group whose level of socio-economic development is below average, six small towns exhibit a low level, and only one town (Kadnikov) is characterized by a high level of development. The lag in terms of indicators relative to average values is a negative factor in the development of small areas, the preservation of their human potential, and the growth of social contradictions. The second stage of the

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study involved identifying the features, factors, and limitations of local community participation (population, business entities, and nonprofit organizations) in solving the problems of small towns in the region by means of a quantitative and qualitative methodological strategy (questionnaire survey of the population in the region, $N = 1900$; focus-group interviews, $N = 5$). The obtained results will serve as the basis for the development of individual trajectories for the development of small areas through the active involvement of the local community in these processes.

KEYWORDS
small towns, citizen participation, local community, socio-economic development

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Introduction

Among 1,118 cities and towns in the Russian Federation, over 70% are small towns with a population of less than 50 thousand people. They are home to about 12% of the country's population (over 16 million people). However, the historical development of small towns following the collapse of the USSR and socio-economic changes during the transition period led to a wide range of problems. In particular, these are the deterioration of urban infrastructure, the collapse of the labor market, the increase in unemployment, the consequent increase in out-migration, the decline in the level and quality of life, and the rise of social tensions. Under such conditions, the implementation of policies aimed at identifying local problems and activating various sources for their solution is required. In this regard, it is necessary to conduct a scientific search for the driving forces behind the development of small towns. In territorial development, the economic component is unarguably of primary importance; however, the social factor is equally important. The formation, approvement, and development of any socio-historical reality is a result of interaction between economic and non-economic, the latter being a powerful human factor of "reverse influence" on the public economy (Gorshkov, 2021). The problem of the study is the discrepancy between the existing potential of citizen participation in small areas' development and the fact that the significance of this intangible resource is not fully recognized by either the population or the state. Consequently, it is insufficiently used in social transformations. Given the relevant role played by intangible factors in territorial development, the present study aims to identify the potential of local community participation in these processes.

Theoretical Background

Citizen participation is a concept that is constantly referred to in various disciplines and applies to a wide range of issues, yet its definitions vary widely. For example, Google search reveals approximately 35,500,000 results[1], indicating that the term is quite widely used. As Ekman and Amnå (2012) rightly point out, a conceptual confusion surrounds this notion: authors use it to denote different things, thereby confusing rather than clarifying the situation. A similar situation can be observed in the Russian research landscape: domestic tradition with the application of Soviet and Western tools has created a terminological confusion that continues to this day (Yanitsky, 2015).

The issue of citizen participation as an internal resource for territorial development was first disseminated in the scientific literature in the first third of the 20th century within American urbanism. This period is characterized by accelerated processes of urbanization, industrialization, and development of entrepreneurship, as well as rapid growth of education and communications. These processes manifested themselves to a greater extent in American society than in the Old World countries. In the managerial practice of the 1920–1930s, citizen participation gradually became a tool for reshaping state policies and monopolistic entrepreneurship, which was accordingly reflected in sociological discourse. Against the background of explosive population growth in American cities, Chicago School researchers began to study the involvement of local communities in the socio-economic transformation of the urban environment using the terms “social” and “political participation” for the first time (Park & Thomas, 1927).

Although citizen participation has no universal definition, a literature analysis enabled the identification of its essential characteristics. The study of selected papers and monographs by both foreign and domestic authors shows that citizen participation is mainly interpreted as individual and collective activities aimed at identifying and solving problems of public interest and improving social welfare (Ukhanova, 2020). As a rule, such definitions conceptualize citizen participation in the context of actions taken for the benefit of others while recognizing the possibility of achieving the public good through the implementation of individual and group goals. Despite the great diversity of definitions, common components can be identified: (a) behavioral and value components; (b) citizen component; (c) component of social change and development.

The issue related to the boundaries of citizen participation remains debatable. Initially, the concept was most often used to refer to political activity and various forms of interaction between the public and the state (Berger, 2009). Then, the methodological understanding of citizen participation expanded to include such activities as volunteering and community work (Levasseur et al., 2010). In addition, approaches that encompass not only citizen behaviors and actions but also citizen values, skills and knowledge, and motivational attitudes have developed (Phan & Kloos, 2023). Thus, multidimensional approaches are gradually emerging, in which citizen engagement is about working to make a difference in communities while developing a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and motivation to achieve these changes through both political and non-political processes.

[1] Google Programmable Search Engine. *Citizen participation.* Retrieved October 27, 2020.

The combination of the original authors' idea and researchers' positions justifies the relevance of a multidimensional approach that takes into account the role of public participation in solving socially relevant problems both in interaction with the authorities (socio-political space) and in the horizontal space of everyday life (socio-economic space). In addition, within the multidimensional approach, we consider the value-based (teleological) aspect of participation determined by value-based attitudes, cultural stereotypes and norms, which allows us to consider the role of citizen participation in the socio-cultural space.

In the research field, the most important issue is to identify the effects (performance) of citizen participation in social development rather than the development level of its individual indicators. We understand social development as a process of the positive development of societies (societal systems), various spheres of social life, social structures, and relations, as well as the creative opportunities and potential of a person within a certain period of time (Chuprov, 2003).

In this study, the effects of vertical and horizontal interactions in the context of citizen participation are considered in the socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural spheres within the integral concept of social development. We assume that the conditions for expanding the opportunities to meet the diverse needs and interests of the regional population (material, social, spiritual, etc.) are created through citizen participation as an intangible resource for regional self-development. Accordingly, a general increase can be observed in the performance, efficiency, and competitiveness of the regional space, as well as its structural complexity as an object of social development.

Scientists have shown that engaged public participation enhances policy legitimacy and accountability (Cornwall, 2008), empowerment of participatory actors (Okali et al., 1994), social learning (Blackstock et al., 2007), and social benefits (increase of social and human potential). Considerably less research has focused on the material benefits of participation: in particular, it has been recognized that participation can shift the cost burden from the state to local resident volunteers (Hallett, 1987). Apart from the positive evaluation of participation, critical approaches are also found in the academic discourse: participation, cooperation, and effectiveness can be contrasted and pretended participation can occur (Musch & von Streit, 2020).

We believe that despite the complexity of measurement, issues related to both the tangible and intangible effects of local participation in solving social problems deserve special attention in the research discourse as they help to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of these processes.

Analysis Methods and Database

The assessment of contradictions is particularly relevant. For this purpose, we chose the methodology for assessing the socio-economic development of urban agglomerations (Voroshilov, 2021). The methodological toolkit was adjusted to calculate the integral index of socio-economic development in small towns that aggregates the initial statistical indicators, with their subsequent grouping.

Using available official statistical data provided by Rosstat [Federal State Statistics Service] (n.d.), we created a list of indicators reflecting various aspects of the socio-economic development of small territories. Then, on the basis of comparability and proportionality of indicators, we standardized the indicators relative to the average values by bringing the cost indicators to the uniform average Russian prices. Finally, we calculated the integral indicator of socio-economic development in small towns and grouped them on this basis.

The sociological approach shows promise for a comprehensive analysis of public participation in solving the social problems of small towns. This approach reveals the possibilities of studying the participation of citizens, their groups and associations as an intangible resource for social development in the context of the socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural dynamics of Russian society at the regional level, which constitutes an integral part of the holistic analysis of society as a complex hierarchical system. The sociological approach allows us to analyze public and expert opinion on the state and role of citizen participation in social development, the peculiarities of civic practices, and the value orientations of citizens.

We applied the strategy of mixed methods research, which is based on the principles of quantitative and qualitative sociology. On the first stage, we conducted a public opinion poll organized by the Vologda Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (VolRC RAS) in small towns of the Vologda Oblast (N = 1,900) in 2022. The sampling of respondents was based on territorial stratification: the first stage involved the selection of regional administrative districts according to the level of socio-economic development; the second stage, electoral districts; the third stage, households via the route method. The selection of respondents in a household was carried out using quotas by sex and age (linkage quota). Thus, the database is a sample representing the population of the Vologda Oblast from the age of 18 and older in terms of municipalities, sex, age, and the type of settlement. The sampling error does not exceed 3%. The survey was conducted using a formalized questionnaire at the place of the respondents' residence. Data was processed using the statistical software IBM SPSS, version 25 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The techniques for constructing and analyzing linear (univariate) and paired (bivariate) frequency distributions and tables were used. The paired (bivariate) frequency distributions are based on the assessment (comparison) of the effects of population participation among those who seldom (1–3 points on a 10-point scale) and often (7–10 points) participate in public life. The scores are determined by asking the following question: "On a 10-point scale, how actively do you participate in the development of your community (yard, village, town, and region)?"

In the second stage, we conducted interviews with representatives of government, business, "third sector," media, science, as well as experts and civic activists (N = 47) in order to identify opportunities for citizen participation in the development of small towns in the region. Thus, the methodology of sequential contributions is adopted; it implies two stages of research, which enables data continuity: the results of one method serve as input data for the next method. According to Morgan (2014), this is the most productive approach to integrating qualitative and quantitative research findings, although it involves greater time, financial, or human resource costs.

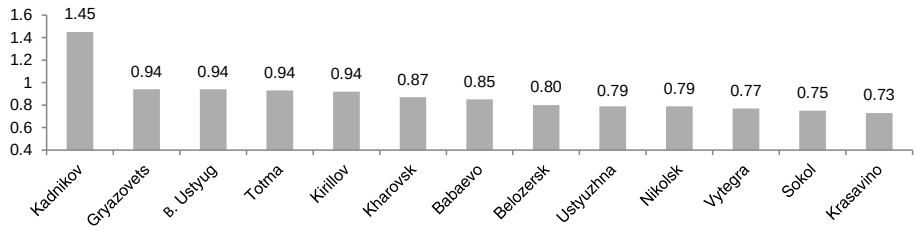
Results and Discussion

The calculations of the integral index of socio-economic development in the small towns in the Vologda Oblast performed on the basis of the proprietary methodology revealed several problems: a decrease in the population (by 16.5% in 1990–2021); a decline in the level of public health services (the number of hospital beds decreased by 47%; the number of average medical beds, by 16.3%); a reduction in cargo turnover (by 8.2%) and passenger turnover (by 72.7%), etc.

Of 13 small towns in the region, six belong to the group whose level of socio-economic development is below average ($0.85 \le I_{dev.lev.} < 0.95$), six small towns exhibit a low level ($I_{dev.lev.} < 0.85$), and only one town, Kadnikov, is characterized by a high level of development ($I_{dev.lev.} \ge 1.15$; see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Socio-Economic Development of Small Towns in the Vologda Oblast for 2021



The standardized indicators calculated relative to the average Russian price level allow us to identify the most problematic areas of development in each town. It was revealed that the main Achilles' heel of small towns that fall into the low development group in the Vologda Oblast is a small amount of investment in fixed capital from municipal funds, as in the towns of Krasavino and Sokol, a low level of local budget revenues in the town of Krasavino, and an insignificant number of children and youth attending sports schools per 1,000 residents, e.g., in the town of Sokol (Kopytova, 2023).

Of note is that investment from municipal funds in Kadnikov is also at a low level; however, as of 2021, it ranks highest among small towns in the region in terms of socio-economic development due to the high number of sports facilities per 1,000 residents.

None of the small towns of the Vologda Oblast fell into the group of above-average and average development levels.

In some small towns, e.g., the town of Vytegra, a factor reflecting the number of healthcare organizations affects their lag in all the studied areas. The lowest standardized birth rates relative to the average indicator are recorded in Kadnikov and Krasavino.

The lag in indicators relative to the average values constitutes an obstacle to their further development. In addition, small towns currently face a range of problems, the most significant of which are the contradictions in the population

structure and large-scale out-migration; a drop in natural growth; increased expenditures on infrastructure maintenance; concentration of the main economic growth in several large centers of the country; development of innovative economy primarily in large agglomerations; low transport accessibility of areas, etc. (Markin & Chernysh, 2019, p. 216).

Noteworthy is that the increase in the development of small towns largely depends on the participation of local communities in regional development, as well as on the state policy of the country and regions. To study this issue, a questionnaire survey was conducted in the Vologda Oblast in 2022. For an in-depth understanding of the issue, a thematic analysis of the materials of expert and in-depth interviews was also used.

Role of Citizen Participation in Developing the Socio-Political Space of Small Towns

One of the main functions of political citizen participation is its ability to act as a feedback mechanism, ensuring the communication of ideas to political institutions. In other words, this activity is aimed at direct or indirect policy-making at different government levels. The mechanisms involved in the implementation of citizen participation provide a means to adjust, modify, and change institutional forms, programs, and rules in such a way that they correspond to the interests of the population.

The very fact of citizen participation, regardless of the effect of interaction with the authorities that create institutional opportunities or restrictions for participation, generally has a more positive impact on the perception of the involved party than alienation and refusal to interact, which leads to tension in society: “Instead of doing something, deciding, or participating, they lie on the couch and curse the authorities, and that’s bad” (Expert 6; Trans. by Yulia Ukhanova, Ekaterina Kopytova, & Sergei Zhestyannikov—Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.).

The survey data show that the effects of citizen participation on transformations at the level of the yard, city, region, etc. are manifested in the socio-political space in the formation of a civically responsible community as a subject able to influence the state of affairs in the immediate and distant environment. The majority of Vologda Oblast residents are convinced that they are able to influence the state of affairs in the family, and the proportion of such assessments is approximately the same in both studied groups (84–87%; see Table 1). Among the active residents, positive opinions about the effect on the state of affairs in other spheres are more widespread as compared to the passive locals: at work (57% vs. 43%), in the yard (39% vs. 22%), in the locality (23% vs. 8%), and in the region and country (16% vs. 6%). In general, the obtained data shows that with increasing social distance, people become less aware of the possibility to influence society, regardless of the degree of participation in public life.

Table 1

Estimates of Civic Impact Depending on the Degree of Participation in Socially Useful Activities, in %

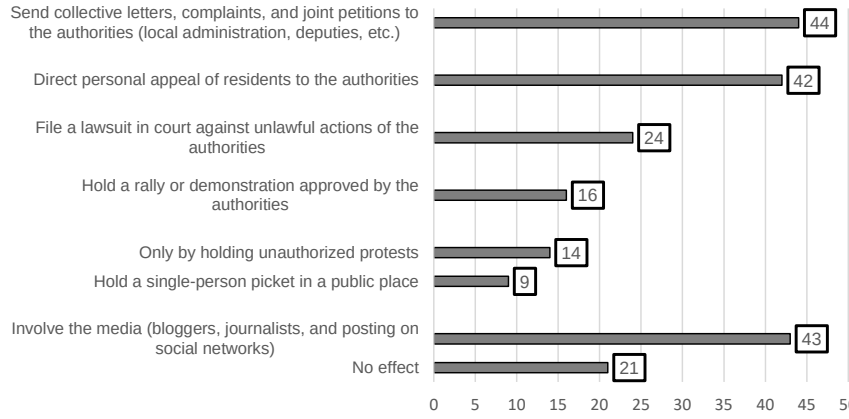
Indicators		In your opinion, do you personally influence the state of affairs in these spheres today?				
		Your family	Your workplace	Your house, yard	Your village, town, city, district	Your region, country
How actively do you participate in the development of your community?	seldom*	86.6	42.6	22.2	7.6	5.6
	often	83.5	56.7	38.8	23.0	16.1

Note. *Henceforth the degree of participation in socially useful activities is assessed on a 10-point scale, according to which the indicators "seldom" and "often" are assigned from 1 to 3 points and from 7 to 10 points, respectively. The scores are determined by asking the question: "On a 10-point scale, how actively do you participate in the development of your community (yard, village, city, and region)?"
Source: Data of VolRC RAS sociological survey, 2022, Vologda Oblast.

As ways to effectively influence local authorities, the population prefers direct dialog with local authorities, as well as attracting media attention. For instance, the share of positive responses to personal appeals of residents to the authorities averaged 47% across the regions; collective letters and complaints made up 45%, involvement of bloggers, journalists, and posting on social networks comprised 41% (Figure 2).

Figure 2

People's Assessments of Ways to Influence Local Authorities Effectively, in % for Each Judgment



Mass actions such as demonstrations, rallies, and protests coordinated with the authorities are significantly less popular in all of the studied regions. Given this, we can conclude that in the political space, citizen participation is mostly related to making appeals to the authorities. Among the political institutions of the unitary system dominating in Russia, it is this institution that performs feedback functions. As Kirdina (2012) rightly notes, appeals to the hierarchical levels of political structure that are involved in the process of governance and fulfillment of the necessary control functions can serve as one of the most important forms of citizen participation in Russia.

The expert survey revealed that the level of citizen participation has been noticeably increasing in recent years, as stated by representatives of the authorities:

> In the last 5–7 years, the population has become more active; they respond to any requests from executive authorities. (Expert 31; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

However, this process does not develop only in a positive context. The following opinion was expressed during the interview:

> The most active people are those who are dissatisfied with something. And when it is necessary to support a good idea, everyone scatters. There is very little activity in this respect. (Expert 3; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)
> People try to solve this problem exclusively by complaining either to the authorities or to the supervising bodies. They write to newspapers and blogs. (Expert 27; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Thus, we have revealed the ambiguous position on assessing the effects of such a form of citizen participation in the political space as public opinion and control. On the one hand, this format of participation does not imply creative activity or altruistic aspirations; on the other hand, it is one of the ways to defend public rights and interests as an alternative to protest participation.

Sociological data show that people do not consider protests to be an effective way of vertical interaction (society–government) regardless of their involvement in citizen participation practices. Among the actors involved in socially useful activities, the proportion of those who consider non-conventional practices of citizen participation an effective way to solve socially significant problems is smaller: 11% of respondents who often participate in the life of the community agree that unauthorized protests are effective in influencing the authorities; the contrary opinion is shared by 87% of respondents, while among those who seldom participate in public life, these indicators amounted to 29% and 71% (Table 2).

Table 2

Population's Effectiveness Assessment of Unauthorized Protests Depending on the Degree of Participation in Socially Useful Activities, in %

Indicators		Do you consider participation in unauthorized protests an effective way to influence the authorities?	
		Yes, I do	No, I don't
How actively do you participate in the development of your community?	seldom	29	71
	often	11.4	88.6

Note. Source: Data of VolRC RAS sociological survey, 2022, Vologda Oblast.

The qualitative research also convincingly shows that the active participation of the population in solving social problems creates an opportunity for a dialog between the public and the authorities:

> The more active citizens are, the better the authorities hear them and fulfill their needs, the more productive and faster the problems are solved on the ground. (Expert 25; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

According to experts, local residents and authorities currently have enough institutional opportunities to work together:

> There are many different programs that involve citizens, so every opportunity for dialogue has been created and many citizens actively exercise this right. (Expert 36; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Community participation in solving the social issues of the territory is possible both individually and in the form of public associations. The impact of citizen participation on territorial development becomes possible due to the developed mechanisms: in particular, programs to support local initiatives, projects of co-participation in the creation of a comfortable urban environment, etc. Experts note the ability of initiative groups and public associations to effectively interact with the authorities at regional and municipal levels:

> The public can communicate certain ideas to the authorities and local self-government bodies quite effectively today; and these ideas can be implemented. (Expert 4; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)
> If the authorities realize that the people need them, the people support them and communicate what they need, and when there is interaction and discussion between them, when people agree, then, I think, the most comfortable environment is created in the city and in the district. (Expert 35; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Despite the difficulties in building public-state interaction, the study revealed examples of quite effective cooperation between the authorities and public activists in solving significant local problems. In addition, the actions of government representatives lead to citizens becoming more consciously involved in socially useful activities:

> After a new pond was built on an abandoned plot of land in the town of Sokol on the initiative of the city manager and with the support of industrial enterprises, people came forward with an initiative to plant trees; then, the city manager found funds and built a bridge and pavilions. As a result, the neglected site turned into a place of recreation. (Expert 27; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Despite the preference for offline formats (as identified above), the active use of information resources is timely for the development of regional citizen participation. According to Vladimir Petukhov, online participation gives impetus to a large number of civic initiatives that move from a virtual space to the real world, reveals the response of the authorities to significant problems, and makes them listen to public opinion (Petukhov, 2022). The study indicates the increasing influence of the Internet as a way to communicate and receive news, which determines the significance of the public potential of Internet resources.

During the interview, most experts noted the importance of Internet technologies as a factor in the effective interaction between society and the authorities. The conditions faced by the regions during the coronavirus pandemic forced both the authorities and public activists to use online resources. According to the experts, civic activity in social networks is higher than in any other format. Communities are created that shape the agenda:

> Authorities cannot ignore such things; they must cooperate with them [community members], answer their questions, respond to their problems. With regard to the current area of work, we note that 98% of all citizens' appeals that we receive are appeals in social networks. Work with civic activism shifts to the virtual world. (Expert 4; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)
> According to the activists, "all local self-government bodies and executive authorities should be active in social networks." (Expert 45; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Another important way for citizens to participate using Internet technologies is through special services for citizen appeals to government representatives:

> We regularly conduct polls and voting there. In particular, now we are discussing the issues of economic development of the city until 2025. (Expert 37; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

However, the availability of such services or the presence of authorities in social networks does not guarantee the effective use of these resources since

> communication with the authorities is purely formal here. The head of a structural unit does not answer you, a statistician does. He has a set of phrases that he knows. There is no direct communication in the online space. (Expert 27; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Regional Internet platforms are becoming a valuable resource for increasing social potential; this trend is most noticeable among young people, while the effects of online participation among the elderly population are also evident:

> Sometimes you realize that one broadcast on a topic gathers much more young people to participate in a cause or event than if you did that in person. (Expert 5; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

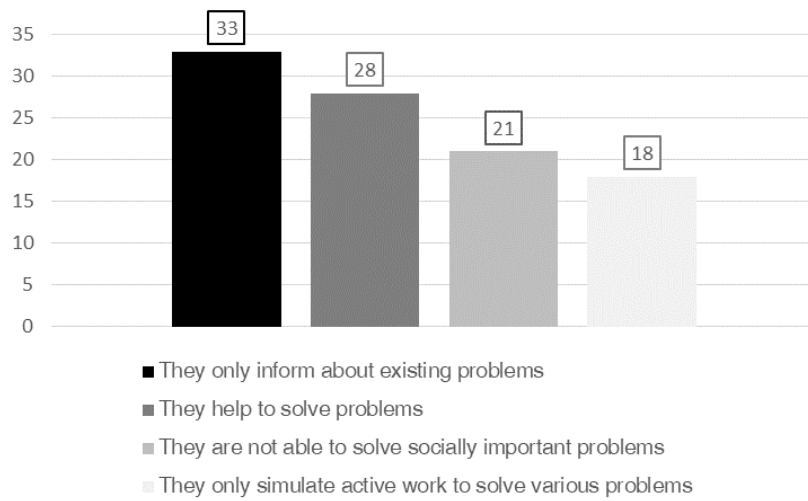
We have a VK[2] group where elderly people actively follow all the news, observe life in our region and in the other regions. (Expert 34; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Another important positive effect of Internet technology is the increase in the financial activity of citizens. Online platforms simplify the mechanism of fundraising:

People have become more active, that is, we have started to collect more funds online than before. (Expert 42; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)
When they transfer their fifty rubles to help children, the elderly, animals, it does not matter to whom, they are already helping. So, this is their civic activity. (Expert 45; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

In the surveyed regions, a third (33%) of respondents believe that online forms of citizen participation primarily inform about existing problems (Figure 3). A less popular view is that online formats help to solve problems, as well as inform about them (28%). Every fifth person believes that online forms are not able to solve socially significant problems (21%), and 18% are convinced that they only imitate activity without any real positive effect. The territorial community as a whole has not yet decided to assess the effectiveness of the online forms of citizen participation, which may be due to their "novelty."

Figure 3
People's Effectiveness Assessment of Online Citizen Participation Forms (in % of the Number of Respondents)



Note. Response to the question "What role does online participation play in the development of your town?"
Source: Data of VoIRC RAS sociological survey, 2022, Vologda Oblast.

[2] VK (short for its original name VKontakte) is a Russian online social media and social networking service. https://vk.com VK™ is a trademark of VK.com Ltd.

The scientific discourse proves that only the first three stages of citizen participation (according to Arnstein's approach) are implemented in vertical interaction on a large scale: informing, consulting, and appeasement, where citizens can listen and be heard, have the right to a deliberative voice, while the authorities retains the right to make decisions. Other stages of citizen participation such as partnership, delegation, and control, are not fully realized (Arnstein, 1969; Smoleva, 2021). The conducted sociological study shows that the partnership type of relations between the state and the public is gradually developing on the ground, with citizen participation acting as a key method for renewing and strengthening such relations.

We believe that under current conditions, the best option for Russia is joint participation in solving the urgent problems of the local community and the authorities, while the task of the latter is to promote the population's involvement in public affairs. We share the opinion of Yakimets and Nikovskaya (2019) that the establishment of a democratic order cannot only be the result of "live creativity of masses from below" as it involves various forms of public-private partnership.

The effects of citizen participation are manifested in the socio-economic sphere, primarily in the implementation of social policy, which, according to Grigoryeva (2011), is a field of interaction between the main actors, which are the state, business, nonprofit organizations, and the local population. The transition from the "welfare state" to the "welfare society" in Russia is associated with an increased role of civil society in social policy.

With the limited capacity of state institutions and the economy to meet a wide range of public needs ("government failure" and "market failure" theories), it is nonprofit organizations that can help (Kosygina, 2018):

> NPOs need to develop in those sectors that are supported by the state and business through grants, subsidies, sponsorship, and donations from legal entities and citizens since they need funding sources. Activity areas arise from the possibility of obtaining funding. And state subsidies and grants are given in those areas that are prioritized by the state in a given locality. (Expert 1; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Traditionally, there is a high demand for citizen participation in socially oriented activities:

> It is also evident from the presidential grant competition. The largest number of applications submitted and supported is in the field of social assistance and social services. We see the demand for these services. This is work with people with disabilities and work to prevent child abandonment. These areas are the most in-demand. (Expert 2; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

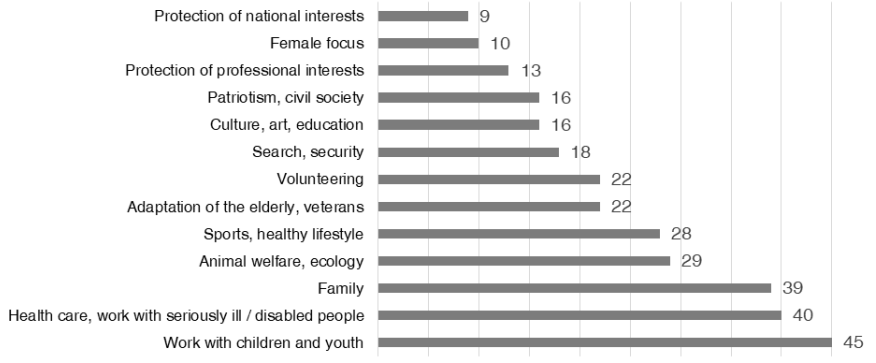
We can generally agree with the conclusions of Mersianova and Jakobson (2011) that even under the current conditions, which are far from ideal, non-state nonprofit initiatives often exhibit high efficiency in those areas where the work of state and municipal institutions gives rise to fair complaints.

The role of citizen participation in the transformation of social and economic institutions, in the increase of living standards and the well-being of the population is manifested not only in creating public organizations but also in self-organization at the place where problems arise and in informal socially useful activities. However, the analysis of interviews with activists suggests that this informal participation is often involuntary, resulting from the oversights of municipal authorities.

The sociological study revealed the areas where the contribution of civic initiatives is assessed to be higher in the regions. These are work with children and youth (average value for small towns in the region is 45%); health care development, including work with the seriously ill (40%); work with families (39%); the protection of nature, including homeless animals (29%); sports development and promotion of a healthy lifestyle (28%; see Figure 4).

Figure 4

People's Assessments of the Role of Citizen Participation by Areas (in % for Each Judgment)



Note. Response to the question "In what areas, in your opinion, is the role of citizen participation in solving important public problems most noticeable?" Source: Data of VolRC RAS sociological survey, 2022, Vologda Oblast.

One of the priority areas of community participation in overcoming the social contradictions of small towns in the region involves improving the place of residence. As noted by government representatives in small towns, a high activity of citizens is observed in cases "where it concerns the entities of social structure" (Expert 39; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.) and in situations where it is a question of "control over what happens in any spheres of city life" (Expert 38; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.).

Public activists positively assess regional and municipal programs related to the people's budget and projects aimed at the development of territorial public self-government:

> Territorial self-governments offer to improve territories. This process involves personal involvement and requires a lot of work. We have to provide one part of the funds ourselves, attract sponsors, and get the other part from the budget. It

> is difficult to get money from the budget, and it is necessary to prepare project documentation. This requires a large amount of organizational work, which is not visible to an ordinary person who is not involved in public work. I think this is a positive experience; there are many undeveloped areas in the city. (Expert 4; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

The interaction between the public and business plays a major role in area improvement:

> The role of business in city development is also important since a large number of social facilities and projects cannot become a reality or be implemented without attracting some additional funds. (Expert 39; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

Successful examples exist where the problems of improvement are solved by citizens with the support of government and business or under the control of social activists:

> There is such an institution as the institution of public inspectors which control the quality during repairs, asphalt laying, and road paving. On several occasions, public inspectors came to the site, disapproved of the quality of the laid asphalt, and as a result, the contractors had to redo it. (Expert 37; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

The second most common form of local community participation in the socio-economic space of the regions includes charity, assistance to the needy, and the most vulnerable social categories of the population. In particular, in the Vologda Oblast, Areopag public organization operates to assist young disabled people in accessing the benefits and privileges of education, employment, improvement of material status, housing, and living conditions that they are entitled to. This organization is one of the positive examples "that show the power of public organizations and their empowering capabilities" (Expert 8; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.).

Thus, the effects of citizen participation in the socio-economic space of the region complement the social policy implementation. Through participation, both formal (activities of nonprofit organizations) and informal (situational or via the implementation of civic initiatives, neighborhood and friendship associations, interest associations, network communities, etc.), socially significant problems that the state could not solve on its own can be addressed locally.

The positive impact of citizen participation can be traced in the context of the socio-cultural development of small territories. We consider socially useful activities (regardless of their formal or informal nature) not just as a resource for solving political or socio-economic issues but also as a source for developing collective traditions, solidarity, and social cohesion in Russian society.

Civic engagement of the population contributes to the development of territorial identity—in socio-humanitarian discourse, this is a social perception of belonging

to a localized social space, a certain community with its social interests. Citizen participation implies the realization of these interests. Social needs and the problems of individuals become public problems to be solved through joint activities, which enable the people involved to gain more control over community development, develop their social networks, and realize their identity (Ukhanova, 2021).

Joint activities in solving problems of local importance helps creating the *I–We* image. The attitude of people to the place of their residence constitutes an important characteristic of regional identity. It was revealed that the part of the population that is more actively involved in public life has a more positive perception of the small town as a place of their residence (55% and 60% of the answers are "I am glad to live here" and "I am happy, in general, but I am not satisfied with many things," respectively; Table 3). Noteworthy is that among those who are more actively involved in the life of the local community, the proportion of those who are indifferent to the area of their residence is much smaller. The obtained data prove that engaging in civic participation has a positive impact on the perception of regional space as a comfortable place for living.

Table 3

Population's Attitude to Their Place of Residence Depending on the Degree of Participation in Socially Useful Activities, in %

Indicators		How do you feel about the place where you live?			
		I am glad to live here	I am happy, in general, but I am not satisfied with many things	I don't have any particular feelings about it	I don't like living here, but I'm used to it
How actively do you participate in the development of your community?	seldom*	38	30	21	15
	often	55	60	6	4

Note. *Henceforth the degree of participation in socially useful activities is assessed on a 10-point scale, according to which the indicators "seldom" and "often" are assigned from 1 to 3 points and from 7 to 10 points, respectively. The scores are determined by asking the question: "On a 10-point scale, how actively do you participate in the development of your community (yard, village, city, and region)?"

Source: Data of VolRC RAS sociological survey, 2022, Vologda Oblast.

The significance of territorial initiative communities is manifested in the development of social ties and interpersonal communication, which positively affects the level of trust and, in general, normalizes the social climate. A positive correlation was established between the degree of participation and institutional trust. As we can see, the active residents of the region trust the authorities of various levels more than the passive residents. In particular, the trust in the President of the Russian Federation is higher by 15 p.p. (61% vs. 46%); in the Government of the Russian Federation, by 21 p.p. (51% vs. 30%); in the head of the region, by 18 p.p. (52% vs. 34%); in the head of a municipal entity, by 19 p.p. (47% vs. 28%).

The analysis of data from sociological surveys revealed a correlation between the degree of citizen participation and social trust. The territorial community trusts their relatives and friends the most, followed by their neighbors and colleagues in the second place and most people and passers-by in the street in the third place. The level of trust in relatives is somewhat higher in the group of people who seldom participate

in socially useful activities (93% vs. 87%; Table 4). Conversely, the active residents of the region are more likely to trust neighbors and most people (by 4–5 p.p.). Thus, civic engagement is positively reflected in the level of social trust, which has a crucial effect under pandemic conditions. We agree with Kozyreva and Smirnov (2019) that in times of crisis, instability and insecurity increase in all the spheres of life, which undermines the potential of trust in the society and reduces social cohesion. In this connection, the importance of citizen participation as a high-potential resource in the development of the socio-cultural environment increases.

Table 4

Social Trust Depending on the Degree of Participation in Socially Useful Activities (in % for Each Judgment)*

Indicators		Tell me, please, do you trust …?					
		Your family members, relatives	Your friends	Your neighbors	Your colleagues	Most people	A passerby in the street
How actively do you participate in the development of your community?	seldom*	92.5	76.8	43.1	43.6	20.5	17.9
	often	86.9	77.6	48.2	41.0	24.7	18.5

Note. *Among those who seldom (1–4 points) and often (7–10 points) participate in public life. The scores are determined by asking the question: "On a 10-point scale, how actively do you participate in the development of your community (yard, village, and town)?" Source: Data of VoIRC RAS sociological survey, 2022, Vologda Oblast.

In the process of interaction through various practices of citizen participation, the population acquires the attributes of agency in social development: the goals of interaction are defined; strategies for their achievement and potential partners are identified; the course of action is developed; the social competence of involved actors increases due to the need to know the rules or procedures of interaction with the authorities. Being involved in public relations with the authorities, actors of citizen participation (individuals, groups, organizations, and communities) can gain popularity and the ability to influence public opinion, resulting in changes not only in the community of civic activists but also in the society in which they operate.

In this regard, it is encouraging that the readiness of activists to be professionally trained in the field of public activities is quite high. For example, a significant increase is observed in the number of applications for the Young Women's Leadership Council:

> In the third project year, there were over 400 applications for 40 spots, similar to a theater school. Applications were not only from the Vologda Oblast, but also from the neighboring Arkhangelsk Oblast, Yaroslavl Oblast, and Leningrad Oblast. That is, these are people who want to learn how to work as public servants. (Expert 8; Trans. by Y. U., E. K., & S. Z.)

To summarize, the analysis revealed a fairly high level of civic activity in various spheres of life, as well as the readiness of the population to be involved in different practices. In addition, the conducted sociological research convincingly shows

that vertical and horizontal interactions of the population in the context of citizen participation in the development of small towns positively affects the socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural spheres.

The representatives of the younger generation, in particular, realize that social involvement, participation in charity work, and volunteerism earn respect from peers and adults, a certain status, as well as communication skills. All this enables their further development and self-development.

Noteworthy is that civic engagement has a positive impact on the perception of regional space as a comfortable place to live. Nevertheless, the civic position of Russian people on charity is rather passive, which is primarily attributed to their distrust of nonprofit public organizations. This can also be explained by echoes of the Soviet mentality: people have more faith in the state than in their own altruism, entrusting it with the solution of social problems. However, the role of citizens is also very important. Here, we are referring to the need to motivate the population to participate in solving the socio-economic problems of the territory.

In this connection, it is essential to develop an effective mechanism for increasing the involvement of local communities in the development of their territories. We believe that participation serves not only as a tool for solving socio-economic problems but also as a source of growing trust in the authorities and in each other, which is the basis for consolidating the society. Moreover, key tools and forms of participation to be used when introducing the mechanism will be determined on the basis of the conducted qualitative sociological research (expert interviews and focus groups), so far as they are relevant to the prospects of the community's participation in the development of their areas (the results of previous interviews demonstrate the most effective forms, such as elections, participation in public improvement of territories, informal forms of self-organization to ensure provision of urban amenities and charity, etc.). Generalization of the obtained data will make it possible to work out individual trajectories of small towns' development, which will be offered to the municipal authorities for practical testing.

Conclusion

As Hong (2018) rightly points out, local residents constitute the most important and capable group that can actively participate in improving the everyday environment and creating livable communities. Of note is that a large number of collaborative initiatives extend beyond the community limited by regional geographical boundaries, and the communities of interest are developed. Nevertheless, it is the community, as people living and working in a particular place, that is most likely to participate in the development of a specific territory. It follows from the above that citizen participation can become the most important intangible factor in the development of small Russian towns. In this regard, creating conditions for the increase in citizen participation in society management as a motivated basis for its viability should be the benchmark and basis in achieving sustainable development. This explains the interest in the conceptual sociological analysis of the "citizen participation" phenomenon.

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

Subjective Well-Being and Participation in Volunteering in Russia

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ABSTRACT
An extensive body of research suggests a positive connection between subjective well-being (SWB) and volunteering. However, their relationship is often described in terms of health-related and personal psychological effects, thus raising an issue of elaborating proxies that would focus on the social effects and determinants of such relationship. This study aims to demonstrate a number of direct and indirect links of volunteering and the SWB on the example of Russian citizens. We believe that exploring the connection between SWB and volunteering can expand knowledge about the social component of SWB and its correlates. The hypotheses suggested were tested using binary logistic regression on data from the All-Russian population survey (N = 2,015, urban and rural residents aged 18 and over were interviewed by telephone). The obtained results do not allow us to conclude that volunteering itself significantly increases the level of subjective well-being. Nevertheless, some kind of "external effect" was revealed: respondents are more likely to feel happy if they observe social solidarity, which in turn may be fostered by raising awareness of the beneficial outcomes of volunteerism. This observation directly leads to practical considerations to be taken into account in planning and organizing volunteer engagement. It would require a shift in the promotion of volunteerism, from its direct impact on the lives of individuals to a broader effect of volunteering on the quality of life in the community at large, fostering the feeling of social connectedness, common goals and solidarity. To achieve this, concerted efforts of NGO leaders and social media in this direction will be important.

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Introduction

The concept of subjective well-being became entrenched in social sciences only in the last decades of the 20th century. Until then, its closest equivalent, the somewhat fuzzy and not very clearly defined concept of happiness, had been in the limelight of debates involving philosophers and psychologists. Different conceptualizations of happiness emphasize either its more hedonic aspects focused on pleasant feelings and positive emotions or its more eudaimonic side centered on fulfillment and personal meaning (Leontiev, 2020). Owing to a global nature of happiness, which embraces both a mental judgement and subjective reaction with regard to an individual's life situation, we prefer, following Leontiev, to use a more specific and measurable concept of "subjective well-being" (SWB) as an operationalization of happiness.

