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SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF INCREASING THE SOCIAL ACTIVITY OF THE YOUTH OF NEW UZBEKISTAN IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

This scientific article provides a comprehensive philosophical and sociological analysis of the essence of youth social activity and its underlying social and institutional determinants within the context of rapid societal transformations. At the current stage of modernization, the article highlights the agentic potential of youth, as well as the interactive and synergistic mechanisms connecting social institutions (statehood, education, mahalla, and civil society organizations) with youth social behavior. The research demonstrates the dialectical relationship between traditional and digital (cyber) forms of social activism, offering scientific conclusions and practical recommendations to optimize the institutional environment and enhance social capital.

Keywords: Transformation, youth, social activity, institutional factors, social institutions, state youth policy, civil society, mahalla, digitalization, social capital.

Introduction

At the beginning of the third quarter of the 21st century, rapid technological, socio-cultural, and socio-political transformations in the global world order are fundamentally altering the structural frameworks of societies. During the transition toward a post-industrial and digital society, the role and position of



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youth-a demographic that is sociopsychologically the most sensitive, dynamic, and adaptable-are being reassessed. A defining characteristic of transforming societies is the declining efficiency of traditional models of social relations and institutional mechanisms, occurring alongside the emergence of new social institutions and axiological orientations.

The large-scale reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan in recent years, the execution of the “Uzbekistan – 2030” Strategy, and the elevation of state youth policy to a qualitatively new level reflect this transformative dynamic. In a nation where over 60 percent of the population comprises young people, enhancing youth social activity and mobilizing their intellectual, creative, and social potential for sustainable modernization and national security constitutes a vital strategic objective.

Youth social activity is a complex, multi-level social phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a mere collection of individual aspirations or psychological traits. It develops at the intersection of the social environment, value systems, and the institutional conditions provided by the state and society. Consequently, a conceptual and systemic investigation into the social and institutional foundations of boosting youth social activity remains a crucial task for contemporary socio-philosophical and sociological sciences.

Methods (theoretical and methodological framework)

The concept of social activity is interpreted through various approaches in scientific literature. Classical sociology views social activity as goal-oriented action and behavior by an individual or group aimed at transforming objective reality and the social environment. According to Max Weber’s theory of “social action”, the intensity of individual activity is measured by the subjective meaning



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attached to the action and its orientation toward the behavior of other social agents.

In analyzing social activity during transformations, the structural-functional analysis proposed by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton carries significant weight. This approach posits that social activity is directly contingent upon societal stability and how effectively social institutions (education, law, politics, and spirituality) fulfill their functions. Functional disruptions (anomie) within the system lead to decreased youth engagement or its diversion into destructive channels.

Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu's and Robert Putnam's concepts of "social capital" and "habitus" provide explanatory frameworks at micro- and mezo-levels. Social capital encompasses an individual's access to social networks, relations of trust, and institutional resources. Adequate social capital among youth consolidates their subjective agency within civic and social processes.

The methodological foundation of this study integrates a systems approach, sociological and socio-philosophical analysis, comparative analysis, and institutional-axiological methodologies. The determinants of youth social activity are comprehensively analyzed across three levels:

- **Micro-level (Individual-motivational):** Personal value systems, self-awareness, and civic responsibility.
- **Mezo-level (Lokal-social):** Family, educational institutions, *mahalla*, and local communities.
- **Macro-level (Institutional-systemic):** State youth policy, legal-regulatory frameworks, civil society institutions, and nationwide modernization programs.



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Results.

3.1. Socio-Spiritual Criteria and Determinants of Youth Social Activity

Youth social activity reflects conscious, voluntary participation in socio-economic, cultural, and political processes, alongside the capacity to demonstrate initiative and responsibility in resolving social issues. During societal transformation, both the motivational foundation and structural manifestations of activism undergo significant shifts.

1. Civic Responsibility and Sense of Belonging: The core foundation of social activity is a cultivated sense of belonging-where an individual perceives themselves as an integral part of a specific society or community and assumes responsibility for its future. While transformational periods often induce utilitarian-pragmatic attitudes and individualism, constructive activism thrives where civic responsibility and common welfare remain primary motivators.

