

# The Role and Place of Youth Political Organizations in the Formation of Public Opinion in the Republic Of Tatarstan

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*Abstract: Youth is the most promising social stratum for any state. The processes associated with the activation of the young generation in the social and political life of the country are the most relevant within the framework of modern sociopolitical discourse. The paper reveals the issue of political activity of youth movements in the Republic of Tatarstan. The role of socio-political youth organizations in the formation of public opinion within the framework of the election campaign is revealed. The authors analyse the current state of political youth associations in the Republic of Tatarstan, their place and potential. Given a certain political passivity of the young generation in Russia, especially in the framework of electoral processes, methods of influencing its public opinion that are adequate to this target audience are of particular importance. Thus, there is an objective need for a thorough analysis of the youth communication sphere in order to identify those methods of communication with youth that will most effectively convey to it the proposed position of certain political actors. It is assumed that in the modern information society, the widespread adoption of global communication technologies, young people, as the most progressive part of society, are most affected by the communication influence of modern information platforms posted on the Internet.*

*Keywords: socio-political youth movements, youth policy, political communication, modern communication technologies, public opinion, society management technologies.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The younger generation is a very important link in almost any field of activity, and politics is no exception. As the last turnout clearly shows, in recent years, young people are rapidly losing interest to the political life in our country, and in particular to the elections.

Moreover, over the past couple of years, the number of upperclassmen and first-year students, who are interested in the ideas and views of non-systemic opposition, and who reject any political activity of the systemic side, has been actively growing. The latest unpopular reforms can serve as a warming factor. In particular, legislative initiatives that somehow restrict the rights and freedoms of the young generation on the Internet. This is evidenced by the increased protest activity, expressed in the mass rallies of thousands "For free Internet" and "In defence of the Telegram messenger".

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## II. METHODS

In the course of work on the paper, empirical (observation) and theoretical research (analysis) methods were used. The first phase of the study consisted of observation and content analysis of the information field of the Internet space, since it is there that the greatest concentration of young people is recorded. Using these methods, tracking and fixing of modern trends in the political sphere of interests was carried out.

During the second phase of the study, a comparative system analysis of the data obtained during the observation with a further semantic grouping was performed.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today, many political parties, especially those representing systemic opposition, have their own youth organisations. However, they are characterized by a paucity and extremely low activity. The party youth movement is the personnel capital of any political organization and its confidence in the future. The negligent attitude of parties leads to a loss of interest on the part of youth in the entire political sphere of activity (Elishev S.O., 2010; Mardani, M., & Fallah, R. 2018). Lack of personnel can lead to severe party expenditures, up to its reorganization or liquidation. Without the development of a younger generation of politicians, the party runs the risk of becoming an outsider in the political arena.

Youth political organisations have a dual function. They involve young people in the sphere of politics, thus providing an opportunity to acquire the necessary skills in the competition that is not so fierce. On the other hand, they provide socio-political organizations with a personnel reserve and train young people interested in a certain political ideology. Many experts believe that youth plays a more significant role in politics than is commonly believed, because those who can lead young people are almost guaranteed to secure a decisive advantage in the struggle for power.

Young people are more mobile and ideologically accessible; this allows them to be actively used in the framework of certain party ambitions (Barrington-Leach, 2011). Political forces that have a formed and organized youth structure, in most cases, realize its potential during the election campaign, being guided by certain mechanisms of manipulative influence, which are based on motivating points.

Possessing this resource, the senior organization has the opportunity to optimize its efforts and evenly distribute them, covering the most necessary electoral space. On a countrywide scale, this practice is applied regularly, in other words, those political forces that have a strong youth reserve are more effective in campaigning.

However, a characteristic feature of socio-political youth movements in the Republic of Tatarstan is their small size and lack of organisation. In this case, one can identify the two largest and most active youth forces: the "Young Guard of United Russia" and youth representatives who support the views of the non-systemic opposition. It is important to indicate the fact that non-systemic political youth is not officially recorded as an organization, but it is united around one politician who does not have access to official political competition in the framework of the electoral process. The areas of responsibility of certain groups within the framework of this association are clearly indicated, a system of official subordination is built, which allows them to evenly distribute responsibilities among participants. This contributes to the rapid response to certain challenges within the framework of the election campaign and the development of response strategies consistent with the policies of the senior organization. Despite their high number, not all participants in the movement are interested in vigorous activity, which in turn creates certain inconveniences and is one of the main disadvantages. The availability of an administrative resource allows them to overcome the above-mentioned inconveniences; however, the forced participation in certain events of the pro-government movement, for example, of university students, has a one-time effect and carries a large set of costs in the future. Young people representing non-systemic opposition do not have a clear structure; they carry out all their activities on a voluntary basis. It is quite difficult to trace their activities in detail, since they are maximally limited by certain external and internal factors.

Thus, on the one hand, it is possible to designate only one officially fixed socio-political youth structure, which is a huge drawback, and on the other hand, being outside the official framework, the non-systemic youth stands out which allows the former to point out that the latter are not exists at all. Therefore, when one side hides the presence of the opposing side, a certain situation arises that mimic the legitimacy of the first (K. Lowden, 2016; Galvão, M., & Henriques, R. 2018; Ulandari, et al 2019; Kabayeva, et al 2018). In other words, pro-government youth organizations, in the absence of competitive views and worldviews, create the appearance of what they say on behalf of all young people. Such a technique works well for less politically erudite youth representatives, who in most cases are not opinion leaders. The situation is different for non-systemic political youth, a characteristic feature of which is the presence of a large number of opinion leaders with a certain body of knowledge about the political sphere and a critical attitude towards pro-government organizations.