However, the concept of subjective well-being is also extensively debated. What is important about SWB is that "an essential ingredient of the good life is that the person herself likes her life" (Diener et al., 2009, p. 63). A broad concept of SWB includes both cognitive and affective evaluation of individual's life. For instance, the impact of volunteering on the SWB of volunteers in the UK was assessed with such key SWB dimensions as life satisfaction, quality of life, sense of purpose, sense of control, anxiety, and depression (Stuart et al., 2020).

One of the earliest overviews devoted to SWB theories and measurement identifies three hallmarks that distinguish SWB: its subjective nature, the abundance of positive measures although a balance between positive and negative indices should not be overlooked, and an emphasis on the global assessment, an integrated judgement of all aspects of a person's life (Diener, 1984, p. 545). According to Leontiev (2020, p. 20), Diener's paper had outlined basic psychological contours of SWB whereas later studies mostly refined and elaborated Diener's major conclusions. A case in point is a study (Borgonovi, 2008), which underscores the subjectivity of the subjective well-being concept and puts forth self-reported health and self-reported happiness as SWB core indicators.

As reflected by the emergence of "positive psychology" (Seligman, 2002), the concept of positive subjective well-being has been increasingly capturing the attention of researchers in recent years. The interest in people's subjective well-being, in contrast to the traditional focus on their ill-being, has expanded the idea of what it means to live well, thereby drawing attention to the potential significance of inquiring into people's subjective views of their subjective well-being (Mellor et al., 2009).

Even a brief overview of SBW literature clearly indicates that psychological, often medical, and sometimes philosophical and economic perspectives predominate in conceptualizing, measuring, and explaining SBW. Also, a relationship between SBW and prosocial behavior is mostly viewed through the lenses of psychology as a way of helping people to realize their existential needs for purpose and fulfillment in life needed to experience optimal psychological health (Konrath, 2014). Indeed, it has been rightly emphasized that a study of SWB has great implications for psychology, as it provides insight into how people feel and think about their lives (Diener et al., 2003). A significant body of research corroborates the evidence that giving of both time and money to others is associated with a number of physical health benefits for givers, including stronger immune systems, a reduced risk of serious illnesses, better cardiovascular health, and a lower mortality risk (Konrath & Brown, 2013).

However, the prevailing empirical and theoretical focus on psychological and medical aspects of SBW leads to a certain underestimation of SBW social aspects. As Diener concludes, the type and quality of social contact differ from study to study. Moreover, they have not been systematically analyzed. Social contact is often related to SWB, but the parameters that affect this relationship are not well understood (1984, p. 564).

To address the gap in studying social aspects of SWB, Mellor et al. (2008) suggest what seems a very productive approach. Within the general SWB construct, Mellor and colleagues identify a neighborhood (or community) well-being component (NWB), that is people's subjective experiences of living in a given community, along with the widely recognized personal subjective well-being (PWB) defined as people's own views of their subjective well-being. The concept of NWB comes closest to what may be referred to as a social component of SWB. It concentrates on social constituents of subjective well-being including trust, participation, common goals, and reciprocity as well as material elements of local security, the natural environment, and availability of resources. Mellor et al. (2008) argue that "despite its conceptual relevance to overall subjective well-being, research that has investigated the social aspect of subjective well-being, particularly NWB, is extremely scarce" (p. 152). A study of volunteering, which is a form of social engagement, and its relationship with SWB gives a relevant ground for examining this relatively unexplored area.

While a positive nature of the above relationship has been well documented, most of the research concentrate on personal and psychological benefits of volunteering for volunteers as individuals, such as gaining new knowledge and skills, changes in career path, enhanced confidence and self-esteem. The social aspects of subjective well-being expose a complex and multilayer structure of SWB but this strand of research received relatively less attention. However, there is no strict dividing line between the social and psychological (or personal) components of SWB, which often overlap.

This paper aims to explore the relationship between volunteering and SWB with a focus on the impact of volunteering on various aspects of SWB. In particular, we seek to demonstrate a number of direct and several indirect links between volunteering and SWB using the example of Russian citizens. In our view, exploring the nexus between SBW and volunteering is likely to enhance the knowledge of SWB social component and its correlates.

As regards volunteering, we follow its operational definition suggested by L. Salamon in the framework of the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project and subsequently adopted in the *Manual on the Measurement of Volunteering Work* of the International Labour Organization (2011). Volunteering is defined as unpaid non-compulsory work, namely time that individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside of their family or household. These operational criteria could be applied independently of any specific socio-cultural context, which made them particularly useful for a cross-national study of volunteering (Salamon et al., 2011).

With a growing contribution of volunteering to the social and economic development globally, the research into volunteering impacts on subjective well-being will continue to be even more relevant for both theory development and policy recommendations. According to United Nations Volunteers (2021, p. 37), the monthly number of volunteers aged 15 years and over amounts to 862.4 million worldwide. Despite the growing recognition of volunteering contribution to global social and economic development, significant gaps remain in measuring the scope of volunteering due to the scarcity of data, especially in the Global South, and inconsistency of measuring tools and approaches. In Russia, a share of adults engaging in volunteering amounts to some 27% of the population[1]. In terms of policy recommendations, the findings of exploring the nexus between volunteering and SWB will further elucidate how to recruit volunteers more effectively (Mateiu-Vescan et al., 2021). Establishing potential benefits of volunteering may help retain volunteers in the organizations (Studer & von Schnurbein, 2013).

Literature Review: Correlates and Measurements of the Relationship Between Volunteering and SWB

Researchers have generated an extensive body of literature discussing the association between volunteering and subjective well-being: Appau & Awaworyi Churchill, 2019; Binder & Freytag, 2013; Brown et al., 2012; Gimenez-Nadal & Molina, 2015; Kim & Morgül, 2017; Konrath, 2014; Magnani & Zhu, 2018; Mellor et al., 2009; Post, 2011; Tanskanen & Danielsbacka, 2016; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001.

Diener's classical notion of SWB is firmly rooted in the idea that it relies on the standards of the respondent to determine what is the good life (Diener, 1984, p. 544). In agreement with the focus on the actor's subjective judgement, a robust body of extant literature measures SWB through a correlate such as life satisfaction. Binder and Freytag (2013) found that volunteering at least once a week significantly increased life satisfaction when personality traits, trust, and social networks were considered. This positive impact was demonstrated among those with lower rather than higher levels of subjective well-being, thus suggesting that the effects of volunteering were "driven by reducing the unhappiness of the less happy" (2013, p. 97).

[1] According to All-Russian Population Survey conducted in 2022 by the Centre for Studies of Civil Society and the Nonprofit Sector of HSE University, Moscow, Russia (Mersianova, 2022).

A similar link between volunteering and life satisfaction was found by Lawton et al. (2021) in their analysis of ten waves of longitudinal data from the British Household Panel Survey and Understanding Society. After controlling for a wide range of factors, including socio-demographic, health, employment status, and religion, the study reported a statistically significant relationship between volunteering and life satisfaction. A longitudinal panel study of adults in Germany (Meier & Stuzter, 2008) also found a direct relationship between volunteering and subjective well-being measured by life satisfaction. The authors reported that an individual who volunteered regularly on a weekly basis had higher SWB than someone who never volunteered.

At that, as follows from the literature review in this section, the relationship between SWB and volunteering is mostly described with psychological and health-related indicators rather than indicators pertinent to the social sphere.

A recent comprehensive umbrella overview of literature identified 28 eligible reviews on older adults in the USA that included a range of volunteer forms. It found a multitude of benefits for volunteering influencing their mental and physical well-being, particularly, reduced mortality, and increased functioning, quality of life, empowerment, motivation, social support, and sense of community. Still, personal psychological and health effects predominated (Nichol et al., 2024).

In terms of personal psychological effects of volunteering, another widely used measure of subjective well-being concentrates on changes in an individual's sense of purpose in life and a fulfilled life. Based on data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, Steptoe and Fancourt (2020) found that regular volunteering, at least once a month, predicted higher levels of feeling that life is worthwhile. Several qualitative studies of recent years established an association between volunteering and a stronger sense of purpose in life (Armour & Barton, 2019; Cousineau & Misener, 2019; Smith et al., 2020).

However, another psychological conceptualization of SWB–volunteering relationship stresses pleasant emotions, a preponderance of positive effect over negative one; hence, the related measure would be a depression- and anxiety-lessening effect of volunteering. A number of studies examined the impacts of volunteering on depression. They predominately focused on changes in depressive symptoms amongst volunteers in later years of their life. Hong et al. (2009) analyzed engagement of people aged 70 and older in volunteering across three waves of a US longitudinal survey. The study found that volunteering had a protective effect against depression for those in later years of life. Hong and Morrow-Howell (2010) polled a group of volunteers involved in the US volunteer program bringing older adults into public elementary schools to improve academic achievement of students. The authors compared changes over time between the school program volunteers participating on average 12 hours per week, with a control group. The research found that after two years of participating in the program and controlling for such factors as marital status, education, employment status, and family income, the volunteering group experienced fewer depressive symptoms whereas the control group reported an increase. While the depression-reducing effects of volunteering and its positive impact on the mental health and subjective well-being of older volunteers are well-

established, a similar effect of volunteering on youth is only starting to gravitate toward the focus of SWB research. Based on the national survey data (from 2019 to 2020) from across the United States, volunteering was found to be associated with higher odds of excellent or very good health in children aged six to 11 years and adolescents aged 12 to 17 years (Lanza et al., 2023).

Various links between volunteering and economic aspects of SWB have also been firmly established in the literature. It gives reasons to researchers to speak about "happiness economics," which examines the impact of material and social resources on SWB (Sarracino, 2013, p. 36).

Among economic resources, income is confirmed as an important correlate of SWB, but at the same time, it emerges as not being the only one. Studies have found that the likelihood of volunteering increases with higher income levels (Musick & Wilson, 2008).

Evidence of a positive association between higher income and volunteering was challenged by Diener (1984) whose findings were further supported by Borgonovi (2008). As Diener puts it, people may only know how satisfied they should be by comparing their situation with that of others (1984, p. 559). Almost a quarter of a century later, Borgonovi's study confirms this view by providing evidence that volunteering reinforces satisfaction for what one has rather than dissatisfaction for what she lacks. Thus, people shift the salient group they use to judge their circumstances from those above them in the income distribution to those below them, which in turn may lead to greater happiness. "By doing so it might mitigate people's tendency to care excessively about relative income and how badly they are doing compared to those above them in the income distribution and in turn lead to greater happiness" (Borgonovi, 2008, p. 2348).

A reverse positive impact of charity donation and volunteering on SWB has also been consistently registered (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011; Choi & Kim, 2011; Wilson, 2000). Some economic theories provide insight into the nature of this relationship. For instance, theories of altruism suggest that a person's subjective well-being could be influenced by the benefits derived from others. Accordingly, the warm glow theory suggests that people derive internal satisfaction from altruistic behavior, such as donation and helping others. Consistent with this, the "warm glow" theory suggests that people derive internal satisfaction from giving (Andreoni, 1990).

As regards social resources associated with SWB, the relationship between social capital and subjective well-being is particularly relevant because social capital and social networks, as its core idea, are natural concomitants of volunteering. The relationship between social capital and SBW has been widely investigated. Despite this, however, no definitive conclusion has been reached owing to both conceptual and methodological difficulties. Partly, these difficulties complicate the study of this relationship due to the generality and vagueness of the social capital concept reflected by a variety of measurements leading to mixed evidence concerning the impact of social capital on SWB.

Most research on social capital stems from Coleman's seminal work (1988) which identified three basic components of social capital: trust, information channels,

norms and sanctions. Later studies elaborated on Coleman's ideas. Trust was further subdivided into categories, which are generalized trust and special trust, e.g., trust in known people or institutions (Paldam, 2000). Information channels were broken into social relationships through contacts with family and friends (Powdthavee, 2008) and civic engagement (Bjørnskov, 2006). As for the third component of social capital, norms and sanctions that can promote actions beneficial for common good and constrain undesirable actions, it appears to be the most abstract and the least agreed upon part of Coleman's social capital triad.

Putnam (2000) particularly focused on the role and benefits of formal and informal social networks, although in a later work, Helliwell and Putnam (2004) admitted that "social trust—that is, the belief that others around you can be trusted—is itself a strong empirical index of social capital at the aggregate level" (p. 1439).

Another important constraint in the study of the social capital–SWB relationship is the so-called reverse causation, which means that correlations between social circumstance and subjective well-being might reflect the effects, not the causes of subjective well-being (Helliwell & Putnam, 2004, p. 1441). Fundamentally, this problem remains unresolved affecting almost all aspects of volunteering–SWB relationship. Thus, while volunteering may lead to higher subjective well-being, the reverse is also possible: people who feel well may be more likely to engage in volunteer labor and select themselves in the volunteering group (self-selection). For example, in a study of religious volunteering, Borgonovi (2008) finds that the positive association between volunteering and health is not causal but rather due to reverse causality or self-selection. Several studies report that any association between volunteering and subjective well-being can be better explained by the participation of happier or healthier people in volunteering than by volunteering itself (Appau & Awawory Churchill, 2019; de Wit et al., 2015; Stuart et al., 2020). In a comparative study of individuals aged 50 and above from 12 European countries, Hansen et al. (2018) identified a relationship between volunteering and life satisfaction, which is though "driven by selection of high-satisfaction individuals into volunteering rather than by volunteering having a clear impact on life satisfaction" (p. 12). Similarly, a 21-year longitudinal analysis of individuals from young adulthood to midlife found that the direction of association was from happiness to higher civic engagement measured by participation in organizations, groups, and associations, rather than the other way around (Fang et al., 2018).

Overall, Meier and Stutzer (2008) posit that the mechanisms for the positive relationship between volunteering and subjective well-being can be roughly divided into two groups: intrinsic indicating that people's subjective well-being increases because of volunteering and extrinsic suggesting that people's utility increases because they receive an extrinsic reward from helping others.

The unresolved issue of reverse causation leads researchers to the conclusion of a bi-directional relationship between SWB and social capital (Lucchini et al., 2015). Similarly, a bi-directional relationship seems to exist between various aspects of subjective well-being and volunteering: "We expect personal well-being to select individuals into volunteer work, and we also expect volunteer service to

enhance well-being, net of pre-existing levels of personal well-being and volunteer efforts" (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001, p. 123). Until now, it remains debatable if there is solid evidence to demonstrate casual links between volunteering and SWB and the conclusion made by Helliwell and Putnam (2004) about 20 years ago still holds true: "the use of causal language in talking about the social context of subjective well-being … is premature, because of the possibility of selection effects, reverse causation" (p. 1456).

Methodology

The proposed hypotheses stem from the main findings of the literature review summarized below:

- SWB is a multilayer construct, with volunteering relating in different ways to a variety of SWB aspects.
- Positive association has been established between SWB and volunteering, although the casual nature of this association has been extensively debated.
- The relationship between volunteering as a prosocial activity and SWB is largely described in terms of personal psychological and health-related effects.
- Specific links between volunteering and social aspects of SWB have been less systemically explored and the focus has been on the reverse causation between social capital and SWB.

Drawing on the theoretical review, we proposed three hypotheses, each highlighting the relationship between volunteering and various aspects of SWB:

Hypothesis 1 (H1): SWB is positively associated with an individual's overall physical and financial well-being.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Correlates of social capital concomitant with engagement in volunteering, such as trust, willingness to unite with others, and a perception of social cohesion in the society are positively associated with a feeling of happiness.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Participation in volunteering is positively associated with SWB.

This study is based on data from an All-Russian survey conducted by the Centre for Studies of Civil Society and the Nonprofit Sector (HSE University, Moscow, Russia) in 2022. The sample size consisted of 2,015 respondents, including urban and rural citizens aged 18 and older who were surveyed via telephone interviews from September 9 to 19, 2022.

The method of analysis used was binary logistic regression, which estimates the probability of a target event occurring as a function of the explanatory variables using a logit transformation of the dependent variable.

In accordance with the emphasis on the subjective judgment of the actor, to measure the SBW, respondents were asked the following question: "Speaking generally, are you definitely happy, rather happy, rather not happy, or definitely not happy?" The dependent variable takes two values: "one" if the respondents replied that they consider themselves definitely happy or rather happy, and "zero" if the respondents considers themselves definitely not happy or rather not happy.

The equation includes the following independent variables:

1. Variables describing overall subjective well-being:

- *Income*. This variable takes two possible values depending on whether the current total monthly income of the respondent's family easily allows them to meet basic needs or not;
- *Health*. This variable has three possible values depending on whether the respondent considers their health to be good/very good, average, or poor/very poor;
- *Marital status.* This variable takes three values: the respondent has never been married; the respondent is married or in an unregistered marriage; the respondent is divorced or widowed.

2. Variables characterizing an individual's attitudes toward trust and willingness to unite with others:

- *Generalized trust*. This variable takes two possible values depending on whether the respondent believes that most people can be trusted or that one should be cautious in their relationships with people;
- *Interpersonal trust.* This variable takes two possible values depending on whether the respondent believes that most people in their immediate social circle can be trusted or that one should be cautious in their relationships with them;
- *Perception of social cohesion in the country*. This variable takes two possible values depending on whether the respondent believes that there is more agreement and unity or disagreement and disunity in the country;
- *Perception of cohesion in the immediate social circle*. This variable takes two possible values depending on whether the respondent believes that there is more agreement and unity or disagreement and disunity among the people in their immediate social circle.

The variable "willingness to unite with others" was not included in the final equation as insignificant; besides, it negatively affected the quality of classification.

3. Participation in volunteering in the past year defined as any socially useful work without coercion or payment, although not to help family members or close relatives.

4. Control variables:

- *Gender*;
- *Age*.

The variable "education" was insignificant and was not included in the final model because it negatively affected the quality of classification.

Results and Conclusions

The results of the logistic regression are presented in Table 1, where Exp(*B*) is the exponent of the regression coefficient, reflecting the change in the chances of feeling happy associated with a change in the predictor compared to the baseline category.

Table 1
Factors Associated With Happiness

Factor	*p*	Exp(*B*)
Gender (male as a baseline)	.002	1.901
Age	.119	0.989
Generalized trust	.449	1.267
Interpersonal trust	.016	1.678
Perception of social cohesion in the country	.000	2.815
Perception of cohesion in the immediate social circle	.017	1.726
Volunteering participation	.337	1.242
Marital status (not married as a baseline)	.000	
Marital status (married/unregistereg marriage)	.000	2.943
Marital status (divorced/widowed)	.023	2.063
Income	.000	3.505
Health (poor as a baseline)	.000	
Health (average)	.000	3.087
Health (good)	.000	4.923
Constant	.020	0.359

The results of the analysis show that feeling happy is slightly more common for women, but is not significantly associated with age. The variables associated with an individual's overall well-being have the most noticeable impact on feeling happy. Having an income that easily allows the respondent's family to meet their basic needs increases the respondent's chances of being happy by 3.5 times, while good health increases the respondent's chances of being happy by 4.9 times compared to respondents who rate their health as poor. Marriage increases the respondent's chances of feeling happy by 2.9 times. Notably, respondents who were previously married but divorced or widowed also have higher chances of feeling happy compared to those who have never been married. Thus, **H1** was fully supported by the data, which corroborates multiple evidence of the relationship between health status and income, on one hand, and SWB, on the other.

According to our data, generalized trust does not have a significant impact on feeling happy, but interpersonal trust increases the respondent's chances of feeling happy by 1.7 times. Moreover, for respondents who believe that there is more agreement and unity among the people in their immediate social circle, the chances of feeling happy increase by 1.7 times. The impact of the perception of social cohesion in the country is even greater: it increases the chances of feeling happy by 2.8 times. Contrary to our initial expectations, willingness to unite with other people and generalized trust do not have a significant impact on happiness. Overall, it can be concluded that **H2** found partial support.

As for **H3**, no significant association was found between participation in volunteering and self-reported happiness. This is in conformity with the mixed evidence on the impacts of volunteering on SWB. While most evidence points to a positive association between the two, a small number of studies found that participation in volunteering and civic participation does not have an impact on subjective well-being (Dolan et al., 2004; Stuart et al., 2020, p. 24).

Thus, the analysis carried out indicates that the greatest influence on SWB is predictably exerted by factors such as the absence of financial problems, good health, and having a permanent relationship partner. In addition, the situation in the immediate social environment is also associated with the feeling of happiness: if a respondent does not trust the people around or considers that there is disagreement and disunity around them, they are more likely to feel unhappy. The perception of social cohesion in the country is also significantly positively associated with SWB. We believe that further exploration of social impacts resulting from SWB and volunteering would lead to a better understanding of the relationship between both of these.

At the same time, the results obtained do not allow us to conclude that volunteering in itself significantly increases the level of subjective well-being. Rather, we can talk about a certain "external effect" of helping behavior and volunteering: respondents are more likely to feel happy if they observe social solidarity, which, in turn, may be fostered by raising awareness of the beneficial outcomes of volunteerism. This observation directly leads to practical considerations that need to be taken into account in planning, organizing, and coordinating volunteer engagement. Therefore, a consistent focus on effects of volunteerism for the community at large, such as strengthening the feeling of cohesion, social solidarity, and social support among citizens of different generations and walks of life, could predictably lead to enhancing the links between volunteering and subjective well-being. This, in turn, would require an additional shift in the promotion of volunteerism, from the direct impact of volunteering on the lives of individuals to its broader impact on the quality of life in the community by fostering the feeling of social connectedness, common goals, and solidarity. To achieve this, concerted efforts of NGO leaders and social media in this direction will be important.

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

From Informal to Formal: Features of Volunteering in Arab Countries

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ABSTRACT
The paper examines the potential of Arab volunteers in solving social problems in their communities. Conceptually, volunteering is viewed as both part of social participation and a form of helping behavior. The research is based on the analysis of data from an online survey conducted among adult volunteers from 20 countries in the North Africa, Middle East, and Gulf regions. These countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and the Palestinian territories. The study identifies distinctive features of Arab volunteers engaged in diverse forms of helping behavior, including their social, demographic, and other characteristics. Remarkably, Arab volunteers showed the same level of trust at both near and far social distances, which distinguishes them from Russian volunteers. The findings suggest that there is a positive environment for the further development of formal volunteering in the Arab world. It has been found that targeted government support has significantly contributed to the development of the culture of volunteering and building its infrastructure in countries of the Arab region.

KEYWORDS
informal volunteering, formal volunteering, helping behavior, social trust, social problems, nonprofit organizations, Arab nations

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Introduction

Volunteering is a set of prosocial collective activities that "extend over time, are engaged in without expectation of reward or other compensation, and often through formal organizations, and that are performed on behalf of causes or individuals who desire assistance" (Snyder & Omoto, 2008, p. 3; see also Duncan, 2012). Volunteering has gained wide social recognition in the modern world based on the principles of equality, humanism, and mutual assistance. Theoretically, volunteering can be explored through various conceptual lenses. In a broad sense, volunteering is part of social participation together with a wide range of other social, public, and individual activities, such as charitable giving, being a member of a local community group, and practicing ethical consumption or advocating for the protection of certain plant and animal species. Social participation refers to collective activities. As Brodie et al. (2011) have found, social participation is widespread phenomenon, embedded historically, and centrally important to people's lives and the communities where they live.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) proposes a broad spectrum of activities based on increasing levels of participation. At one end of the IAP2 spectrum, participation activities may involve the provision of information through, for example, websites and factsheets and lead to a "shallow" form of participation, which is just little more than information sharing. At the other end of the spectrum, citizens' participation contributions include consultations and other forms of collaboration with government agencies on issues of importance to the community (Brodie et al., 2009). Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) heavily affects the IAP2's spectrum. Arnstein's typology, which highlights different levels of participation, moving from nonparticipation to citizen control, was later widely referred to Guaraldo Choguill (1996), Tritter and McCallum (2006), Cornwall (2008), Collins and Ison (2009).

Along with being a tool for citizen empowerment through social participation, the phenomenon of volunteering is examined as a form of helping behavior when people actively identify opportunities to help others often at considerable personal cost. There are certain characteristics that mark volunteering as a distinctive form of helping.

Unlike spontaneous helping that can be provided in response to difficulties or urgent situations, volunteers typically look for opportunities to help or in other words, select themselves to engage in volunteering. Unlike the obligatory helping that occurs in the context of ongoing relationships, volunteers typically do not know those they help in advance (Omoto & Snyder, 1995). Typically, the extant research defines both formal and informal volunteering as unpaid work that is carried out for a charitable, social, or political purpose while distinguishing the two types of volunteering by whether one engages in unpaid labor in a formal organizational setting (e.g., foodbank, school, church, animal shelter) or on an individual basis, as part of informal networks, including friends and neighbors. An essential aspect of both types of volunteering, formal and informal, is helping those who are in need (Taniguchi, 2012; Wang et al., 2017).

Indeed, although both types of volunteering generate benefits for the society, the literature focuses much attention on the formal volunteering undertaken through an organization, mainly in the US context. However, recent studies have revealed that participation in prosocial behaviors is multifaceted. By simply focusing on formal volunteering, scholars might miss the plurality of behaviors, which enable civic engagement (Cnaan & Park, 2016; Reed & Selbee, 2001).

The socio-economic situation, religious beliefs, and cultural aspects of the Arab region, comprising most of the countries of North Africa, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, directly affect the philosophy of volunteering in this area. While being an interesting, rapidly developing social phenomenon, it is just a new name for an age-old tradition there. In particular, Arab society has a long history of informal volunteering based on religious and humanitarian values, mainly on compassion and empathy for others. Traditionally, it has been predominantly informal and has been linked to supporting each other and society through religious and cultural practices (Haddad, 2015) that encourage prosocial behavior and promote altruistic thinking, as noted by the United Nations Volunteers [UNV] (2019).

In addition, volunteering in Arab countries is associated with helping people during holidays or difficult times and is seen as a religious duty and charitable work (UNV, 2011). The word “volunteering” is *tatawa'a* in Arabic, which means donating something. It also means participating in charitable activities that are not a religious requirement. It originates from the word *al-taw'a*, which means compliance, smoothness, and flexibility.

The concept of volunteering is taking on new forms as a result of modernization and the development of governmental and non-governmental institutions. In general, helping others is seen as part of a religious obligation rooted in the religions of Arab peoples, and the line between giving time voluntarily and as a duty is not sharply defined (UNV, 2015). However, recent years have also demonstrated new emerging trends in Arab philanthropy as it is expanding beyond religiously motivated giving and giving to family and relatives. The philanthropy sector is contributing to the relief of the immediate needs of the poor and the provision of basic services, as well as to the accomplishment of sustainable development goals, including education, health, and economic empowerment (Haddad, 2015).

The Arab world, consisting of more than two dozen countries, presents significant disparity regarding economic and social development. Across this highly diverse region, there is a lack of solid academic research and data on volunteering. This poses a serious challenge to sustaining and expanding volunteerism projects and initiatives in the above region (UNV, 2015).

Some important facts about the development of volunteering in a few countries in the researched region can be found in the evidence library of the knowledge portal[1] for volunteerism for development practitioners and policy makers. The web database includes local studies on activating the role of women in volunteering in Saudi Arabia (Afif, 2010) and Algeria (Zizah, 2018) and identifying the role of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) in activating youth volunteering in Oman (Al-Ani et al., 2016). Particular attention should be paid to the paper describing new emerging trends in the relationship between volunteers and the state explored in the Arab world (Haddad, 2021).

The available comprehensive estimate of the total volunteer workforce in Arab countries, prepared as background research (UNV, 2018), presents a figure of nine million full-time equivalent workers who volunteered either informally outside an organization, i.e., helped as unorganized individuals or with friends and relatives, and formally through an organization or institution.

The next global study (UNV, 2021) used a different approach to estimating the volunteer workforce based on international statistical standards and with a reference period of one month. The study showed that the monthly number of volunteers aged 15 and over in the Arab countries was 26.2 million.

In 2018, Arab nations had one of the largest shares of informal volunteers in the world (82,9%), with only African volunteers (86,9%) ahead of them (UNV, 2018). Overall, formal volunteering has become an established practice in many cultures (especially in western countries) with the availability of nonprofit organizations that direct volunteers' time and services to those who need assistance.

Traditional prevalence of informal volunteerism has been a result of numerous challenges that formal volunteerism faces in the Arab countries, such as the absence of clearly outlined policies concerning civic engagement and volunteering, restricted funding, and a lack of enthusiasm for volunteering due to the minimal institutionalization of philanthropy.

Indeed, as researchers note, even when willing to engage in formal volunteering, people will not be able to do so unless the necessary institutions exist (Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Wang et al., 2017). In the nonprofit sector of the Arab world, the lack of funding and a fairly low institutionalization of philanthropy brought about a lack of enthusiasm for formal volunteering. It is only recently that governments have begun to recognize the importance of volunteering and support it through targeted policies raising awareness about its positive impact on society. States are promoting the concept of volunteering by establishing the necessary legal and political frameworks. They have integrated the notions of civic engagement and volunteering into school

[1] https://knowledge.unv.org

curricula (Haddad, 2015, 2020). Consequently, by the next measurement (UNV, 2021), the gap between the number of informal and formal Arab volunteers had narrowed, moving slightly towards the world average ("70% and 30%").

Thus, individual volunteers from Arab countries show a tendency to be more motivated about joining a coordinated volunteer group if there is a certain level of institutional support. Without institutional support, those who would like to volunteer would choose to do it informally. Another possible reason for a rise in formal volunteering statistics is that potential volunteers see more benefits for their personal and community development by engaging in formal volunteering. Both a growing statistic of volunteering through nonprofits and enhancing public awareness about public benefits of volunteering in the Arab region have been strongly facilitated by local governments' policies. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, the government promotes the culture of volunteering for sustainable development and a better future for the next generation. Government support in UAE has led to the launch of the National Volunteer Program for Emergencies, Crises and Disasters, which aims to form a base of volunteers and qualify them to assist government agencies in case of emergencies. In 2017, the government of Dubai launched "A Day for Dubai," an initiative calling on residents to volunteer on one day in a year to help those in need and support community services by offering their time, knowledge, or skills. Government initiated the opening of Emirates Voluntary Academy in Abu Dhabi and Dubai Volunteering Center (Volunteering platforms, n.d.). Officials in the State of Qatar promote the culture and values of volunteering by widely celebrating the Arab Volunteer Day, which falls on September, 15 (Officials to QNA, 2022*)*. Examples of government current support for volunteering in the countries of the Arab region are numerous. However, there is a noticeable lack of systemic data and analytical research on measuring and evaluating the work of volunteers. Nevertheless, a growing influence of volunteering in the above region on personal development, individual trust to other persons, and their willingness to contribute to the social development of local communities motivated the authors to carry out this study and address the gap in the empirical data on volunteering in the Arab region.

Methodology

The authors carried out an anonymous online sociological survey of volunteers from the Arab world over the period from August to September 2023. They initially approximated the sample size at 720 participants aged 18 years and older, with an average set of 40 participants from each of the 18 selected countries in the region.

The geographical scope of the survey included Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and Palestinian Territories. They were selected from 24 countries traditionally assigned to the Arab region. Turkey and Afghanistan, which are not formally part of the Arab world, were also included.

During the course of the survey, volunteers from Djibouti, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman were added to the pool of respondents. At the same time, volunteers from

Afghanistan and Turkey were passive in relation to the survey or something prevented them from active participation. Therefore, these two countries were excluded from the list of participating countries due to low response rates.

Survey participants were asked to answer 20 questions using a computer or smartphone. The questionnaire asked the respondents about various aspects of their volunteer experience, their willingness to unite in a group activity, their level of trust in the people around them, their assessment of the contribution of volunteers to solving social problems, their social background, gender, education, age, and other characteristics of the portrait of a social group of volunteers.

The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the tools used in the ongoing monitoring of the state of civil society in Russia. This monitoring has been carried out since 2006 by the Centre for Studies of the Nonprofit Sector and Civil Society at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University) with the support of the University's Program for Basic Research. Similar questionnaires used in the HSE University monitoring and in the present research have enabled a comparison of the data obtained in the Arab region with data that characterize a sector of Russian volunteers.

The dissemination of the invitation to participate in the survey was mainly made by the activists of the nonprofit association International Organization for Volunteerism (IOV). They shared links to the survey website through social media platforms, especially chat rooms, and through personal contacts. Their efforts played a significant role in promoting the survey (HSE University & International Organization for Volunteerism, n.d.).

A total number of 768 individuals aged between 18 and 69 from 20 different countries were interviewed over a period of two months. In terms of gender, 49% of the participants were male and 51% were female. About half of the respondents could be classified as young people and about two thirds of them had a higher education. Most respondents were urban residents from megacities with at least one million inhabitants (23%) and large cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants (20%). Rural areas, represented by settlements with less than 10 thousand inhabitants, accounted for 14% of the population surveyed. Detailed socio-demographic characteristics of respondents are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Question	Category	%
Gender	Male	49
	Female	51
Age	18–24	28
	25–34	13
	34–45	20
	45–59	32
	60+	7

Table 1 Continued

Question	Category	%
Approximately how many people live in your residence community (city, town, or village)? (one answer)	1 million or more	23
	From 500 thousand to 1 million	13
	From 250 to 500 thousand	11
	From 100 to 250 thousand	6
	From 50 to 100 thousand	7
	Less than 50 thousand	14
	Less than 10 thousand	10
	Less than 3 thousand people	4
	I don't know	12
How much formal education have you completed? (one answer)	Some secondary school, but no certificate	6
	Completed secondary school	8
	Secondary vocational technical school	2
	Special vocational technical college (medical college, etc.)	4
	Some higher education but no university degree	14
	Completed university degree (Bachelor's, Master's degree or equivalent)	64
	I don't know	2

During the survey, people were also asked about their financial situation. The question was: "Your household/family income comes from different sources and may be earned by several family members. As regards the monthly total income of your family, how easily does it allow you to meet basic needs?" It turned out that 48% of respondents found it in general easily (13% very easily, 28% easily, and 7% rather easily) and 52% found it difficult (7% with difficulty, 7% with great difficulty, and 38% with some difficulty).

As for the health condition of the volunteers surveyed, 39% of the respondents rated their health as very good, 44% as good, and only 2% as poor. The rest of the participants assessed their health as average. It should be noted that 86% of the sample of respondents had been involved in volunteering within the last year. In addition, volunteering was defined as an activity for social benefit, without compulsion or payment, and not to help family members or close relatives. Accordingly, 14% had volunteered in the past.

Finally, if we characterize the respondents in terms of the institutional type of their volunteering, 12% were informal volunteers, 36% were formal volunteers, and 48% were involved in both formal and informal volunteering. These groups serve as the basis for the further description of the empirical data collected during the survey. To better understand the factors that may be associated with both formal and informal volunteering, we organize the Results section around our central independent variables.

Results

Helping Behavior

Volunteers from Arab countries showed high levels of engagement in various helping behaviors, whether helping strangers monetarily or by donating items, or through specific actions or deeds. An impressive 97% of respondents reported engagement in at least one form of helping behavior over the past year. Specifically, 88% of respondents gave money to unknown people, 83% donated items, and 90% helped through certain actions or behaviors.

Among those who provided financial help to strangers, there were slightly fewer men than women (48% and 52%, respectively). The distribution by age was as follows: 27% of those who donated money were aged 18–24, 12% were aged 25–34; 21% were aged 35–45, 32% were aged 45–59, and 8% were aged over 60. Overall, the largest proportion of those who helped with money was found among volunteers aged 35 and over, with a rate of 91–94%. The share of those who gave money is high in almost all income groups, ranging from 88% to 94%. Even among those whose family income makes it very difficult for them to meet their basic needs, a substantial proportion (67%) still offered monetary help. The same level of money aid (67%) is observed among those who consider their health to be poor. Among the respondents in good or very good health, 89% had given cash donations to strangers in the past year, compared with 83% of those who regarded their health as average.

Looking at those who helped strangers in need by giving them material goods over the past year, it was found the gender breakdown was nearly equal, with 51% male and 49% female. The age composition of this group closely mirrored that of those who provided financial help. It was observed that the proportion of people who helped with things was higher among those aged 35–59 varying from 92% to 94%, compared to 72–75% for the youngest and oldest. Individuals with the highest incomes and good health assessments were more likely to donate items to unknown people.

When considering other acts of mutual aid, it became evident that 51% of men and 49% of women helped unfamiliar individuals in need through specific actions or behaviors. The age distribution of this group closely corresponds with the above-mentioned groups of volunteers. However, the youngest (18–24 years old) and middle-aged (35–45 years old) volunteers most frequently helped others through actions or behaviors, with proportions of 96% and 97%, respectively. In the remaining age groups, this share ranged from 77% to 87%, with the percentage observed among those aged between 25 and 34 years. Notably, lower-income individuals were a bit more likely to engage in this form of helping behavior. Nevertheless, a tendency to help through certain actions or deeds to assist others did not demonstrate any significant correlation with self-reported health status.

These findings support the idea that more resourceful people are more likely to help others, which makes sense as everyone needs to have resources to share them. However, education level does not have the same effect. The data shows that highly educated Arab volunteers do not help strangers in need more frequently than volunteers with less education.

Social Trust

Previous studies on the relationship between social trust and volunteering are mixed. Usually, the research differentiates between the so-called generalized trust, which refers to the trust in strangers outside the family and friendship spheres and particularized trust, sometimes referred to as interpersonal trust, and which is characterized as the trust in others that people know personally, such as family members, relatives, and friends. According to Uslaner (2002), the difference between generalized and particularized trust is similar to the distinction Putnam drew between "bonding" and "bridging" social capital. In this paper, we use the terms "trust at the near social distance" and "trust at the far social distance" describing nearly the same dichotomy. Overall, generalized trust guides individuals to identify common goals and facilitates collective action. This type of social trust promotes prosocial activities that help strangers. Particularized trust is "extended only toward people the individual knows from everyday interactions" (Freitag & Traunmüller, 2009), which limits individual's possibilities to collaborate with others for collective action.

The extant literature on volunteering suggests various correlations between trust and people's decision to volunteer. Brown and Ferris (2007) find that individuals' trust in others and in their community are important determinants of volunteering in the United States. Bekkers (2012) conducted longitudinal analysis using panel data from the Netherlands. He finds that people with low trust are more likely to quit volunteering, and hence, volunteers exhibit higher levels of trust as a result of self-sorting. Liu et al. (2020) find that generalized trust is identified to be positively associated with volunteering participation among Hong Kong Chinese, which leads to recommendations for the government to strengthen efforts in promoting volunteerism via building generalized trust.

During data analysis, an intriguing characteristic of Arab volunteers was observed. Specifically, there is no significant difference in the level of trust they have at the near and far social distances. To measure the level of trust at the far social distance, the respondents were asked the question: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?" As a result, 37% of respondents said that "Most people can be trusted."