2. Value Transformation and Social Orientations: Axiological criteria determine the qualitative indicators of activism. Today's youth experience a complex synthesis of traditional and modern values. National-cultural values (family, community, respect for elders) coexist with modern aspirations (individual liberty, self-realization, pragmatism). Key avenues of youth engagement include:

- *Ecological and Social Volunteering:* Assisting vulnerable populations and engaging in environmental projects (e.g., the nationwide "Yashil Makon" greening initiative).
- *Educational and Cultural Activism:* Promoting literacy and participating in intellectual circles and scientific projects.
- *Social Entrepreneurship:* Addressing social challenges (unemployment, inclusive education, recycling) through business innovations.



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3.2. Institutional Foundations of Youth Engagement

Institutional foundations encompass formal and informal structures that provide legal guarantees, resources, and frameworks for youth activity.

- **Legal Framework and State Youth Policy:** The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On State Youth Policy”, the establishment of the Youth Affairs Agency, and relevant decrees form the regulatory basis. Institutional efficiency is demonstrated through targeted social support (“Youth Notebook”), social mobility pipelines (“Future Leaders”, Youth Parliament), and public talent initiatives (“Five Important Initiatives”). However, lingering bureaucratic inefficiencies continue to hinder optimal real-world impact.

- **The Mahalla Institution:** As a unique local self-governance institution, the *mahalla* system was upgraded by introducing the “Youth Leader” (*Yoshlar yetakchisi*) role. This creates a direct mezo-level platform to identify youth concerns, support grassroots initiatives, and foster local civic engagement.

- **Educational Institutions:** Universities serve as primary spaces for cultivating critical thinking, soft skills, and leadership. Autonomous student self-governance, debate clubs, and scientific societies serve as key indicators of vibrant institutional youth engagement.

- **Civil Society and NGOs:** Non-governmental organizations enable “bottom-up” initiative pipelines. State grants and social orders support youth NGOs, though financial sustainability challenges remain.

3.3. Interaction Model of Axiological and Institutional Factors

1. **Institutional Deficit Regime:** High youth motivation exists without adequate structural platforms or social mobility, leading to frustration, institutional distrust, and brain drain.



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2. **Axiological Deficit Regime:** State infrastructure and funding are present, but genuine youth interest is lacking, resulting in superficial formalism and administrative overreach.

3. **Synergistic (Optimal) Regime:** Institutional opportunities align seamlessly with intrinsic youth values, establishing an open ecosystem for self-realization and progress.

3.4. Digital Transformation and Cyber-Activism

As ‘digital natives’, modern youth increasingly shift activism into virtual spaces.

- **Digital Activism:** Manifests through social media platforms (Telegram, Instagram, YouTube), online petitions, blogs, and digital communities. Advantages include high dissemination speed, non-hierarchical networking, and rapid resource mobilization (crowdfunding).

- **Cyber-Activism Risks:** Include *slacktivism* (superficial online engagement without real-world action), vulnerability to information manipulation/radicalization, and the digital divide between urban and rural youth.

Discussion and conclusion

Enhancing youth social activity during societal transformation is a multifaceted process requiring balanced alignment between socio-spiritual values and institutional support. Moving beyond mere administrative measures or staged events requires building an autonomous institutional ecosystem that supports authentic youth initiatives and fosters civic ownership.



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Practical Recommendations:

1. Institutional Reforms:

- Transition youth-focused organizations (Youth Affairs Agency, Youth Union, Mahalla) from bureaucratic management to “bottom-up” initiative-support models.
- Enhance the methodological and financial autonomy of *mahalla* “Youth Leaders”, evaluating performance through outcome-oriented Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Scale up public funding and social contracts for youth-led non-governmental organizations.

2. Socio-Spiritual and Axiological sphere:

- Integrate comprehensive civic responsibility, environmental awareness, and volunteer culture modules across all educational tiers.
- Grant genuine autonomy and decision-making power to Student Self-Government bodies in higher education institutes.
- Expand transparent recognition mechanisms for active youth, including social credits, academic incentives, and grants.

3. Digital Activism and Cyber Environment:

- Establish free media literacy and digital hygiene educational platforms.
- Improve digital communication channels (online hearings, open chats, e-surveys) between state bodies and youth, ensuring feedback directly informs policy decisions.

Successfully synergizing youth social motives with robust institutional resources serves as a primary driver for sustainable societal modernization and national growth.



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