On the one hand, over the past couple of years, the number of upperclassmen and first-year students interested in the ideas and views of the non-systemic opposition, and rejecting any political activity of the systemic side has grown significantly. They are distinguished by their activity and courage in expressing their political position. Their speakers are peculiar leaders of opinion within the framework of small and medium groups. According to the results of the study, for successful

interaction with such an audience it is necessary to distance oneself from any images of central power by focusing on the educational and enlightenment character of communication. It is reasonable to highlight online distribution channels that are in demand in this segment. It is required to interact with the blogosphere which is authoritative for them and formulate a content format and presentation of information separate from other target audiences, as well as actively use Telegram messenger.

On the other hand, the dominance of certain political forces over a long period of time has a strong impact on a certain part of youth. Today, a whole section of young people who have a desire to join the existing political system, playing "by the rules" has stood out. In most cases, their main motive is to build a successful career and build a database of contacts that, in their opinion, will be useful to them outside the political field. The overwhelming majority of this segment fades over time, losing all interest in the business as a result of a competitive filter within a particular social organization. Work with this segment has fewer barriers, and the main task is to integrate them as much as possible into the process of creating favourable public capital of political activity.

Despite the cardinal differences between the above segments, the absolute majority is the part of youth that is poorly integrated into the political process; this part has been formed over a decade of ineffective youth policy. This target audience is the most common among young people. They are witnesses of passive political competition within the framework of which, in most cases, the result is clear initially. In other words, representatives of the target group often anticipates the result, the consequence of this is lost any interest in participating in the electoral process. Moreover, interest in political information issues disappears and a kind of disintegration and distance from the political sphere as a whole takes place.

The second largest target group next to the previous one are young people who do not show any interest in politics. The most dangerous is the fact that its number constantly grows from year to year. Most often, complete indifference to political life in the country is associated with a complete lack of understanding of the situation in the country and a reluctance to take responsibility for certain moments. Indifference arises as a result of sometimes objective, and sometimes even far-fetched fears associated with the political sphere in the country, reinforced by strong stereotypes. That is why political thinking in this segment is extremely stereotyped as a result of a deliberate informational vacuum. Understanding the interests of this segment in the online sphere can indicate the connecting areas of influence on it.

For a full understanding of the whole scale of the situation, it is worth noting the fact that the number of youth representatives who are sympathetic to non-systemic opposition and registered as volunteers is more than 700 people. This is more than 7 times higher than the total number of all youth of the systemic opposition in the Republic of Tatarstan. Given the strong potential of young people and their political mobility, the absence of such capital drastically reduces the level of confidence in systemic parties.

The total number of representatives of official socio-political youth organizations is more than 2500 people.

Nevertheless, the level of interest of the Tatarstan youth in the life of existing parties is less than 20 per cents. On the whole, the interest of the younger generation in the republic in politics is stably low. An important point is the fact that the younger generation spends the most time on the Internet and actively uses social networks. However, the number of subscribers of the largest community on the VKontakte social network among the republican youth does not exceed 4000. It is worth recalling that the total number of youth in the Republic of Tatarstan from 14 to 25 years old is 437,000. Also, to understand the current trend, it is necessary to identify the following research results. The first is the lack of faith in its significance. That is, the younger generation does not believe that their voice can change anything. The next reason was called the lack of understanding of the practical impact from the elections both on the life of the country as a whole and on their own. In other words, the lack of understanding how can elections help people and what is their degree of significance. Another factor in the youth's declining interest in politics is the fact that there is no explanation of events in the world and in the country; therefore it is not clear how this all affects and can directly affect their life in society (M. Hahn-Bleibtreu, 2012).

Over the past couple of years, the number of upperclassmen and first-year students, who are interested in the ideas and views of non-systemic opposition, and who reject any political activity of the systemic side, has been actively growing. Recent unpopular reforms, in particular, legislative initiatives that somehow restrict the rights and freedoms of the young generation on the Internet may be a warming factor. This is evidenced by the increased protest activity expressed in the mass rallies of thousands "For free Internet" and "In defence of the Telegram messenger".

Moreover, the study revealed the fact that young people do not accept the method of communication using the same tools and messages that only reject their attention and interest in politics. An important factor in working with youth is audience segmentation. As a rule, the same motivation is used in the elections: for example, the drawing of smartphones from Apple or a free concert ticket for a certain show star. However, young people are much more multifaceted and do not accept this approach, because, firstly, not everyone is motivated by the benefits offered, and secondly, many of the chips have been already understood by the audience, or were not preferred, that is, commensurate with the cost of the audience (in this case, going to the polls).

As already indicated at the beginning of this study, the modern generation has a number of features that allow them to feel more confident in the digital sphere. On this basis, there is a need to search for new methods, or even a new approach to youth education, which will correspond to all the points indicated.

#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Every day, the increasing role of the Internet in all political processes is becoming more noticeable. The main user of the online network is the young generation, which, being united by their interests, has the opportunity to practically freely analyse and discuss their points of interest, gradually turning this discussion into calls for certain actions.

Ideally, the pre-election period is characterized by increased attention of the participants of this process to their

audience and an increase in the campaign component, which one way or another flows into the Internet space, where the majority are active users belonging to the younger generation (F.Y. Denstad, 2009).

As practice shows, the already existing format of socio-political youth organizations is practically not in demand, as a result of which, unofficial youth associations around non-systemic opposition appear, which are practically not regulated by state control. It is such unofficial associations that dictate the vector of public sentiment in the online space and form their own vision of the existing situation, which in most cases comes down to a negative perception of the election process in the country.

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