However, only 50% believed that most people from their immediate environment can be trusted, while 49% answered that they should be careful in dealing with people close to them. However, only 50% of respondents believed that most people in their immediate environment could be trusted, with 49% answered that they should be careful in dealing with people close to them.

Similar studies performed in Russia (Kak izmenilos' otnoshenie, 2023) showed a considerable difference in trust levels between near and far social distances. Specifically, only 19% of those who participated in volunteer activity in Russia believed that most people can be trusted, whereas 63% held trust in most individuals within their immediate environment.

Concerning volunteers from Arab nations, women display greater overall trust in people (40% compared to 34%). However, they surprisingly demonstrate less trust in those within their immediate social circle (48% compared to 52%). Trust in the

immediate surroundings increases significantly with age, rising from 33% in the 18–24 age group to 70% in the 45–59 age group, but then drops again to 33% amongst the oldest respondents.

Regarding the level of trust at a far social distance, the youngest respondents once again showed the lowest inclination towards trust at only 24%, and the highest level of trust reaching 51% was demonstrated by the respondents aged 41–59. However, no clear linear trend can be observed within the data.

Trust is traditionally considered as a crucial prerequisite for engaging in prosocial behavior and the collected data support this notion. The respondents who believe that most people can be trusted were more likely to participate in NPOs activities (76% versus 68%). In addition, they were more likely to offer help to strangers in need: with money (92% versus 86%) or things (89% versus 79%). Interestingly, there was no such connection observed for assisting with actions (84% versus 94%). It can be assumed that sharing material resources requires a greater level of trust in comparison to offering assistance through non-material acts of kindness.

Impact to Social Issues

The absolute majority of respondents (98%) from Arab nations holds a remarkably positive view towards engaging volunteers to address social issues. They firmly believe that volunteers should be involved in solving social challenges within their countries. In detail, 87% of respondents answered that volunteers should certainly participate, while 11% held the view that they should do this rather than should not.

The difference between volunteers who served formally and informally in this matter is minimal. For example, 83% of individuals who volunteered on their own or with friends or family, and 87% of people who volunteered through various organizations like NPOs, volunteer centers, educational institutions, and corporations along with 88% of those who engaged in both formal and informal volunteering, think that volunteers should play a visible role in solving social problems.

Regarding the current efforts of volunteers to solve social issues, Arab volunteers have a high level of appreciation for their work. More than half of respondents (54%) viewed the current contribution of volunteers positively, and additionally 34% of respondents described it as satisfactory, indicating a generally positive view of the work of volunteers. Only 7% of respondents had negative views on the volunteers' contribution.

Moreover, the data indicates that individuals who engage in organized volunteer activities are likely to evaluate the impact of volunteers even more favorably. Specifically, among those volunteers who engaged in volunteering on their own or with their friends and relatives, only 44% positively assessed the current contribution of volunteers to solving social issues within their country. In contrast, among organized volunteers, the share of positive ratings is 62% for those who solely participated in formal volunteering and 60% for those who engaged in both formal and informal volunteering.

These findings suggest that direct contact with other volunteers, registered groups, and nonprofit organizations, as well as a deeper awareness of their activities and the outcomes of their efforts, lead to more positive evaluations of the contribution of volunteers to solving social problems.

Further evidence to support this claim is the fact that awareness of nonprofit organizations also positively influences the evaluation of the contribution of volunteer activity. The question was: "In many countries, there are organizations that call public attention to social issues and provide support to the needy people. These are, for example, non-governmental, nonprofit organizations (supporting veterans, people with special needs, families with many children as well as leisure, cultural, youth and sports organizations), and charities. Do you know, have you heard of such organizations in your residence community? Or do you hear about them for the first time now?" Among those who confirmed that they knew about nonprofit organizations in their residence community, 57% positively rated the contribution of volunteers to solving social problems, while among those who only "heard something" about such organizations, the figure stands at 49%. A similar disparity can be observed between those who participated in the activities of such organizations (58% positive ratings) and those who did not participate (45% positive ratings).

In general, volunteers from Arab nations had a more positive view on volunteer involvement in solving social problems compared to their Russian counterparts (Mersianova, 2022), as it is shown in Table 2. A total of 81% of Russian volunteers and 98% of Arab volunteers agreed with the notion that volunteers should participate in solving social issues within their countries. However, just 33% of individuals who participated in volunteer service in Russia expressed certainty that volunteers should participate, while 48% believed that they "should rather than shouldn't". Among the respondents from Arab countries, these shares reach 87% and 11%, respectively. Moreover, 15% of Russian volunteers were opposed to this idea, while only 2% of Arab volunteers shared the same view. Specifically, 5% of Russian volunteers thought that volunteers certainly should not engage in solving social issues within their country.

Table 2

Involvement of Russian and Arab Volunteers in Solving Social Problems

Question	Variants of answer	In Russia, %	In Arab states, %
In your opinion, should or should not volunteers participate in solving social issues in your country?	Certainly should	33	87
	Should rather than should not	48	11
	Should not rather than should	10	1
	Certainly, should not	5	< 1
	I don't know	4	< 1

When evaluating the contribution of volunteer activity in solving social problems, the respondents from Arab countries also had generally positive outlook. Both regions shared the same percentage (7%) for quite negative assessments. However, Russian volunteers were more likely to consider the contribution satisfactory (48%) with a positive assessment rate of only 37%. In contrast, 54% of volunteers from Arab countries rated the contribution positively, while 34% considered it satisfactory.

It should be noted that the respondents from Arab countries showed a high degree of self-identification as volunteers. Overall, 93% of respondents identified

themselves as volunteers and only 5% expressed any uncertainty regarding their self-identification. Interestingly, organized volunteers were somewhat more likely to affirm their self-identity as volunteers.

Among those who participated in volunteering either individually or with friends and family, 89% self-identify as volunteers and 6% have some doubts. Meanwhile, among organized volunteers, these proportions are 96% and 4%, respectively. In Russia, only one-third of those who participated in volunteer activity over the last year considered themselves as volunteers, while one-quarter expressed doubts. Thus, 41% of those who participated in volunteering in Russia did not actually identify themselves as volunteers.

The unstable volunteer self-identification could be one of the reasons why Russian volunteers, compared to their Arab counterparts, undervalue the contribution of volunteers to solving social problems and are less likely to perceive it as necessary. This is partly supported by the fact that some respondents from Arab countries who are uncertain about their volunteering identity also hold more negative opinions regarding the idea of participation of volunteers in solving social problems as well as about their contribution. At the same time, the sample size does not possess sufficient statistical power to draw definitive conclusions on this matter.

Conclusion

The study led to some findings regarding volunteer activity in the Arab world. Firstly, it is evident that volunteering in the region has become a social practice that continuously grows and progresses from a purely religion-related practice to a positive and sustainable mechanism for social change. Furthermore, volunteers from Arab countries exhibit a considerable level of involvement in diverse forms of helping behavior. Targeted government support for the development of the culture of volunteering and building its infrastructure in most countries of the region has contributed to the following positive changes reflected in the extant literature and supported by our data:

- a significant growth in the scope and diversity of volunteering activities;
- a perceptible increase in the statistics of volunteer workforce engaged through organizations (nonprofits and charities) gravitating toward the world average figures of organized volunteering;
- a higher degree of self-identification as volunteers and enhancing awareness about the importance of non-governmental, nonprofit organizations in solving social issues, providing a solid basement for further development of formal volunteering in the Arab region;
- consequently, an absolute majority of respondents from Arab nations holds a remarkably positive view towards volunteer engagement in addressing social issues because awareness of nonprofit organizations is positively associated with the evaluation of the contribution of volunteer activity.

Our data from the Arab countries supported previous findings from the other regions of the world indicating that more resourceful people have a stronger propensity to engage in volunteering.

Arab volunteers showed an almost equal level of trust at both near (particularized trust) and far (generalized trust) social distances, which is quite different from the Russian survey data. Most Russian volunteers hold more trust in the people from their near circle. The difference on this point may be accounted for by specificity of historical development, culture, and religion. However, this difference needs further exploration at the comparative level.

The present findings help to address a gap in the available empirical data from the Arab region and point to a strong role played by the governments of the Arab countries in promoting organized volunteering. However, further cross-country comparative research is necessary to identify intrinsic differences and similarities between different countries of the Arab region, on one hand, and between Arab countries and other countries of the world with the developing nonprofit sector, on the other.

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

Youth Participation in Citizen Science: Problems and Opportunities of Engagement in Russian Context

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ABSTRACT
We present a study of social participation in Citizen Science. The aim is to identify the problems and opportunities for attracting young people to Citizen Science using an example of genetic research projects held in 2020–2023 in Russia. The paper briefly reviews the development of the understanding and use of Citizen Science, as well as shows its application in genetic research. Empirical data were obtained in the course of qualitative and mass quantitative sociological studies. Scientific, organizational, and social contexts of wide involvement of people in scientific activity are shown. The narratives and motives of interested parties are analyzed. The study revealed limited development of Citizen Science practices in Russia, as well as the underdevelopment of the infrastructure for expanding social participation in scientific research. Moreover, natural scientists show contradictory attitudes and doubts about the involving volunteers in scientific research. We conclude that critical and doubtful attitudes towards Citizen Science decrease as practical experience of interaction is gained. According to data from mass sociological studies, there are significant differences in young people's assessments of scientific activity and participation

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in volunteer practices, especially at school age. The necessity to draw public attention to the potential of using Citizen Science in a broad sense has been demonstrated.

KEYWORDS
youth, volunteers, citizen science, motivation, social technologies

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Introduction

The collaboration of science and private life is reflected in the active participation of ordinary people in the production of scientific knowledge. Thus, research carried out by amateur scientists is referred to as Citizen Science (Cooper, 2016). On the one hand, this involvement of ordinary people causes so-called massivization of science, thus changing the ground rules within the scientific environment. Given this, scientists by profession are forced to adapt to the changes (Popova et al., 2017). However, many of them oppose these changes, rejecting the practices of citizen science as quasi-scientific. On the other hand, Citizen Science practices that have existed for over a hundred years (and implicitly for over three hundred years) are global in scope, representing one of the most inherently horizontal forms of public participation in progressivist action. Such activities change localized communities by encouraging people to work for the common good and scientific progress. In this way, people learn about themselves, the world around them, and the possibilities of modern science. They can better accept the knowledge and innovations that new scientific data and results bring to private life.

Citizen Science, as well as volunteering in general, is social participation in a broad sense, since it is a horizontal interaction or a form of collective action. Embedded in certain institutional settings, it has different directions of interaction, including centers of engagement initiation (Pevnaya & Tarasova, 2022, p. 209). Social participation acts as a source of social ties in communities (Verba & Nie, 1987), increases trust in social institutions, including the state (Vishnevskii, 2021, p. 109). In this sense, Citizen Science expands opportunities for interaction between such important institutions

as science, education, the state, and ordinary people, increases public confidence in science, creates many additional channels of horizontal communication, changing society itself.

Our research focuses on voluntary participation in scientific research and projects, or scientific volunteering, or Citizen Science (CS). In many countries, the engagement of non-professionals (citizen scientists) in the implementation of scientific projects is a common practice; however, in Russia, such types of activities are either new, little known, or are not articulated as volunteering. An overview of publications by Russian authors on the issues under study reveals that the majority of works analyze the international experience of Citizen Science reflecting on its philosophical and sociocultural aspects (Shekera, 2022, p. 92). As a form of social participation for national practice, Citizen Science remains largely unexplored and faces even greater difficulties than cultural, social, and educational volunteering in Russia (Volkova, 2019, p. 42). In the Russian discourse, Citizen Science is often seen as a social project that is still in the process of forming its own identity (Muraveva & Oleynikova, 2021, p. 48). Gazoyan (2020), Muraveva & Oleynikova (2021) explore the limitations of citizen research, including mechanisms of interaction with professional science, barriers to its scaling.

In practice, the enthusiasm of volunteers, who are excited to be involved in scientific projects, is often counterbalanced by the skepticism of scientists themselves as to whether such projects might actually be of any scientific merit. Moreover, both scientists by profession and science administrators note the contradictory and ambiguous attitude to the work of related sciences and citizen researchers. In this regard, there remain open questions concerning the organization of citizen scientists' activities, the principles and standards of such work, along with other issues such as the concept of citizen science, its differences from other practices, and the involvement of non-professionals in solving research issues.

Pevnaya et al. (2020) note that modern formats of volunteer activity are determined by several aspects: the structure of the organization of activity (formal/informal); place of activity (online/offline), its intensity (episodic/regular); motivation of the volunteer (self-improvement/community creation); category of work (provision of services, mutual assistance, participation, agitation, and leisure). On that basis, we focus on the motivations for participation and types of volunteer activities in CS, as well as organizational schemes of work to engage citizen scientists in this paper.

Characterization of the Basic Concept

Further, we rely on the definition of Citizen Science from the Oxford English Dictionary, that is, “scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with or under the direction of scientist by profession and scientific institutions” (The University of Oxford, n.d.). Thus, the key criteria are the choice, desire, and motives to engage in such activities. The role of Citizen Science has been understood differently in the research of naturalists, representatives of the exact and technical sciences, humanities and social sciences. Historically, this is due to the

discussion between R. Bonney and A. Irwin who are considered the founders of the CS concept (Bonney et al., 2016; Irwin, 1995). On the one hand, scientists by profession are focused on the interests of science as "things in themselves," pay a lot of attention to data collection technologies, the development of scientific tools. With CS approach, the costs of large-scale works can be significantly reduced (Romashkina & Lisitsa, 2022). However, the free use of civilian researchers' labor is quite often criticized (Vohland et al., 2021). Likewise, the use of the term "science" in defining the activities of non-professionals is also under criticism. These are, however, characteristics that are essential for scientists and resonate with volunteers. Representatives of the humanities and social sciences draw attention to the fact that the inclusion of a wide range of non-professionals opens science to the public, while at the same time attracting research attention to the problems of citizens (Irwin, 1995). In this sense, SC contributes to the democratization of science, the development of civic engagement of society (Zhelezniak & Seredkina, 2016); like any other non-profit sector, it serves as "an arena of collective action around common interests, goals and values" (Clark, 1991). Also, the possible reduction of bureaucratization is noted. Certainly, the transition from amateurism to professionalism increases quality, and these arguments are relied upon by critics of CS. The complex relationship between academia and society is now increasingly criticized, accusing the former of excessive bureaucratization, focus on scientometric indicators rather than on "pure knowledge" and "common good," making arguments for absolutization of financial results.

Modern researchers suggest distinguishing between a broad and narrow understanding of CS. The active participation in scientific research of voluntary participants from among ordinary citizens gives an idea of the broad semantic content of Citizen Science. In a narrow sense, CS involves obtaining truly scientific results by non-professional scientists (Vohland et al., 2021). For a number of reasons, the international institutionalization of Citizen Science has bypassed Russian practices; therefore, the present priority is the development of Russian institutions for expanding the participation of citizens in scientific research and their support.

Citizen Research Practices

A rather specific list of types of volunteer work is known that implies the inclusion of a wide range of non-professionals voluntarily participating in the scientific process (Federal crowdsourcing and citizen science catalog, n.d.). Some projects involve volunteers in the field and laboratory work, such as collecting natural material, archaeological digs, as well as medical, biological, ecological, and agricultural tests and studies. This allows scientists to process large data arrays for complex calculations, process modeling (Shekera, 2022, p. 96). In addition, some equipment of volunteers or their IT competencies can be used. Civilian researchers might be engaged in data ranking and classification, extraction of content from an image, annotating, and other issues that fundamental scientific research usually solve (Wiggins & Wilbanks, 2019).

Modern scientific-cognitive activity is being transformed into the one assuming different degrees of engagement among the subjects of scientific cognition. Therefore,

CS is considered as an organization form of scientific activity, as a unification of cognitive efforts on the basis of scientific methods and scientific worldview (Pirozhkova, 2018, pp. 77–78).

Meanwhile, scientific popularization is also being accomplished as well as the recruitment of volunteers who might eventually become scientists. The hierarchical interrelationships that are being built are partially transformed into a dialog between professional and non-professional scientists, and partially into a developing volunteer movement. This mechanism requires a greater level of trust from science to society, and science also needs to be open to the issues of society.

Trust, knowledge, cooperation, and mutual assistance stand out as the basic values of Citizen Science. The inquisitiveness inherent especially in young people, the desire to learn about the world around them, and the popularity of online interactions contribute to expanding the boundaries of citizen science (Volkova, 2019, p. 43).

Due to the real growth of volunteer research in the international community, the European Association for Citizen Science institutionalized its basic principles in 2015. Alongside the essential characteristics described above, which imply the productive citizens' engagement aimed at achieving new knowledge and bringing benefits to all research participants, organizational rules and legal aspects have been defined. The organizational rules established for such research provide for the citizen involvement at all stages of the research, control over their work, public availability of CS project data, and feedback from the organizers, in particular on the volunteer's personal scientific contribution, the quality of the data provided to the scientists, and the extent of the impact of the research results on society. The legal aspects of CS take into account ethics, copyright, and intellectual property issues[1].

Citizen Science is most engaged in biology, environmental protection, ecology, and geography (Kullenberg & Kasperowski, 2016). In addition, Citizen Science projects contribute to solving problems in the field of food supply, achieving the goals of sustainable development (Ryan et al., 2018). In different countries, farmer volunteers are involved in agricultural experiments (Gosset, 1936).

As to the organization of citizen research, the practice of independent projects on a non-profit basis or local research projects is more widespread. Another important factor for the organization of citizen research and the development of Citizen Science in general is the availability of appropriate infrastructure, primarily high-quality information platforms. For example, the Russian project *Liudi nauki* [People of Science][2] exemplifies the effective information ecosystem for citizen research. This platform enabled everyone to find a project according to their personal preferences and resources. Regrettably, the project was discontinued after the funding period expired.

To sum up, the development of scientific volunteering in Russia should be recognized as neither systemic nor widespread. According to the Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, in 2019, only 3% of the adult population (aged 18–65 years with

[1] https://www.ecsa.ngo

[2] https://citizen-science.ru

a total sample of 7,584 people) noted the experience of participation in some type of scientific volunteering (Gokhberg et al., 2020).

Due to the integration of scientific volunteering into the initiatives of the Decade of Science and Technology in Russia (Ob ob'iavlenii v Rossiiskoi Federatsii, 2022), we can assume an increase in efforts to promote the practices of involving citizens in large-scale research projects in the near future. The government has created a demand for the involvement of scientific volunteers. In this regard, since 2021, six major scientific projects in the field of genetic technologies have been implemented in five Russian regions within the framework of the Federal Scientific and Technical Program for the Development of Genetic Technologies[3] (hereinafter referred to as Genetic Research). For each of the projects, a large-scale involvement of citizen scientists was intended in order to expand the geography of voluntary participants as much as possible. Of particular importance was to ensure the largest possible involvement of the studying youth. Researchers and organizers faced some difficulties: they had no experience in interacting with volunteers and did not understand the structure of organizing such work. In addition, the actual participants often denied the very possibility of a successful outcome.

Data and Methods of Analysis

The processes of involvement of citizen researchers (scientific volunteers) in the genetic research projects were studied in 2022–2023 in the course of a sociological study. The study was designed following the scheme of work with citizen researchers in Genetic Research: scientist by profession—project (subproject) leader—organizer of work with volunteers from the project—mentors—scientific volunteers. We labeled the first group as "scientist by profession," the second and third as "organizers," and the fourth and fifth groups were actually "volunteers." In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of the first three groups, as they were the most informed. The fourth and fifth groups were examined using mass questionnaire surveys. In this article, we analyzed 11 interviews with representatives of the first two groups, as well as sociological data of a formalized survey in the fifth group, which we defined as citizen researchers, and a mass formalized survey in a random sample of young people aged 18–35.

The survey was conducted according to a three-stage design. The samples were purposive, non-random; data collection was carried out by the snowball method. The sample V1 was formed directly in the process of Genetic Research from students-citizen scientists (citizen researchers' sample). A total of 530 citizen scientists were interviewed, of whom 477 (90%) were aged 18 years and 53 (10%) were aged 19–35 years; 33% female and 67% male. Since scientific projects are implemented in different territories, this sample is characterized by geographical diversity. Of the respondents, 23% live in rural areas, 28% of volunteers live in small towns and urban-type settlements, 33% live in large cities with a population of up to a million, and 16% live in cities with a population of over a million.

[3] https://fcntp.ru/programs-and-projects/gentech/detail/

Sample V2 (control, or random) was formed by mixed method, through questionnaire and online survey of respondents from young people under 35 years old. The sample was selected randomly, with a sample size of 3,159 people. The V2 (control) sample comprise 40% male and 60% female, 24% of respondents live in rural areas, 14% live in small towns and urban-type settlements, 22% live in large cities with a population of up to a million, and 40% live in cities with a population of over a million. Two age groups were identified in the V2 sample structure: under 19 years old are 2,114 people (67%) and 19–35 years old are 1,045 people (33%). Since the former are more likely to be still in secondary general education and the latter have already completed it, we refer to these subsamples as V2M and V2S, respectively. Subsamples of both V2M and V2S are 39% and 40% male, respectively. In the V2M sample, 95% of respondents are in high school and the rest are students; the V2S sample has 87% of students in the group up to 25 years old while in the group 26–35 years old, 5% are students, 86% are employed and 9% are neither working nor studying.

The research questions were aimed at identifying the characteristics of CS perceptions among those who had such experiences and those who could potentially be involved. The authors used qualitative analysis of textual data and the statistical software IBM SPSS for quantitative analysis.

Organization of Citizen Science in Genetic Research

The projects we reviewed required the widest geographical coverage and the involvement of a large number of schoolchildren and students. In the projects, the interaction with citizen scientists varied depending on the tools and goals. Some projects involved volunteers for collecting biomaterials in a particular way. At times, the scientists asked volunteers to lend their digital resources or to do some work in the laboratories. Citizen Science was understood here in a broad sense.

In our study, we distinguish cognitive-affective, status, and behavioral signs and contexts. Our assumption was that the status component reflects future orientation, the cognitive-affective component represents orientation directly to cognition and communication, and the behavioral component displays current actions and motives. Organizers mainly emphasize the behavioral context, but there are also cognitive-affective signs.

According to the interview results, at the planning stage and during the first experience scientist by profession and organizers had different opinions about the feasibility and efficiency of work with scientific volunteers. Scientist by profession were often reluctant to involve volunteers in science or distrustful of their work. They most often built their critical argumentation on the basis of status and behavioral contexts. The organizers' arguments were much more diverse. First of all, they relied on behavioral signs. They tested different ways of involving scientific volunteers and arranging their work, as well as built communications with all the participants of the projects.

In particular, scientist by profession expressed the following opinions: "I asked not to involve volunteers in my project", "people who are non-professionals can spoil not only our results, but also the image of science itself", "in my opinion, all these things [SC] are just empty words". As for organizers, they said: "Communication is not clear enough … it is quite difficult to understand how it should be arranged," "not

everyone knows each other, it is not clear yet who is doing what," "scientists do not always communicate with citizen researchers" (Trans. by Gulnara Romashkina, Elena Andrianova, & Marina Khudyakova — G. R., E. A., & M. K.).

In the course of the work, the assessments of scientist by profession shifted towards cautious optimism. Here are examples of statements by representatives of different groups of informants: "It really matters to me how it all works," "how everything will continue after the funding is cut off," "sometimes citizen researchers come to work in science, but in their hearts, they still can't give up volunteering," "I would like it to be not a single action," "if after involving 100 people we get three people in science, will it a lot or not enough?" (scientist by profession; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.).

> Almost every scientific project involves work, repetitive actions that do not require special skills and knowledge. … It is possible to teach a person some simple technical functions quite quickly and, probably, it would be even effective," "the skeptical attitude of scientists may be caused by their unwillingness to interact … but this is fixable. (Organizers; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)

All organizers emphasize the difficulties in organizing citizen research, as well as the necessity to technologize some key works (behavioral and status context):

> To structure the target audience by age, keeping in mind that different ages have different needs, communication channels, means of engagement, and levels of expertise in social experience, so different tasks can be entrusted to them; "all the legal aspects should be figured out, i.e., the organizational framework should be developed. (Organizers; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)

Also, organizers said:

> The first step is to define the goals for citizen reearchers, … to identify those functions or items of this research that can be entrusted to common people, … to think through the communication system ... and what the path of a citizen scientist in the project will look like, how they will learn about it, what they will do in the project, how they will get feedback. (Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)

The basic narrative of the organizers suggests that citizen science holds great promise or resource for science, which is, however, difficult to realize:

> It is especially relevant today. There are stereotypes in society about science and scientists that they are such "ivory towers," … they know something, do something, but there is no sense in their work. … Stereotypes arise from the fact that they are not familiar with this field. (Organizers; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)

Moreover, "citizen scientists and volunteers, who not only collect data and do some field work, have economic potential in projects, because they can make the project cheaper, make it effective, but you have to work with them"; "Young people think: it's not

interesting there, they won't let me in, it takes too long to study there, it's too difficult and there is little pay … Meanwhile, there are now state tasks about technological independence"; "Citizen science is a chance to interest those who have doubts, to show them from the inside that in fact there is something to do in science, that it can be interesting, scientists are also young". (Organizers; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)

Among the interviewed organizers there is a rather strong positive message with cognitive-affective content:

> Our mission is to teach children to make projects and model science … They use the same methodology to collect data in different parts of the country, and then discuss and analyze these data. It's a model for now, but our dream is to find a place where our kids can enter real science. (Organizers; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)
>
> Any climate research, as well as phenological ones are built on citizen science and researchers, because there is no real possibility to collect reliable obvious facts of climate change or to fix all categories, plantations, measure trees by "greening". For me personally, citizen research was an occasion to conduct mass research with no budget, i.e., on a purely volunteer basis. This proved to have its own positive result. (Organizers; Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.)

A general conclusion that emerged from the initiatives is that citizen researchers are not that difficult to involve as long as their motivation is known and their goal is properly formulated. It is also necessary to know where to find these motivated researchers and, most importantly, to equip them with instructions and tools. Whatever the citizen researchers do should be technologically comprehensible and not too time-consuming. From a scientific point of view, the results obtained by citizen researchers are relevant, valuable, and can be further used in large-scale research. The main request from young participants of the projects is the availability of feedback and appropriate communications, which at present have not been fine-tuned.

Based on the analysis of interviews, the following possible schemes of work between organizers and research volunteers can be identified:

- the research organizer directly interacts with a volunteer who is a highly motivated, interested participant of the project, independently applied, ready to work under instructions; does not require additional motivation and intensified control over the implementation of the work;
- the research organizer directly contacts the mentor who is a motivated participant of the project, independently applied or agreed to the invitation (from the management or the research organizer) to arrange the work of volunteers on the territory; is ready for mostly independent work under instructions; does not require additional motivation and control over the implementation of the work;
- the research organizer is in contact with a mentor organizer who has no motivation (or low level of motivation) to participate in the project, is not ready to work independently under instructions; in this regard, they need a motivation support at all stages of fieldwork, constant contacts with the research organizer and increased control over the implementation of the work.

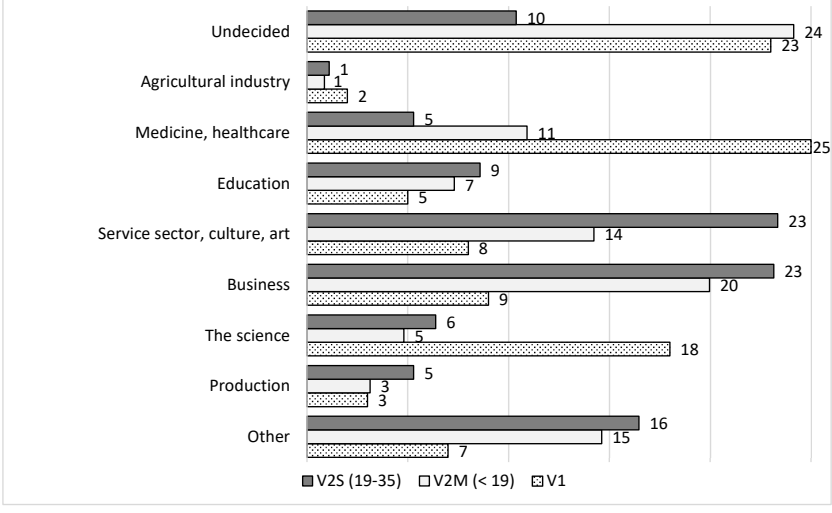
Thus, the formats of work with scientific volunteers depend on the degree of motivation of the participants and their willingness to participate in scientific projects. These formats determine the ways of organizing work with research volunteers, the degree of inclusion of the research organizer in their activities, as well as the planning of further interactions.

Results and Discussion

In Genetic Research projects, the majority of volunteers (83%) are schoolchildren, the rest are students of technical schools and colleges. Such a sample is conditioned by the main aim of the project which is the necessity to engage young people in science. When answering the question "What professional sphere would you like to associate your future with?" 18% of volunteers mentioned science, 25% chose medicine and health care, 9% noted business, 8% would like to work in service sector, 2% in agricultural industry, all others were still being determined (Figure 1). These answers can be easily explained by the joint influence of the scientific field of the studied projects and the age of the respondents.

Figure 1

The Structure of Responses to Closed Questions "If You are Studying, What Professional Sphere Would You Like to Associate Your Future With? If You Work or Have Worked, in What Professional Sphere?" (In % of the Sample of citizen researchers)



Answers to the question about the preferred career field among the interviewed citizen researchers and young people in the random sample under 18 years of age are similar only in the groups of "Undecided" (23% and 24% respectively), "Production" (3%), "Education" (7% and 5% respectively). The proportion of those oriented towards medicine and healthcare is more than twice as high among scientific volunteers as in the random sample under 18 years of age (V2M). In the V2S random sample (19–35 years old), only

5% are medically oriented (see Figure 1). Science projects involve young people initially focused on scientific research in this particular field or those who are still in search of their vocation. The higher proportion of science, medicine and health choices by citizen researchers is explained by the fact that the projects themselves focus on the application of genetic technologies. The older the youth in the random sample, the higher the share of those who are oriented towards the service sector, culture and art, and business.

The gender specifics of the chosen field of activity are quite expected. In the V2M subsample, males' priority is given to business (43%), and females' to services and education (22% each). In the V2S subsample, the choice of males is business 27%, and females have the first places in the service sector 19%, business 15%, and medicine 14%.

Engagement in volunteering in general, and especially in scientific research, is by no means a randomly organized process. Young people need to be encouraged to take part in this activity. Thus, according to our data, when asked "How did you become involved in this project?" 58% of the volunteers answered that they were recruited by mentors (teacher, lecturer, supervisor), 18% were recruited to participate in projects as part of a training course at their place of study, 17% became interested in the project on the basis of information from open sources, 7% came with friends or acquaintances. As a result of participation, only a small proportion of respondents reported negative experiences: 2% indicated that their participation was not voluntary; 3% were not interested in the project; 3% did not acquire anything new. Sometimes the interviewed citizen researchers noted difficulties and ambiguities in the work (14%); expressed dissatisfaction with the fact that it took too much time (8%); did not receive information about the results of the work (4%). Evaluative and behavioral responses have no gender specifics.

More than half of the respondents had previous volunteering experience, but the number of those who had experience of scientific volunteering was significantly lower. Personal involvement in science projects and volunteering significantly increased the likelihood that this respondent would participate in Citizen Science projects. Thus, respondents in the V1 sample participate occasionally (47%) or continuously (16%) in science clubs, societies, etc. In the V1 sample, 54% of respondents participated in volunteer movements, and in 20% of cases these were science projects. In the V2 random sample, the following results were observed: 53% and 50% had previously participated in volunteer movements and volunteer activities, and these were scientific projects in 13% and 7% of cases for V2M and V2S, respectively.

Remarkably, the answers to the open questions demonstrate a vast awareness of young people about scientific projects. These include school projects, sociological research, various museum projects, etc. There are no statistically significant differences between the youngest and older groups of young people in the control sample and the sample of citizen researchers in real scientific projects on participation in volunteer movement and in scientific projects in particular.

Interest in scientific activity, volunteer activities, including those related to science, statistically steadily decreases with increasing age of respondents in the control random sample. More than 60% of respondents in the control sample (60% and 65% in the V2M and V2S samples, respectively) did not take any part in scientific clubs or other scientific activities. In other words, such participation is a little more

marked in the younger group. The differences in answers to the question "Would you like to take part in volunteer activities related to science?" are even stronger: 62% and 53% of the V2M and V2S samples, respectively, answered affirmatively.

Though the volunteer sample included not only the most interested in volunteering young people, yet there is a stable difference in the orientation to their future professional definition, which is noticeable in the group of young people under 18 years of age. While young people are still in school, their interest in science and in volunteering is more prominent. In response to the question "Would you still like to take part in volunteer activities related to science?" 93% of respondents answered "Yes". Of the respondents, 90% definitely liked their participation in the project, while 9% answered ambiguously ("Yes and no"). In general, 98% of the surveyed participants noted a positive experience, each of them indicating 3–4 options from the offered ones. For 73% of participants of scientific projects, who are citizen researchers, the important thing is to be interested, 64% learned something new, 46% contributed to the solution of a real scientific problem (Table 1).

In the structure of the disclaimer responses (If you didn't like it, then why?) the "Other" option took the first place, which was 13% of the sample. It was not quite clear what to do and how for 9% of the sample. It took too long for 6% of the sample. It was difficult to follow the study protocol in 4% of cases. Here is a transcript of some of the answers-comments: "the procedure of work is not worked out," "physically very difficult occupation", "it was difficult," "is not perceived as a real benefit to the scientific project," "only clear instructions were given without explanation" (Trans. by G. R., E. A., & M. K.).

In assessing the practical experience of participating in scientific projects as volunteers, interest, experience, training, future activities, and career, communication is in the first place.

Table 1

The Structure of Responses to Closed Questions "Please, Indicate the Positive (Negative) Aspects of the Work You Have Done" (in %)

Answer options	V1
Made a contribution to solving a real scientific problem	46
Learned something new	64
We talked with scientists, people with extensive professional experience	23
Who want to do scientific work in the future	21
It was interesting	73
We met new people	20
and the work was connected with the future profession	13
Received certificates that can be used in the portfolio	17
It was not quite clear what to do and how	10

Table 1 Continued

Answer options	V1
It was difficult to follow the protocol of the study	4
It took too long	8
Participation was not voluntary	2
It was not interesting	3
Nothing new has been acquired	3
There was no information about the results of the work	4

Note. More than one answer option was allowed.

Consider the motives in the question of the projective type "What do you think could motivate you to take part in such activities?" In all samples, the leading options are "An interesting experience that will come in handy in the future," "An opportunity to learn something new," "Communication with interesting people," which can be combined with the description "experience, communication, learning new things" (Table 2). However, these options have different grounds.

Table 2

Structure of Answers to the Question "What do You Think Could Motivate You to Take Part in Such Activities?", % of the Number of Respondents

Answer options	V1	V2M (<19)	V2S (19–35)
Nothing can motivate	1	9	7
Active life position	29	24	23
An opportunity to meet people important for a future professional career	33	36	46
Get certificates, diplomas	33	26	23
To feel a sense of belonging to science	41	15	17
Communication with interesting people	52	43	45
The desire to engage in scientific research	55	24	20
An interesting experience that will come in handy in the future	62	51	52
An opportunity to learn something new	71	49	44

Note. More than one answer option was allowed.

The desire to engage in scientific research is reported by citizen researchers in 55% of cases, while in the control sample 24% of younger respondents and 20% of older respondents indicated such a desire. The desire to feel a sense of belonging to science is reported by 52% of the surveyed science volunteers, 15% and 17% in the V2M and V2S samples, respectively. Thus, in the control sample, interest in science,

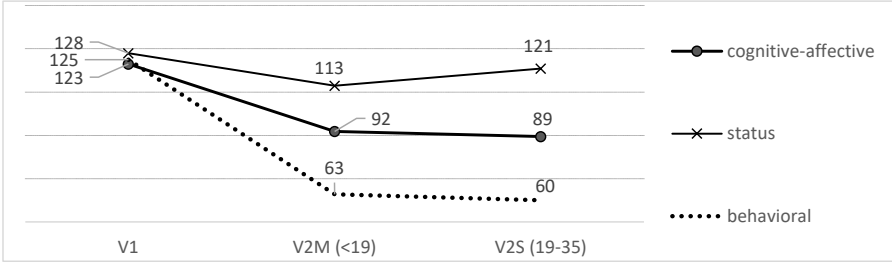
regardless of age, dropped from the third place in the ranking to the sixth place. In the volunteer group, "Communication with interesting people" is higher than in the control group, and this option does not depend on age. "An opportunity to meet people important for a future professional career" (46% in the older subgroup of the control sample vs. 33% and 36% in the volunteer group and the young control subgroup) does not differentiate between young citizen researchers and the younger subgroup of the control sample, but increases in the older groups. The assessment of the option "Get certificates, diplomas" is higher in the group of citizen researchers than in the control group. As noted above, the younger the respondents, the higher their estimates of interest in science. Active life position as an estimated characteristic of moral and value type is given by 29% of volunteers, and 24% or 23% in the V2M and V2S samples, respectively. The option "Nothing can motivate" occupies the lowest level in the rating, with 1% in the group of those who have experience of participation in the project (9% and 7% in the V2M and V2S groups, respectively).

For simplifying the analysis, the evaluations of supposed motives were structured into three groups according to the above-mentioned classification. In the method of analysis of the formalized survey, the cognitive-affective component was formed by summing up the share of responses (in % of the number of respondents) according to options "Communication with interesting people" and "An opportunity to learn something new"; the status component was formed through options "An opportunity to meet people important for a future professional career," "Get certificates, diplomas," "An interesting experience that will come in handy in the future"; behavioral one was formed through the options "Active life position," "To feel a sense of belonging to science," "The desire to engage in scientific research." Negative motivation (option "Nothing can motivate") was not considered in this structure.

Therefore, all three components in sample V1 (citizen researchers) take approximately equal values, being higher than in control sample V2 (Figure 2). The status component, as expressed motives for achieving some significant results in the future, has the highest value in all three samples, reflecting a statistically significant (checked on the basis of Pearson's Chi-squared criterion, Wilcoxon criterion, $p < .01$) upward influence of age while leveling the influence of experience of participation in citizen science projects (Figure 2).

Figure 2

The Structure of the Components of the Supposed Motives in the Answers to the Question "What do You Think Could Motivate You to Take Part in Such Activities?", % of the Respondents



The cognitive-affective component significantly increases in the group of respondents who has an experience of participation in citizen science projects and weakly though statistically significantly depends on the age of the respondents. The behavioral component significantly increases with the experience of participation in citizen research and statistically does not depend on the age of respondents. The experience of participation in projects significantly reduces the level of skepticism and increases the prospects for further participation in citizen science and in the volunteer movement in general. Note the gender characteristics of motivation for participation in the V2 sample. Males give status and cognitive assessments of motivation about 10% more often than females. Whereas there are no gender differences in the behavioral component.

