

The Way International Events Contribute to Constructing National and Political Identity

**(the case of XIX World Youth and Students
Festival)**

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Youth in Public Diplomacy

- easier for them to find mutual understanding
- more perceptive to innovations and transformations
- able to offer new approaches to deal with old problems
- less susceptible to prejudices and stereotypes

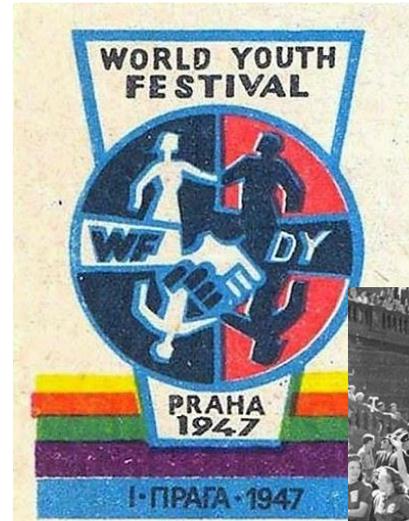


Theoretical and Empirical Basis

- The theoretical basis: the concept of public diplomacy supported by research methods dealing with event-driven cognition
- The empirical research methods: analyzing official documents and Internet resources, as well as in online questioning of 116 WFYS-2017 participants (both delegates, participants and volunteers) from 36 regions of Russia.

World Festivals of Youth and Students

- the first festival held in Prague in 1947
- four content components in festival agenda: anti-war, anti-imperialistic, image, and socio-economic
- correlation between these components changed at different stages of the festival movement



Stages of Festival Movement

- The **first stage** (1947-1985) - the dominating idea was anti-war struggle
- The **second stage**, after the collapse of the USSR and the world socialist system, the festival movement with its leftist political orientation, went through difficult times. The very choice of the capitals for the festivals (Pyongyang, Havana, Algiers, Caracas, Pretoria, and Quito) at this time emphasizes the domineering anti-imperialist component
- The **new stage** in the history of the festival movement began in 2015 - socio-economic content is prevailing

XIX Festival in Sochi

- 20,000 young people, aged 18 to 35, from more than 180 countries. 2000 foreign participants visited 15 regions of the country from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok
- Key topics: “Culture and Globalization”, “Global Economy”, “Knowledge Economy”, “Development of Public Institutions”, “Politics and International Security”
- The Left and the Global Agenda

- “I am a communist and I wanted to learn more about how people from all over the world are fighting and showing solidarity with other countries. In addition, I wanted to celebrate the anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, and be here with my friends and comrades from Russia” (male, 22, student, Great Britain)
- “I just expected to see Russia, meet people from all over the world, share contact information with them, discuss the situation in our countries, attend interesting and informative discussions” (male, 22, student, Canada).

Top Social Notions Shared by the Festival Participants

- “progress / science”
- “personal self-realization”
- “family”
- The categories of “peace / stability”, “travel”, “entertainment / leisure”, “desire for change”, “material well-being”, “strength”, “nature / creation” and “freedom ”(named in descending order) are represented more weakly

Significance for Russian Youth

- 74 people (64%) pointed out that the domestic and foreign policy of our country became a more exciting topic for them
- 98 people (84%) answered that they began to study the politics of foreign states, especially the development of international relations
- 72 respondents out of 116 (62%) gave a positive reply to the question: “Did you manage to establish friendly relations with representatives of foreign countries?”

The Key Speaker: Sergey Lavrov

- “The desire to communicate, the desire to do this on the basis of mutual respect, because not only at the festival are different religions, different cultures, different civilizations - this is a picture of the modern world. This cultural diversity should be our common wealth, on the basis of which we should strive for prosperity and development of all spheres of human life, wherever this happens ... ”



- The movement of youth and student festivals, as the 19th festival in Sochi has shown, is undergoing the influence of globalization and geopolitical transformations. Remaining the important institution of public diplomacy, the festival movement expands the political spectrum of representation and makes a significant contribution to the formation of the national and political identity of young people

