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**INSTITUTIONAL AND NON-INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS FOR
THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSNATIONAL
YOUTH MOVEMENTS**

Postgraduate specialization:

5.5.4 – International Relations: Global and Regional Studies

Abstract

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Relevance of the Research Topic. In today's rapidly changing global socio-political landscape, the increasing digitalisation of society and the merging of traditional and modern forms of youth political involvement have led to the emergence of transnational youth movements. These movements are fostering an environment in which young people are embracing informal and unconventional methods of political participation. This necessitates a reevaluation of the role of virtual communities, human rights alliances, and new media, as they expand as new platforms for political activity and engagement. Through transnational youth movements, young people are empowered to engage actively in international politics and exert their influence in transnational socio-political arenas.

The interest in this topic arises from the divergence of interests and contradictions between institutional and non-institutional actors involved in shaping transnational youth movements, which can lead to conflict situations. These discrepancies are evident in the goals established, methods of operation, expectations of these movements, and the perception and definition of the role of youth in contemporary society. As a result, potential conflicts arise that require careful analysis and consideration to enable effective cooperation.

In this context, the criteria for institutionality encompass formalisation, stability, legal legitimacy, and the presence of clear organisational structures. Institutional actors operate within legally established procedures and possess structural and administrative resources to influence public processes. However, despite having administrative and legal resources, institutional actors do not always manage to respond effectively to changes in the socio-political sphere.

Non-institutional actors in the context of transnational youth movements refer to individuals or groups operating outside established formal structures and lacking official legal legitimacy. They influence social and political processes through informal networks, social media, physical or online actions, and other forms of direct engagement. These actors can include activists, collective virtual identities, autonomous communities, and various non-governmental organisations that play a crucial role in transnational youth activism. Due to their dynamic and mobile nature, non-institutional actors can act as initiators of transnational youth movements, shaping trends and impacting the socio-political phenomena and conditions that influence these movements.

The divergence in objectives, methods, and perceptions regarding the role of youth can lead to conflicts between different actors, impacting the trajectory and character of transnational youth movements. Institutional actors consider transnational youth movements as a platform to influence the international configuration of socio-political, cultural, and economic processes. This drives states, international, and regional organisations to engage actively with youth, who play a crucial role not only in the creation but also in the consumption of virtual content, as well as in the dissemination of transnational knowledge, popular culture, and information flows.

Within the context of transnational processes, youth policy has garnered attention not only from young people within state borders but also from global youth communities, including

collective virtual identities such as digital diasporas and online communities. This dynamic presents new challenges and opportunities for institutional actors to address in the development and implementation of youth policy.

Transnational youth movements facilitate the mobility of information, knowledge, and culture, thereby reducing the time and resources required not only for communication but also for the adaptation and retransmission of socio-political values. Digital technologies enable non-institutional actors to more frequently take on the role of initiators of youth movements, setting developmental trends and influencing socio-political phenomena, factors, and conditions that shape transnational youth movements. In such conditions, non-institutional actors, such as digital diasporas, gain an effective platform for engaging youth in the early stages of integration into the transnational sphere, consolidating cultural and informational spaces, and universalising behavioral patterns among youth.

In today's rapidly evolving socio-political landscape, especially with the rise of societal digitisation, it is essential to study both institutional and non-institutional conditions that give rise to transnational youth movements, in order to understand social and political processes at the international level. Non-institutional conditions refer to factors existing outside formalised structures that can influence social norms, mass culture, or informal social movements. Non-institutional issues, in turn, are problems arising outside or on the fringes of formal institutional structures, often linked to social discontent, environmental crises, or human rights, and demand unconventional approaches and solutions.

Therefore, the relevance of the research is determined by the need to examine both institutional and non-institutional issues, the contradictions between the interests of participants in the process, their objectives, perceptions of the role of youth in contemporary society, and the chosen strategies for influencing the trajectory and nature of the development of transnational youth movements.

The review of the scientific literature on the subject indicates that issues related to the transnational aspects of youth movements remain relatively underexplored. Despite existing studies on this topic, there is a need for a more comprehensive analysis of the interaction between institutional and non-institutional conditions in the formation of transnational youth movements and their impact on political and socio-cultural processes.

The **research aims** to determine the content of institutional and non-institutional conditions that ensure the formation and development of transnational youth movements.