Conclusions

Modern social reality is characterized by the integration of science into all social spheres. The involvement of people from different social strata with backgrounds other than science is reconfiguring science at the institutional and epistemological level. An example of such changes is the transformation of Citizen Science in the practice of widening social participation. Citizen Science is well known and significant in the world practice. In Russia, interest in such practices is also growing. But so far, the infrastructural and informational support for CS in Russia is still inconsistent. As a result, it is practically unknown to the general public and completely dependent on the state's participation.

Citizen Science is a horizontal form of public participation that encourages people to work for scientific progress. Citizen Science is social participation in the broad sense, as it is a form of collective action aimed at the common good, embedded in certain institutional settings, having different directions of interaction, including centers of initiation of involvement. Direct scientific goals for professional researchers are performed by volunteers in the narrow sense of understanding CS. Understanding CS in a broad sense does not require that volunteers act as researchers. The most active projects involving volunteers are realized in biology, ecology, astronomy, and agriculture. In Russian scientific practice, CS is involved in the broad sense of the term, as there are strong institutional barriers to the fixation of scientific results and participation of non-professionals in scientific research.

Citizen Science practices demonstrate the possibilities of social participation in scientific research. Horizontal ties between different social strata (e.g., schoolchildren and outstanding scientists), which are normally separated by many institutional barriers, are expanded. As a result, people's trust in science and scientist by profession trust in the non-professional actions of volunteers increase. Volunteers can not only perform supportive goals in the implementation of scientific research, but also develop the engaging organizations themselves. Bringing the professional expertise of volunteers to the development of NPO work acts as one such important example (Obukhov, 2023). This increased involvement may also change the configuration of Citizen Science.

The social context of CS involvement is much broader than its scientific and organizational contexts. In addition to the obvious expansion of knowledge and attracting public attention to scientific problems and results, Citizen Science contribute to the democratization of science, the development of civic engagement of society, promotes the expansion of the community of interests and accustoms citizens to positive collective action for the common good, expands the social base of scientific activity, including through the recruitment of young people.

There are important grounds for criticism of CS. Critics warn of a possible decrease in the quality of scientific results, damage to the image of science, the risk of exploiting enthusiasm in the process of widely attracting free labor, risks in the legal field, discrediting positive scientific and social results due to organizational and informational failures. The opportunities for a drastic reduction in the cost of scientific work, voiced as the main advantage of CS, make sense only if the basic requirements for the scientific purity of experiments, safety, and legal validity of attracting non-professionals are met, which, for its part, also requires certain efforts and costs. Ignorance, lack of consideration of risks, and failure to comply with basic requirements lead to increased distrust of Citizen Science and science in general.

The development of scientific volunteering in Russia is not systemic and widespread. The state has formed a request to attract scientific volunteers. One example was the Genetic Research projects. The projects implied large-scale involvement of civilian researchers with the maximum expansion of geography and the number of voluntary participants. The problem of researchers and organizers was that they had no experience of interacting with volunteers, did not understand the structure of the organization of such work, and specific performers often denied the very possibility of a positive experience.

Empirical data obtained in the process of sociological research on the example of Genetic Research projects have presented the distrust of professional researchers to the wide involvement of non-professionals. However, as scientist by profession gain experience in specific work in citizen research, distrust of Citizen Science decreases.

In addition, the limitations for scaling up the involvement of volunteers in projects were the lack or poor use of infrastructure (including information and educational), misunderstanding of the motives of potential volunteers, difficulties in communication between scientist by profession and volunteers.

Based on the analysis, possible Citizen Science formats were formed, which depend on the degree of motivation of participants and their willingness to participate in scientific research, the degree and form of involvement in research, as well as the ability to be independent in specific activities.

Volunteer participation in general, and even more so in scientific research, is not a randomly organized process. Young people need to be accustomed to this activity. So, according to our data, more than 70% of volunteers were involved in scientific work by mentors (teacher, instructor, curator) or as part of training courses. More than half of the survey participants had previous volunteering experience, but the experience of scientific volunteering is much lower. Personal participation in research projects and volunteering significantly increased the likelihood that this

respondent would take part in CS. Interest in scientific activities, volunteer activities, including those related to science, decreases statistically significantly with an increase in the age of respondents.

Evaluation of the motivation structure of scientific volunteers depends on the type of actor, his role and place in the chain of research activities. However, there is a fundamental discrepancy in the estimates of the structure of the motives of potential volunteers on the part of the organizers, and the self-assessments of the volunteers themselves. The differences in estimates between real and potential volunteers in the control sample are not so fundamental, although there are important features.

Empirical data demonstrate that age differences in the opinions of potential or actual scientific volunteers are significant only in cases when the future benefit or potential result for their future career (status component) is estimated. The main factor in increasing social participation in Citizen Science in all other areas was the experience of participation in civic science and volunteer activities.

The opinion of young people under the age of 19 in the control (random) sample is much closer to the estimates of their peers in the sample of scientific volunteers than among the older part of the youth (from 19 to 35 years). In fact, based on the results of our research, we see that the youngest respondents are more likely to express a desire for science and volunteering. However, as they grow older, the trajectories of the development of the active part of the youth diverge. And the older the respondents, the more pronounced such differences are. It can be concluded that it is at school age that it is necessary to start learning to participate in activities useful to society. The scientific potential of young people, as well as the potential of volunteering in other fields, can be educated much earlier than is commonly believed.

Gaining experience, learning, and interest in science are important motivations for young people to participate as volunteers in scientific projects. The expansion of social participation turns out to be a significant component of education, which demonstrates significantly higher scores for all options in the survey of real scientific volunteers. In the assessments of real scientific volunteers, the status, cognitive-affective and behavioral components practically coincide. Whereas in the assessments of potential volunteers, the status component greatly exceeds the cognitive-affective and behavioral aspects, and the latter has the lowest rank. In addition, the discrepancies increase with age. In a subgroup of 19 to 35-year-old potential volunteers (control sample), the cumulative weight of such options as “Active life position,” “To feel a sense of belonging to science,” and “Desire to engage in scientific research” is two times lower than the status components and one and a half times lower than the cognitive-affective.

Recommendations for Practice

One of the significant problems when discussing processes in Genetic Research projects was the disruption of communications, the lack of feedback between volunteers and scientist by profession.

It seems necessary not only to give people information about the implementation of certain projects, but also to inform society more systematically about inspiring

examples of CS, the history and practice of world science. Popularization of currently available successful practices is one of the important goals, first of all, in the work with young people.

Management practices often do not consider the possibility of scaling volunteer activities in scientific research. More public attention needs to be attracted to the opportunities that using citizen science can give. The international experience of involving citizen researchers in science is not sufficiently evident in the Russian scientific and information space. The available examples were the initiative of individual enthusiasts, but not a system of involving interested and caring citizens to scientific research.

In scientific projects, volunteers can also be involved in more complex activities based on their professional knowledge and skills. In Genetic Research projects, these functions are carried out by the organizers of work with young volunteers. These are teachers, methodologists, organizers of group work. We studied the motivation and self-performance assessments of this social group in separate plots; however, the results obtained turned out to be significantly different than for the groups discussed above. Therefore, we decided not to reflect them in this article.

Limitations of the Study and Prospects for the Disclosure of the Subject

The limitations of the study include the unrepresentativeness of the sample of volunteers. In addition, we have not fully disclosed the organizational part of Citizen Science due to the limited scope of this article. The study of the development of social horizontal interactions in the practices of Citizen Science is one of the significant extensions of the ideas not disclosed in this work.

The participation of young people in Citizen Science is essential not only for the development and popularization of scientific research, but also for educational purposes. This applies to both natural sciences and humanities. An important educational component of Citizen Science may be a promising direction for future research. It is necessary to conduct a series of interviews with teachers and organizers of the work of circles on biology, ecology, and other related natural sciences for a more complete disclosure of the educational part of the subject.

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ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

Experiences in "Letting the Public in": Tentative Conclusions on the Administration-Public Tango for Co-Responsible Local Governance

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ABSTRACT
Governance and citizenship issues are more complex, and communities recognize the need for a new approach to mobilization, participation in creation and welfare, and a joint responsibility for the implementation of public life management principles. The paper proposes a view of Romania's struggles to work from the bottom up by experimenting with various European models in a common framework of local administration to encourage citizen participation. After initial enthusiasm for a process led by the Council of Europe aimed at creating co-responsibility areas, administrative practices showed that local governments refused to grant the prerogative of leading public policies and distributing budgets. The model of co-responsibility aims to restore participatory democracy, ensure sustainable development, and reconfigure relations between social actors such as governments, enterprises, civil society, families, and individuals. However, progress has been slow, and as the example described in Timișoara, Romania's largest western city, shows, it has still a long way to go before the implementation of participatory governance, for example, in the form of budget allocations, is appreciated positively by the local population. This paper is based on participatory observations, media monitoring, and the study of key actors involved in promoting co-participatory processing at the local level.

KEYWORDS
participatory democracy, well-being indicators, shared social responsibility (co-responsibility), participatory budget, co-creation, neighborhood democracy, vignette

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Introduction

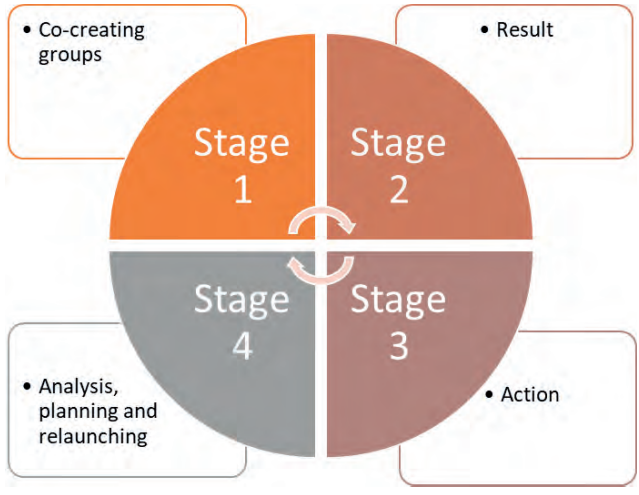
The concept of "co-creation" is sweeping all sectors of public life, from government affairs to business relations, from cultural consumption to settling social unrest. In a nutshell, co-creation means the inclusion of various actors who are willing and bring their knowledge, skills, and resources to develop and achieve a solution and create value that cannot be achieved without cooperation (Agger & Hedensted Lund, 2017; Vargo et al., 2015). In public administration, co-creation of policies is presented as the appropriate response to the many challenges posed by the 21st century vortex-like evolution, demanding reforms of the systems, improved organizational efficiency, a stronger commitment to such objectives as ensuring the economic, social welfare, and environmental sustainability expectations of communities (Bagirova & Notman, 2020; Rösler et al., 2021). Co-creation is defined as a

> process through which two or more public and private actors attempt to solve a shared problem, challenge, or task through a constructive exchange of different types of knowledge, resources, competences, and ideas that improve the production of public value in terms of visions, plans, policies, strategies, regulatory frameworks, or services, either through a continuous improvement of outputs or outcomes or through innovative step changes that transform the understanding of the problem or task at hand and lead to new ways of solving it. (Torfing et al., 2019)

Co-creation of public services and policies is considered a promising practice of reshaping the traditional relationship between the state and its citizens, businesses, and NGOs (Hržica et al., 2021). Based on existing literature, the author of this study proposes the following graphic representation of the process (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Co-Creating Cycle



In the first stage, a decision needs to be made on how to recruit participants in the co-creating groups, what the rules of engagement are, how to adopt decisions, and how to capitalize on results. In the second, the results are analyzed and planned for implementation. The third stage operationalizes the plans and finally the impact of the actions is evaluated for relaunching the process, as a fourth, but not the last stage. A successful process allows for a renewal of the cycle.

Internationally, co-creation is promoted vividly by such bodies as The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2011). At the European Union level, the concept is seen as an embodiment of subsidiarity principles and bottom-up processes that lead to increasing the legitimacy and efficiency of the administrative activities. The countries of the European Union strive to develop compatible (and even convergent) models, as they share values associated with the rule of law and democratic principles (Thijs et al., 2018), but also recognize that there are significant differences between national (and local, for that matter) public administrations, derived from cultural, political, historical, and administrative traditions (Ongaro, 2019). Post-Communist countries that are currently part of the European Union (EU) recognize their transition-related issues that were highlighted by EU requirements during the membership negotiation, which unveiled vulnerabilities, lack of critical structures and administrative capacity, the over-politicized nature of administration, lack of transparency, undeveloped participation, and lack of traditions for letting the public in (Ágh, 2004; OECD, 2023; Rösler et al., 2021).

Letting the public in active and meaningful participation in shaping administrative affairs is a long and sometimes painful process, with numerous examples of drawbacks and resets along the way, like in a tango where partners behave like equals but display an elegant fight over power. European initiatives to stimulate citizen participation show that there are success stories, but also numerous barriers in ensuring a functional model for co-creation in public administration, such as structural barriers (Baptista et al., 2020), organizational culture (Tummers et al., 2015), organizational structure (Andrews & Brewer, 2013), lack of expertise (Lember et al., 2019). Often, despite advocacy favoring bottom-up approaches, opening public administration on the local level is piloted by top-down, state, and governance policies (Haruță & Radu, 2010; Tummers et al., 2015). Public participation itself is a legitimate topic of inquiry since there are numerous examples of lack of interest or willingness to participate in public life, despite existing frameworks, as shown by Sherry Arnstein (1969), who identifies eight levels of involvement of citizens in public life. According to her model, the bottom levels of the ladder are represented by concepts such as *manipulation* and *therapy* tactics, which correspond to a non-participation culture. The next two levels are *informing* and c*onsultation*, labeled tokenism since citizens are viewed as passive actors. The three upper levels depict citizen power, with the public showing increasing progress of decision-making influence capacity. Citizens can engage in *partnerships* with public institutions, exercise delegated power over public matters, or function as *citizen control* (Arnstein, 1969; Collins & Ison, 2006).

Instruments of public participation are numerous, from voting, polling, public debates, public meetings or hearings, petitions, comments and suggestions, mailings,

advocacy initiatives, up to citizen juries, watchdog groups, advisory groups, etc. (Fishkin, 2009), as instances of deliberative/proximity or direct democracy, as the current terminology describes as specific for the 21st century (Council of Europe, 2021). Surveys on participation, viewed from the officials' perspective, or focusing on public perceptions show that while participatory techniques are generally considered beneficial and have a positive impact on final proposals, require time, patience, professional direction, and commitment. Obviously, cooperation bears both advantages and disadvantages for the parties involved in the co-creation of public policies, as remarked by Irvin and Stansbury (2004). When the public is successfully allowed to enter, the greatest gain is not in the participation outcomes themselves, but in the increase of the confidence in their knowledge and capacity, a greater awareness that their opinion counts, and better trust in the authorities (Nared & Bole, 2020). Of course, as Pevnaya et al. (2020) show, the organizational structures of the public need to be prepared to make full use of the opened possibilities.

OECD proposes that public participation is possible on the condition three basic principles are met: *transparency*, meaning that governmental activity must be placed under public scrutiny; *accessibility*, which implies that citizens must have the possibility to access and use public information anytime and anywhere; *responsiveness*, i.e., capacity of governments to respond efficiently to new demands and needs coming from the citizens. However, a nuanced view on the issue shows that post-communist societies still suffer from the mock democracy they had to endure in the form of forced participation in certain types of community activities, often in the interest of the dominant party. Therefore, the culture of participation needs to be carefully nurtured and encouraged beyond the mere creation of a legal framework. It requires effort, commitment, long-term commitment, and reassessment.

Against this background, the undertaken research follows, in diachronic perspective, the evolution of co-creation processes in Romanian local public administration, as an instance in post-communist countries and their challenges in dealing with new models of shaping public life. The research question addressed in this study deals with identifying grass-root experiences with letting the public into sharing the responsibility of public administration. Based on direct observation, participatory research and long-term monitoring of local projects, this research aims to identify whether there is a continuity in pursuing a responsive, open, and modern administrative model at a local level or not, respectively whether there can be identified a sustainable frame of co-responsible action that citizens can rely upon irrespective of changes in the leadership of the administrative bodies.

Materials and Methods

The present paper zeros in on the example of Timișoara, the largest city in the western part of Romania, which experiments boldly with European models even from their "beta" versions of policy proposals for public participation, as an example of struggles and tango dancing to accommodate citizens' expectations and demands while maintaining a functional administration at the local level. The approach adopted

for this study is a hands-on approach in a research action paradigm, in the manner described by Davydd Greenwood and Morten Levin:

> People do two things: they make observations ... and they perform actions. The most important difference between making observations and performing actions is the intention with which they are done ... In making observations, the intention is to discover what is the case, i.e., it is theoretical ... However, in performing actions, the intention is to bring about change, that is, it is practical. (Greenwood & Levin, 2007)

Molineux (2018) described the action research method as one that is both participative and reflective. It is typically about worthwhile practical purposes, democracy and participation, many ways of knowing, and emergent developmental responses (McKernan, 2006; Reason, 2006; Vickers, 2007). It builds on the author's participation in monitoring or steering citizen participation processes and/or participation as a member of target groups in processes curated by administrative bodies since 1990. The processes analyzed in this article are presented as vignettes, built to highlight the political will that underpinned each of the processes, a summary of activities, and an evaluation of the capacity of the process to remain relevant over time (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014; Lieberman, 1987). Vignettes are used as qualitative tools in social science research, offering a short, carefully constructed description of a situation (in this case), representing a systematic combination of characteristics, allowing for novel insights into complex processes (Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). In constructing the vignettes, the author of the present study followed the outline proposed by Lieberman (1987):

- context;
- presentation of actors (who were involved);
- what happened;
- impact (if any);
- comments.

The proposed vignettes aim to capture policies relating to co-creation practices identified in the last two decades in Romania at a local level.

Results and Discussion of Romanian Experiences With Citizen Participation

In the post-communist period, public administration has been transformed from the executive of legal forms to the main funding source of public affairs and an important public services provider, responding to the needs and legitimate expectations of the residents of the administrative unit (Popescu, 2017). Post-communist Romania developed the legal framework for regulating the activities of public authorities, democratic participation, and citizen control under the guidance first from the Council of Europe and later of the bodies of the European Union, as part of negotiations to join these European bodies. Currently (as of 2023), the main documents that regulate citizen and stakeholder participation in the management of public affairs are those presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Legal Framework for Citizen/Stakeholder Participation

Law	Focus	Types of citizen/stakeholder participation
Constitution of Romania (Constituția României, 2003)	Contains the fundamental principles, outlining fundamental freedoms and the roles and competencies of different state bodies	Right to petition, right to legislative initiative, obligatory cooperation between the government and "social bodies," the Economic and Social Council
Law No. 52 *Privind Transparenta Decizionala în Administrația Publică* [On Decisional Transparency in Public Administration] (Lege nr. 52, 2003)	Establishes minimum procedural rules to ensure decisional transparency within central and local public administration authorities and other public institutions in relation to citizens and their legally constituted associations	Public consultation processes for draft laws and other regulations at local and central levels, and citizen and stakeholder participation in public meetings
Emergency Ordinance No. 57 *Privind Codul Administrativ* [on the Administrative Code of Romania] (Ordonanță de Urgență nr. 57, 2019)	Provides a framework for the organization and functioning of public administration authorities and institutions, among others	The general obligation of public authorities and institutions to inform and submit to public consultation, debate draft normative acts, and allow citizen access to the administrative decision-making process, as well as data and information of public interest. Also describes the process of consultation between the central and local authorities
Law No. 367 Privind Dialogul Social [On Social Dialogue] (Lege nr. 367, 2022)	Regulates different forms of social partners and the relationship between them and the state	Participation in decision-making processes through social dialogue commissions (at the central and local levels) and the National Tripartite Council for Social Dialogue

Note. Source: developed by the author.

At the local, municipal level, public administration is achieved by the cooperation between the elected Local Council (renewed through elections on party lists, every four years) and the more stable City Hall, which employs civil servants, but is led by the mayor, who is also elected.

In case of divergence in opinions between the mayor and the councilors, the mayor usually has the upper hand. The mayor may have democratic reflexes and invite councilor and citizen participation or may only limit the consultation processes to the minimum requirements included in the law. Reports show that many instances of participation in urban settings in Romania were inspired by different international organizations or resulted from internationally funded projects, whether the initiatives were recognized as such or not. Timișoara was exposed early to European influences, the Council of Europe creating, at an early stage, in 1992, the Intercultural Institute, a nongovernmental organization to promote civil society development actions at local, national, and international levels, intercultural values, active citizenship, social inclusion, and respect for human rights.

Almost three decades of experiences illustrate what Ploštajner and Mendeš (2005) call "double democratization" processes, since both local administration bodies and the civil society learned to support each other, make each other possible, and limit each other in the participatory processes. At times, citizens felt that they lacked power because in acting on bottom-up initiatives they encountered barriers or facilitators as preconditions for being heard, such as that the request met some international demand, that the administration wanted to take action and it happened that its efforts went in the same direction as the citizen initiative, that the leader of an NGO enjoyed national or international prominence, and only in the last instance were the institutions convinced that the group represented by the NGOs should be satisfied. According to the 2012 Democracy Index, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit and measuring the state of democracy in 167 countries, Romania was in the 59th place, being evaluated as "flawed democracy" (Baltador & Budac, 2014). The scores calculated on a scale from zero to ten for Romania showed a relatively high score for the electoral process and pluralism (9.58), but a low score for political participation and political culture (4.44 and 4.38, respectively). How these data are reflected in action, at a local level, is presented in the following vignettes.

Consultative Councils or "Neighborhood Democracy" in Action

In 2001–2002, the Local Government Assistance program, sponsored by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), facilitated various citizen participation techniques to help solve local problems in 26 cities from 15 counties in Romania. Against this program, Consultative Councils of Citizens (CCC) were formed to address specific issues. In Brașov, for instance, the consultative group participated in the shaping of the public transportation system in 2001. In Turnu Magurele, the mayor started a consultative group on education. In Mediaș, Pitești, and Timișoara consultative group consisting of retired persons was formed, inviting those who desired to work on a volunteer basis with the city administration to establish such groups. In addition to the Consultative Council of the Elderly in Timișoara, in 2003, the local City Council passed a decision to form neighborhood consultative councils in the traditional districts of Timișoara, to start cohesion processes, and to better address the needs of a city in full transformation. The rules indicated that a consultative council needed at least seven people to come together and express their desire to discuss various aspects of collective life. They voluntarily considered themselves representatives of education, health, culture, services, and commerce, residents associations, etc. interested in forwarding bottom-up in dialogues with one of the vice-mayors, designated to coordinate and bring the results to the local council debates. Of the 14 proposed Neighborhood Consultative Councils, 12 were successfully established.

The model was borrowed from Mulhouse in France, a town with which Timișoara has "twinning" relations, and the then mayor of Timișoara appreciated the French model to be a vivid and inspirational form of participative democracy at the local level. The elected Local Council promised to provide space for organizing meetings of the consultative councils, but unlike the politically elected councils, the consultative ones worked completely voluntarily, without financial compensation. Neighborhood councils were seen as instruments of citizen participation, to enrich the decision-

making process in the local public administration, with the scope of commonly pursuing local public interest actions, works, services, and projects. Despite the large coverage of consultative council formation in the media, in a survey carried out in 2005, only 27% of locals were aware that such councils existed (Badea, 2005). Furthermore, only 35% of those who knew about the committees were interested in getting more information, and only 6% tried to contact the members of these committees. Some years later, around 2011, there was a massive dropout of these councils, motivated by fatigue, lack of efficiency, citizens' perception of limited impact on public policies, and weak connections between politics and community (Schiffbeck, 2019). Almost two decades later, in 2023, only two are still having meetings and some sort of activity. Of the four stages of the co-creation cycle, described in Figure 1, only the first two were visible to the public, while the action on public proposals was often obscured in the political-administrative process, and relaunching the action seemed to lack entirely. Enthusiasm for contributing to the meetings of the co-creating groups diminished over the years, and recruitment for volunteers slowed down. The consultation processes proved to be tiresome, the success stories few, and the new mayor (elected in 2012) abandoned the organization of common sessions with these citizen groups in favor of Facebook[1] consultations (Robu, 2018).

Timișoara—Territory of Co-Responsibility

Another form of consultation was facilitated by an initiative group that tested the idea of implementing the concept of "co-responsibility" in public administration in Timișoara (2007) and later (2009) created the Center for Ethical and Solidarity-Based Resources and Initiatives (CRIES). CRIES accessed generous financing through the European Social Fund and implemented the project entitled *Rolul Dialogului Social în Promovarea Incluziunii Sociale Active* [The Role of Social Dialogue in the Development of Active Social Inclusion] in eight major cities in Romania (Institutul Intercultural Timișoara, n.d.). Overall, in 2011 the project managed to involve about 1,500 residents of eight major cities (Arad, Bucharest, Brașov, Cluj-Napoca, Iași, Oradea, Sibiu, and Timișoara) in discussing their perceptions of well-being and developing well-being indicators. The results, processed with ESPOIR software for the statistical analysis, were used as a basis for developing action plans for sustainable and co-responsible societies in the eight mentioned cities. The local coordination group and moderators who were willing to work with citizens in the process underwent special training in handling public meetings and to preserve the methodological coherence of the process. A total of 164 groups were involved in such consultations, giving 15,354 responses (with an average of 93.6 messages/group). This resulted in 59 indicators grouped into eight main families or areas. The indicators thus obtained were brought back to citizens for validation. In this way, citizens who have been part of the process could see what has been done with their responses and how these responses were used. The eight families (preestablished by the Council of Europe) were:

[1] Facebook™ is a trademark of Facebook Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. По решению Роскомнадзора, социальная сеть Facebook в России признана экстремистской организацией и заблокирована.

(a) access to means of living;
(b) living conditions/framework of life;
(c) institutional relations;
(d) personal relationships;
(e) social equilibrium;
(f) personal equilibrium;
(g) feelings of well-being/ill-being;
(h) attitudes and initiatives.

As a distinctive feature of the process, it must be highlighted that the Local Coordination Groups activated and invited in the consultation process a large diversity of citizens, rarely touched by other inquiries, such as single mothers, persons affected by chronicle diseases, prisoners, homeless people, people from families affected by the migration phenomenon, alongside with what is usually called the elite in society: cultural actors, academia, entrepreneurs, civil servants. Among the responses, one could find contrastive ideas as "well-being equals finding a place in the night shelter" (homeless person) to "well-being in the city means finding a parking spot near institutions where one has problems to solve" (entrepreneur) or "well-being means having support services for childcare" (mother). A city geared toward serving its inhabitants must find appropriate responses for each request. Furthermore, public policies must address such a diversity of needs (Cernicova-Buca, 2012). The educational element—and probably the most powerful—in the deliberative meetings organized to build the well-being indicators proved to be the question "What are you ready/willing to do to enjoy well-being?" Classical surveys ask only for or against a given set of questions. For many of the citizens involved in the process of describing well-being, this has been the first moment to understand/reflect on their own responsibility in the community. It measured the strength of the community, its readiness for action, in terms of involvement in public life and for generating proactive attitudes. And most of all, the responses to this question gave a hint of what reserves of enthusiasm, human resources, initiatives were available in the community.

At the peak of the project, the mayor of Timișoara signed a document aligning the city with European municipalities engaged in creating "territories of co-responsibility," with stakeholders invited to participate in deliberative processes to shape the future of the city. The event took place on January 25, 2012, in the presence of Maria Ochoa-Lido, the representative of the Council of Europe, the Meeting Room of the Council for head of the Local Timișoara Social Cohesion and Diversity, the Timișoara Mayor, representatives of other authorities and public services, civil society, and citizens. It was acknowledged that Timișoara signed the Charter of shared social responsibility, thus sealing the commitment to the European principles and to the process of joining the interests and views of those who propose public policies, those who implement them, and those who were beneficiaries of public policies and actions (Cernicova-Buca, 2012; Tomozii & Huang, 2022). Similar processes were unfolded approximately at the same time in Mulhouse (France) and Salaspils (Latvia), with an eye on the Council of Europe, which encouraged member states, authorities, NGOs to adopt co-responsibility principles and engage in co-creation of public policies and solutions.

For the Timișoara case, the elections of 2012 brought to power a mayor who did not see value in the process and abandoned the well-being indicators, the idea of co-responsibility and consultation sessions altogether, opting for a swifter, but less democratic consultation via personal social media accounts. The co-creating groups, formed with care and effort, saw the well-being indicators created, anticipated action, but since the process was stopped, they were left with the feeling of unfulfilled promise of a more engaged, democratic administration.

Cultural Projects Such as Co-Creative Experiences and Participatory Budgeting

The practice of involving citizens and stakeholder groups in major decisions was capitalized upon in the period 2011–2016, when the city of Timișoara prepared its candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture. On the initiative of the mayor, the Timișoara European Capital of Culture Association (ECoC) 2021 was created to manage the bid. In 2014, Timișoara became the first Romanian city to develop a long-term cultural strategy, following a participative process (Turșie, 2021). Timișoara 2021 (postponed to 2023 because of the COVID-19 pandemic) applied several participatory practices such as the bidding phase, based on public consultations (through surveys and public meetings), the preparatory years before exercising the title, the implementation of projects announced to be multiannual and based on co-creation. All of these are supposed to be the legacy of the ECoC program. Some of the processes overlap with the latest wave of direct democracy, represented by the adoption of at least partially participatory community-based budgeting. The model is in full development across Europe (Sintomer et al., 2008) and beyond, but in Romania, timid examples can be cited. Although proposed with the persistence of local NGOs, the participatory budget was put on hold by the mayor of the 2016–2020 legislature (Robu, 2018), who believed it to be "populist" and reminiscent of communism. The new mayor, elected in 2020, embraced the idea and started implementing it in 2022. Participatory budgeting took the form of selecting projects to be financed from local funds through public voting on the platform created by the City Hall[2]. The platform is inspired by the Barcelona-based Decidim Free Software Association that sets as goals "the democratization of society through the construction of technology, methodologies, practices, standards, actions, narratives, and values, in a free, open, collaborative, and reflective way" (About Decidim, n.d.). NGOs could upload their proposals for projects financed from the city budget, and the selection of the winners took the form of local voting. In the case of cultural projects and later of NGO-led projects, the co-creation cycles (see Figure 1) were completed and relaunched. The result is only partially satisfactory and led to numerous negative comments in the media, but local civil society groups consider it a promising start for opening the door to a more inclusive and meaningful participation in public affairs coming from civil society. The results are commented on in a variety of manners: the NGO community champions the baby steps; the media is critical of the results and asks for more genuine forms of participation. However, a report on participatory budgeting in Romania places Timișoara as a forerunner, with the largest number of

[2] https://decidem.primariatm.ro

projects submitted for such budgeting and with the largest sums allocated through such a process (Damian & Ile, 2022). Capitalizing on European trends on the matter, researchers and advocacy groups alike argued that local elected officials should embrace participatory budgeting programs as key tools to involve citizens in local decision-making processes and argued that participatory budgeting projects should be designed in collaboration with citizens, civic groups, and NGOs in the community. So far, the results are far from satisfactory, as most public administration officials view participatory budgeting as an "administrative burden" and often do not follow through with the responsibility to actually finance selected projects (Damian, 2022).

From Single Processes to Strategic Choices

The next step, so far, has been initiated by the city hall, which has contracted the services of a PR and communication agency for *The Strategy of Participatory Democracy in Timișoara* (Primăria Municipiului Timișoara, 2023). The public participation strategy is part of the commitments assumed by the local administration through the Local Open Government Action Plan 2022–2023, approved by Local Council Decision No. 211 of May 24, 2022 (Hotărârea nr. 211, 2022). The role of this strategy is to improve the level of participation and involvement of citizens in the decisions that the city hall takes, as well as to diversify the ways in which citizens can get involved. In line with the strategy for the development of public participation, the action plan will focus, on the one hand, on the development of internal skills (tools/processes/procedures/staff training) and, on the other hand, on the development of mechanisms to increase citizens' civic engagement (advisory councils, other forms of group representation, civic education programs, etc.), mechanisms that will be adapted to the existing reality. The media have already voiced critical opinions that the initiative is simply a dressing window activity (Mîț, 2023).

The public could be let in more vigorously, but … time will show whether the initiative is merely an electoral tool (2024 is an electoral year for Romania) and whether the next leadership of public affairs will continue to tango with the public, engaged in the co-creative effort. Participation in the consultations towards this strategy left a feeling of déjà vu and encouraged only a cautious enthusiasm. Adopting innovative tools and stabilizing these new decision-making tools will depend not only on the readiness of citizens and citizen groups, but also on the appetite of administrative bodies to engage in the tango and dance it to the end.

Conclusions: Next Stop?

The creation of sustainable communities, even more of a network of such communities, is a long-term process that can only be achieved through a step-by-step strategy. Through participation and more feasible electronic participation, government accountability and project subsidiarity can be achieved together with a balance between economic competitiveness, social cohesion, and environmental quality. The vignettes presented in this study show that, given the willingness of citizens to embrace innovation in public life, a variety of forms of participatory processes can unfold. In Timișoara, some of these forms targeted a "catch all" area (such as neighborhood

councils, called upon to propose anything that mattered at the communal level, or to deduce well-being indicators in a territory of co-responsibility), while others focused on specific areas (such as culture or project budgeting). However, the initial momentum was lost in time, leading to the abandonment of the forms and the search for new ideas. Most of the existing literature on the topic either examines the macro-level of co-participatory processes, looking into the legislative frameworks allowing for sharing responsibility of public good between administrative bodies and stakeholders (public), or present case studies, many of which are project-based.

The novelty of the present research is the diachronic approach, highlighting, through a succession of vignettes, more than two decades of experiences at a local level. Co-creation in public administration presupposes an intensive dialogue between citizens and administrative bodies in shaping the decision-making process. Although co-creation is increasingly seen as a viable way to address contemporary challenges in public service delivery (Voorberg et al., 2017) and managing public life, its main value is learning experiences. Through dialogue, partners pinpoint fundamental problems and seek solutions in a learning process that involves both public officials and citizens. Given the limited academic attention given to the co-creation and co-production of this learning process and its relation to policy change, the present study addressed this issue from a diachronic perspective. The study considered the experiences accumulated from one of the most dynamic cities in Romania, Timișoara, which is seen as a learning city. The vignettes offered insights into the main instances of co-creative initiatives, but also illustrate the hesitations, drawbacks, and fading away of energy in producing a co-responsible local governance. Public weariness, changes in administration, the long time needed for co-creation initiatives to produce visible and exciting results have impacted the consolidation of a model allowing for a reliable, functional process in ensuring that public good is pursued and responsibility for a community's wellbeing is shared by the administration and by the public in the profound meaning of the concept. Most probably, this is the reason for the active search, on a European level, for new forms of attracting citizens into participatory processes.

We believe that there is a potential for future research to address various co-creation points of view through the lenses of administrative tradition in which co-creation (or any other method) is studied and/or implemented. Nevertheless, future research (and practice) should focus on the digital tools supporting co-creation, not only the measurement of co-creation readiness, but also other stages following the readiness evaluation, for example: (a) supporting the selection of services suitable for renewal based on co-creation principles; (b) supporting the whole interactive process of co-creation, and (c) evaluation of the co-creation process. The author of this paper acknowledges limits of research, mainly linked to the fact that it deals with experiences in a big city that is also a regional capital, while smaller towns display a different dynamic and may not enjoy the same potential for innovation in administration. The literature shows that in examining public administration, one needs to consider both administrative traditions and the political culture of the place. Therefore, while the paper contributes to understanding the co-creative processes in Europe, the results cannot be automatically extrapolated to all European countries.

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BOOK REVIEW IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

Maria V. Pevnaya (Ed.). (2023). Sotsial'noe uchastie molodezhi v sotsiokul'turnom razvitii gorodov Rossii i postsovetskikh stran: Potentsial i model' upravleniia [Social Participation of Youth in the Sociocultural Development of Russian Cities and Post-Soviet Countries: Potential and Management Model]. Izdatel'stvo Ural'skogo universiteta

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In this review of the book *Sotsial'noe uchastie molodezhi v sotsiokul'turnom razvitii gorodov Rossii i postsovetskikh stran: Potentsial i model' upravleniia* [Social Participation of Youth in the Sociocultural Development of Russian Cities and Post-Soviet Countries: Potential and Management Model][1], I highlight its unique strengths and initiate a discussion on topics that are too vast to be comprehensively covered within the confines of a single, albeit inclusive, book.

The book aims to explore a multitude of issues related to the social participation of youth in the contemporary context. The authors are renowned scientists from Ural Federal University (Russia), including M. V. Pevnaya, E. A. Shuklina, A. N. Tarasova, A. V. Kulminskaia, T. Y. Bystrova, M. S. Fedorova, D. V. Minchenko, D. F. Telepaeva, S. N. Kostina, O. V. Notman, M. Cernicova-Buca, whose research and publications have had a significant impact on the academic and scientific community not only in Russia, but also worldwide (Bystrova et al., 2022; Pevnaya & Telepaeva, 2020).

Along with the research findings themselves, what I find particularly intriguing about this work is the successful fusion of research strategies and

[1] For the full version of the book in Russian, please visit: https://elar.urfu.ru/handle/10995/122737?locale=en

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methods. The research methodology developed and implemented by the authors of this book provides practical insights that can prove invaluable for other research projects dealing with complex issues.

The book is structured into Introduction, Chapters 1–5, Conclusion, and Appendices. The first chapter delves into conceptual approaches and models for social management and policies aimed at enhancing the involvement of young people in the life of their urban environments. This chapter stimulates a captivating discussion about the role of youth as either objects or subjects of social policies, including those in Russia, as framed within various concepts of social participation.

In my perspective, the book primarily aligns with a prevailing trend in youth studies, treating youth as a valuable resource for urban development. It views youth more as an object than as a subject of public policies aimed at their inclusion in urban development projects. The central question posed by the authors, "How to involve the resource of youth in territorial development" (p. 266, Trans. by Arthur Atanesyan—A. A.) encapsulates the book's core focus. This approach, which sees youth as a resource, is as crucial as the one that place young people at the center of policy-making process. Both approaches are equally important. In the latter scenario, youth actively engage with public policies, including those related to urban development, considering them as resources for self-development and self-representation. When combined with other research works that explore both perspectives, this book serves as a valuable roadmap for shaping public policies targeting youth. It is particularly pertinent in societies where traditions of initiating policy reforms from various societal strata, including youth (a bottom-to-top approach), are still evolving.

The book exemplifies a complex and multi-layered analysis drawing on a variety of social research methods. The comprehensive and interdisciplinary research conducted by the authors unfolds in three stages, elaborated in Chapters 2–5. The book's structure reflects the inclusion of two primary research components: one executed through local fieldwork in Yekaterinburg, Russia, and the other through international investigations encompassing two post-Soviet countries (Russia and Armenia) and two Eastern European nations (Poland and Romania). These four countries are represented in the field research by cities which the authors have found comparable by their cultural and educational roles, as well as by their size similarly proportional to population of their countries: Yekaterinburg (Russian Federation), Gyumri (Armenia), Poznań and Zielona Góra (Poland), and Timișoara (Romania).

