

Summary

The theme of cultural participation has been present in sociology since the 1970s, when research focused on young people entering new forms of cultural activity. This dissertation develops that tradition by analyzing the impact of new media on the cultural participation of young white-collar workers. A central role is played by digital media and their internal mechanism - algorithms. These shape communicative practices according to a consumerist logic, which does not always align with the quality or depth of content. Reflection on these transformations reveals a fundamental shift from communal forms of cultural practice toward individualized and algorithmically mediated experiences of digital culture. Contemporary online participation increasingly fails to produce durable social bonds, generating instead fluid networks of incidental connections shaped by the logic of digital platforms. Within this context, the category of *Homo Digitalis* becomes particularly significant: it describes a human subject whose identity, preferences, and activities are inseparably intertwined with technology and shaped by algorithms. This existence is fragmented and subordinated to a continuous stream of information, raising questions about cultural continuity and the possibility of preserving memory and tradition in the digital world. The structure of the dissertation comprises both theoretical and empirical components, with a particular emphasis on comparative analysis and the reconstruction of mechanisms of cultural participation in their traditional and digital forms.

The aim of the study was to reconstruct Zbigniew Bokszański's classic work *Young Workers and Cultural Advancement* and to compare it with contemporary social realities. The author examined the extent to which the professional advancement of young white-collar workers is linked to cultural advancement, and whether this relationship is stable and profound or rather superficial. The analysis was based on an analogy between young workers of the 1970s and today's corporate and office employees, both groups operating within hierarchical structures and striving for economic stability. However, the contemporary research context required attention to new factors: systemic transformation, globalization, the digital revolution, algorithmic mediation, and a transformed labor market. The project combined qualitative and quantitative methods (interviews, observation, secondary data analysis, and an online survey), allowing for a multidimensional view of the processes under study and the dynamics of changes in cultural practices. Ultimately, the study aimed to show how mechanisms of social integration, mobility, and cultural participation are reproduced or transformed under new social and digital conditions.

The findings indicate that the relationships between social, professional, and cultural advancement have undergone fundamental change. In the respondents' perception, cultural participation has ceased to function as a marker of distinction and no longer defines social hierarchy, as it did in the 1970s. Professional advancement strengthens a sense of social position but does not lead to an intensification of cultural participation, which today is shaped primarily by content disseminated through social media. Digital capital skills in content selection, effective

navigation in conditions of information overload, and other technological competencies, emerges as the key resource. Compared with Bokszański's research, this shift is fundamental: culture has ceased to be a status marker and has become a universal good, subordinated to the logic of the digital world.

The temporal context of this study is particularly significant. During the research process, the COVID-19 pandemic erupted, profoundly disrupting socio-cultural life. At the same time, the company OpenAI released to the public its large language model, ChatGPT, alongside the rapid development of other chatbots, which left a notable imprint on the ways cultural capital is constructed. This underscores how quickly and intensively technological changes occur, reshaping socio-cultural life and presenting a serious challenge for research.