This aim is pursued through the resolution of the following interrelated **research objectives**:

- To analyse the transformation of youth movements in a transnational context and identify its specific features;
- To examine conceptual approaches to the study of transnational youth movements;
- To determine the specifics and characteristics of national youth policies in post-Soviet states within a transnational context;
- To identify the role of international institutions in the formation and development of transnational youth movements;

- To determine the role of the cultural and educational sphere in fostering global youth communities;
- To present the digital diaspora as a form of transnational youth collective identity.

The **object of the research** is transnational youth movements.

The **research subject** is the characteristics of institutional and non-institutional conditions in the formation and development of transnational youth movements.

The study hypothesises that institutional actors possess administrative and regulatory resources that enable them to create conditions for controlling the degree of restriction and openness of the socio-political and cultural space for transnational processes. However, the increasing digitalisation in social and political processes enhances the role of non-institutional actors as initiators of transnational youth movements, allowing them to create conditions that shape these movements. Therefore, for effective engagement with youth at both national and international levels, it is essential to consider the impact of non-institutional components and interact with non-institutional actors to influence the formation and development of transnational youth movements, taking into account that the contemporary configuration of international socio-political processes establishes interdependence between institutional and non-institutional conditions.

The dissertation research is grounded in a comprehensive **theoretical and methodological framework** that encompasses various scientific approaches and methods tailored to the specific objectives and tasks of the study. This research draws upon social constructivist, cultural transmission, network, institutional, neo-institutional, post-structuralist, postmodern, and structural-functional approaches to accomplish its research objectives.

The social constructivist approach facilitated the examination of how social constructions and meanings created by actors influence the formation and activities of youth movements. The cultural transmission approach underscored the role of cultural practices, symbols, and identities in shaping transnational youth movements. The network approach revealed the intricate social networks and interactions among actors, shedding light on the structure of these networks and their impact on the development of youth movements. The institutional approach enabled an exploration of the new opportunities and challenges encountered by institutional actors in formulating and implementing youth policies, particularly in response to the diversification of knowledge sources, communication channels, and socio-political expression means among the youth. The neo-institutional approach delved into the influence of formal and informal institutions on the development and sustainability of youth movements. The post-structuralist approach provided tools for deconstructing discourses and power, elucidating how linguistic and symbolic practices shape the identities and strategies of youth movements. The postmodern approach highlighted the fragmentation, pluralism, and hybridity of cultural forms and practices. Lastly, the structural-functional approach was instrumental in conducting a detailed analysis of the functions of non-institutional actors, such as digital diasporas, which serve as an influential platform for cultural, social, and political impact on youth. It also

facilitated the study of transnational knowledge that facilitates cross-border communication and the exchange of culture and knowledge among global youth communities.

The study of transnational youth movements, their formation involving both institutional and non-institutional actors, and the influence of socio-political phenomena on their development is a complex political phenomenon. To comprehensively understand this, a diverse methodological apparatus was employed. This included modelling and comprehensive factor evaluation techniques like SWOT and PESTLE analyses, as well as comparative analysis and normative-legal methods. These methods were crucial in providing a thorough and rigorous analysis of the subject.

The modeling method was employed to construct models of youth agencies and non-governmental organisations in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, which enabled the identification of national specificities of transnational youth movements in the examined countries. By applying the comparative method to analyse these models, the research was able to uncover the role of institutional actors in promoting transnational youth movements. The normative-legal method facilitated an assessment of the extent to which youth rights are protected as guaranteed by normative-legal documents adopted by CIS member states, as well as an evaluation of the role of the legal framework in enhancing cooperation between states in cultural, humanitarian, and economic spheres, thereby stimulating transnational flows in the region. The comparative analysis of the results from SWOT and PESTLE analyses of youth policies within BRICS, SCO, and EAEU frameworks revealed common trends, highlighted unique indicators, assessed effectiveness, and identified shortcomings.

Academic novelty of the research:

1. It is identified that the transformation of youth movements in a transnational context is characterised by decentralisation, increased levels of international coordination, and adaptation to global challenges.

2. The "transnational youth movement" concept has been defined as a new phase of youth activism through the systematisation of approaches to transnational spaces, borders, cross-border networks, youth identity, transnational knowledge, and political mobilisation. These movements are characterised by their informal nature and function as decentralised horizontal networks of activists, utilising information technologies and social networks for effective coordination and mobilisation, with the primary objective of driving global changes and shifting their focus from national issues to global concerns.

3. Based on the identification of the features and specifics of youth policies in the post-Soviet states under study, models of the structures of youth engagement agencies and NGOs in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan have been presented. These models illustrate the structural-functional principles of internal and external NGO systems within the analysed countries, as well as the institutional platforms for regulating and coordinating the activities of agencies responsible for youth work.