These major regional cities serve as university hubs, attracting young individuals from the surrounding areas. The authors employ a comparative approach grounded in the assumption that young people in post-Soviet and post-socialist countries may exhibit both similarities and differences in terms of motivations for social involvement and participation. Consequently, exploring these commonalities and disparities serves to shed light on specific mechanisms governing public behavior among young individuals in the present day.

During the initial phase of the study, 1,276 young respondents aged between 14 and 35 were interviewed. This sample comprised 465 young individuals from Yekaterinburg, Russia, 268 from Gyumri, Armenia, 264 from two cities in Poland, and

279 from Timișoara, Romania. The broader sample consisted of students hailing from 41 settlements in the Sverdlovsk region of Russia, 43 in Armenia, 110 in Poland, and 94 cities and rural areas in Romania (pp. 54–55).

This study focuses on determining the level of awareness of the younger generation about the history and culture of their hometown, identifying the views of young citizens on significant urban symbols, public spaces, cultural and historical sites of value to the urban community and tourists, assessing the experience of social participation of young people, and identifying various forms of direct and/or indirect participation of young people in the life of society. The study also explores a wide spectrum of social practices among young individuals, ranging from information sharing to volunteering within the context of their hometowns.

The authors distinguish passive and active forms of social participation. Passive forms involve activities such as signing petitions to protect historical monuments or the environment, while active forms encompass actions like park clean-ups, tree planting, assisting in the organization of exhibitions and public events, financial contributions to religious organizations, volunteering, online promotion of local attractions and cultural sites, and guiding tourists to key landmarks (p. 56).

In this context, an opening is provided for further discussion on at least two issues. Firstly, are there additional forms of social participation that hold greater importance, depending on specific national, cultural, and historical contexts? For instance, while donating to religious organizations is listed among the significant forms of social participation in this study, today, contributing to clinics for cancer patients, especially children, might be considered more crucial. During periods of armed conflicts, which have been a part of the social reality for multiple generations in and around Europe, including Poland, Romania, Russia, and Armenia, activities such as collecting clothing, food, and funds for refugees, veterans, and homeless people might take precedence, mobilizing young people and others. In such circumstances, running a tour of the city for tourists as shortlisted in this study may seem trivial. Presently, we also witness a growing trend of feeding street animals in city environments, for example, in Armenia and Russia. Therefore, evaluating youth's social involvement through the most contemporary and pertinent forms of participation, as validated by this particular demographic, appears to be a promising perspective.

Secondly, do some of the modern and popular forms of social participation challenge traditional descriptions of "active" and "passive" participation? For example, there is an ongoing and lively interdisciplinary debate today surrounding "slacktivism" as a form of online public activism. This concept is viewed differently by two main opposing camps of scholars: some consider it an active form of communicative engagement with intrinsic value, while others see it as passive and subservient, characterized by "lazy talking" and subordinate to "real" offline activism (Atanesyan, 2019; Basheva, 2020; Housley et al., 2018). The book paves the way for a broader discussion of these questions.

The second study included in the book focuses on a survey of youth in the Sverdlovsk region of Russia, conducted in 2020 using a standardized questionnaire. The authors aimed to uncover the motivational factors and practices of social

participation among the region's youth, with a focus on contributing to the socio-cultural development of the cities where these young respondents reside. The sampling was designed to include quotas based on gender, age, employment status, education, and level of involvement in public associations and organizations among young people.

This study sheds light on the most typical and relevant innovative social participation practices among youth in the cities of the Middle Ural region. Additionally, the study evaluates the level of information competence among schoolchildren and students concerning events crucial for regional development. The study delves into the potential of youth volunteering in sporting and cultural events and examines the influence of information sources (education and media) on youth motivation. Furthermore, the research tracks the evolution of volunteer activities, both in online and offline formats, and assesses potential prospects for their future development. Lastly, the authors implement an empirical typology to identify successful models for organizing effective management of young people's social participation, based on assessments provided by schoolchildren and students (pp. 59–60).

The third significant facet of the field research employed in this book utilized a case study approach. In this context, the city was regarded as a focal point for constructive social practices involving youth participation in the socio-cultural development of urban and administrative environments. Three cities were examined in total: Yekaterinburg (Russia), Gyumri (Armenia), and Timișoara (Romania). The study's objective was to discern the conditions, prerequisites, and influential factors affecting the social participation of urban youth in post-socialist countries. The ultimate aim was to formulate management models and specify the techniques for overseeing constructive forms of youth involvement in diverse formats. Researchers analyzed and described socio-cultural urban projects featuring youth participation as illustrative cases. These projects were supervised at various levels, including municipal and those with international involvement. The purpose was to identify the current projects and strategies employed by key stakeholders in managing urban youth.

One might develop the impression that the authors primarily view youth as the target of social policies, designed to activate, stimulate, support, and encourage young individuals:

> The social participation of youth in modern Russia is supported at the state level. Within the framework of the national project *Obrazovanie* [Education], various programs and projects are being implemented throughout the country. However, in many respects their effectiveness for the country, the region, and most importantly for the young citizens themselves depends on how exactly and what exactly officials, specialists from educational institutions and youth policy do in partnership with youth. (p. 266; Trans. by A. A.)

This illustrates the top-down approach, making it even more imperative to consider a more critical examination of this approach in subsequent discussions, exploring alternative bottom-up approaches and resources that can provide valuable insights.

Drawing from the results of the first phase of the case study, a comprehensive set of contemporary concepts for the socio-cultural development of the city with youth involvement emerged. This set was further elaborated through interviews with experts, including representatives from municipal government, the non-profit sector, and organizers of youth projects in cultural and educational urban institutions.

The case study strategy encompassed focus group interviews with students and young volunteers, participant observation of individuals and entities orchestrating youth participation across universities, non-governmental organizations, and the broader socio-cultural landscape of the city. Together, these methods facilitated the classification of current ideas and directions for the socio-cultural development of cities, allowing for the characterization of their unique qualities and specifics as cultural and educational cities. These methods also created a framework for social participation and self-realization among youth. In addition, the research team collected photographic and video materials, which provide visual insights into the practices of social participation in the analyzed cities. The study gathered data on urban symbols of significance from the perspective of young people.

To delve into the matter of constructing the symbolic urban space by young individuals, the authors combined focus group interviews with the mental mapping technique. Again, the research locations encompassed two focus groups in Gyumri (Armenia), three focus groups in Yekaterinburg (Russia), and two focus groups in Timișoara (Romania). The study addressed a range of issues related to the exploration of the city's associative image, employing various methods including the association method, the mental map method to investigate students' perceptions of the city as a platform for personal self-realization (a "city for themselves"), and the symbolic space of the city as an integrator of youth social participation.

There were identified and thoroughly analyzed nine projects based on participant observations, expert interviews with managers and personnel from nonprofit organizations, educational, social, and cultural institutions engaged with young volunteers, focus groups, group and individual interviews with students experienced in active social participation, document analysis, as well as information resources (websites and social media groups) pertaining to the specified cities. These projects were frequently cited by experts, specialists, and students. A qualitative analysis was carried out on the collected and transcribed materials, treating these projects as distinct and independent cases for in-depth examination.

The conceptualization of urban space through the visualization of young people's ideas and perceptions is particularly intriguing. Drawing from their extensive study, the authors have identified several key concepts of urban spaces enriched by the involvement of youth, including "City as a Home" (found in Gyumri, Yekaterinburg, and Timișoara), "Free City" (in Yekaterinburg and Timișoara), "City as a Center, and Center as a City" (in Yekaterinburg and Timișoara), "Educational Center" (in Yekaterinburg, Timișoara, and Gyumri), and "Combination of Traditions and Innovations" (in Gyumri and Timișoara) (pp. 131–149; Trans. by A. A.).

Through expert interviews, participant observations, and focus group discussions, four types of young people have been emphasized: activists, conformists, potential

participants, and passive individuals. After measuring young people's commitment to participate in the developing of their cities through their perception of the city as attractive and their willingness to promote it through offline and online activism, the authors found that among Armenian (40%) and Romanian (39%) youth, the activist type (those with high levels of both criteria) prevails, compared to Poland (21%) and Russia (16%).

Potential activists, i.e., those who highly value their city but are not very motivated to promote it, are more numerous in Poland (45%) and Russia (43%). All four countries (cities) under study have almost the same percentage of conformists, i.e., those who are ready to promote their cities, but do not rate them highly. However, indifferent/passive young people, who do not rate their city highly and are not interested in promoting it, prevail in Russia (21%), ahead of Poland (16%) and Romania (13%). Interestingly, this passive type of youth, who do not like their city and are not interested in participating in its development, seems to be sparsely represented in Armenia (3 %) (pp. 200–201).

The collection of qualitative data aimed at complementing and refining the results of the quantitative survey, specifically pertaining to young citizens' perceptions of crucial urban symbols, public spaces, and cultural and historical landmarks that hold particular value for both the urban community and tourists. A comparative analysis of the practices of public management of urban youth activities at both the city level and within individual organizations across different countries, as well as identification and description of promising urban sociocultural projects that involve youth participation, help to better frame youth studies as well as future projects with/for social participation of youth.

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ARTICLE

How the Enlargement Affects European Union Legislative Process

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ABSTRACT
This article contributes to the ongoing debate regarding the systemic impact of EU enlargements on the duration of the legislative process. Two methods, interrupted time series analysis and survival analysis (the Cox model), are used to show the effects of enlargements, using empirical data comprising EU secondary law directives and regulations. A key distinction of this study from most similar research lies in its focus on distinguishing between legislative and implementing acts, which mitigates the risk of conflating the analysis due to substantial differences in their adoption processes. The methodology and research design help us disentangle the enlargement effects from those of the Treaty reforms and other institutional and structural parameters of the EU decision-making process. The findings reveal a significant acceleration of the legislative process at the moment of the 2004 enlargement, essentially confirming our prior research results. The validity of our conclusions is substantially enhanced by the improvements in modeling techniques. The article also explores potential reasons for the acceleration of the legislative process and concludes that the most likely cause is the refinement of working methods in the Council.

KEYWORDS
European Union, EU enlargement, legislative process, decision-making, legislative duration, survival analysis, Cox model, interrupted time series analysis

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Introduction

The 2004 enlargement of the European Union (EU) has given impetus to the research on how the increase in the number of Member States (MSs) complicates and slows down the EU decision-making process. This topic goes beyond mere academic interest, as significant disagreements on politically crucial issues including the 2015 migration crisis, the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, and reforms of the Emissions Trading System have captured public attention. Despite this widespread discussion and numerous examples, we still lack a clear understanding of the systematic negative impact of EU enlargements on the duration and efficiency of the decision-making process.

Our article aims to contribute to the current body of research on the duration of the EU legislative process by specifically examining the impact of EU enlargements. Using a database and methods that differ from previous studies, we intend to more accurately assess the impact of enlargements, isolating it from the effects of institutional changes.

Theoretical Background

Several approaches theorize the possible impact of an increase in the number of actors on decision-making process. The most well-known ones are spatial analysis, club theory, voting power approach, and transaction costs theory.

Spatial analysis proceeds from the basic assumption that decision-making efficiency depends on distance between the positions of actors and institutional parameters of the decision-making process (Enelow & Hinich, 1984). From this perspective, an increase in the number of EU MSs should generally lead to a more complicated decision-making process and an increased duration of the adoption of legislative acts (Klüver & Sagarzazu, 2013; König, 2007). However, the result and duration of the legislative process are affected not so much by the number of actors (MSs) themselves as by the level of heterogeneity of their preferences. If the preferences of the new MSs fall within the range of preferences of the old MSs, this may not significantly impact the duration of decision-making (Steunenberg, 2002; Tsebelis, 2003). Thus, from the conceptual point, an increase in the number of MSs may not affect the duration of decision-making. In addition, changes in institutional parameters can both accelerate and slow down the legislative process, overlapping with the influence of the increase in the number of actors.

The substance of institutional parameters also matters, however. Theoretically, with rigid, super-majoritarian decision-making rules, the growth in the number of actors (and in the heterogeneity of preferences) should lead to a slowdown or

even a deadlock of the legislative process, since it becomes more difficult to build a coalition, for which any change of legislation is more profitable than the *status quo*. Quite the contrary, with soft decision-making rules, the opposite effect is possible, since an increase in the number of actors facilitates the formation of various coalitions in support of changes (Golub, 2007; Toshkov, 2017).

The theory of clubs (or the theory of club goods) based on the theory of public goods explains that along with an increase in the number of actors, their willingness to contribute to the production of club goods decreases (Cornes & Sandler, 1996). This phenomenon should be particularly evident in financial matters, especially when it involves contributing to common financial instruments and distributing these shared funds. Thus, an increase in the number of actors theoretically should lead to an increase in disputes and a slowdown in the decision-making process. There is research evidence to some extent confirming this point for the EU (Thomson, 2009; Zimmer et al., 2005).

The voting power index method involves the analysis of all possible winning coalitions and the calculation of the power index of each actor based on how often it becomes a key member of the coalition (in other words, its participation is essential for the coalition to gain the necessary number of votes). A commonly used Banzhaf index (Banzhaf, 1965) have been regularly applied in the studies of qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council of the European Union. According to this approach, EU enlargements should complicate the adoption of legislation (Baldwin & Widgren, 2004) unless it is accompanied by significant institutional changes.

The transaction costs theory postulates that an increase in the number of actors should raise transaction costs unless there are changes in institutional parameters that could offset this effect (Buchanan & Tullock, 1965). Theoretical studies of EU institutions' activities have brought about similar conclusions (König, 2007; Scharpf, 2006).

Summing up, the existing theoretical approaches reveal several causal mechanisms that can engender a slowdown of the EU decision-making because of an increase in the number of MSs. However, this forecloses neither the conclusion that such a slowdown has ever occurred nor the extent of it. Furthermore, the majority of theoretical approaches emphasize the significance of institutional parameters of the decision-making process, supposing that changes in these parameters could potentially outweigh the negative effects of enlargement. Despite this, the question regarding the actual impact of the past EU enlargements remains unanswered.

Review of Empirical Studies

Several empirical studies consistently reveal common trends regarding the impact of various factors on EU decision-making duration. The participation of the European Parliament, particularly through the ordinary legislative procedure, tends to slow down the legislative process, while QMV in the Council accelerates it (Golub, 1999, 2007; Golub & Steunenberg, 2007; Hertz & Leuffen, 2011; Kaveshnikov & Domanov, 2022; Klüver & Sagarzazu, 2013; König, 2007; Rasmussen & Toshkov, 2011; Schulz & König, 2000). The adoption of new legislative documents typically takes longer

than amendments. Additionally, the process tends to be more time-consuming for permanent acts compared to provisional ones (Drüner et al., 2018; Hurka & Haag, 2020; Kaveshnikov & Domanov, 2022; Rasmussen & Toshkov, 2011). The higher is the complexity of the document, the longer is the decision-making process (Hurka & Haag, 2020; Kaveshnikov & Domanov, 2022). However, Rasmussen and Toshkov (2011) did not find any clear dependence. The packaging of proposals typically extends the decision-making timeline (Kirpsza, 2022). Enhanced transparency in the Council has been observed to facilitate decision-making (Hagemann & Franchino, 2016).

Several empirical studies relying on the methodology of duration studies have assessed the impact of various EU enlargements on the speed of the legislative process, either directly or indirectly.

First, let's examine studies that investigate the impact of EU enlargements on the speed of the legislative process. On the basis of survival analysis and the Cox model, Golub and Steunenberg concluded that the increase in the EU membership to 9, 10, 12, and even 15 members accelerated the decision-making process (Golub, 2007; Golub & Steunenberg, 2007). However, their research is based on database comprising EU legislative acts between 1968 and 1998, with the period of 1968–1972 (before the 1973 enlargement) used as a reference. It thus makes sense to suggest that the observed acceleration was notable mainly in contrast to the relatively slow decision-making process during those years, which was partly attributed to the policies of France under the Charles de Gaulle government.

Klüver and Sagarzazu (2013) investigated the influence of ideological differences between the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament on the EU legislative process using the same Cox model. Additionally, they concluded that enlargements did not affect the duration of decision-making. The fact that their research used the period from 1979 to 2010 raises questions about whether they adequately considered the influence of various changes in institutional parameters, including Treaty reforms, on the duration of decision-making.

The study of Best and Settembri (2008) based on descriptive analysis did not reveal the impact of the 2004 enlargement on such parameters as the number of adopted acts and the average period of adopting acts. However, the number of acts adopted before and after the enlargement is not a reliable indicator, since this approach does not take into account the possible increase of EU competence and the emergence of new sectoral policies. Moreover, the analysis of the average adoption period of acts does not consider many other factors that affect the duration of the legislative process, e.g., the type of acts, legislative procedure, and decision-making procedure in the Council.

Two relatively recent papers are entirely devoted to the study of the effect of EU enlargements on the duration of the legislative process.

Hertz and Leuffen (2011), having analyzed data for the years 1976–2006 with the Cox model, concluded that the enlargement of the EU to 10, 12 and especially to 15 and 25 MSs slowed down the decision-making process. Although, the results of their study should be regarded with some reservations. The use of such a long time series complicates the evaluation of the impact of the numerous changes in institutional

parameters that have occurred in the EU over this long period, particularly the Treaties reforms and the evolution of the QMV practice in the Council. The Luxembourg Compromise of 1966, amongst other things, cast a long shadow on EU development. The political veto principle led to the fact that until the mid-1980s, the Council legislated exclusively on the unanimity basis, which inevitably slowed down the decision-making. The new dynamics of the EU development in the late 1980s and 1990s in this context can be misinterpreted as the effect of the 1986 and 1995 enlargements.

In their pursuit of more accurate results, Hertz and Leuffen (2011) compared various periods characterized by different numbers of MSs, presenting paradoxical findings. For instance, no significant change in the duration of decision-making was observed when comparing the EU-12 with the EU-10 and the EU-15 with the EU-12. However, a substantial slowdown emerged in the EU-15 compared to the EU-10. Given that the enlargement from 10 to 12 MSs and from 12 to 15 MSs on a standalone basis did not have a significant impact on the duration of decision-making, there is a reason to doubt that the difference between the EU-10 and EU-15 periods is caused by the increase in membership, and not by other factors. Similarly, when scrutinizing the EU-25 compared to the EU-15, Hertz and Leuffen (2011) failed to identify a substantial difference. Yet, they found a significant slowdown when comparing the EU-25 with both the EU-12 and the EU-10, which raises doubts about the interpretation of the results.

Toshkov (2017) conducted a thorough study of the impact of the 2004 enlargement on the legislative process through a range of methods, such as (a) the descriptive analysis of the number of acts adopted, (b) the Kaplan–Meier curve, (c) the heterogeneity of preferences of MSs in terms of their initial positions and of voting results using network analysis logic. He concluded that the 2004 enlargement did not have a negative impact on the duration of the decision-making process.

The individual methods employed are susceptible to criticism. The analysis of the number of acts before and after the enlargement fails to consider the potential increase in the EU competence and the development of new sectoral policies. The Kaplan–Meier curve cannot take into account factors beyond the EU membership, such as the amendments to the EU Treaties, different legislative procedures, etc. The study of the heterogeneity of the initial positions of MSs relied on the data from the DEU-II project (Thomson et al., 2012), comprising MSs' positions on 331 issues of 125 legislative acts, constructed through expert interviews. While this database is the most comprehensive of its kind, it may not fully align with the analysis of the EU legislative process as a whole. The analysis of the preferences of Member States' preferences based on voting results has some acknowledged shortcomings (Toshkov, 2017, p. 186). Nevertheless, when considering all the methods collectively, a tentative conclusion can be made regarding the absence of any "strong and systemic effects" of the 2004 enlargement on the decision-making process (Toshkov, 2017, p. 189).

In summary, the existing body of research on the subject yields contradictory results. This inconsistency may be partly attributed to variations in how databases are constructed, that is, whether they include only directives or encompass all acts, as well as the specific periods under examination. Notably, the research does not differentiate

between documents of secondary and tertiary law, an important factor given that the process of adoption of tertiary legislation acts has specific features because of acts' technical nature.

Another notable limitation in most studies is their methodology, which falls short in effectively distinguishing the influence of enlargement from other factors. This includes changes in institutional parameters, notably Treaties reforms and the gradual evolution of decision-making practices. Some researchers openly acknowledge this challenge, in particular Toshkov (2017), who points out that "the precise effect of enlargement remains impossible to disentangle from all other contemporarious institutional, political, and societal developments that affected the EU" (p. 178).

Research Methods

Our goal is to evaluate the influence of the 1995 and 2004 EU enlargements on the duration of the decision-making process. To this end, we employ two methods, namely interrupted time series (ITS) analysis and survival analysis employing the Cox model.

The basic idea of ITS analysis (Morgan & Winship, 2007) is to model the behavior of a dependent variable (in our case, the duration of the decision-making process) before and after the event. The proper construction of the model and the choice of variables, as well as the absence of other relevant change in the survey period, allow us to interpret the discontinuity at the time of the event as the casual effect of this event. As regards the EU legislative process, the ITS method was previously used by Bølstad and Cross (2016) to assess the impact of the Amsterdam, Nice, and Lisbon Treaties.

We investigate the effect of each enlargement via linear regression, which was calculated separately for the period before and after the event, as proposed, for example, by Imbens and Lemieux (2008). We chose symmetric windows covering a period of two years before and two years after the event. These windows should be small enough to minimize the influence of other possible factors, and large enough so that the empirical data (the number of acts adopted) ensures acceptable accuracy of calculations.

Linear regression is calculated using Equation 1. For each enlargement, a binary variable E (enlargement) is introduced, reflecting whether the document was adopted before ($E = 0$) or after ($E = 1$) the enlargement[1]. The time variable t is centred on the moment of enlargement, i.e., $t = 0$ when E changes from zero to one. X is a vector of additional variables reflecting fixed effects. In this linear regression equation, coefficient β_1 reflects the immediate effect of the enlargement, β_2 sets the trend of the duration of the legislative process before the enlargement, and β_3 stands for trend change after the enlargement.

$$\ln Y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 E_t + \beta_2 t + \beta_3 E_t t + \sum_{m=1}^{M} \beta_{m+3} X_{mt} + \varepsilon_t \quad (1)$$

[1] Legislative acts initiated before the enlargement, but adopted after, were coded as adopted after the enlargement. We assume that a significant part of the negotiations on the legislative file was held before the enlargement, and the role of the new MSs during the final stages of legislative process was of low significance.

To consider the influence of institutional and systemic factors, we incorporated a set of control parameters into our model. These parameters reflect fundamental factors whose impact on the duration of decision-making was confirmed by the numerous studies mentioned above. The model includes the following control parameters: the type of the act (directive or regulation); the legislative procedure (ordinary legislative procedure/cooperation/consultation/assent/the Council acts without participation of the European Parliament[2]); the decision-making rule in the Council (unanimity or QMV); the novelty of the act (new act or amendments); the provisional/permanent nature of the act; and the complexity of the act. We take into account these control parameters in the form of fixed effects by introducing additional variables. To correctly calculate fixed effects in the model, we should disentangle documents adopted on the same day. To achieve this, we divided each day of the study period into 34 time slots based on the maximum number of documents adopted in a single day during the given period[3], which allowed us to implement the model at the level of individual acts.

To consider the nonlinear nature of the dependency between variables and not overload the model with hard-to-compute components, link functions are used. Considering the characteristics of our database, we use a logarithmic link function, as recommended by Fox (2015, p. 392) and Hilbe (2011, p. 193). We test our model for first-order auto-regressive auto-correlation using the Breusch–Godfrey test, and for auto-regressive conditional heteroscedasticity using the Engle test. The test results are generally unproblematic[4], enabling the implementation of the model at the level of individual acts.

The second method we applied was a survival analysis using the semiparametric Cox model for calculations. In survival analysis, the crucial choice is between parametric and semiparametric models. Parametric models are very sensitive to characteristics of baseline hazard distribution, while semiparametric models including the Cox model could be used, on the contrary, even if hazard varies with predictor level. Following the intensive theoretical discussions in the early 2000s, it was concluded that the specific characteristics of empirical data on the EU legislative process and the nonuniform probability distribution make the Cox model more suitable for researching the duration of EU legislation (Golub, 2007, p. 162; Zorn, 2007, p. 568).

The Cox model has been actively used in political science since the second half of the 1990s (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones, 2004). Since the early 2010s, the Cox model has been the most frequently used method in the study of the activities of EU institutions in the context of duration studies. Among eleven studies of this kind, eight employed the Cox model (Brandsma & Meijer, 2020; Chalmers, 2014; Drüner et al., 2018; Hertz & Leuffen, 2011; Hurka & Haag, 2020; Kaveshnikov & Domanov,

[2] Officially, when the Council acts without the participation of the European Parliament, the procedure is designated as a non-legislative procedure. However, many acts adopted in this manner possess all the legal characteristics of secondary law, which justifies our inclusion of this procedure in the list.

[3] 34 acts were adopted on April 29, 2004.

[4] Signs of autocorrelations are evident in the database of documents around the 1995 enlargement (all acts, models 1 and 2), which aligns with the overall low accuracy of calculations related to the 1995 enlargement (see the Results section) and serves as another reason to exercise caution in drawing conclusions in this segment of the research.

2022; Klüver & Sagarzazu, 2013; Rasmussen & Toshkov, 2013). Two studies used variations of linear and logistic regression, while one employed the interrupted time series (ITS) method.

The Cox model is based on the multiple regression method (Cox, 1972). This semiparametric method predicts the risk of occurrence of an event (hazard risk) for the object under consideration and evaluates the influence of independent variables on this risk. As a result, the model determines the value of the hazard ratio (HR) between the risk indicators in the experimental and control groups.

In this study, we define an event as the adoption of a legislative act. A control group is an array of legislative documents adopted before enlargement; the experimental group consists of documents adopted after the enlargement. Risk is the probability that a document that has not been adopted on day *N* since the beginning of the legislative procedure will be adopted on day *N*+1. Thus, the hazard ratio shows to what extent the probability of document adoption differs before and after the enlargement.

In our study, we established two-year periods both before and after the respective enlargements. This approach serves a dual purpose: firstly, it ensures comparability between the results obtained from the Cox model and the ITS method; secondly, these designated periods help minimize the potential influence of various changes in the institutional parameters of the decision-making process. Calculations were carried out using a multifactorial model to take into account the influence of institutional and systemic factors. The control parameters are similar to those used in the ITS model. The calculation results were checked for the proportional effect assumption by the Grambsch–Therneau test and passed the test as far as concern the enlargement variable.

The empirical database of our study covers EU secondary law directives and regulations extracted from the official EU legislation portal EUR-Lex[5]. Our database principally differs from the data used in most similar studies; it includes only legislative measures (secondary law) but not implementing measures (tertiary law). Implementing measures contain detailed provisions, which make it possible to implement existing legislative decisions in practice. Some types of implementing measures are adopted by the Council[6], they are manifold and could muddle up the analysis of decision-making if taken into account together with legislative acts. After the Lisbon Treaty, it became easy to differentiate between secondary and tertiary legal acts, due to the inclusion of terms like “delegated” or “implementing” in the titles of acts of tertiary legislation. However, in the periods we examined, these markers were not used. For empirical data collection, we relied on a crucial distinction, which was that acts of secondary legislation were identified by their legal basis, i.e., particular articles of basic Treaties, while acts of tertiary legislation have a different legal basis, namely acts of secondary law (Lenaerts & van Nuffel, 2005, p. 570).

[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html

[6] After the Lisbon Treaty, delegated acts are adopted by the Commission (Article 290 TFEU, see Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 2012a), while implementing acts are adopted by the Commission according to comitology procedures or by the Council alone (Article 291 TFEU, see Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, 2012b).

We decided to exclude decisions from the database since these acts lack a fundamental characteristic of legislation: they do not establish general rules but rather apply legislative rules to individual situations. The number of secondary law decisions is significantly higher than the combined total of directives and regulations. Including all these documents in the database could significantly compromise the results of the analysis.

We excluded legal documents directly related to the 1995 and 2004 enlargements (those citing Accession Treaties as their legal base) from the database. These documents are usually rapidly adopted[7] because they formalized agreements reached during earlier accession negotiations. The final database thus includes 1,538 legal documents for both study periods (Table 1).

It is challenging to distinguish the effects of enlargements from those of the basic treaty reforms because these events occurred closely in time. Without careful handling, the absence of this distinction or the use of improper methods can cast doubt on the validity of conclusions in the studies mentioned earlier.

The Maastricht Treaty (MT) took effect within two years before the 1995 enlargement, and the Nice Treaty (NT) within two years before the 2004 enlargement. To tackle this challenge, we created two models for both the Cox and ITS methods. Model 1 uses the entire dataset, where the impact of enlargement is mixed with the potential impact of the Treaty amendments. For Model 2, we refined the dataset by excluding documents based on those articles that were changed respectively by the MT and NT. We omitted such Treaty changes as the introduction of new competencies, change of legislative procedures in specific policy areas (e.g., new policy areas subject to consultation or the ordinary legislative procedure), and shifts from unanimity to majority voting in the Council. To maintain dataset consistency, we excluded such documents adopted both before and after the respective Treaty entered into force. As a result, Model 2 accurately represents the pure impact of the enlargement.

Table 1

Description of the Database

	Four years around 1995 enlargement			Four years around 2004 enlargement		
	Total	Before enlargement	After enlargement	Total	Before enlargement	After enlargement
Directive	179	102	77	195	138	57
Regulations	677	383	294	487	314	173
All acts	856	485	371	682	452	230

To enhance the validity of the findings, we employed two methods of analysis. The exclusion of tertiary law documents and decisions allows us to assess the patterns of the legislative process *stricto sensu*. The chosen methods, control variables, and survey periods help us accurately separate the impact of the enlargements from the

[7] Most directives of this kind are adopted within 50–60 days. The average time for the adoption of a typical directive is 658 days in the first research period (1993–1996) and 765 days in the second period (May 1, 2002–April 30, 2006).

influence of the Treaty changes and other institutional parameters. Model 2, excluding relevant documents from the dataset, serves to assess the potential impact of the Treaty changes. The potential impact of the gradual evolution of decision-making practices, such as trilogues and the erosion of consensual practices in the Council (details below), is minimized as these trends develop slowly and may not significantly affect decision-making patterns in the four-year periods around the corresponding enlargements. It should be noted that the short timeframes for analysis require us to rely on relatively small data samples, potentially diminishing the statistical accuracy of the model results.

Results and Discussion

The results of the modeling are presented in Tables 2–5. Before discussing the impact of the enlargements, it is worth noting that the Cox model confirms well-known patterns related to control parameters[8]. The participation of the European Parliament, especially the use of the ordinary legislative procedure[9], slows down decision-making while the Council's qualified majority voting accelerates this process. The adoption of new, complex, and permanent acts takes more time than the adoption of amendments, simple and provisional acts.

Table 2

Impact of 1995 Enlargement on the Duration of Decision-Making (ITS Model)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2 (Maastricht Treaty impact excluded)		
	All acts	Directives	Regulations	All acts	Directives	Regulations
Enlargement (E), β_1	0.74	0.97	0.81	0.69	0.85	0.74
Time (t), β_2	1.0001	1.0005*	1.0001	1.0004	1.0005	1.0003
$E \times t$, β_3	1.0009	0.9997	1.0005	1.0004	0.9995	1.0003
Constant, β_0	250.9***	508.0***	162.9***	170.4***	517.0***	138.1***
Dispersion	0.80***	2.26***	0.88***	0.84***	0.41	0.95***
Fixed effects (directive/regulation)	yes	–	–	yes	–	–
Fixed effects (other control parameters [a])	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of acts (N)	856	179	677	677	81	596
Period, months	48	48	48	48	48	48

Note. [a] Control parameters: legislative procedure, unanimity/QMV in the Council, new act/amendments, permanent/provisional act, complexity of the act. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p < .005$.

[8] We have excluded these data from the tables to avoid clutter but they are available in Appendix (Tables A1, A2).

[9] In the survey periods, this procedure was officially called the co-decision procedure.

Table 3

Impact of 1995 Enlargement on the Duration of Decision-Making (the Cox Model)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2 (Maastricht Treaty impact excluded)		
	All acts	Directives	Regulations	All acts	Directives	Regulations
Hazard ratio (HR)	0.83**	0.76	0.88	1.19*	1.15	1.02
Control parameter directive/regulation	yes	–	–	yes	–	–
Other control parameters [a]	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of acts (*N*)	856	179	677	677	81	596
Period, months	48	48	48	48	48	48

Note. [a] Control parameters: legislative procedure, unanimity/QMV in the Council, new act/amendments, permanent/provisional act, complexity of the act. * $p \le .05$; ** $p \le .01$; *** $p < .005$.

Table 4

Impact of 2004 Enlargement on the Duration of Decision-Making (ITS Model)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2 (Nice Treaty impact excluded)		
	All acts	Directives	Regulations	All acts	Directives	Regulations
Enlargement (*E*), β_1	0.36***	0.47***	0.43***	0.34***	0.47***	0.40***
Time (*t*), β_2	0.9998	0.9992*	1.0005	0.9998	0.9992	1.0005
E × *t*, β_3	1.0019***	1.0026***	1.0004	1.002***	1.0026***	1.0004
Constant, β_0	514.6***	1111.1***	275.9***	521.2***	1106.9***	275.3***
Dispersion	0.96***	0.57	0.93***	0.94***	0.57	0.91***
Fixed effects (directive/ regulation)	yes	–	–	yes	–	–
Fixed effects (other control parameters [a])	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of acts (*N*)	682	195	487	649	191	458
Period, months	48	48	48	48	48	48

Note. [a] Control parameters: legislative procedure, unanimity/QMV in the Council, new act/amendments, permanent/provisional act, complexity of the act. * $p \le .05$; ** $p \le .01$; *** $p < .005$.

Table 5
Impact of 2004 Enlargement on the Duration of Decision-Making (the Cox Model)

Variable	Model 1			Model 2 (Nice Treaty impact excluded)		
	All acts	Directives	Regulations	All acts	Directives	Regulations
Hazard ratio (HR)	1.28***	1.26	1.20	1.32***	1.23	1.14
Control parameter directive/regulation	yes	–	–	yes	–	–
Other control parameters [a]	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Number of acts (*N*)	682	195	487	649	191	458
Period, months	48	48	48	48	48	48

Note. [a] Control parameters: legislative procedure, unanimity/QMV in the Council, new act/amendments, permanent/provisional act, complexity of the act. * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p < .005$.

Practically identical results of Models 1 and 2 demonstrate that the impact of the Maastricht and Nice Treaties on the duration of legislative process was negligible, at least within our study period. These results confirm the conclusions of Bølstad and Cross (2016) about the Nice Treaty.

Regarding the 1995 enlargement, two methods employed have yielded divergent results. The Cox method did not reveal the impact of the enlargement on decision-making. The HR for all acts is 0.83 (Model 1); it is considered that the factor is insignificant if HR differs from 1.0 by less than 0.2. In Model 2 (database refined of Maastricht Treaty impact), we can see negligible effect of opposite nature (HR = 1.19). However, the accuracy of calculations in both cases is not very high, which casts doubt on any meaningful interpretations. The ITS method at first glance indicates a significant instantaneous effect of enlargement: β_1 is equal to 0.74 in Model 1 and 0.69 in Model 2, that means considerable acceleration of decision-making. However, the accuracy of calculations in both Models is below the significance level. Moreover, when analysing directives and regulations separately, the results of both methods do not have the accuracy that would allow us to make any relevant conclusions.

Thus, our research does not allow us to make an unambiguous conclusion about the effect of the 1995 enlargement due to the low statistical accuracy of calculation results. Nevertheless, we can cautiously assert that the 1995 enlargement did not have a distinctively negative effect on the duration of the decision-making process.

More reliable conclusions can be drawn about the impact of the 2004 enlargement. Paradoxically, both methods indicate that after the enlargement the decision-making process has noticeably accelerated. This acceleration was instantaneous, long-term trends of decision-making durations did not change. The Cox method gives HR = 1.28 in Model 1 and 1.32 in Model 2 (database refined of Nice Treaty impact). The ITS method gives the coefficient β_1 = 0.36 in Model 1 and 0.34 in Model 2.

Similar results that are obtained when analysing directives and regulations separately confirm the systemic nature of the enlargement effect. The calculations have high statistical accuracy both for all acts (both methods) and for directives and regulations separately (ITS method).

Our findings challenge the common notion of a slowdown that occurred in decision-making following the 2004 enlargement. The conceptual approaches presented in the first part of the article do not provide a clear explanation for this phenomenon. Nevertheless, several assumptions can be considered.

The seemingly obvious explanation that the decision-making process speed up because of the Nice Treaty is not valid. Model 2, which was designed specifically to test this assumption, convincingly refuted it.

Other options to explain the acceleration of decision-making process include the influence of trilogues and shifts in consensual practices within the Council. The period in question saw the growing use of the practice of trilogies, informal meetings involving representatives from the Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council to discuss legislative proposals (Brandsma, 2015; Kaveshnikov, 2021b). The initiation of regular trilogues during the third reading of the co-decision procedure in 1995 marked a pivotal moment, proving to be highly effective. Over time, trilogues became a standard practice during the first and second readings as well. This shift is evident in the legislative outcomes during the fifth and sixth EP legislatures (2000–2009), where approximately 60% of co-decision legislation was adopted at the first reading, around 30% at the second reading, and only 10% required a third reading and a meeting of the conciliation committee (Rasmussen, 2012, p. 743). Empirical studies further confirm the significant role of trilogues in expediting the legislative process (Toshkov & Rasmussen, 2012).

The erosion of the consensus culture in the Council could also have a certain impact on the duration of decision-making. Even when the Council de jure can decide by vote, MSs usually continue negotiations and try to reach a consensus (Mattila & Lane, 2001). Thus, between 1994 and 2002, 81% of all decisions in the Council were adopted without a vote (Heisenberg, 2005, p. 66). However, in recent decades, it has become increasingly difficult for Council members to reach a consensus: in the first half of the 2010s, the vote share increased to 35–40% of the number of issues where voting is provided for by the Treaties (Wallace et al., 2015, p. 83). When building our database, we coded decision-making procedures in the Council (voting or unanimity) on the basis of the articles of the Treaties. When the relevant article provided for QMV, we did not check whether the vote was held in practice or the document was adopted by consensus. Thus, the gradual increase in the share of legislative documents adopted by the QMV, unaccounted for in our models, could distort the results and create the illusion of acceleration of the legislative process due to the enlargement.

It is important to note that the evolution of both trilogue practices and the diminishing consensus culture in the Council has been a gradual process. It is highly improbable that these factors could produce an immediately noticeable effect, as indicated by the ITS model, specifically through coefficient β_1 reflecting the immediate impact of the enlargement. The observation that the enlargement does not influence

the long-term trend (as indicated by coefficient β_3 in the ITS method) further supports this assertion.

