



# DigiGen

## The Digital Generation's Political Voices

WP6 ICT and Civic Participation  
DigiGen - The impact of technological  
transformations on the digital generation -  
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Report can be downloaded here:  
<https://www.digigen.eu/results/online-political-behaviour-and-ideological-production-by-young-people/>

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# The Digital Generation's Political Voices: Informing Policy



- netnographic research (online observation, content and 65 interviews in total)
- conducted between September 2020 and April 2021 in Estonia, Greece and the United Kingdom
- compares the reasons and the means by which youth engaged in online civic participation, focusing on online movements mobilising for racial, social and environmental justice.



# Research Questions

- Research Questions Set 1:
  - Why do participants engage in civil participation on digital networks in the three countries?
  - What are the similarities and differences by comparison (i.e., ideology, identity and community, framing - socioeconomic and gender factors)?
- Research Questions Set 2:
  - How do participants engage in civil participation on digital networks in the three countries?
  - What are the similarities and differences by comparison (i.e., digital affordances, problems of surveillance, censorship, organisation, mobilisation - online and offline behaviour)?



# Case studies: ICT and Civic Participation for Racial, Social, Environmental – Intersectional Justice

- Greece: Primary data youth activism mobilising for against gender-based violence, anti-police brutality
- Estonia: Primary data youth activism mobilising for LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter (BLM)
- UK: Primary data for BLM and environmental civic participation Extinction Rebellion (XR and XR Youth)

# WP6 Contribution

- **digital citizenship** (e.g. access, commerce, communication, literacy, etiquette, rights and responsibilities, health and well-being, security/safety, data justice, digital inequalities).
- **digital media use by adolescents** (and specific problems relating to adolescence).
- **digital activism scholarship** (with specific focus on youth participation in social movements, everyday activism, new participatory repertoires, and leadership emergence theories in social movements).
- **youth political culture** and digital activism/citizenship **specific to each country** and the identification of cross-cultural continuities and discontinuities that may emerge in comparison.

	WHY	HOW	COMPARISON
<b>ESTONIA</b>  <b>LGBTQ</b>  <b>BLM</b>  <b>GENERAL</b>	<p>Speaking out for the marginalised as a matter of responsibility and an only way forward to a better society.</p> <p>Leading to other people becoming more informed and changing their minds.</p> <p>Linked to personal experience of discrimination that informs a person’s capacity for empathy, as well as cultural discourses surrounding social justice</p>	<p>Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit, VKontakte and Tiktok</p> <p>Not preoccupied with questions of surveillance and took no extra steps to protect themselves</p> <p>International (English speaking) accounts were much better for informational purposes than local Estonian ones, that were often accused of being ill informed, narrow minded, even racist and homophobic.</p>	<p><b>Estonia to Greece and UK</b></p> <p><b>Differences:</b> Speaking out for the marginalised Less worried about issues of privacy and surveillance</p> <p><b>Similarities:</b> Linked to personal experience of discrimination an injustice Some use of similar platforms</p>
<b>GREECE</b>  <b>ANTI-POLICE VIOLECE</b>  <b>ANTI-GENDER VIOLENCE</b>  <b>GENERAL</b>	<p>Mistrust of political parties and organisations</p> <p>Interest to do some things, not to change the world, but first to change our everyday life;</p> <p>Activation and politicisation are triggered by personal experiences linked to the ways (multiple) gender identities are treated in a specific social context, but also in society at large</p>	<p>Facebook, Instagram, YouTubeMessaging apps as well as video conferencing platforms</p> <p>Reluctance, distrust and criticism towards platforms and apps – preference for open source</p> <p>A means of (counter)information diffusion and less as a meaningful space where political strategies can be deployed.</p>	<p><b>Greece to Estonia and UK</b></p> <p><b>Differences:</b> More distrust to political parties and commercial platforms ICT less a space for organisation and strategy</p> <p><b>Similarities:</b> Politicisation are triggered by personal experiences Some use of similar platforms</p>
<b>UK</b>  <b>XR local national global</b>  <b>BLM Leicester</b>  <b>GENERAL</b>	<p>Adopting new more affective approach to environmental activism</p> <p>Anger about police brutality and fight for equal rights</p> <p>Inequality: people relying on handouts to feed their children in a rich country</p>	<p>Innovation in organisation and communication in XR (holacracy model, carbon neutral cloud, glassfrog, basecamp, mattermost)</p> <p>BLM Leicester: pre-existing networks supporting very social media savvy young people</p> <p>Adolescents don’t use Facebook but use Twitter and Instagram a lot for their political participation.</p>	<p><b>UK to Greece and Estonia</b></p> <p><b>Differences:</b> In XR there is organisational and communication innovation In BLM there is reliance on pre-existing networks There is mentoring for the younger activists</p> <p><b>Similarities:</b> With Estonia: Anger about inequality, racial, social injustice. With Greece: Distrust of police and government</p>

# Comparison

- **Estonian participants** are active for equal rights for the BLM movement and against discrimination for the LGBTQ, but they are **less worried about issues of privacy and surveillance in comparison to participants in Greece and the UK**. Perhaps this is because the media and political system are far more polarised due to EU related crisis of recent years.
- **Greek participants** have **far more distrust to political parties and commercial platforms** than the Estonians and **see ICTs less a space for organisation and strategy than the UK participants**.
- **UK participants** differ in that there is organisational, communication innovation and more widespread mentoring for the younger activists.
- The three countries exhibit **similarities** however. **Politicisation is triggered by personal life experiences and specific events especially anger surrounding inequality, racial, social and environmental injustice**.
- There is also some use of **similar platforms**, but the **ways these are used varies** in the three countries (i.e., young people use less Facebook in Estonia and UK, but still do use it for publicization UK to reach parents or older people, Estonians and UK participants use more Instagram and Tik Tok than Greek participants, and all follow debates on Twitter in particular.

# Policy provocations

- Common in the 3 countries anger surrounding inequality, racial, social and environmental injustice.
- Better digital governance, then more trust and safety in digital citizenship (Estonia)
- More unstable government and exceptional events (Greek crisis, Brexit) less trust in politics and more polarisation
- Less digital development, less digital networks seen as space for coordination, organisation and protest, more emphasis on the physical participation (Greece).
- More digital development, more innovation (UK), more jump-scaling of youth into global concerns (Estonia BLM).



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