4. A growing trend has been identified regarding the involvement of international organisations from developing countries in financing youth projects, organising forums and

conferences, and developing specialised documents defining strategic directions for youth work through comparative analysis of the results of SWOT and PESTLE evaluations of youth policies within BRICS, SCO, and EAEU frameworks. The recommendations include developing a unified youth policy concept for BRICS nations, establishing a coordinating body responsible for implementing SCO youth policy programs, improving coordination to tailor programs and initiatives to the socio-economic, cultural, and religious differences among SCO member states, harmonising overall strategies and programs, and creating a unified monitoring and evaluation system for EAEU youth initiatives.

5. The influence of transnational knowledge on the formation of global youth communities through transnational education, new media, and mass culture is substantively demonstrated. Specifically, the impact of transnational education, which creates a model of dual presence and facilitates youth integration into the transnational space, is explored. The application of epistemological discursive analysis has revealed how knowledge is expressed, transmitted, and perceived in public discourse, as well as how perceptions of knowledge influence the formation of mental models and knowledge among youth.

6. The characteristics of the digital diaspora as a form of collective youth identity have been substantiated, specifically its role in consolidating cultural and informational spaces, engaging youth in processes of early integration into the transnational space and universalising behavioural models among youth. The virtual tools used by the digital diaspora for lobbying socio-political initiatives are also presented, as well as the platforms through which it exerts cultural, social, and political influence on youth, whether physically or virtually, present within the sphere of foreign youth policies.

Dissertation's provisions submitted to defence:

1. In today's transnational socio-political landscape, youth movements are undergoing significant transformations. These changes are evident in the decentralisation of their structures, increased international coordination, and their ability to adapt to global challenges. There is a clear trend towards greater youth involvement in international discourse, demonstrated through active participation in global debates and actions on issues such as climate change, human rights, social justice, and peaceful coexistence. These processes represent a shift from primarily local and centralised forms of organisation to more adaptable and decentralised ones, enabling youth to play an active role in shaping international political and social agendas. Youth movements, becoming more autonomous and self-organising, are forming new and informal forms of political participation, contributing to the rethinking of traditional approaches to youth policy, which requires state structures to transition from perceiving youth as a passive object to actively recognising and supporting its agency.

2. The transnational youth movement represents a new evolution of youth activism. It is a form of organisation and activity for youth groups and communities that fosters the diversification of knowledge and experience sources, the formation of virtual collective identities, and the activation of cross-border socio-political participation among youth. These movements are characterised by their informal nature, decentralised organisation through

horizontal networks of activists, active use of information technologies and social networks for participant coordination and mobilisation, and a commitment to global changes, addressing the global community and global issues. The most effective conceptual approach for studying transnational youth movements is Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "social fields." Bourdieu's theoretical tools allow for identifying non-traditional subjects of youth movements, contextualising contemporary mechanisms of unconventional political participation by youth, and assessment of the effectiveness of such participation in promoting and implementing socio-political initiatives.

3. As a result of the diversification and transnational nature of knowledge sources, communication channels, and means of socio-political participation, youth policy has become a focus of attention not only for youth within state borders but also for global youth communities abroad, including collective virtual identities of youth (digital diasporas, online communities). This presents both new challenges and opportunities for institutional actors, which must be taken into account in the development and implementation of youth policy. The developed models of the structures of state youth agencies and NGOs in Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan demonstrate that the role of state bodies in regulating youth policy directly influences the intensity of transnational processes in the national context. Relaxing the regulation of youth policy can enhance transnational connections but may also result in excessive external interference in matters concerning the national characteristics of youth movements. By establishing fundamental principles for the protection of youth rights in the legal documents of the CIS member states, an environment of opportunities has been created to further promote cooperation between states in cultural, humanitarian, and economic spheres, thereby encouraging transnational flows in the region.