The absence of a noticeable slowdown in the legislative process after the 2004 enlargement can be explained by the fact that the preferences of new MSs lied generally within the range of preferences of old MSs, especially in the first decade after the new MSs joined the EU. Research on Member States' positions and voting outcomes shows that the conflict dimension between Western and Eastern MSs is usually not significant (Mattila, 2009; Plechanovová, 2011; Thomson, 2009; Toshkov, 2017). This dimension becomes noticeable only in specific policy areas, such as climate policy or migration and asylum policy (Thomson, 2009, p. 767; Toshkov, 2017, p. 188). Sectoral studies strongly demonstrate that a sustained divergence in preferences (West vs. East) is notable in specific policies, including migration and asylum (Geddes, 2018; Potemkina, 2019), redistributive policies, e.g., encompassing structural funds, common agricultural policy, and environmental policy (Veen, 2011), climate policy (Jevnaker & Wettestad, 2017; Kaveshnikov, 2021a), and energy security (Goldthau & Sitter, 2015; Mišík, 2016; Youngs, 2020). It should be noted, however, that these policy areas constitute only a small fraction of EU activities. Additionally, most of these policy divisions gained significance and became politically contentious many years after the 2004 enlargement. Consequently, the divergence in the preferences of MSs on these issues had no significant influence on the overall dynamics of decision-making immediately following the enlargement.

The distribution of preferences among new MSs may explain the absence of a slowdown, but it does not account for the notable and immediate acceleration in the legislative process after the 2004 enlargement, as demonstrated in our models. Therefore, it would be safe to assert that this acceleration was primarily due to changes in the Council's working methods. Just before the accession of the new MSs, for the specific purpose of streamlining decision-making in the enlarged Council, new Rules of Procedure were adopted[10], which provided for several measures to improve its effectiveness.

In particular, the new Rules of Procedure established that at the stage of preparation of the Council meeting: (a) a file is submitted to Coreper only when there is reasonable prospect of progress; (b) the Presidency shall undertake efficient consultations between meetings and encourage MSs' delegations to communicate among themselves; (c) MSs' delegations are recommended to communicate their positions in written form before the meeting; wherever possible, written input shall be submitted jointly by delegations maintaining identical positions.

As far as concern the meeting, Rules of Procedure established inter alia that: (a) no item shall be placed on the agenda for information only, such information should instead be transmitted to delegations whenever possible in advance in written form; (b) the Presidency shall limit the maximum length of interventions; (c) like-minded delegations are encouraged to entrust a single spokesperson to express their common

[10] The Rules of Procedure were adopted by the Council's Decision 2004/338 on March 22, 2004 (Council Decision, 2004).

position on a specific point; (d) delegations shall make concrete drafting proposals, rather than merely expressing their disagreement with a particular point.

Despite the technical nature of these procedural changes, they successfully simplified discussions in the Council, playing a pivotal role in accelerating the overall decision-making process in the EU, as our study demonstrates.

Conclusions

This article contributes to the debate on the systemic impact that EU enlargements may have on the duration of the legislative process. As for the 1995 enlargement, the low reliability of calculations allows us to only state very cautiously that it did not affect negatively (decelerated) the decision-making process.

Results of our research demonstrate that a significant instantaneous acceleration of the legislative process took place at the moment of the 2004 enlargement. The absence of a slowdown can be explained by the fact that the preferences of the new MSs were generally within the range of preferences of the old ones. A new axis of contestation (Western vs. Eastern MSs) emerged only in a limited number of EU policy areas and it happened quite some time after the enlargement. Even if there was a temporary deceleration of the legislative process due to this enlargement, it has been more than compensated for by subtle institutional changes.

Most likely, the new Rules of Procedure of the Council, which was specifically approved to adapt the institution to the increased number of MSs, significantly enhanced the Council's efficiency and positively influenced the duration of the legislative process. The increase in membership to EU-25 neither diminished the functionality of the Council nor undermined the generally smooth legislative process within the Union.

These conclusions essentially confirm our previous research but are more valid due to a significant refinement in our modeling technique. The inclusion of new control parameters in the ITS method enables us to consider the effects of corresponding institutional parameters on the speed of decision-making. By dividing each day of the study period into 34 time slots, we can more precisely evaluate the impact of control parameters. Models 1 and 2 clearly show that the Maastricht and Nice Treaties had no discernible impact on the speed of the legislative process. We have also developed additional arguments to discuss potential reasons for the acceleration of decision-making after the 2004 enlargement.

Our research demonstrates that the relationship between the number of actors (Member States) and decision-making speed in the EU is not straightforward, with institutional parameters playing a significant role. While research often focuses on major changes like fundamental Treaty reforms, we find that minor changes could have a more profound impact. The Union's institutional system is intricate, with numerous forums, actors, procedures, and entry points. Within this complex structure, many elements can be fine-tuned to influence the efficiency and direction of the policy process.

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Appendix

The Cox Models of the Decision-Making Duration

Table A1

Impact of 1995 Enlargement on the Duration of Decision-Making (The Cox Model)

Parameter	Model 1			Model 2 (Maastricht Treaty impact excluded)		
	All acts	Directives	Regulations	All acts	Directives	Regulations
EU membership						
EU-12	1.20**	1.32	1.14	1.19*	1.15	1.02
EU-15	0.83**	0.76	0.88	0.84*	0.87	0.98
Control parameters						
Type of the act						
Directive	0.33***	–	–	0.31***	–	–
Regulation	3.04***	–	–	3.19***	–	–
Legislative procedure						
Ordinary legislative procedure	0.65**	0.73	0.40*			
Cooperation	0.48***	0.99	0.22***	0.39***	0.81	0.39***
Consultation	0.69***	1.38	0.63***	0.52***	1.23	2.55***
Council without EP	3.45***		3.29***	3.05***		6.81***
Assent	1.17		1.18	0.98		
Decision-making rule in the Council						
Unanimity	0.46***	0.62	0.39***	0.48***	0.41*	0.45***
QMV	2.16***	1.60	2.56***	2.10***	2.46*	2.23***
Novelty of the act						
Amendments	1.26***	1.59**	1.27*	1.36***	1.97**	1.21*
New act	0.79***	0.62**	0.79*	0.73***	0.51**	0.83*
Temporary scope of the act						
Permanent	0.37***	0.18***	0.42***	0.42***	0.27***	0.40***
Provisional	2.71***	5.46***	2.40***	2.37***	3.70***	2.48***
Complexity (length) of the act						
Short	1.24*	1.38	0.95	1.09	1.97*	1.07
Medium	0.89	0.71	1.08	0.87	0.52*	0.93
Long	0.78	0.97	0.98	1.10	0.95	0.90
Number of acts (N)	856	179	677	677	81	596
Period, months	48	48	48	48	48	48

Note. The main entries are hazard ratios (HR). Empty cells mean that data are not applicable because of absence/small number of documents with such parameter. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p < .005$

Table A2
Impact of 2004 Enlargement on the Duration of Decision-Making (The Cox Model)

Parameter	Model 1			Model 2 (Nice Treaty impact excluded)		
	All acts	Directives	Regulations	All acts	Directives	Regulations
EU membership						
EU-15	0.78***	0.79	0.84	0.75***	0.81	0.87
EU-25	1.28***	1.26	1.20	1.32***	1.23	1.14
Control parameters						
Type of the act						
Directive	0.48***	–	–	0.46***	–	–
Regulation	2.08***	–	–	2.19***	–	–
Legislative procedure						
Ordinary legislative procedure	0.35***	0.88	0.29***	0.34***	0.89	0.43
Cooperation	2.29		2.04	2.19		2.69
Consultation	1.17	0.95	1.08	1.15	1.13	0.96
Council without EP	4.59***	9.35***	4.70***	4.49***		2.86
Assent	0.92		0.98	0.98		0.34
Decision-making rule in the Council						
Unanimity	0.45***	1.15	0.66**	0.68***	1.02	0.58***
QMV	2.23***	0.87	1.51**	1.48***	0.98	1.72***
Novelty of the act						
Amendments	1.56***	1.72***	1.33**	1.57***	1.55**	1.38***
New act	0.64***	0.58***	0.76**	0.64***	0.64**	0.73***
Temporary scope of the act						
Permanent	0.66**	0.43**	0.72	0.63***	0.41**	0.78
Provisional	1.51**	2.34**	1.41	1.58***	2.45**	1.27
Complexity (length) of the act						
Short	1.50***	1.55**	1.52***	1.44***	1.65***	0.95
Medium	0.77***	0.68*	0.87	0.79*	0.61**	1.08
Long	0.76***	0.92	0.60***	0.69***	0.73	0.98
Number of acts (N)	682	195	487	649	191	458
Period, months	48	48	48	48	48	48

Note. The main entries are hazard ratios (HR). Empty cells mean that data are not applicable because of absence/small number of documents with such parameter. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p < .005$.

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ARTICLE

Integrative Model of Shared Reality and Identity–Emotion–Efficacy Factors of Pro-Environmental Action

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ABSTRACT

Several theoretical models explain the influence of identity factors on pro-environmental action, but an integrative explanation of these factors is required, especially in nonactivist samples. This study aims to determine the mediating effects of social identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy on the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action. We use a correlational survey method on 258 and 305 students in Studies 1 and 2, respectively. The full structural equation model found that the model well fits both studies. Consistently in the two studies, shared reality positively predicts social identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy. We found that these factors mediate the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action. These findings conclude that ordinary people sharing the same environmental reality catalyze the formation of identity, emotion, and efficacy factors.

KEYWORDS

pro-environmental action, social identity, group efficacy, group-based anger, shared reality

ETHICAL RESEARCH STATEMENT

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study. This study had ethical clearance from the Ethical Committee of Faculty of Medicine of Universitas Lambung Mangkurat No. 185-186-188/KEPK-FKULM/EC/V/2020 (Study 1) and No. 672-673-674/KEPK-FKULM/EC/VI/2021 (Study 2).

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Introduction

Global crises, such as climate change or waste accumulation, are complex problems. This global challenge also requires a global response. Based on this notion, large groups of social communities need to be involved in collective action, and psychology needs to offer tools for overcome this action, one of which is pro-environmental action (Barth et al., 2021). Specifically, scholars define pro-environment as goal-directed behavior in which people strive to achieve explicit goals for environmental benefits and maximize the reduction of harm to the environment (Steg & de Groot, 2019; Steg & Vlek, 2009). Stern (2000) created a taxonomy of pro-environmental actions, two of which are implemented in the public (e.g., environmental activism) and private (e.g., recycling at the individual level) spheres. One theory that can be applied to

public- and private-sphere pro-environmental behavior is the social identity model of pro-environmental action (SIMPEA). Fritsche et al. (2018) suggest several factors of SIMPEA such as emotional and motivational factors, in-group identification, group norms and goals, and collective efficacy.

Research for developing SIMPEA models is required, but only a few studies tested integrated and structured variable dynamics models. Wallis and Loy (2021) in Germany only regressed variables on SIMPEA without structured modeling. Wenzel and Süßbauer (2021) took the qualitative approach to explain SIMPEA in a German sample. Moreover, Li et al. (2019) proposed using SIMPEA for intervention formulation in China but did not prove the relationship dynamics between variables. This article presents empirical evidence on using SIMPEA to explain the effects of environmental group identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy on pro-environmental action among Indonesian students. We endeavor to elucidate the process, through which ordinary people develop collective identity, emotion, and efficacy in relation to environmental issues with the objective of inspiring them to engage in action. We intend to extend SIMPEA by adding shared reality as a catalyst. Shared reality is one's experience that forms a common inner state with others about the world (Echterhoff, 2012; Echterhoff & Higgins, 2018; Echterhoff et al., 2009). In the context of the environment, individuals can undergo nature-related experiences that were proven associated with pro-environmental behavior (Rosa et al., 2018). For example, Garza-Teran et al. (2022) found that people with similar experiences in natural environments, such as a nature excursion, tend to exhibit a strong connection with nature. Thus, the current study hypothesized that people sharing a common reality related to nature experiences may form a specific identity, emotion, and efficacy that can explain pro-environmental action. Prior to delineating the hypotheses, we provide a concise overview of the existing literature on identity, emotion, efficacy, shared reality, and pro-environmental action.

Identity

The first factor is group identification or identity. This study examines the identity of an environmentalist group, which is one of the aspects that exists and is inherent in a person and a trait that distinguishes one from others (Barker, 2008). SIMPEA presents a different perspective by systematically describing the variables of group identity that influence perceived environmental damage in large numbers over time (Fielding & Hornsey, 2016). Dono et al. (2010) found a significant effect between the environmentalist social identity and environmental activism. Shadiqi et al. (2022) reported that environmental self-identity mainly strongly predicts pro-environmental behavior on the issue of global warming in Indonesia. The SIMPEA model adopts the social identity model collective action, or SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2008). In this model, social identity as the central variable can directly influence collective action or be firstly mediated by group efficacy and group-based emotion on a political issue. Tausch et al. (2011) and Saab et al. (2015) explain that anger is a response to motivation to take unfair action in addition to the belief that problems can be solved collectively (group efficacy), which, thereby, increases the likelihood of one being

part of a group (group identity) to participate in an action. The theoretical model of SIMCA explains several important concepts that influence collective action: identity as a central factor, mediating effect of group-based anger as a response to injustice, and mediating effect of group efficacy as an instrumental motivation (van Zomeren et al., 2008). The novelty of the current research is its explanation of the dynamics of the major factor of SIMPEA, that is, social identity along with two types of identity. We examine environment movement (politicized) identity and environmentalist identity in our model, similar to that conducted by Xing et al. (2022). The study poses the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a (H_{1a}): Social identity predicts pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 1b (H_{1b}): Social identity predicts group-based anger.

Hypothesis 1c (H_{1c}): Social identity predicts group efficacy.

Emotion

The second factor in SIMPEA is emotion. We examine group-based anger, which is defined as an emotional experience or feeling experienced by individuals during the identification of social groups. They can also experience these emotions when separated from the group (Becker et al., 2011). According to Fritsche et al. (2018), this emotion is a predictor variable that influences pro-environmental action. In addition, the findings of van Zomeren et al. (2011) indicated that emotion, especially group-based anger, exerts a significant role in mediating collective action. This finding is in line with that of Steg and Vlek (2009), who posit that emotion and motivation trigger collective processes associated with three central variables of social identity, namely, in-group identification, collective efficacy beliefs, and in-group behavioral norms and goals. These variables interact in influencing the assessment of environmental crises and public responses in the private and public spheres. The current model also endeavors to analyze group-based anger in pro-environmental action on the basis of the SIMPEA model. Thus, we put forward the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2 (H_2): Group-based anger predicts pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 3 (H_3): Group-based anger mediates the relationship between social identity and pro-environmental action.

Efficacy

The last factor is group efficacy, which is a shared belief in the ability of the group to implement actions that produce certain levels of achievement (Bandura, 1997). Group efficacy is one of the predictors of the formation of pro-environmental action based on the SIMPEA (Fritsche et al., 2018). Early research on the SIMPEA regarding group efficacy depicts an increase in intention to engage in pro-environmental action in the public or private spheres with the increase in-group efficacy. The findings of Fritsche et al. (2018) confirm the role of group efficacy in motivating the intention to take pro-environmental action as proposed by SIMPEA. Leonard and Leviston (2017) state that group efficacy can indirectly increase the intention to engage in activities in the realm of consumption or pro-environment-based use at the private and civil

(public) levels. Lauren et al. (2016) also demonstrate that environmental identity was indirectly correlated with the intention of pro-environmental behavior activities, in which mediation by self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 4 (H_4): Group efficacy predicts pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 5 (H_5): Group efficacy mediates the relationship between social identity and pro-environmental action.

Integrative Pro-Environmental Action and Shared Reality Theory

The research model develops the theory of pro-environmental action based on the SIMPEA (Fritsche et al., 2018; Masson & Fritsche, 2021), which complements the SIMCA by Thomas et al. (2012) and van Zomeren et al. (2012, 2018). SIMPEA and SIMCA use integrative models that emphasize identity factors. van Zomeren (2015) extends SIMCA by adding moral conviction as a catalyst of identity factors. Alternatively, the current study proposes an alternative catalyst, namely, shared reality. We place shared reality as the primary catalyst and the identity factor as the central variable.

Tory Higgins introduced shared reality theory (SRT) in the 1990s (Echterhoff, 2012). Jost et al. (2008) use SRT to explain how and why people are motivated to unite and struggle to change the social status quo through relational processes. This study deems that this explanation can strengthen the argument that shared reality can be related to group efficacy in the fight against environmental problems. Moreover, the explanation that people who take collective action have shared interests, feel angry, believe they can make changes, and identify with relevant social groups strengthens this argument (McGarty et al., 2014). One motive of shared reality is the epistemic motive to overcome uncertainty (Echterhoff, 2012; Echterhoff et al., 2009), which can explain why people identify and join a group (Hogg & Rinella, 2018). The second motive of shared reality is the relational motive, which causes people to affiliate and feel connected to others (Echterhoff et al., 2009). An experiment by Huntsinger et al. (2009) found that the affiliation motive causes mood contagion. This concept forms the basis of the posited relationship in the current study between shared reality and emotion. Moreover, the study aims to determine the mediating effects of social identity, group-based angry emotion, and group efficacy on the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 6a (H_{6a}): Shared reality predicts social identity.

Hypothesis 6b (H_{6b}): Shared reality predicts group-based anger.

Hypothesis 6c (H_{6c}): Shared reality predicts group efficacy.

Hypothesis 7a (H_{7a}): Social identity mediates the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 7b (H_{7b}): Group-based anger mediates the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 7c (H_{7c}): Group efficacy mediates the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action.

Hypothesis 8a (H_{8a}): The relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action exerts parallel mediation via social identity and group-based anger.

Hypothesis 8b (H_{8b}): The relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action exerts parallel mediation via social identity and group efficacy.

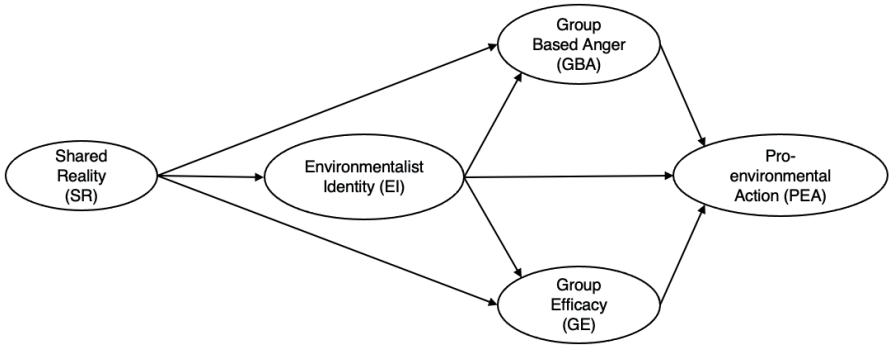
We chose Indonesian undergraduate students as a sample in Study 1 and Study 2. According to UNESCO, from 2008 to 2018, Indonesia had the highest number of undergraduate students in Southeast Asia (Salihu, 2020). The number of Indonesian undergraduate students has been increasing, reaching over nine million by 2022 (Rizaty, 2023). The increasing number of these students potentially increases environmental action. Research by van der Laarse (2016) indicated a growing environmental awareness among the young generation in Indonesia. In the study by Parker et al. (2018), more than 80% of 1,000 Indonesian youths identified themselves as environmentalists. In both studies, we gathered non-activist participants who had never experienced pro-environmental actions, such as protests. This was done to test how shared reality can shape the dynamics of predictors for action among participants who have no experience in pro-environmental action and no affiliation with specific environmental groups, such as the Save Meratus movement group. Hornsey et al. (2006) found that the factors influencing the intention to engage in collective action vary depending on whether the participants are affiliated with organizational groups or not.

Study 1: Pro-Environmental Action in the Public Sphere

Study 1 tests the theoretical model (Figure 1) in the context of an action to a local environmental problem, namely, Save Meratus, in South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. This action is a protest against the local government in the province because a company intends to exploit the Meratus Mountains Geopark. On October 15, 2019, local environmental organizations succeeded in winning a cassation that prohibited mining companies from exploiting the Meratus Mountains; however, according to Bernie (2020), the struggle to save this geopark will continue indefinitely. Study 1 uses the identity of the environmental movement and environmental collective action regarding Save Meratus.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model



Method

Participants and Design

This research uses quantitative methods with a correlational approach. It conducted a correlational survey research using Google Forms on June 14–28, 2020. The sample comprise students of several universities in the South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. Initially, we collected data from 475 respondents and eliminated 170 participants who were not students in the province. Finally, the sample consisted of 305 participants who were recruited using nonprobability sampling. Similar to Dono et al. (2010), we used a sample of university students aged 17 to 33 years (mean age 21.04 years; *SD* = 1.606). The sample included 114 (37.4%) males and 191 (62.6%) females; 289 (94.8%) Muslims and 16 (5.2%) people of other religions; 176 (57.7%) individuals were members of various organizations (e.g., civic, student, religious, and environmental) and 129 (42.3%) were not members of any organizations. All participants were enrolled at universities in South Kalimantan and were not affiliated with the Save Meratus movement group and never engaged in the Save Meratus action before. They also reported that never participated in other environmental actions, although they were aware of them.

Measurement

All measures were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The Appendix provides the details of all statements and the test results (Table A1). The self-reported questionnaire was in Bahasa Indonesia and consisted of research information, informed consent, instructions, measurements, and demographic data entries. The participants were briefed about the rescue action in one paragraph to help them understand the context prior to answering the questionnaire.

Shadiqi et al. (2018) developed the measure for collective action as a scale, which we modified to the environmental context. This tool determines whether a person wants to be involved in collective action to support the response to the Meratus rescue problem. 13 out of 15 items are valid and reliable (composite reliability = .945, Cronbach's alpha = .947), e.g., "Demonstration with peaceful speech." The measurement uses a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = *totally disagree* to 7 = *totally agree*).

Based on a scale by Shadiqi et al. (2018), the politicized identity scale in the environmental movement was developed in this study. The tool measures the identification of participants in the Save Meratus environmental movement using four valid and reliable items (composite reliability = .921, Cronbach's alpha = .917), e.g., "I see myself as part of the Save Meratus movement." Items were rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

The measure for group-based anger used four items from Shadiqi et al. (2018) for measuring angry emotions based on membership in a group. Psychometric analysis indicated that the four items were valid and reliable (composite reliability = .895, Cronbach's alpha = .886), e.g., "As part of a group, I felt angry with what other groups did to Meratus." Items were rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

Group efficacy was measured using three items from Shadiqi et al. (2018) for measuring one's belief in being part of a movement group to achieve a common goal. Analysis pointed out that the three items were valid and reliable (composite reliability = .940, Cronbach's alpha = .939), e.g., "In my view, our strength as a group can stop the Meratus problem." Items were rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

The shared reality scale was adapted from five items by Schmalbach et al. (2019) for measuring the description of shared experiences of inner states with a movement group (composite reliability = .958, Cronbach's alpha = .957), e.g., "I think that the members of the Save Meratus movement and I are on the same wavelength with regard to the Meratus case." Items were rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

Procedure and Data Analysis

The research began with a cross-cultural adaptation measure from English to Indonesian based on Beaton et al. (2000) for the shared reality scale, pro-environmental action, and environmentalist identity scale. This stage consisted of translation, synthesis, back-translation, expert assessment, and a pilot study. Afterward, we collected data through an online survey. All measures were evaluated via Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). We used structural equation modeling (SEM) with a maximum likelihood estimator through AMOS. We tested the full model using the indicators of each variable. The criteria used for model fit are as follows (Ghozali & Fuad, 2012; Hooper et al., 2008; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). The first one, chi-square (χ^2), is close to zero, $p > .05$. A large chi-square is associated with larger numbers of participants; however, the size of data increases with the increase in the chi-square (Wijanto, 2008), thus explaining the fit on 305 participants using only the chi-square value is difficult. The second is the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA), which should be close to zero or between .05 and .08. The criterion for a good model is a CI close to zero and no higher than .08 (Hooper et al., 2008). We also refer to the comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) with values > .90. The last one is standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) ≤ .08. We also added descriptive analysis and bivariate correlation to describe the data.

Results

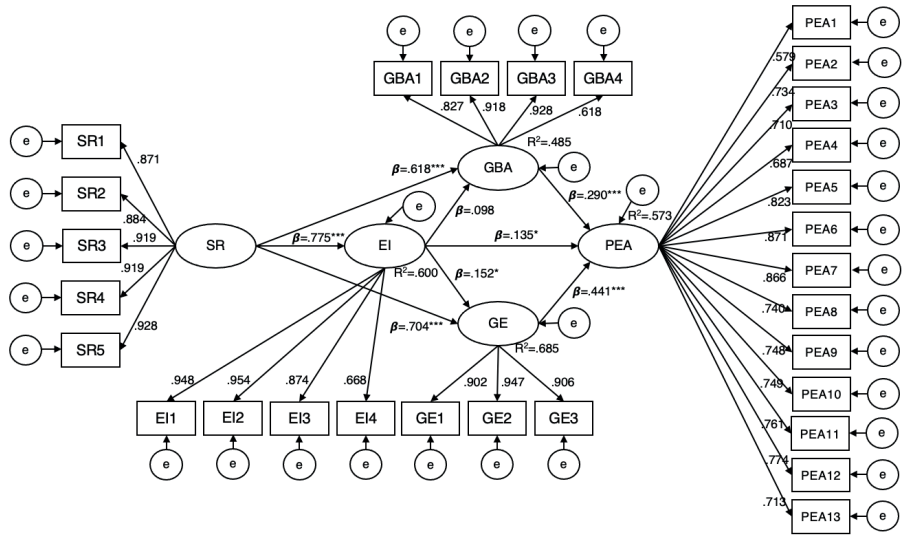
According to the correlation results (Table 1), the demographic factors of age and religion are not correlated with pro-environmental actions. However, organizational affiliation is positively correlated with pro-environmental action, and gender is negatively correlated with pro-environmental action. Based on the correlation coefficients, we found that shared reality, environmentalist identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy are positively correlated with pro-environmental action.

Table 1
Descriptive and Bivariate Correlation (Study 1)

Variable	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender	(Male = 1, Female = 2)		–	.033	–.126*	–.031	–.016	–.019	–.042	–.144*	–.037
Age	21.04	1.606		–	–.230**	–.043	–.044	–.004	–.012	–.066	–.021
Organizational affiliation	(Yes = 1, No = 0)				–	.023	.134*	.075	.043	.196**	.140*
Religion	(Muslim = 1, Non-Muslim = 0)					–	.068	–.001	–.018	.054	–.069
Group-based anger	5.20	1.259					–	.639**	.662**	.605**	.587**
Group efficacy	5.65	1.145						–	.792**	.647**	.723**
Shared reality	5.24	1.190							–	.657**	.794**
Environmental collective action	5.48	1.069								–	.607**
Environmental movement identity	4.98	1.274									–

Note. **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$

Figure 2
Results of Analysis on Full Model of SEM (Study 1)



Note. SR = shared reality, EI = environmentalist identity, GBA = group-based anger, GE = group efficacy, PEA = pro-environmental action. ***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

Based on the model in Figure 2, we find that the model fits the criteria well (χ^2/*df* = 2.620, CFI = .938; TLI = .930, RMSEA = .073, but GFI = .827 indicates a marginal fit, and no indication exists that the chi-square value meets the fit criterion ($\chi^2(359)$ = 940.505, p = .000). However, by considering the results of the test, the model can be considered a relatively good fit based on several criteria. For a number of indicators, we modify the model by correlating the error variance.

Analysis confirms that shared reality positively predicts environmental identity (β = .775, t = 11.769, p < .001; thus, $\mathbf{H_{6a}}$ is supported), group efficacy (β = .704, t = 10.795, p < .001; thus, $\mathbf{H_{6b}}$ is supported), and group-based anger (β = .618, t = 7.699, p < .001; $\mathbf{H_{6c}}$ is supported). The environmentalist identity only significantly predicts pro-environmental action (β = .135, t = 2.039, p = .041; $\mathbf{H_{1a}}$ is supported) and group efficacy (β = .152, t = 2.449, p = 014; thus, $\mathbf{H_{1c}}$ is supported) but not group-based anger ($\mathbf{H_{1b}}$ is rejected). Group-based anger (β = .290, t = 4.658, p < .001; $\mathbf{H_2}$ is supported) and group efficacy (β = .442, t = 5.874, p < .001; $\mathbf{H_4}$ is supported) positively predict pro-environmental action.

In the indirect effect, we performed bootstrapping with 1,000 iterations. Analysis confirmed that environmentalist identity (*indirect effect* = .073, 95% CI of B = [.015, .158], p =.042; $\mathbf{H_{7a}}$ is supported), group-based anger (*indirect effect* = .126, 95% CI of B = [.070, .205], p =.001; $\mathbf{H_{7b}}$ is supported), and group efficacy (*indirect effect* = .218, 95% CI of B = [.124, .321], p = .001; $\mathbf{H_{7c}}$ is supported) mediated the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action. Furthermore, group efficacy (*indirect effect* = .068, 95% CI of B = [.013, .142], p = .042; thus, $\mathbf{H_5}$ is supported) mediated the relationship between environmentalist identity and pro-environmental action. In parallel mediation, environmentalist identity and group efficacy (*indirect effect* = .037, 95% CI of B = [.008, .081], p = .038; $\mathbf{H_{8b}}$ is supported) mediated the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action. Other models of indirect effect proved nonsignificant ($\mathbf{H_3}$ and $\mathbf{H_{8a}}$ are rejected).

Brief Discussion of Study 1

This study examines the factors of pro-environmental action in the public sphere on the Save Meratus issue. Social identity is relatively weak in explaining pro-environmental action. Ordinary people feel more confident in the success (efficacy) of the group, such that they are more robust and want to be involved in supporting the Meratus rescue action. Only group efficacy mediates the relationship between politicized identity and pro-environmental action. On local issues, people build a shared reality regarding the similarity of their identity, emotion, and efficacy regarding emerging environmental issues. In Study 1, social identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy mediated the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action.

Study 2: Pro-Environmental Action in the Private Sphere

Study 2 intends to confirm the theoretical model in Figure 1. We tested the model in the context of environmental problems in general instead of specifically, as in Study 1. This test was conducted to ensure that the proposed theoretical model effectively explained the phenomenon of pro-environmental action in general. Study 2 uses a different type of identity, that is, environmentalist identity. We examine pro-environmental action in the private sphere.

Method

Participants and Design

This study used quantitative methods with a correlational approach. A correlational survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey[1] website from June 16 to August 12, 2021. The population was composed of students in South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. This study focused on ordinary people. Initially, we collected 311 data but eliminated eight participants who were not students in the province and 45 who participated in demonstrations/protests. The final sample comprised 258 participants aged 17 to 25 years who were identified using nonprobability sampling (mean age 20.04 years; *SD* = 1.303). The sample included 77 (29.8%) males and 181 (70.2%) females; 233 (90.3%) Muslims and 24 (19.7%) people of other religions; 167 (64.7%) individuals were members of various organizations (e.g., civic, student, religious, and environmental) and 91 (35.3%) were not members of any organizations. The participants were enrolled at universities in South Kalimantan and not affiliated with any environmental organization.

Measurement

All measures were subjected to CFA. The Appendix provides details of the statements and the results of the testing (Table A2). An online questionnaire was formulated in Bahasa Indonesia and consisted of research information, informed consent, instructions, measurements, and demographic data.

This study measured pro-environmental action using a scale by Eom et al. (2018), which intends to measures one's involvement in pro-environmental action in personal areas, such as recycling, energy and water conservation, and green purchasing, with 10 out of 16 valid and reliable items (composite reliability = .805, Cronbach's alpha = .812), e.g., "I collect and recycle waste paper." This measurement uses a five-point Likert type scale with agreement responses on items 1–4 (1= *totally agree* to 5 = *totally disagree*) and answers with a frequency of 5–10 (1 = *never* to 5 = *very often*).

The environmental identity scale uses measurements from Klas (2016) and determines one's identification with environmentalist groups using five valid and reliable items (composite reliability = .852, Cronbach's alpha = .861), e.g., "I am a person who considers environmentalists important." Items are rated using a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*).

[1] https://www.surveymonkey.com

The scales for group-based anger, group efficacy, and shared reality used the same measurement tools as those in Study 1 but in the context of environmentalist groups. CFA indicated that the three scales displayed satisfactory validity and reliability as follows: group-based anger (composite reliability = .908, Cronbach's alpha = .904), group efficacy (composite reliability = .881, Cronbach's alpha = .876), and shared reality (composite reliability = .868, Cronbach's alpha = .881).

Procedure and Data Analysis

The entire research procedure is the same as that of Study 1, and analysis also used the full-model SEM with the same estimators and model fit criteria as those in Study 1.

Results

The results (Table 2) demonstrate that gender, age, organizational affiliation, and religion are not correlated with pro-environmental action. Based on the correlation coefficients, we found that shared reality, environmentalist identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy are positively correlated with pro-environmental action.

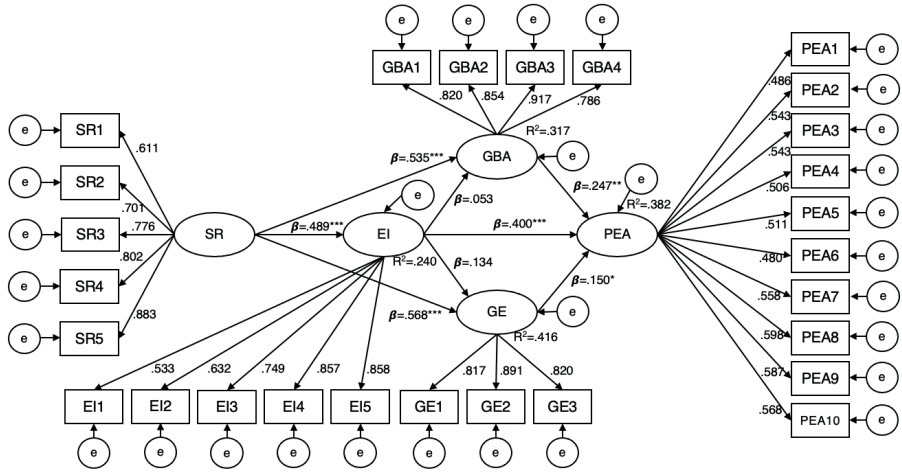
Table 2

Descriptive and Bivariate Correlation (Study 2)

Variable	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Gender	(Male = 1, Female = 2)		–	–.061	.086	.015	.037	.028	.085	.152*	.062
Age	20.040	1.303		–	–.325	–.001	.106	.013	.023	–.053	.048
Organizational affiliation	(Yes = 1, No = 0)				–	–.050	–.022	.193**	.032	.022	.083
Religion	(Muslim = 1, Non-Muslim = 0)					–	.060	.004	.025	.037	.040
Shared reality	5.288	.870					–	.465***	.511***	.546***	.462***
Environmentalist identity	4.917	1.031						–	.290***	.362***	.439***
Group-based anger	6.072	.951							–	.507***	.373***
Group efficacy	5.858	.879								–	.345***
Pro-environmental action	3.637	.604									–

Note. ***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

Figure 3
Analysis Result With Full-Model SEM (Study 2)



Note. SR = shared reality, EI = environmentalist identity, GBA = group-based anger, GE = group efficacy, PEA = pro-environmental action. ***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$.

Based on the model in Figure 3, we found that the model fits the criteria well ($\chi^2/df = 1.868$, CFI = .924; TLI = .914, RMSEA = .058; but GFI = .858 is a marginal fit, and no indication exists that the chi-square value meets the fit criteria ($\chi^2(312) = 582.921$, $p = .000$). However, by considering the results of the modeling test, the model can be considered a relatively good fit on several criteria. For a number of indicators, we modified the model by correlating the error variance.

In the model analysis, we prove that shared reality positively predicts environmental identity ($\beta = .489$, $t = 5.377$, $p < .001$; $\mathbf{H_{6a}}$ is supported), group efficacy ($\beta = .568$, $t = 6.806$, $p < .001$; $\mathbf{H_{6b}}$ is supported), and group-based anger ($\beta = .535$, $t = 6.183$, $p < .001$; $\mathbf{H_{6c}}$ is supported). Environmentalist identity only significantly predicts pro-environmental action ($\beta = .400$, $t = 4.142$, $p < .001$; $\mathbf{H_{1a}}$ is supported) but did not significantly predict group-based anger and group efficacy ($\mathbf{H_{1b}}$ and $\mathbf{H_{1c}}$ are rejected). Group-based anger ($\beta = .247$, $t = 3.269$, $p = .001$; $\mathbf{H_2}$ is supported) and group efficacy ($\beta = .150$, $t = 1.974$, $p = .048$; $\mathbf{H_4}$ is supported) positively predicts pro-environmental action.

In the indirect effect, we performed 1,000 bootstrapping. Analysis confirmed that environmentalist identity (*indirect effect* = .159, 95% CI of $B = [.088, .253]$, $p = .002$; $\mathbf{H_{7a}}$ is supported), group-based anger (*indirect effect* = .062, 95% CI of $B = [.054, .185]$, $p = .001$; $\mathbf{H_{7b}}$ is supported), and group-based anger (*indirect effect* = .069, 95% CI of $B = [.016, .143]$, $p = .048$; $\mathbf{H_{7c}}$ is supported) mediated the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action. The model of the indirect effect of others was confirmed to be nonsignificant ($\mathbf{H_3}$, $\mathbf{H_5}$, $\mathbf{H_{8a}}$, and $\mathbf{H_{8b}}$ are rejected).

Brief Discussion of Study 2

This study examines the factor dynamics of pro-environmental action in the private sphere. Shared reality catalyzed identity, emotion, and efficacy, which is consistent with previous findings. The effects of group-based factors (group-based anger and group efficacy) were weaker than those in Study 1 due to the private nature of pro-environmental action. Consistent with Study 1, environmentalist identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy mediated the relationship between shared reality and pro-environmental action.

General Discussion

Both studies demonstrate that the identity of the environmentalist group plays a significant role in pro-environmental action. Whitmarsh and O'Neill (2010) explained that individuals who merge themselves as environmentalists generally act in a manner that is beneficial to the environment. Based on these findings, the study proposes that people who fuse or define themselves, as part of an environmentalist group will also behave appropriately as a group member; an example of this notion is protecting the environment. Study 2 reveals that the regression coefficient of environmentalist identity is strongly related to the private sphere of pro-environmental action compared with that in Study 1. We deem that the underlying reason is that nonactivist behavior expresses environmental needs more gently and emphasizes perceptions of environmental responsibility and obligation for moral reasons (van der Werf et al., 2013). Study 1 demonstrated that individuals in the public sphere will participate in environmental activism to affirm their identity or relieve discomfort related to such an identity (Lacasse, 2016). Interestingly, the two studies found that the mediating effects of emotion and efficacy were nonsignificant in the relationship between social identity and pro-environmental action. The reason for these findings may be that the entire sample is composed of non-activists who have not yet formed a strong identity, in which the social identity process contributes to the success of the social influence approaches, such as collective behavior (Wenzel & Süßbauer, 2020). Therefore, another corroborating variable is required, that is, shared reality.