4. Transnational youth movements represent a complex and multifaceted platform for influencing the international configuration of socio-political, cultural, and economic processes. Given the current geopolitical situation, international organisations of developing countries, such as BRICS, SCO, and EAEU, have the potential to become new exporters of ideological and value orientations. Through comparative analysis of the results of SWOT and PESTLE evaluations of youth policies within BRICS, SCO, and EAEU frameworks, a growing trend has been identified regarding the involvement of international organisations from developing countries in financing youth projects, organising forums and conferences, and developing specialised documents defining strategic directions for youth work. The analysis also uncovered various challenges and limitations in the field of youth policy, such as disagreements in approaches and priorities among EAEU participants, limited youth involvement in policy development and implementation, and the absence of a monitoring and evaluation system. In the context of the SCO, shortcomings include the lack of coordination mechanisms and differences among member countries, while for BRICS, shortcomings include the absence of a common concept, differences in political priorities, and limited resources in the field of youth policy amidst transnational processes. Recommendations stemming from the analysis results include developing a unified youth policy concept for BRICS countries,

establishing a coordinating body responsible for implementing SCO youth policy programs, enhancing coordination to adapt programs and initiatives to the socio-economic, cultural, and religious differences among SCO member states, aligning general strategies and programs, and creating a unified monitoring and evaluation system for EAEU youth initiatives.

5. Transnational knowledge plays a crucial role in forming global youth communities and ensures cross-border communication, cultural exchange, and the sharing of knowledge and experiences within transnational youth movements. Through transnational education, new media, and mass culture, cultural values and socio-political beliefs are disseminated, shaping even the most distinct societies. The phenomenon of transnational education allows young people to be physically present in one country while simultaneously being involved in another country's youth policies and traditions, facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences in a virtual environment. This creates a unique model of dual presence for students and promotes integration into the transnational field. Modern communication tools, new media, and mass culture are powerful instruments for creating and sharing knowledge in global youth communities, but they also carry potential risks, such as misinformation and manipulation of youth. The openness of youth during their formative process creates conditions in which they become particularly susceptible to the influence of various cultural, social, and political narratives, thereby forming a collective identity based on these influences.

6. Transnational youth movements facilitate the mobility of information, knowledge, and culture, reducing the time and resources needed not only for communication but also for the adaptation and retransmission of socio-political values. Collective virtual identities of youth (digital diaspora, online communities) can lobby for the promotion of socio-political initiatives both online (signing petitions, publishing in media) and by calling for physical actions and events. In this context, non-institutional actors, such as the digital diaspora, gain an effective platform for exerting cultural, social, and political influence on youth, whether physically or virtually, within the sphere of foreign youth policies. As one of the most dynamic forms of collective virtual youth identity, the digital diaspora has the opportunity to engage its peers in the early stages of integration into the transnational field, consolidate cultural and informational spaces, and universalise behavioural models among youth.

The theoretical validity of the research lies in the comprehensive analysis of the interaction between institutional and non-institutional actors in the formation of transnational youth movements and their impact on socio-political phenomena, factors, and conditions that contribute to the development of these movements. In this context, the most effective approaches to conceptualising transnational youth movements were identified, and the factors influencing the effectiveness of youth policy under conditions of transnationalisation were evaluated. The materials, conclusions, and generalisations presented in the work can contribute to enriching and refining theoretical understandings of the contextualisation of non-institutional subjects within transnational youth movements, unconventional forms of political

participation and youth involvement, the study of the role of transnational knowledge in the global youth movement, and the influence of the digital diaspora on the formation of transnational youth movements.

The practical implications of the research are expressed in the potential use of the main provisions, developed tools, identified trends, and conclusions in the process of developing youth policies and programs at both national and international levels. The developed models and tools, adapted to contemporary socio-political realities, allow for the simulation of scenarios for implementing youth policies, taking into account the national characteristics of the analysed countries. The materials and results presented in the research not only enrich the toolkit of authorised bodies working with youth but also provide effective methods for application in the field of soft power. The materials and conclusions presented in this dissertation can be used in the educational process to prepare teaching materials, deliver lectures, and conduct seminars in political science and interdisciplinary studies of political problems in international relations.

Approbation of the dissertation:

The research findings and conclusions were showcased at four all-Russian and three international scientific conferences. Six scholarly articles on the dissertation topic have been published, amounting to 5.52 conventional printing sheets in total. Five articles, totaling 4.71 printing sheets, were published in peer-reviewed scientific journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of Candidate of Sciences must be published.

Scope and structure of the dissertation:

The structure of the dissertation is determined by the research objectives, tasks, and the specifics of the applied methodology. The dissertation comprises an introduction, three chapters with six sections, a conclusion, and a list of references.

The list of sources and literature includes 343 sources, including normative legal acts, 72 monographic studies, 64 scientific articles published in Russian, 127 scientific articles published in foreign languages, 35 scientific dissertations and abstracts of dissertations related to the dissertation research topic, as well as analytical data and digital resources. This ensures the comprehensive coverage and relevance of the literature and sources used in the dissertation research.