This study considers shared reality a catalyst that strengthens social identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy. People are encouraged to express their feelings, beliefs, and environmental concerns (Higgins et al., 2021). Shared reality can strengthen social identity, because individuals who share a social identity will exhibit the same attitudes, feelings, perceptions, and values; in other words, individuals will share the same reality (Hogg et al., 2017). This concept aligns with one of the motives of shared reality, that is, connecting with other people or fellow community members. Thus, individuals are motivated to build a shared reality with others to gain validation for their identities and experiences. In addition, the emotions of group members can coalesce, although these emotions do not have the same target (Echterhoff et al., 2009). Thus, group-based anger emerging from events related to social identity as a member of a particular group can become more robust due to the similarity of feelings among one another. Shared reality can be a catalyst that strengthens group efficacy

due to shared beliefs and concerns between group members. Through this belief, individuals believe that problems can be solved in a collective manner. People who do not join environmental groups can build common views, feelings, and thoughts with environmental groups, because of the shared reality that occurs in the environment that also impacts daily life.

Humans express a strong motivation to share their understanding of the world (Higgins et al., 2017); thus, in realizing environmental care behavior, environmental activists exert many efforts such as campaigns and pro-environmental movements. The availability of various facts about environmental problems, which are spread through various media, provides awareness for individuals about current environmental conditions, which ultimately enables individuals to understand the views, feelings, and thoughts of members of environmental groups. In addition, individuals can exhibit inner similarities with a group, because of the perceived relevance of a concept in the form of feelings, beliefs, or an evaluation. Moreover, the experiences a person can foster the truth felt in the inner state (Echterhoff & Higgins, 2018).

These findings confirm that individuals who share a common reality and display a strong identification with an environmentally conscious group and belief in collective efficacy lead individuals to engage in pro-environmental action. This shared identity fosters responsibility and affiliation, while confidence strengthens the belief in the effectiveness of collective effort. In this regard, group-based anger potentially motivates action through a shared sense of injustice or urgency. This finding is in line with that of previous studies (Brügger et al., 2020; Fielding & Hornsey, 2016; Landmann & Rohmann, 2020; Pong & Tam, 2023). The localized nature of the problem in Study 1 may lead to a strong sense of shared identity and urgency among group members, which may be fueled by group-based anger at local environmental injustices. Additionally, group efficacy plays a critical role in motivating collective action for addressing this specific problem. Shared reality in Study 2 is more general but continues to foster a sense of responsibility and affiliation with the broad environmental cause. Group efficacy still plays a key role in motivating individuals to believe in the effectiveness of their collective effort, while group-based anger may stem from broad environmental challenges such as climate change or biodiversity loss.

The study successfully replicated the core tenets of SIMCA, which reaffirms the significance of group-based variables, such as social identity, group-based anger, and group efficacy, in motivating collective action. However, we introduce a novel twist to this model by replacing the traditional morality variable with *shared reality* as a catalyst. The findings elucidate how the collective understanding of shared reality within the group can act as a potential driver of collective action. This shift, that is, from morality to shared reality, marks a pivotal contribution that emphasizes the role of a shared perception of reality within the group as a motivating force. This study extends and refines the SIMCA by offering fresh insights into how group dynamics and the shared understanding of reality within a group can fuel collective action aimed to address critical issues.

The study observed a notable divergence in the mediation of group efficacy between Study 1 (which tackled specific and localized issues, such as saving

Meratus) and Study 2 (which examined general environmental concerns). In Study 1, we observed that group efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between environmental identity and pro-environmental action in the public sphere. This finding underscores the potency of beliefs in-group efficacy in motivating actions in the public sphere when addressing highly localized environmental challenges, particularly within the context of a politicized identity or movement, in which urgency and collective efficacy are notable. Conversely, in Study 2, we explored general environmental issues but were unable to identify the mediating effect of group efficacy in the relationship between environmental identity and pro-environmental action in the private sphere. This distinction may be attributed to the nature of the environmentalist identity, which is broader and less movement-oriented than those of the politicized identity in Study 1. A possibility exists that individuals with a general environmentalist identity may be more reliant a diverse set of motivation, including personal values and external influences, when engaging in pro-environmental action in the private sphere. Therefore, these findings underscore the contextual and identity-specific nature of the mediating effect of group efficacy on the relationship between environmental identity and pro-environmental action.

The desire to take pro-environmental action is fueled by the collective belief that collaboration can lead to environmental improvement. A compelling case study is the Save Meratus movement, which was initiated in 2017, in conjunction with local environmental efforts. The movement achieved a significant milestone when the Supreme Court granted cassation to revoke the mining license of PT MCM on February 4, 2021. This success significantly boosted the confidence of the people in the efficacy of group movement to accomplish common environmental goals. Nash et al. (2019) further supported this notion by emphasizing that local communities frequently prioritize local environmental issues over other concerns. Notably, positive changes in specific environmental issues typically translate into positive overall evaluations of the environment as a whole. Consequently, such enhanced perceptions can motivate individuals to positively contribute to environmental causes.

This research is limited the examination of identity, efficacy, and emotion in relation to SIMPEA. However, many other potential factors can motivate people to engage in pro-environmental action, such as in-group norms and goals (Fritsche et al., 2018), other types of identity (Milfont et al., 2020), and socio-economic factors (Eom et al., 2018). In addition, future research should use other research methods, such as experimental ones, to confirm whether the variables under study exert causal effects. This study is also limited to a nonactivist sample; thus, different findings may be generated when testing the model on activists.

Conclusion

This study confirms the extended SIMPEA by adding variables of shared reality. Analysis indicated that shared reality can catalyze identity, emotion, and efficacy. When ordinary people share similar views on environmental issues with environmental movement groups and environmentalists, they will tend to strengthen social identity,

group-based anger, and group efficacy. Social identity is a weak central factor in the ordinary (nonactivist) group, and it cannot strengthen group-based anger and group efficacy. The mediating effects of identity, emotion, and efficacy were only significant when linking shared reality and pro-environmental action. This model can explain how ordinary people (who never participated in actions and are not members of environmental organizations) want to engage in pro-environmental action. This model can be utilized to comprehend the factors driving individuals to participate in environmental action spanning from local to global scales, including climate action initiatives conducted in both the public and private spheres.

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Appendix

Table A1

The Results of the CFA Test, Validity, and Reliability of Study 1

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
Pro-Environmental Action Scale					
PEA1. Demonstration with peaceful speech [*Demonstrasi disertai orasi damai*]	.578	.587	$\chi^2(58) = 170.054$, $p = .000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.932$ CFI = .969, TLI = .958, GFI = .926, RMSEA = .080 SRMR = .0374	Composite reliability = .945 Cronbach Alpha = .947	AVE = .574
PEA2. Signing a petition (either online or offline) [*Tanda tangan petisi (baik online atau offline)*]	.725	.747			
PEA3. Creating flyers containing information about the Meratus case [*Membuat selebaran yang berisikan informasi kasus Meratus*]	.713	.724			
PEA4. Distributing flyers containing information about the Meratus case [*Menyebar selebaran yang berisikan informasi kasus Meratus*]	.693	.703			
PEA5. Writing a letter and sending it to authorities (government leaders) [*Menulis surat dan mengirimkan kepada otoritas (pemimpin pemerintahan)*]	.835	.815			
PEA6. Making a support banner [*Membuat spanduk dukungan*]	.883	.855			
PEA7. Displaying a support banner [*Membentangkan spanduk dukungan*]	.878	.849			
PEA8. Raising funds [*Menggalang bantuan dana*]	.735	.697			
PEA9. Participating in informal discussion meetings [*Ikut serta pada pertemuan diskusi informal*]	.754	.746			
PEA10. Participating in formal discussion meetings (advocacy) with the government/other parties [*Ikut serta pada pertemuan diskusi formal (advokasi) dengan pemerintah/pihak lain*]	.761	.763			
PEA11. Inviting others (friends/family/close acquaintances) to participate in the Save Meratus Action [*Mengajak orang lain (teman/keluarga/kenalan dekat) untuk ikut serta pada Aksi Save Meratus*]	.755	.739			
PEA12. Spreading information about the action through social media (Line, etc.) [*Menyebarkan informasi aksi melalui media sosial (Line, dll)*]	.774	.751			

Table A1 Continued

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
PEA13. Participating in group religious activities to support Meratus (for example, group prayer sessions like Muslim Pray) [*Ikut kegiatan agama secara berkelompok demi mendukung Meratus (misalnya sholat istighosah bersama)*]	.708	.677	$\chi^2(58) = 170.054$, $p = .000$, $\chi^2/df = 2.932$ CFI = .969, TLI = .958, GFI = .926, RMSEA = .080 SRMR = .0374	Composite reliability = .945 Cronbach Alpha = .947	AVE = .574
Environmental Movement Identity Scale					
EI1. I see myself as part of the Save Meratus movement [*Saya memandang diri saya sebagai bagian dari anggota pergerakan Save Meratus*]	.946	.894	$\chi^2(2) = 4.103$, $p = .129$, $\chi^2/df = 2.052$, CFI = .998, TLI = .994, GFI = .994, RMSEA = .059 SRMR = .0084	Composite reliability = .921 Cronbach Alpha = .917	AVE = .749
EI2. I identify myself as a member of the Save Meratus movement [*Saya mengidentifikasikan diri saya sebagai anggota dari pergerakan Save Meratus*]	.961	.895			
EI3. I feel a strong bond with the Save Meratus movement group [*Saya merasa memiliki ikatan yang kuat dengan kelompok pergerakan Save Meratus*]	.875	.838			
EI4. I am proud of the Save Meratus movement group [*Saya bangga dengan kelompok pergerakan Save Meratus*]	.640	.628			
Group-Based Anger Scale					
GBA1. As part of a group, I felt angry with what other groups did to Meratus [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa geram dengan apa yang dilakukan oleh kelompok lain pada Meratus*]	.825	.751	$\chi^2(1) = .004$, $p = .947$, $\chi^2/df = .004$, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.007, GFI = 1.000, RMSEA = .000 SRMR = .0005	Composite reliability = .895 Cronbach Alpha = .886	AVE = .687
GBA2. As part of the group, I felt angry about the behavior of other groups that have threatened Meratus [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa marah dengan perilaku kelompok lain yang telah mengancam Meratus*].	.932	.833			
GBA3. As part of the group, I felt frustrated by the Meratus issue caused by other groups [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa kesal dengan masalah Meratus yang ditimbulkan oleh kelompok lain*].	.918	.861			
GBA4. As part of the group, I felt unhappy about the Meratus issue [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa tidak senang dengan masalah Meratus*].	.596	.595			

Table A1 Continued

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
Group Efficacy Scale					
GE1. In my view, our strength as a group can stop the Meratus problem [*Dalam pandangan saya, kekuatan kita sebagai kelompok dapat menghentikan masalah Meratus*]	.887	.863	$\chi^2(1) = 1.574$, $p = .210$, $\chi^2/df = 1.574$, CFI = .999, TLI = .998, GFI = .997, RMSEA = .043 SRMR = .0051	Composite reliability = .940 Cronbach Alpha = .939	AVE = .839
GE2. I believe that collective efforts can successfully prevent the Meratus problem [*Saya berpikir bahwa upaya bersama dapat berhasil mencegah masalah Meratus*]	.968	.908			
GE3. Our unity becomes strong as a group and can bring about many changes together [*Persatuan kita menjadi kuat sebagai kelompok dan dapat banyak perubahan secara bersama-sama*].	.891	.858			
Shared Reality Scale					
SR1. I think that the members of the Save Meratus movement and I are on the same wavelength with regard to the Meratus case [*Saya pikir anggota pergerakan Save Meratus dan saya berada pada gelombang pikiran yang sama terkait dengan kasus Meratus*].	.848	.866	$\chi^2(3) = 3.871$, $p = .276$, $\chi^2/df = 1.290$, CFI =.999, TLI = .998, GFI = .995, RMSEA = .031 SRMR = .0062	Composite reliability = .958 Cronbach Alpha = .957	AVE = .816
SR2. I feel the same way about the Meratus case as members of the Save Meratus movement [*Saya merasakan hal yang sama tentang kasus Meratus seperti anggota pergerakan Save Meratus*].	.864	.877			
SR3. I agree with the perspective of members of the Save Meratus movement regarding the Meratus case [*Saya setuju dengan sudut pandang anggota pergerakan Save Meratus mengenai kasus Meratus*].	.936	.882			
SR4. Members of the Save Meratus movement and I see the Meratus case in the same way [*Anggota pergerakan Save Meratus dan saya melihat kasus Meratus dengan cara yang sama*].	.943	.881			
SR5. I agree with the perception of members of the Save Meratus movement about the Meratus case [*Saya setuju dengan persepsi anggota pergerakan Save Meratus tentang kasus Meratus*].	.921	.892			

Note. SLF = standardized loading factor, CITC = corrected item total correlation, RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation, GFI = goodness-of-fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker–Lewis index, AVE = average variance extracted, Bahasa version of items in given in square brackets.

Table A2

The Results of the CFA Test, Validity, and Reliability of Study 2

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
Pro-Environmental Action Scale					
PEA1. I collect and recycle waste paper [*Saya mengumpulkan dan mendaur ulang kertas bekas*]	.491	.522	$\chi^2(34)$ = 63.965, p = .001, χ^2/df = 1.881, CFI =.951, TLI = .935, GFI = .952, RMSEA = .059	Composite reliability = .805 Cronbach Alpha =.812	AVE = .293
PEA2. I collect empty bottles for the recycling process [*Saya mengumpulkan botol-botol kosong untuk proses daur ulang sampah*]	.559	.577			
PEA3. I often discuss environmental problems with friends [*Saya sering berbincang dengan teman-teman tentang masalah-masalah yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan*]	.532	.493			
PEA4. In the past, I have reminded someone of their environmentally damaging behavior [*Di masa lalu, saya pernah mengingatkan seseorang atas perilaku merusak lingkungan yang dilakukannya*]	.465	.413			
PEA5. When you visit a grocery store, how often do you use reusable bags? [*Saat Anda mengunjungi toko bahan makanan, seberapa sering Anda menggunakan tas yang dapat digunakan kembali?*]	.509	.433			
PEA6. How often do you eat organic food? [*Seberapa sering Anda makan makanan organik?*]	.483	.430			
PEA7. How often do you eat local food (produced within 161 km or 100 miles)? [*Seberapa sering Anda makan makanan lokal (diproduksi dalam jarak 161 km atau 100 mil)?*]	.559	.486			
PEA8. How often do you turn off your personal electronic devices or put them in low-power mode when not in use? [*Seberapa sering Anda mematikan alat elektronik pribadi Anda atau dalam mode daya rendah saat tidak digunakan?*]	.609	.518			
PEA9. When buying light bulbs, how often do you purchase high-efficiency energy-saving bulbs? [*Saat membeli bola lampu, seberapa sering Anda membeli bola lampu hemat energi dengan efisiensi tinggi?*]	.615	.533			

Table A2 Continued

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
PEA10. How often do you take actions to conserve water when showering, doing laundry, washing dishes, watering plants, or using water for other purposes? [*Seberapa sering Anda melakukan tindakan untuk menghemat air pada saat mandi, mencuci baju, mencuci piring, menyiram tanaman atau penggunaan air lainnya?]*	.574	.493	$\chi^2(34) = 63.965$, $p = .001$, $\chi^2/df = 1.881$, CFI =.951, TLI = .935, GFI = .952, RMSEA = .059	Composite reliability = .805 Cronbach Alpha =.812	AVE = .293
Environmentalist Identity Scale					
EI1. I am a person who considers environmentalists important [*Saya adalah orang yang menganggap para pecinta lingkungan penting*]	.512	.512	$\chi^2(3) = 4.499$, $p = .222$, $\chi^2/df = 1.500$, CFI =.998, TLI = .992, GFI = .993, RMSEA = .044	Composite reliability = .852 Cronbach Alpha = .861	AVE = .544
EI2. I am someone known as an environmentalist [*Saya adalah orang yang dikenal sebagai pecinta lingkungan*]	.641	.674			
EI3. I am someone who feels a strong connection with environmentalists [*Saya adalah orang yang merasakan ikatan yang kuat dengan pecinta lingkungan*]	.755	.732			
EI4. I am someone who is proud to be part of environmentalists [*Saya adalah orang yang bangga menjadi bagian dari pencinta lingkungan*]	.847	.733			
EI5. I am someone who sees myself as part of environmentalists [*Saya adalah orang yang melihat diri saya sebagai bagian dari pecinta lingkungan*]	.872	.749			
Group-Based Anger Scale					
GBA1. As part of a group, I felt angry with what other groups did to damage the environmental [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa geram dengan apa yang dilakukan oleh kelompok lain yang merusak lingkungan*]	.812	.778	$\chi^2(2) = 8.568$, $p = .014$, $\chi^2/df = 4.284$, CFI =.991, TLI = .972, GFI = .985, RMSEA = .113	Composite reliability = .908 Cronbach Alpha = .904	AVE = .713
GBA2. As part of the group, I felt angry about the behavior of other groups that have threatened the sustainability of the environment. [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa marah dengan perilaku kelompok lain yang telah mengancam kelestarian lingkungan*]	.847	.786			
GBA3. As part of the group, I felt frustrated by the environmental damage caused by other groups [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa kesal dengan masalah kerusakan lingkungan yang ditimbulkan oleh kelompok lain*]	.929	.856			

Table A2 Continued

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
GBA4. As part of the group, I felt unhappy about the environmental damage issue [*Sebagai bagian kelompok, saya merasa tidak senang dengan masalah kerusakan lingkungan*]	.782	.738	$\chi^2(2) = 8.568$, $p = .014$, $\chi^2/df = 4.284$, CFI =.991, TLI = .972, GFI = .985, RMSEA = .113	Composite reliability = .908 Cronbach Alpha = .904	AVE = .713
Group Efficacy Scale					
GE1. In my view, the strength of the group can stop environmental problems [*Dalam pandangan saya, kekuatan kelompok dapat menghentikan masalah lingkungan*]	.823	.749	$\chi^2(1) = .494$, $p = .482$, $\chi^2/df = .494$, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.004, GFI = .999, RMSEA = .000	Composite reliability = .881 Cronbach Alpha = .876	AVE = .712
GE2. I believe that collective efforts with the group can succeed in carrying out pro-environment actions [*Saya berpikir bahwa upaya bersama kelompok dapat berhasil dalam melaksanakan aksi pro-lingkungan*]	.905	.810			
GE3. The unity of the group becomes strong as one group, and can bring about many changes in the environment [*Persatuan kelompok menjadi kuat sebagai satu kelompok, dan dapat membawa banyak perubahan dalam lingkungan*]	.823	.736			
Shared Reality Scale					
SR1. I think that the members of environmentalist group and I are on the same wavelength with regard to environmental problem [*Saya pikir anggota kelompok pecinta lingkungan dan saya berada pada gelombang pikiran yang sama terkait dengan masalah lingkungan*]	.589	.624	$\chi^2(3) = 3.929$, $p = .269$, $\chi^2/df = 1.310$, CFI =.999, TLI = .996, GFI = .994, RMSEA = .035	Composite reliability = .868 Cronbach Alpha = .881	AVE = .572
SR2. I feel the same way about the environmental problem as members of environmentalist group [Saya merasakan hal yang sama tentang masalah lingkungan seperti anggota kelompok pecinta lingkungan]	.673	.741			
SR3. I agree with the perspective of members of the environmentalist group regarding the environmental problem [*Saya setuju dengan sudut pandang anggota kelompok pecinta lingkungan mengenai masalah lingkungan*]	.777	.729			

Table A2 Continued

Indicator	SLF (> .40)	CITC (> .40)	Fit Model Indices	Reliability (> .70)	Validity (> .50)
SR4. Members of the environmentalist group and I see the environmental problem in the same way [*Anggota kelompok pecinta lingkungan dan saya melihat masalah lingkungan dengan cara yang sama*]	.802	.714	$\chi^2(3) = 3.929$, $p = .269$, $\chi^2/df = 1.310$, CFI =.999, TLI = .996, GFI = .994, RMSEA = .035	Composite reliability = .868 Cronbach Alpha = .881	AVE = .572
SR5. I agree with the perception of members of the environmentalist group about the environmental problem [*Saya setuju dengan persepsi anggota kelompok pecinta lingkungan tentang masalah lingkungan*]	.903	.770			

Note. SLF = standardized loading factor, CITC = corrected item total correlation, RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation, GFI = goodness-of-fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker–Lewis index, AVE = average variance extracted, Bahasa version of items in given in square brackets.

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ARTICLE

Unearthing the Role of Cultural Perception in Homeownership Behavior: A Conceptual Exploration

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ABSTRACT
Homeownership, viewed as a form of economic behavior, warrants a comprehensive examination considering individual perspectives. This study seeks to redefine cultural perception as an additional variable that extends the influential Theory of Planned Behavior, which serves as the foundational framework for studies in economic behavior. It presents a conceptual framework introducing the pivotal concept of cultural perception in the analysis of homeownership, drawn from an extensive literature review in economics and housing. The study delves into the notions of cultural dimensions, norms rooted in culture, homeownership, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), addressing the existing gap regarding the "cultural influence" within the TPB framework. Furthermore, this study introduces a novel perspective by expanding TPB by incorporating perception variables linked to cultural values, forming a synthesis of economics, cultural, and psychological disciplines. A metric for assessing perception concerning cultural values is also proposed to effectively encapsulate the essence of the homeownership concept. This study is anticipated to augment the precision and comprehensiveness of investigations into the dynamics of homeownership behavior, and thus enrich the behavioral literature by integrating ideas from diverse disciplines.

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homeownership behavior, norms in culture, cultural perception, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), redefinition

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Introduction

Homeownership is commonly examined from a macroeconomic perspective. Observations regarding the housing market conditions, property price dynamics, and affordability issues have garnered significant attention from scholars. Homeownership is an exciting field of economics that deserves exploration from various angles, including behavioral economics, and ideally, should go beyond them (Adu-Gyamfi, 2020). The modern economic dynamics associated with changes in the housing market, income levels, transportation accessibility, ease of mobility, and residential preferences have undergone substantial shifts, particularly in densely populated urban areas. For example, in the United Kingdom (UK), only 30% of households remain hopeful about the possibility of homeownership today (Luu & Tonthat, 2022, p. 3).

Similarly, in the United States (US), it is projected that by 2040, the percentage of homeowners will decrease from 64.7% to 62.2%, marking a reduction of approximately 2.5%. The disparity between homeowners and renters is expected to widen by roughly 12.6% (Goodman & Zhu, 2021). It is noteworthy that under normal circumstances, homeownership should increase alongside population growth and the formation of new households. Consequently, research with such micro perspectives warrants a place in homeownership literature.

From this perspective, homeownership is viewed as a multifaceted behavior that is influenced by several factors. At this stage, an analysis of housing decisions still needs to involve economic, sociological, and psychological considerations (Lindblad et al., 2017). This approach aligns with the assertion of Hew et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of a comprehensive framework that delved into the inner workings of individuals before they ultimately decide to own or rent a home. Nevertheless, since the study of homeownership behavior falls under micro-observation, it necessitates the inclusion of a psychological perspective (Marsh & Gibb, 2011; Rohe & Lindblad, 2013). The psychological viewpoint contains statements of behavioral tendencies, emotional responses, thought patterns, social interactions, and other external influences.

The popular theories explored for observations focusing on these five aspects are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). These theories have been employed in various observational fields, including elucidating the phenomenon of homeownership. Research on home purchasing behavior, decisions to relocate, and house financing motivations often apply both theories. For example, Lindblad et al. (2017) utilized TPB in their analysis of first-time homebuying. Cohen

et al. (2009) used TPB to expound on household decisions to transition from renting to homeownership. Liadi and Tapamose (2021) examined homeownership intention issues based on TPB. Additionally, Al-Nahdi, Habib, et al. (2015) tested TPB to explain the phenomenon of real estate purchasing.

There is a strong indication that future research on homeownership necessitates a more comprehensive analysis from this micro perspective. Cultural considerations and beliefs can emerge as pivotal components in analyzing homeownership behavior. The absence of these elements may lead prospective homeowners to make decisions that only account for a partial set of internal and external factors. Consequently, the conducted analysis needs to be more comprehensive. However, research on homeownership that implemented TPB and TRA have yet to incorporate these variables into their studies, often limiting their exploration to default variables, as recommended by these theories. The central variables in both approaches are attitude, subjective norms, and behavior intention.

While TRA and TPB have been well-received and tested in several studies that focused on homeownership, however, they did not incorporate cultural and belief-related considerations into their elements. Lindblad et al. (2017) explained that external factors influencing specific behavioral decisions are known as "actual control." Actual control differs from perceived control behavior, but its presence can be accommodated by TPB (Ajzen, 2012). For example, Al-Nahdi, Nyakwende, et al. (2015) incorporated financial aspects into actual control. It is believed that the influence of actual control factors on homeownership deserves consideration and observation. Cohen et al. (2009) included race as one of the actual controls that moderated perceived behavioral control (PBC). Additionally, Liadi and Tapamose (2021) used the ease of owning landed properties to indicate perceived control. Integrating cultural values and belief factors, as one of the actual controls into the exploration of TPB is an area that has yet to see significant development.

Indeed, many actions are influenced by an individual's culture or beliefs, including the decision to own a home. In this context, cultural factors are related to enduring beliefs or values that are ingrained and influential, reinforcing cognitive preferences and decision-making behavior (Alesina & Giuliano, 2015). A relevant example of this understanding is that many countries considered homeownership as a "sort of obligation" for those who are married. A growing cultural norm suggests that when individuals get married, they should aim to own a home, and if they are incapable, the marriage might be postponed (Mulder & Wagner, 2001). Cultural influences also play a role in homeownership, especially for young people who live with homeowner parents, as they aspire to become homeowners themselves (Choi et al., 2019; Sangkakoon et al., 2014). Additionally, homeownership is viewed as a form of moral responsibility that is typically expected to be fulfilled after marriage (Zuhrah et al., 2021).

The earlier mentioned references underscore the influence of cultural factors on homeownership behavior. While previous studies, albeit limited in number and not exploring TRA and TPB, have identified a connection between cultural factors and homeownership decisions. Interestingly, the relationship between cultural aspects and homeownership decisions has yet to be observed for phenomena in developing

countries (Adu-Gyamfi, 2020). Huber and Schmidt (2019) and Marcén and Morales (2020) concluded that cultural proxies significantly influenced homeownership decisions for immigrants. Lu and Chen (2006) found evidence that cultural norm proxies had a more pronounced impact on tenure choices among family heads with relatively low educational backgrounds. Additionally, Adegoke et al. (2016) stated that homeownership among women in Nigeria was influenced, in part, by cultural and traditional considerations.

This study aims to extend the concept of TPB in explaining homeownership behavior to achieve a consensus on the findings of the abovementioned studies. A proposed novel idea to enhance the comprehensiveness of TPB is the inclusion of cultural concept, which can be added as an "actual control", as posited by Ajzen (2012). While TRA and TPB form the conceptual foundation of this study, the focus is exclusively on extending TPB. It is contended that incorporating the role of actual control into the TPB framework inherently expands TRA. In chronological terms, TPB was formulated later than TRA. In essence, TPB is constructed upon the foundation of TRA by introducing the additional factor of PBC (Chatzisarantis & Biddle, 1998). Proposing a model that integrates actual control, represented by cultural norms, into TPB would offer a higher level of comprehensiveness than merely introducing this factor into TRA.

This addition is believed to elucidate actual homeownership behavior, particularly in countries with robust traditions that consistently uphold culture in the dynamics of global life. The subsequent section of this paper will expound on the term "cultural", its dimensions, and coverage. Finally, the concluding section will present the relationship between culture within the TPB framework.

Homeownership Concept

Homeownership is not solely confined to the act of purchasing a house. This terminology has been widely understood and forms the basis of analysis in many studies. The assumption that buying a house equates to owning a home is only sometimes accurate. The home purchasing phenomenon has shown that some houses are bought not for dwelling, as is the essence of a home. Houses are acquired solely as a profitable commodity. Therefore, homeownership cannot be adequately equated with mere house buying. The concept of homeownership is further elucidated in the following paragraph.

The terms home and homeownership in existing social literature should be more broadly defined consistently (Proxenos, 2002). Conceptual definitions and interpretations of the term level of homeownership should be prepared as clearly as possible to be used as a reliable measure (Bessant & Johnson, 2013). Some examples of the different homeownership concepts included the following. Firstly, homeownership is defined as the number of households that own a house divided by the number of houses (Moore, 1991). Moore specifically used this comparison between the number of households, and the number of houses to measure the level of homeownership.

Apart from being defined by property rights and placement, several other works of literature only used the recognition of property rights to be categorized as homeownership. In other words, it is not stated that the house should be occupied to be considered as homeownership. For example, B. Wang et al. (2021) and Y. Wang (2023) defined homeownership as residential property owned by individuals or their spouses. When household members (including an individual) hold property rights to the house, they are referred to as the homeowners (Sun et al., 2022). An individual becomes an owner if they are the registered owner of a property designated as a single-family residence, condo, or duplex (Hall & Yoder, 2022). Furthermore, a study by Cigdem and Whelan (2017) was more inclined to use this concept. Homeownership is defined as ownership with or without a mortgage, and it is direct ownership.

Integrating the concepts of "home" and "ownership," coupled with exploring the various homeownership applications, resulted in this study's crucial ownership construct. The central focus of this investigation revolved around homeownership, consisting of both the legal aspects of ownership and habitation (Burke, 1998; C.-O. Chang & Chen, 2018; Yates & Bradbury, 2010). Homeownership represents a proactive step taken by a household to secure lodging, accompanied by documented proof of ownership, and thus granting the owner complete authority over its use for personal and communal purposes. This study underscored three essential aspects of homeownership, distinguishing it from the prevailing paradigm: (a) tangible existence of the dwelling as the culmination of this effort; (b) adherence to the legal prerequisites of property ownership; and (c) utilization of the abode. These three components are crucial in defining homeownership. Consequently, if a household possesses a residence that remains unoccupied, choosing instead to dwell in a rented space, this research contends that such a household cannot be classified as a homeowner.

Homeownership Intention

The discussion on intention is crucial for this study. As van der Hoek (2007) noted there was a need for a clear consensus on what intention exactly means. Each study offers its definition. Essentially, van der Hoek (2007) pointed out that intention was tied to our mental state and could not be looked at in isolation from other factors. It aligns with Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) idea that three things shaped intention: individual attitudes, social norms, and various factors influencing perceived control. These three factors are subjective probabilities that motivate behavior. Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) concept has been widely used in intention studies, such as studies by Godin et al. (2005), Kasri and Chaerunnisa (2022), and many others.

Shaffer (1976) defined intention as a mental plan of action that could be more or less clear in guiding one to behave. Due to this ambiguity, some studies should correct the mistakes by equating intentions with expectations (Warshaw & Davis, 1985). However, they are distinct. Behavioral intention is how determined a person is to carry out, or not carry out a particular behavior in the future. Intention refers to a person's likelihood of engaging in specific behaviors (Ajzen & Fisbbein, 1974; Warshaw & Davis, 1985).

Hancher (1972) categorized intention into three types. Firstly, programmed intention is a concept, or plan in a person's mind. This intention is visible once the person acts on it later. Therefore, Hancher (1972) explained that an active intention was observable from the actions taken. From active intentions, others can discern the true intentions behind the behavior. Thirdly, the ultimate intention aims to bring about a specific outcome. Briefly, the impulse to take action leads to a result.

According to Hancher (1972), ultimate intention is closer to the concept of active intention, making it the preferred approach for explaining intention. The urge to take action, as seen in ultimate intention, can be applied to concepts like purchase intention, as defined by Yüksel (2016) and Hsu and Tsou (2011) concerning a consumer's intent to buy a product in the future. Hsu and Tsou (2011) argued that the strength of one's determination also affected the likelihood of carrying out a behavior. Additionally, a more recent view on intention comes from Bananuka et al. (2019). They defined intention as the determination to try to carry out a behavior.

Considering these various perspectives on intention, the key takeaway for explaining homeownership intention is the individuals' mental and psychological state, which impacts their determination to follow through with their plan through actions. Therefore, homeownership intention is an overall picture of individuals' mental and psychological state that shapes how determined they are to own a home, even in the face of various obstacles they may encounter. To sum up, homeownership intention encompasses both internal and external support. Internal support comes from mental and psychological conditions and abilities, while external support comes from motivation from people and the environment.

Cultural Definition

In the realm of social science literature, several definitions of culture exist. One of the earliest cultural definitions was put forth by Tylor in his book *Primitive Culture* (1871). In its nascent stages, this definition of culture primarily emphasized non-material aspects. Notably, this perspective was echoed by scholars, such as Bidney (1944), Steward (1956), Linton (1936, p. 88), Wissler (1920), and Aberle et al. (1950). They asserted that culture encompassed non-material entities, including knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, skills, habits, spiritual practices, magical beliefs, astrology, children's games, proverbs, nursery rhymes, traditional endurance, sacrificial rites, emotional and imitative language, the art of counting, and rites or ceremonies. This also included all forms of culture shared characteristics that make them subject to acquisition through learning (Hockett, 1950), transmission across generations (Linton, 1936, p. 98), dissemination, and application within a confined community.

White (1959) further expanded Linton's (1936) concept of culture. The definition of culture is the term given to a particular order or class of phenomena. The phenomenon can be in the form of objects and events, resulting from unique human manipulation abilities. Culture consists of material objects, such as tools and decorations, and intangible aspects, such as beliefs and attitudes within specific communities. It is a complex mechanism that governs human survival and existence. In this context,

it can be considered that the house has become a part of material culture. There is a connection between home and culture. For example, there is a cultural influence on the form or structure of the house. On the other hand, a house is designed by involving the culture developed by the owner (Pedersen et al., 1988).

While sometimes complementary, various perspectives on culture can also be contradictory. However, culture generally manifests as a social characteristic encompassing non-material elements (actions, habits, behaviors, beliefs, and religions), and material elements (buildings, tools, amulets). Culture is transmitted and cultivated within a specific community, giving rise to a distinct system of social life. Briefly, a relevant concept within the context of homeownership that accommodates all these conceptions is known as the "cultural-based norms" (Ackerman & Tellis, 2001). This concept refers to aligning values and norms inherited within a community, and the chosen behavior. Individuals will adopt a behavior if it aligns with the values and norms, they perceive that is appropriate within their community's culture. Furthermore, this concept can be utilized to explore the cultural influence on homeownership.

Cultural-Based Norms on Homeownership

Cultural-based norms are apt for analyzing the influence of cultural perceptions on homeownership for several reasons. Firstly, homeownership can be differentiated based on the traditions observed within a particular community. For example, in a country where owning a home is considered a cultural norm for married individuals, it would not be seen as peculiar or even a cultural transgression if a married couple chooses to reside with their parents. Conversely, a married couple may not be culturally unconventional to live with their parents in specific communities. Secondly, homeownership is a complex form of behavior influenced by various factors. Therefore, in open-minded societies, the housing tenure choice often has greater flexibility. Individuals may opt to reside in condominiums, container homes, communal living arrangements, or even motor or mobile homes. Conversely, in traditional and more closed societies, the options for housing tenure may be limited to owning a standalone landed house. Homeownership is significantly influenced by specific customs and practices within a community as part of its cultural fabric.

Homeownership, a process that spans days or even years, includes cultural considerations as a significant factor. Religion is among the cultural aspects increasingly garnering scholarly attention as a representation of homeownership. Borchgrevink and Birkvad (2022) examined the influence of Muslim's culture on homeownership in Norway, particularly concerning the Islamic prohibition of usury (*riba*) among a group of professional Muslim women in Oslo, Norway. Their analysis delved into intergenerational disparities, gender dynamics, and transnational dimensions. Their study concluded that these experienced women regard the issue of usury as a sacred prohibition outlined in the Qur'an, which subsequently constrains their access to housing loans.

Adu-Gyamfi (2020) discerned distinct patterns of religious influence on homeownership, emphasizing that religious beliefs and practices hold profound significance in individuals' lives. Ghana's profoundly ingrained cultural phenomenon asserted that homeownership was not solely contingent on one's income or tangible resources. Instead, abstract factors, including blessings from the gods also played a crucial role in determining homeownership.

Qureshi (2020) posited that homeownership often symbolized a tangible manifestation of success for immigrants. The diverse origins and racial backgrounds within a community are also pivotal aspects of the cultural dimensions of homeownership. In Norway, immigrants are categorized into Muslim and non-Muslim groups, and Qureshi (2020) proceeded to estimate the current number of private residences in each selected community or racial group. The data indicated that Muslim immigrant communities (except those from Pakistan and Turkey) exhibited a relatively lower inclination to acquire bank debt for homeownership compared to non-immigrants and non-Muslim immigrants (e.g., Vietnamese). Ultimately, it was concluded that the likelihood of becoming a homeowner is influenced by considerations of social status and adherence to religious norms in the housing procurement process.

Ntah and Forgha (2018) elucidated that cultural disparities that stemmed from ethnic diversity in a particular geographical area were believed to contribute to discrepancies in homeownership opportunities. For example, Das et al. (2019) observed the diverse ethnic landscape in India, whereby caste and ethnic distinctions interplayed, highlighting the relevance of exploring the role of demographic factors in tenure selection decisions. They discovered significant variations in homeownership opportunities across states with distinct cultural characteristics, and within districts within a given state. Moreover, homeownership opportunities in India exhibited disparities based on gender, caste, and creed.

Marcén and Morales (2020) underscored the impact of culture, encapsulated in preferences and beliefs, on homeownership, which was proxied by the region of origin of the homeowner. They posited that each immigrant's region of origin harbored specific preferences and beliefs that positively and substantially influenced homeownership. Huber and Schmidt (2019) further provided evidence that the preferences and homeownership culture of the parents' region of origin were inherited by the second generation (children) and influenced their homeownership decisions. In summation, compelling evidence supports the assertion that culture significantly shapes decisions regarding homeownership (Lennartz et al., 2016).

Cultural Perception Measurement

Referring to the previously outlined concept of cultural perception, the metric of measurement known as "cultural-based norms" was employed. In a different context, the measurement metric developed by Najib et al. (2022) could be considered as one of the options for assessing cultural-based norms perception. They measured cultural perception using three indicators: attention to social values within the community,

influence of tradition, and customary practices. Furthermore, they utilized this measurement in the context of organic food purchasing behavior. They constructed this metric based on Hofstede's (2001) well-known and wide-ranging measures of popular culture perception.

Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions encompassed individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and femininity. Najib et al. (2022) constructed the cultural perception metric with a focus on the collectivism dimension. Collectivism/individualism are among the most substantial dimensions that shape consumer behavior (Husted & Allen, 2008). Collectivism pertains to what is deemed permissible, or should be disregarded by community members. It also elucidates how individuals behave under the customary norms of their community (Hofstede, 2001). Najib et al. (2022) employed only three indicators of cultural perception with a specific emphasis on collectivism.

Though relatively straightforward, these three indicators by Najib et al. (2022) are sufficient in representing cultural perceptions regarding homeownership behavior. The statements used by Najib et al. (2022) for capturing attention to social values within the community included, "It is important to pay attention to the values in the society when buying". The statement to gauge an individual's perception regarding the influence of tradition on their behavior was, "influential tradition when buying". Both of these statements encompassed the essence of homeownership, as buying implies making an economic sacrifice to possess. B. Wang et al. (2021) and Y. Wang (2023) defined homeownership as residential property owned by individuals or their spouses. When a household member (including an individual) holds property rights to the house, they iare referred to as the homeowner (Sun et al., 2022).

The third statement by Najib et al. (2022) was, "consuming … has become a popular culture". This statement effectively covered the cultural factor, while also addressing the essence of the homeownership concept that included "to use". C.-O. Chang & Chen (2018) defined homeownership as a household living together in a residence owned by family members. Yates and Bradbury (2010) and Burke (1998) explained that rights determined homeownership. Individuals who own homes, but do not reside in them are called non-resident homeowners. The appropriate terminology for such individuals would be "housing speculators" or "housing investors". Housing speculators typically leave their properties vacant (Stiman, 2019; van de Geyn & Draaisma, 2009). Their explicit intent to commercialize the property through renting or reselling is a discernible reason for their non-residence (Chen et al., 2018). This phenomenon is a frequent occurrence within the realm of homeownership.

Najib et al. (2022) third statement in the cultural perception metric that they developed adequately complemented the essence of the homeownership concept in terms of "to use". Therefore, all three statements are a comprehensive measuring tool for cultural perception in the context of homeownership.

Expansion of TRA and TPB

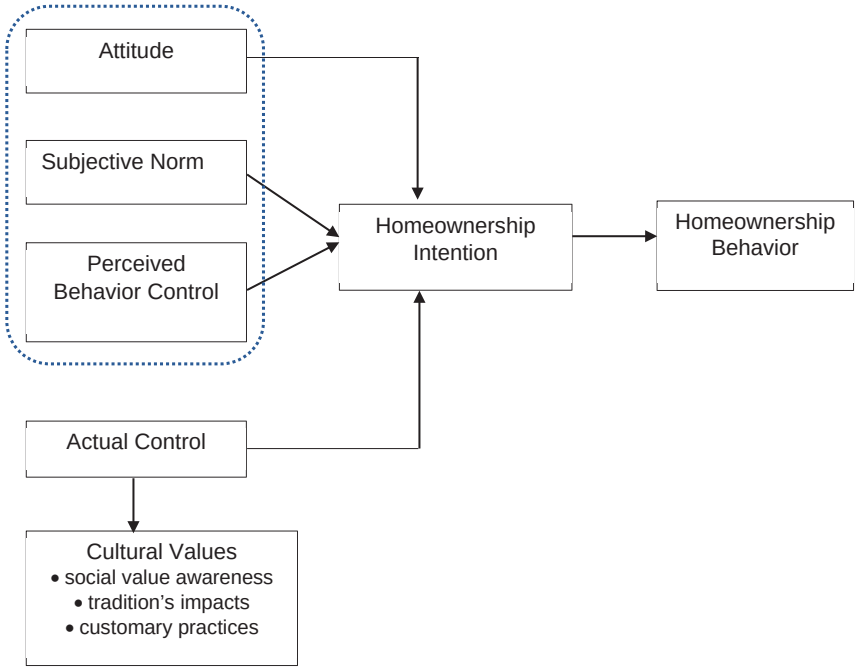
The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), an enhancement of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), has been widely applied in behavioral analysis across various fields beyond psychology. It provides a robust framework for understanding behaviors related to health (Casper, 2007), IT development (Gómez-Ramirez et al., 2019; Ramadan et al., 2017; So & Bolloju, 2005), tourism (Grubor et al., 2019; Sparks & Pan, 2009), housing (Lindblad et al., 2017; Sia & Jose, 2019; Sumbandy et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022), and others. In marketing and product sales, TPB is particularly relevant for explaining purchasing decisions, as individuals consider factors like time, information, cost, self-confidence, and others before making a purchase, such as buying a house.

Despite its effectiveness, TPB has limitations, particularly its narrow view of external factors that influence intention and behavior (Hasbullah et al., 2014). Considering additional variables could enhance TPB's accuracy. For example, incorporating moral norms (Ajzen & Driver, 1992), community support (Rhodes et al., 2002), moral responsibility (Beck & Ajzen, 1991), and individual characteristics (Terry et al., 1999) could provide a more comprehensive understanding of behavior. These elements are integral to culture. This study advocates for an expanded model of TPB by integrating cultural perceptions as an influencing factor in homeownership decisions in addressing these limitations.

Culture has been associated with homeownership in the literature and also in practices. It is shown to significantly influence homeownership in various societies with considerations of moral, social, and religious norms shaping behavior. The role of culture in Eastern society considers that having a home is a moral consequence of marriage (Zuhrah et al., 2021). Individuals in homeownership behavior also consider their social traditions, such as taking a debt to own a house (Rodríguez-Planas, 2018). For instance, Islamic culture believes engaging in banking practices involving usury within mortgages is strictly prohibited (Borchgrevink & Birkvad, 2022). According to Beck & Ajzen (1991), recognizing homeownership as a moral consequence supported incorporating cultural factors into TPB.

In summary, adding individual cultural perception as a determinant of behavioral decisions in the context of homeownership can significantly enhance TPB's explanatory power. Several studies have demonstrated the influence of culture on individual decisions regarding homeownership. However, existing research on TPB in the context of homeownership has yet to fully integrate cultural perception with attitude, perceived control, and subjective norms. In conjunction with attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavior, cultural values influence homeownership behavior by influencing its intention. Moreover, measuring cultural perception is proposed through three components: awareness of social values, the influence of tradition, and customary practices. The proposed expanded TPB model is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
Proposed Framework of Modified TPB



Social values refer to preferences and aspirations about ideal conditions that have become ingrained in a particular society, such as living in peace (Blamey & Braithwaite, 1997; Klein, 1990; Parashar et al., 2004). These values are accepted by society as behaviors deserving mutual respect (Abedini, 2011). Empirically, the urgency of social values awareness exists in the Indonesian culture. Indonesia has local wisdom regarding "auspicious days" for building houses (Rosyadi, 2015). This practice is still upheld to this day (Aryanto, 2023). They have specific traditional techniques passed down through generations to evaluate the quality of days (good or bad) for constructing houses (Permatasari & Sukarman, 2023). They still cherish this social value even as it begins to be overlooked in more modern households.

Tradition is something built by specific communities, with or without reference to what they consider sacred (Champagne, 2017). In this context, the tradition of house selection in China serves as strong evidence of the effect of this indicator on tenurial decisions. Homeownership in culturally ingrained China typically pays close attention to *Feng Shui* considerations, proximity to graves, land shape, and corridor layout (Sia et al., 2018). They consider all these factors to achieve harmony between the living space and its environment (W. L. Chang & Lii, 2010; Wu et al., 2012).

Customary practices are described as a cultural belief, a knowledge system, and specific characteristics shaping social interactions within a community (Hellemann,

2021). Homeownership in African countries, such as Uganda and Nigeria, is also influenced by this indicator (Agheyisi, 2020; Asiimwe, 2009). Widows in Uganda face obstacles to homeownership due to these patriarchal customary practices (Asiimwe, 2009).

These indicators can be used separately or collectively to represent cultural values as actual control. The presence of actual control in the TPB framework can be considered as PBC, but in other cases, it is highly likely to be a separate factor (Ajzen & Klobas, 2013). This study considers cultural values as a control that arises externally and is separate from PBC because it is not within the individual's control, similar to health or disaster issues. Therefore, conceptually, its measurement differs from PBC.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of cultural factors and beliefs in understanding homeownership behavior. Previous research that utilized TPB and TRA in analyzing homeownership have not fully integrated the cultural and belief aspects into their models. Culture greatly influences homeownership decisions, including moral, social, and religious aspects. Unmet cultural perception constraints can often influence homeownership decisions, potentially resulting in deferred choices. Despite the globalization impact on some cultures, cultural factors remain crucial in homeownership.

The study suggests expanding the TPB model to include individual cultural perceptions in determining homeownership behavior. Several studies and daily practices have shown how culture significantly affects individual homeownership decisions. However, existing research on TPB in the context of homeownership has yet to fully integrate cultural perception with attitude, perceived control, and subjective norms. This expansion is anticipated to enhance the precision and comprehensiveness of research on global homeownership behavior. In other words, the proposed framework is not confined to a specific social community, but can be applied across cultures.

This study suggests three components to measure cultural perception: awareness of social values, the influence of tradition, and customary practices. By integrating cultural elements into the TPB framework, research on homeownership can become more comprehensive and accurate in explaining the factors influencing individual behavior in choosing to own or rent a home.

This proposed model is poised to contribute substantially to homeownership research, providing a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the intricate factors that influence housing decisions. Furthermore, this study offers significant contributions to homeownership practices, and enriches behavioral literature by integrating concepts from diverse disciplines. Further empirical studies utilizing this expanded TPB framework with cultural perception as a key component are warranted to validate its applicability and effectiveness in diverse cultural contexts.

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ARTICLE

Unpacking the "Bihariness" — Reflections on Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi

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ABSTRACT

Netflix's true crime documentary *Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi* (2022) follows the story of serial killer Chandrakant Jha, a Bihari migrant worker in Delhi. The documentary sensationally portrays his spine-chilling crimes, while superficially discussing pressing issues of police brutality and the dysfunctionality of the criminal justice system. The interplay of socio-economic conditions, the indifferent justice system, and its effects on one's degrading mental health is what we seem to get out of this three-part series through visual and textual analysis. The backdrop of the migrants as a pathological problem vis-à-vis its interaction with the criminal justice system is emphasized by highlighting the "Bihariness" of Chandrakant Jha. The documentary refers to this "Bihariness" albeit tangentially, though fails to discuss the caste and class locations of these prejudices and chauvinism that is directed against the figure of the working-class Bihari migrant. In this paper, we attempt to unpack this popular narrative as a casteist and classist commonsensical social and cultural reproduction to understand the figure of the Bihari migrant as depicted in the documentary. We contend that highlighting the "Bihariness" of migrant workers is a form of othering that mainly plays out through their conspicuous laboring bodies, language, and their association with criminality. In doing so, we also intend to explore the dimensions of mental health and socio-economic and institutional interactions of poor migrant workers in urban areas.

KEYWORDS

Bihari, migrant worker, true crime, mental health, Bihariness, criminality, urban area

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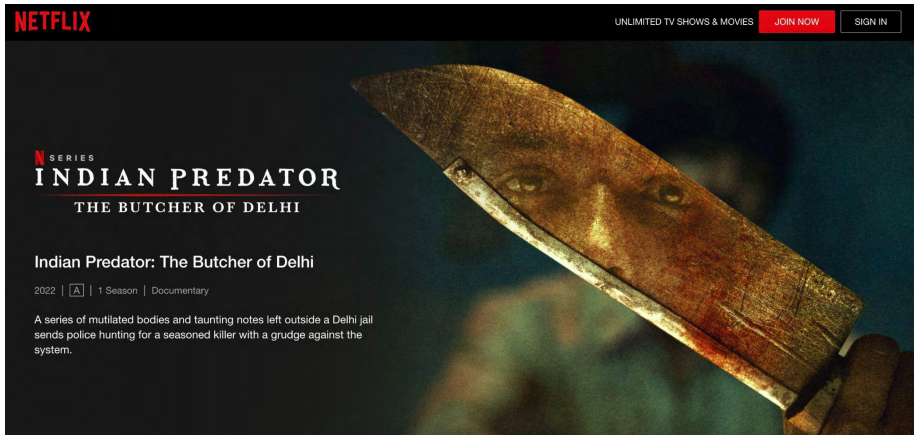
Introduction

In July 2022, Netflix[1] released the first edition of its true crime documentary series called *Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi*. The docuseries shows the story of a serial killer named Chandrakant Jha, a Bihari migrant worker in Delhi. The documentary portrays his spine-chilling crimes in a manner that is not just sensational but also overly dramatic by having actors enact the gruesome scenes. However, the discussion of issues on the surface without truly exploring the pressing areas of the Indian criminal justice system makes it like most other shows that are interested in showing the viewers an unexplored reality but not brave enough to delve deeper into it. For this paper, we are not touching upon the technicalities and the craft of cinema per se; instead, we are focusing on the figure of the Bihari migrant, which is referred to in the docuseries by several participants alongside focusing on the socio-economic interactions of poor Bihari migrant workers in urban areas. We contend that the backdrop of the migrants as a pathological problem vis-à-vis its interaction with the criminal justice system is emphasized by highlighting the "Bihariness" of the criminal. Despite being well-intentioned, the documentary ends up making the representation of Bihari's identity a criminogenic one.

Figure 1

Title Image of the Docuseries Indian Predator: The Butcher of Delhi



Note. Source: https://www.netflix.com/in/title/81252894.

Design of the Study

This paper utilizes the methodology of visual analysis for analyzing the three episodes of the documentary series. The first episode named "Tohfe" [Gifts] is of 42 minutes, the second episode named "Tasveer" [Pictures] is of 43 minutes, and the third episode named "Tukre" [Pieces] is of 40 minutes. Visuality refers to how vision is constructed in various ways: "how we see, how we are able, allowed or made to see, and how we see this seeing and the unseeing therein" (Foster, 1988, p. ix). In other words, what is seen

[1] Netflix™ and its logo are trademarks of Netflix, Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

and how it is seen are culturally constructed. While analyzing the different scenes in the docuseries, we have deployed a critical visual methodology along two lines of inquiry. The first deals with the site of circulation: In what forms does the image (the figure of the Bihari migrant) circulate? The second deals with the site of the audience: How do the audience and participants engage with the image? The paper uses textual analysis as a method to analyze the representation of a Bihari man as an identity and the Bihari man as the central character in the docuseries. We have used aspects like identity, language, mannerisms, and other aspects including criminality in which the Bihari identity especially of male migrant workers is often othered.

The majority of Bihari migrants, as suggested by the International Growth Centre's (IGC) study are cyclical laborers from vulnerable groups who are often accused of taking over urban areas and jobs (Samaddar, 2020). In the popular imagination, Bihar has come to represent a cultural symbol of backwardness, "dirtiness," and trouble, which is almost impervious to "development" (A. Kumar, 2009). The docuseries refers to this "Bihariness" understood as a menace, albeit tangentially. However, it fails to discuss the caste and class locations of these prejudices and chauvinism that are directed against the figure of the working-class Bihari migrant. In this article, we attempt to unpack the popular narrative of the Bihari menace or "Bihariness" as a casteist and classist commonsensical social and cultural reproduction. We are analyzing the social identity of the working-class Bihari migrants, which is constructed by the twin processes of migration and exclusion. Internal migration plays an important role in conflating economic, social, and criminal harm to the Biharis. Their social identity, or Bihariness, leads to their othering in urban spaces, as they are conspicuous laboring bodies with language being a prominent marker of their identity. Their othering and exclusion also get structured through criminality as often, including in the documentary, the terms Bihari and criminal are used interchangeably. This is why we have tried to problematize the portrayal of the Bihari migrant figure in mainstream media before presenting our analysis of "Bihari" as the Indian Predator. Subsequently, we have tried to explore the dimensions of mental health including a psychological analysis. We have also tried to highlight the synonymy of Bihariness and criminality as depicted in the documentary apart from reflecting on the caste privilege of the criminal.

"Bihariness"—Migration and Exclusion

Migration from their native place or home to various centers of economic activity that eventually become their house or place of residence and work is a reality for a sizable population of Bihar. In most anthropological works on migration, the "home" and the "house" are the two loci that stand in contrast: one being the migrants' most natural abode, and the other, their adopted place, one to which they remain aliens (Fazal, 2016). For a large number of Biharis, their mode of being is defined by migration from their "home" or native place and the exclusion that they face in their "house" or the current place of work and residence. While staying in their adopted place for years, they are made to feel like they do not belong there. In other words, "Bihariness" as an immigrant social reality is routinely shaped by the processes of migration from the homeland and social exclusion faced in the adopted land.

At any rate, for some time the Bihari population has certainly been the most mobile one in the country (Karan, 2007, as cited in Tripathy & Verma, 2013). As per a study by the International Institute for Population Sciences, more than half of the households in Bihar are exposed to migration to more developed places within and outside the country and the majority of households depend on remittances for their livelihood (Roy et. al., 2021). Bihar is a major source of migrant laborers who are engaged in the agricultural and industrial sectors in several states of India. The overwhelming majority of the migrant Bihari population does not come from the landed and privileged classes. A significant proportion of the Bihari migrants belong to lower castes and Muslim communities. The feudal structures are so deeply entrenched in Bihari society that most forms of occupational mobility for the lower castes (even in rural non-farm employment) remain out of the question (A. Kumar, 2009). Therefore, historically, the alternative of migration to other areas has been the only way for the lower peasantry to attain upward mobility, both in social and economic terms (A. Kumar, 2009). According to Deshingkar and Farington (2009), out of the many factors that force migrant workers to leave their native land and go somewhere else is the harsh reality of the chance of moving beyond caste-based discrimination that they experience in their land. However, the endless covert and overt forms of caste-based discrimination continue no matter the place they migrate to and the upper castes individuals will always have exclusionary practices to not just exert their power over them but also make it a point to explicitly make them understand how they do not "belong" there (Kundu & Mohanan, 2017).

Even after living in a place for a long period and offering valuable services through their labor, Bihari migrant workers are treated as the "other" and the "outsider." Basic recognition and respect for their existence and their work, as well as being treated as other respectable citizens of the country, is difficult to achieve (R. Kumar, 2020). The migration from Bihar to Delhi is particularly worth noting because the Indian capital is a hub of migratory activities. Delhi, like many other cities, has been witnessing a rapid surge of internal migration. It has evolved into a developed area of informal occupations and livelihood for many in the secondary and tertiary sectors of its economy (Datta, 2018). Thus, an overwhelming population of Bihar has to contend with the twin processes of migration (from the native land) and exclusion (in the place of work and residence), which serve to shape their Bihariness or Bihari identity in the metropolis of Delhi. Embedded in both processes, such factors as social exclusion, assimilation difficulties, denial of citizenship rights, exploitation, and everyday violence become critical components of their Bihariness.

Bihariness and Othering—Laboring Bodies, Language, and Criminality

Workers from different regional backgrounds in Delhi are heavily dependent on their regional networks. However, their strong regional bonds do not have much relevance in achieving upward income mobility although it does affect the occupational choices of the workers (Jha & Singh, 2014). Studies have shown that incomes mainly obtained in the informal sector are exploitative, as workers do not receive their remuneration on time and face many hardships through the involvement of multiple intermediaries

(Mosse et al., 2005). This indicates that most of the Biharis outside Bihar are already having a precarious and vulnerable existence. A. de Haan (1997) uses the term "unsettled settlers" for such a class of migrant workers. While their social and cultural visibility is largely muted in rural areas, the sheer population density and shared spaces make their presence conspicuous in urban areas. Due to this, they are often loathed outside Bihar as representatives of a sordid cultural milieu (A. Kumar, 2009). Migrants from Bihar are often accused of taking over urban areas and jobs from the "locals." In reality, most Bihari migrant workers are laboring bodies having precarious existences in urban spaces. Most of them are in low-paying informal and precarious jobs and reside in informal settlements. Despite their valuable contribution to the urban economy, unfortunately, they have to face discrimination in the social and cultural life of the cities. Urban middle-class residents are often quick to blame the Biharis for anything and everything that is wrong with their city ranging from the proliferation of slums to traffic snarls, overcrowding in public spaces, and higher crime rates.

As per various estimates, Biharis comprise about a quarter of the total population of Delhi (Kapur, 2013). While many Biharis are in white-collar jobs and own businesses, most of them work as informal workers in different economic sectors of the city. According to a study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), workers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh constitute about 70% of Delhi's migrant workers earning less than 250 dollars in a month. Additionally, in slum clusters and parts of unauthorized settlements in Delhi, eight out of ten people are from three states, which are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal (Joshi, 2023). Although they live and work on the margins of urban life, the nature of their work makes them stand out in the urban populace of Delhi. They experience loneliness, as well as social rejection and shame in hostile urban conditions (Datta, 2022). Despite providing crucial services to the economic and social life of Delhi through their labor, the Bihari migrant workers are looked at with disdain by the large middle class of Delhi. To them, Bihar has come to represent a cultural symbol of backwardness, "dirtiness," and trouble, which is almost impervious to "development" (A. Kumar, 2009). Bihari society remains an object of disgust and shame for them. In fact, any working-class person irrespective of their state of origin is termed a Bihari. Thus, in the worldview of the middle class, the term Bihari acquires a new meaning. It is used as a slur towards a working-class person while simultaneously "othering" them. This is clearly seen in the poor and inhumane treatment of them for their socio-economic position in society, making them vulnerable citizens in their own country (Agarwal, 2022).

Language is considered as a signifier of Bihariness and Bihari identity in many locales. However, it also serves as the reason for discrimination against Biharis in Delhi. Bihari as a geographical identity is often mistaken as a linguistic identity. For this, partly, the blame lies on British colonial rule. An Irishman named George Abraham Grierson, while doing the first "modern" linguistic survey of India, grouped all the languages of Bihar into a single category called Bihari languages (Pandey, 2021). This is how the languages spoken in that particular geography came to be known as Bihari language(s). Speakers of Bihari languages like Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, Angika, Bajjika, etc. are often mocked for their accents and pronunciation of Hindi and

English words. They are also deemed as rustic and culturally less sophisticated (Abbi, 2013). In subsequent years, the government of India officially used the term Bihari dialect(s) in several censuses to enumerate dialects under Hindi (Pandey, 2021). This relates to the postcolonial process of establishing Hindi not only as the lingua franca but also as the official language at least in the North Indian states by subsuming other mother tongues to the hegemony of the Hindi language (Abbi, 2013). Consequently, the various native languages in North India, including Bihar, came to be recognized as dialects of the Hindi language being inferior to it as such (Abbi, 2013). Working-class speakers of different Bihari languages have to go through everyday ignominy in Delhi as they are derided for their accents and pronunciation. Through everyday insults such as these, not only do they get relegated to the margins of the social and cultural life of Delhi, but they also get labelled as the "other."

The exclusions of Bihari migrant workers, along with registers of poverty and social space, language and ethnicity (Redclift, 2016), are structured through perceived criminality. This is another dimension that is ascribed to the Bihari identity by the urban middle class in order to do the "othering" of Bihari migrant workers. In Delhi, most of the petty crimes are attributed to Biharis even when they are not part of it. Criminalization of their ethnic identity has grave implications for their livelihoods, housing, access to services, and interactions with the state and non-state actors. In many ways, the assertion of cultural superiority against the Bihari migrants and the display of aversion towards them is only a particular form, in which the deep caste prejudices of these urban, upper caste, and middle classes are exercised against the lower castes and classes in general (A. Kumar, 2009).

In the post-liberalization era, Indian cities have seen the emergence of the new middle class. Their acquired consciousness of a gated community has always been suspicious of the dangerous and dirty "others." Migrant Biharis, given their class and caste locations, stand in opposition to these "better" classes, hence the gravity of the trouble and othering suffered by them (A. Kumar, 2009). For this reason, many Bihari migrant workers shy away from embracing and enacting their Bihari identity, particularly in urban spaces. It is critical to know and understand how a land of rich culture, science, and literature becomes synonymous with stigma and shame to the extent that individuals shy away from identifying themselves with this place lest others look down upon them (R. Kumar, 2020). It is crucial to realize that dehumanizing experiences are an everyday reality for this group of people, whose identity and invisibility go hand in hand (Agarwal, 2022).

"Bihari" Identity in the Mainstream Media

The limitations and restrictive nature of understanding Bihar as a geographical space, the language spoken there, their culture, and the comparative notion of migrant workers is a huge grey area (R. Kumar, 2020), which thrives in misrepresentation and inaccurate representation in the mainstream media. Over the years, the Bihari identity has been portrayed in a stereotypical way. In most instances, such a portrayal has been extremely problematic. Bihar as a geographical place is stereotyped as the criminal

underbelly of the country where lawlessness is a norm. There is the widespread use of acronymic puns like BIMARU and terms like Cow Belt State as identity markers for Bihar in the print and online media. The entertainment media, which has a more unfettered imagination, dwells on Bihar's economic backwardness and criminality (Sathya Prakash, 2009). Films and TV serials as an art form have widespread reach into the mindscapes of the people. While taking refuge under "artistic freedom," they can perpetuate harmful and negative stereotypes. The stereotypical imagining in the media over a period of time becomes shared public opinion (Sathya Prakash, 2009). Due to this, even those people who have never been to Bihar can be quite vocal about such real or imagined negative aspects. Thus, the shared public opinion about Bihar gets produced and consumed in the wider society, without much correspondence with the actual lived experience.

There is another reason why we are seeing such a stereotypical portrayal of Biharis in the mainstream media. In recent years, vulgar and titillating songs seem to have become the chief cultural export of the Bhojpuri cinema and music industry. This has much to do with the ownership of the industry in the hands of the private capital, which uses this export for profit-making in addition to creating demand for the same in the cultural space of the Bihari migrants. Most such songs through their lyrics and visual representations sexualize women's bodies and are full of sexual innuendos. The objectification and sexualizing of women's bodies for the pleasure of the male gaze and the existence of women simply to "satisfy" the male figure is highlighted in the music videos. One cannot emphasize enough the patriarchal transactions that are evident through the music and dance representations of what we know and understand of Bhojpuri music, as well as the fact that this further gets permeated and normalized as not just the overall patriarchal society that we live in but also equates the values and culture of that community with what is represented on screen (Chakraborty & Nain, 2020). Thus, Bihari culture gets essentialized as one in which Biharis revel in obscene songs signaling cultural degradation. The fact that Biharis represent a diverse and rich culture with a wide range of cultural artefacts and traditions gets undermined in the process.

Another way to understand the portrayal of Bihariness in media and consequent othering is by looking at the changes in power relations in the socio-political landscape of Bihar in the past few decades. According to Sathya Prakash (2009), the negative depiction of Bihari identity in popular media coincides with backward classes occupying political power by displacing the powerful upper castes in Bihar. Therefore, this "imagining" of Bihariness can also be read as a reprisal by the media, which is full of upper castes and reactionary elements (Sathya Prakash, 2009). According to Awanish Kumar (2009), instances of "unruly Bihar," now and then, in media only reinforce its reactionary class foundations by giving an ethnic and cultural form to what is essentially a class and caste issue (A. Kumar, 2009). However, instances of cultural degradation due to sexist and misogynist music culture and criminalization of politics are cited as the prime manifestation of anything and everything that is wrong with Bihar. Consequently, it gets inscribed as an essential feature of the Bihariness of the working-class migrants from Bihar.

"Bihari" as the Indian Predator

Consciously or unconsciously, the documentary presents a particular Bihari identity to the audience. Also, the discussion of issues lies on the surface without exploring pressing issues such as police brutality and the functioning of the criminal justice system. Hence, this makes it similar to most other shows that are interested in presenting an unexplored reality to the viewers but are not brave enough to delve deeper into it. Unlike most true-crime accounts, the killer and the victims represent the poorest sections of society. Most victims, in this case, were extremely poor with little access to food, shelter, or support, which is what the killer preyed on. The interplay of socio-economic conditions, the indifferent justice system and its effects on one's degrading mental health is what we seem to get out of this three-part series. The perpetrator's background leading to his actions and behavior should have been the discussion point of mental health and the consequences of poor mental health. Another important theme that runs through the series is the portrayal of migrants as a pathological problem through their interaction with the criminal justice system, which is emphasized by Chandrakant Jha's Bihari background. In this section, we seek to present some of these discussions under the three sub-themes of psychological analysis of the Indian Predator, synonymy of Bihari and criminality, and caste location of Chandrakant Jha.

Figure 2

Picture of the Victim Clicked by Chandrakant Jha

Note. Source: https://www.netflix.com/in/title/81252894.

Psychological Analysis of the Indian Predator

In the docuseries, there is a moving depiction of how the serial killer and his victims were daily wage laborers-migrants, whose existence is acknowledged neither in life nor in death. This has always been the case with this group who are conveniently invisibilized by the very society in which they live and work. While sensationalizing and

romanticizing horrific events is a trademark of the many shows that we are exposed to today, the bait becomes easier when the target group in question is of no concern to society (Datta, 2018). The show does not delve deeper into the need to question and discuss police reforms, even after Jha clearly mentions being unduly tortured inside the jail (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 27:29). Such oppressive structures have the potential to further damage the psychosocial development of a person (Marcia, 2002). One knows that this particular section of society which is the most vulnerable in every way possible is dealing with this inhumane treatment across systems. One is directed to think about why there is no detailed acknowledgement and mention of systemic torture and injustice from the Indian judiciary. It is important to note the evident class-caste divide between the groups of people who are narrating their experiences of the investigative case and the criminal in question. It is interestingly noted by Jha that Bihar has been a focus of study for scholars from multiple fields except psychology (Verma, 2019). However, this may most definitely see a shift in the current times of heightened local and global crises. While the definition of "health" enshrined in the constitution of the World Health Organization (1948) was in place for a long time, the lack of systemic and structural changes has made matters worse (World Health Organization, n.d.).

In the context of the docuseries, it is unfortunate that not many mental health experts have actually weighed in and discussed Jha's case in detail except one clinical forensic expert, Dr S. L. Vaya (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 25:00). Vaya rightly states that deteriorating mental health is a highly possible consequence of underprivileged children owing to their poor socio-economic background (Arroyo-Borrell et al., 2017). She further explains that the antisocial behavior observed in Chandrakant's case stems from his innate need to experience a sense of power in order to feel valued and respected (Gaik et al., 2010). This is an important aspect that has been missing in his life, irrespective of the space he has ever been a part of. This ranges from his family environment to his life in Azadpur Mandi and even inside the prison by jail officials. Development Economist, Alak Sharma shared his views on Jha's case after saying, "I am not a mental health expert, but using common sense I can say that overworking and the cramped living situation hurts mental health" (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 8:38; Trans. by Anup Tripathi & Moitrayee Das—A. T. & M. D.). Studies have shown how one's life experiences about their work and living conditions have an impact on mental health (Hodgkinson et al., 2017). It is important to note that in a country dominated by myths rather than facts, constant stigma and taboos lead to information inaccuracies and consequences that affect lives. It is always a good decision to let mental health experts take the lead when it comes to sharing information in this field.

Research has shown how maternal mental health and socio-economic status, particularly the educational level of the mother play a significant role in determining the mental health of their children (Cabrera et al., 2011; Goodman, 2007; Kahn et al., 2004; Sonego et al., 2013). Poor socio-economic status including lack of education significantly increases the risk of their children developing behavioral problems, being hyperactive and antisocial (Arroyo-Borrell et al., 2017). This information is crucial because it is exactly what is shown in the docuseries regarding Jha's background. As for his relationship with his mother and his family, in Chandrakant'

words, “he hated them”, and did not want to live with them (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 38:44; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.). His mother was a schoolteacher and his father worked in the irrigation department. According to Chandrakant, his parents did not have time for him and did not care for his education or overall well-being (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 38:52). That is precisely when his emotional disconnect and lack of attachment to his family began taking shape.

The circumstances, in which children grow up, are crucial determinants of the later years of their lives (Cabrera et al., 2011). Research has also argued that maternal influence in children’s lives plays a huge role in the negative outcomes that are experienced in the child’s life (Olson et al, 2002). Through the documentary, it is clear that Jha’s mother was not an active and present figure in his life. Thus, he never received the care or attention that a child is expected to receive from their primary caregivers. Akhilesh, a resident of Ghosai village, has detailed how Chandrakant and his siblings were left to fend for themselves and many times even starved as they did not have food to eat (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 21:50). Their mother would be constantly busy with other activities.

If we look at the documentary and its mention of Chandrakant Jha as a criminal committing serial murder, the starting point to analyze would be his childhood (Allely et al., 2014; Heide & Solomon, 2006; Mitchell & Aamodt, 2005). To understand the intricate nuances of one’s life, factors such as socio-economic status, the mental health of the primary caregivers, and the relationship between the parents and child and the overall family environment need to be well understood (Bernard-Bonnin et al., 2004; Conger et al., 2010; Lyons-Ruth et al., 1990; Moes, 1991). It is easy to label a “poor migrant Bihari worker” as a criminal, but difficult to look into the structure that perpetuates and reinforces the birth of such “criminals” (Blau & Blau 1982; Sampson, 1987; Shaw & McKay, 1942).

Synonymy of Bihari and Criminality

The docuseries does hint towards a positive correlation between the Bihari identity and the possibility of their criminal engagement. As Verma (2019) mentions, the Bihari identity is about understanding how identities get socially restructured and evolve whether for better or worse. In the docuseries, prominent development economist, Alakh Sharma says, “The Bihari migrant can be considered as the lowest category of people” (Sood, 2022, Episode 2, 7:39; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.). He goes further to explain that their lack of skills and expertise coupled with poor socio-economic status is the reason for the inhumane treatment of the police towards them. It is so ironic that the police get a “pass” to treat the Chandrakants of the country in a particular way. However, there is no acknowledgement of the fact that even when outrageous and illogical demands are made for motorcycles among other things from the police, no actions are taken. This is about what happens in a country where the word “Bihari” is used as a slur, where othering and outcasting a certain group marked by their socio-economic status (Sholder, 2011) is a norm. Very often, their very existence in certain locales makes them criminals in the eyes of the wider society. In the third episode of the series, Vijay Mandal, son of Anil Mandal (one of Jha’s victims) shares that after

several years his family got to know about his father's death (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 11:21). There was no information about it whatsoever from the police even after constantly paying bribes and keeping in contact with the police. The son asks, "We are also humans, right?", and we wonder the same.

Utkarsh Anand, the legal journalist, talks about "apathy" when it comes to certain segments of society (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 7:47). He mentions an automatic shut-eye response to their problems. He further adds that in many cases even when there is weak evidence or lack thereof, it is usually believed that

> they could have done it or have done it, and face consequences. The fact that these poor migrant workers are taken for granted and their problems never receive any attention they deserve is an everyday fact. Scholars have said it is primarily because this section of people was never accepted or treated as respectable citizens of the country from the very beginning. (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 7:47; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.)

Anand says, "Chandrakant is currently on parole, doing everything that any other human does, but he is still an invisible man" (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 5:36; Trans. by A. T. & M. D.).

The status of ethnic minorities or vulnerable groups has never been optimal in the Indian context. It is not unusual for them to be treated unfairly in every space they find themselves in, to physical harassment against them through multiple formal and informal institutions (Rafi, 2005). Sunder Singh, the Sub-inspector who was handling Jha's case along with his team says that these migrant workers are poor with no social support (Sood, 2022, Episode 3, 9:10). Their lack of the necessary "networks" and "connections" make their already difficult lives worse. They are treated unfairly and they go unnoticed just because they are migrants. However, he is quick to add that was not the case with Chandrakant Jha's case (the case he was handling). However, it happens in many cases in the Indian Judiciary system.

The subject of Bihari identity and one's association with the Bihari culture is desperately looking to unpack answers. To truly understand what it means to be a Bihari and whether all there is to associate with this identity starts and ends with backwardness, casteism, crudeness and primitiveness, and being a criminal? Verma (2019) shares that this subject has to be dealt with utmost and sincere knowledge, information, and a balance of the complex nuances of the development and identity formation of the land of Bihar (Verma, 2019).

Jha's Caste Privilege

India's caste hierarchy is one of the longest-standing rigid, social, oppressive structures. It has stood still through centuries and does not seem to see the end of time (Gadgil & Malhotra, 2016). The complex interplay of conflict in the name of caste and the ongoing struggle for power makes it quite evident that caste systems seem to operate in the village context in different forms or structures. This does not withstand our holistic understanding of an overall caste hierarchy (Sahay, 2004). The association

between caste dominance and violence has been long established in the study of the caste system. Wherein people from the upper caste exert their power through violence on the lower caste group (Nandan & Santhosh, 2019). The caste structure that determines the value of one's existence in India has a very obvious role to play. The associations of ideas of "untouchability" and "rejected group" come straight from the fact that they come from a lower caste (Srivastava & Sutradhar, 2016).

In reference to the docuseries, one can see that Chandrakant Jha is an upper-caste male from the Maithil Gaud Brahmin caste from Ghosai village who shifted to Madhapur, Delhi for work. The dominance of the Brahmin caste (Nandan & Santhosh, 2019) and being on top of the hierarchy chain have given Jha a lot of benefits even after committing heinous crimes as a serial killer. His victims whom he befriended and later murdered were mostly individuals who came from a lower caste. He had gotten a certain number of paroles and was finally on life imprisonment without remission and not a death sentence. It is not just something to ponder but also to question the system.

Figure 3

The Accused Chandrakant Jha Talking to the Media

Note. Source: https://www.netflix.com/in/title/81252894.

Conclusion

This article has tried to show the multiple systems of socio-economic inequalities. The complex interplay of caste, class, and gender, has a direct impact on the existence of an individual. It is crucial to understand the dominant discourse in the economic sphere. The discussions of policy-making in migration studies primarily focus on their lives' financial and monetary aspects. However, it ignores their challenges and stories which account for their subjective experiences. This encompasses a holistic understanding of their overall well-being as human beings (Datta, 2018). There is an urgent need

to analyze the role of internal migration in conflating economic, social, and criminal harms. The interplay between violence and the caste system has been long discussed in academic and non-academic literature. The association between Bihari identity and their likelihood of future criminality has been a prime area of the Bihari migrant discourse. It ends up creating the stereotype of Bihari identity as a criminogenic one. In addition to the systemic oppression that the documentary in question forces us to address, we should also consider the neglected and under-discussed aspect of the psychological state and well-being of these people, which is either maintained or further degraded by their daily experiences with formal and informal institutions.

The article has tried to outline the exclusionary and discriminatory practices against the Bihari migrant workers, as well as the explicit and implicit ways of the exhibition across formal and informal institutions. Human development and growth are influenced by several critical factors throughout a person's life. It all starts at an early age with the relationship with their parents, family environment, and general surroundings. These help them to form a view of themselves, as well as the world around them. When the family environment as well as the surroundings they find themselves in later in life are not conducive to a child's development, it becomes a breeding ground for a number of problematic actions and behaviors (Mallers et al., 2010). This is coupled with the fact that a segment of the population is treated as social rejects and not even ordinary citizens of the country.

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Database	Author, A. A., Author, B. B., & Author, A. A. (2002). A study of enjoyment of peas. *Title of the Journal*, *8*(3). Retrieved February 20, 2003, from the PsycARTICLES database.
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