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Studying the Problems of Youth "Transitions" in European Countries / Изучение проблематики молодежных «переходов» в европейских странах

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Аннотация: В настоящей статье осуществлен анализ исследований европейской молодежной политики. Предметом исследования являются основные тенденции,

типология и принципы функционирования молодежных «переходов» в европейских странах. Актуальным и своевременным является вопрос о необходимости изучения феномена молодежных «переходов», так как на сегодняшний день не выработано общепринятого взгляда на способы изучения данных процессов. Методологическую основу исследования составили анализ и синтез, институциональный, системный и сравнительные подходы. На основании изученного материала авторы приходят к выводам, что при рассмотрении стратегий молодежных «переходов» необходимо учитывать несколько институциональных сфер, таких как тип социально-направленного государства и специфику перехода от учебы к работе. Взаимодействие этих стратегий дает разные модели молодежных переходов. Данные исследования подчеркивают важные межнациональные различия в зависимости от режимов распределения социальной помощи, типов капитализма, а также стратегий роста. Таким образом, мы рассмотрели различные стратегии, структурирующие переход к взрослой жизни: чтобы объяснить разные модели молодежных «переходов», необходимо учитывать несколько институциональных сфер, такие как тип социально-направленного государства и специфику перехода от учебы к работе. Взаимодействие этих стратегий дает разные модели молодежных переходов. Хотя многие европейские исследователи утверждают, что возрастная политика важна в этом отношении в силу старения общества и роста «седой силы», большинство работ, посвященных этому вопросу, фактически опровергают гипотезу уклона в пользу пожилых: эти исследования подчеркивают важные межнациональные различия в зависимости от режимов распределения социальной помощи, типов капитализма, а также стратегий роста. В итоге мы приходим к выводу, что молодежь следует рассматривать, как часть общества в целом, и, следовательно, чтобы понять, как она переходит во взрослую жизнь, нужно видеть полную институциональную, политическую и экономическую картину.

Ключевые слова:

молодежь, социальное обеспечение, молодежная политика, молодежные переходы, европейские государства, социально-направленное государство, типология молодежных переходов, модели молодежных переходов, социальное гражданство, система образования

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Introduction

Youth and youth policy have traditionally been given a significant place in the European research discourse. Scientists are considering a whole layer of relevant issues. Economists analyze youth unemployment; sociologists have created a special subdiscipline, "sociology of youth," proving that the transition to adulthood is delayed and changes shape, prolonging the period of life called "youth"; representatives of political science specialties have also begun to take into account this transformation in life.

The subject of the study is the main trends, typology, and functioning principles of youth "transitions" in European countries.

The relevance of the research is dictated by the fact that from the state's perspective, youth policy should be oriented toward receptivity to innovations and modernization of

society. Despite certain differences in the lifestyles and worldviews of Russian and European youth, there is a lot in common between these groups in a number of parameters. By researching and identifying development patterns of youth as a social stratum in Europe and the state's policy toward the younger generation, it is possible to adopt positive experiences and avoid mistakes in youth policy. Because the state policy in Russia does not have sufficient traditions and experience to function effectively, it should also be noted that the question of the need to study the phenomenon of youth "transitions" has never been raised. It is also relevant and timely that a generally accepted view on studying these processes has not yet been developed.

The methodological basis of the study was made up of institutional, systemic, and comparative approaches. The socio-political reflection of the study's subject dictated the chosen methodology's originality. Based on the need to consider models of youth policy, we used the following methods as the main ones. 1. The method of comparative analysis, based on which various methods of studying youth policy were carried out. 2. The institutional method. 3. A cultural-historical method that allowed us to study the changes in social strata within the state as a whole. The result of using these methods was analyzing and synthesizing the data obtained. In addition, the formal-logical method and the method of "retrospective analysis" were also used in the research process.

Studies by European scientists either focus on one country or try to identify structural trends and highlight similarities between countries. However, a number of researchers have shown the importance of national characteristics when it comes to youth "transitions." In different countries, young people enter adulthood in different ways, partly due to the different organization of political institutions [\[1\]](#). We consider works that analyze this institutional diversity from the point of view of comparative politics. Youth transition strategies relate to various sectors (social protection, education, labor market, student support). Their nature and coordination are highly diversified across countries.

In addition, various researchers have tried to analyze strategies for structuring youth "transitions." First, the comparative literature on the socially oriented state has tried to consider the problem of age in general and youth in particular. Second, the literature on pedagogy and the transition from study to work offers interesting ideas concerning the so-called modes of skill formation. Third, some studies have tried to combine these two directions to analyze the "models of youth transitions" as such.

Since the 1990s, "youth studies" have been built around three questions. Firstly, is "youth" the correct category for analyzing society? Is it relevant to examine society through the prism of age? Some researchers have argued that the youth should be considered a separate part of the population. In contrast, others have insisted on inequality between generations, arguing that youth is heterogeneous—using P. Bourdieu's idea that "youth is just a word" [\[2\]](#). Secondly, if age is really relevant, is it a "life cycle" effect or an "age group" effect? Does this question affect the study of inequality within and between generations? Thirdly, what is the role of action and structure for young people? Several studies have analyzed young people's experiences, lifestyles, subcultures, and actions, while others have studied the economic conditions in which young people live.

It should be noted that in the so-called industrial era, a person's life path passed through three periods: childhood (with the introduction of mass education systems), adulthood (the working segment of the path), and old age (subject to the creation of pension systems). This structure was called "the division of the life path into three parts" [\[3\]](#). Since the 1970s,

the categories of the life path have undergone significant changes that have influenced the traditional division into three parts.

The emergence of a "new life stage" called "youth," located between childhood and adulthood, led to the spread of education and the complexity of employment, significantly complicating this transition from childhood to adulthood.

Three trends led to the emergence of "youth" as a life stage: the postponement to a later date when different thresholds for entering adulthood pass (getting an education, going to work, leaving the parental home, getting married, and having a child); the separation of these transitions in time and their reversibility [4]. Such transformations have come to be called "unstable" or "youth" transitions [5].

Typology of youth "transitions"

In youth studies, scientists have tried to characterize transitions by talking about a socially oriented state on the one hand and the transition from study to work on the other. They proposed classifications related directly to youth transitions. A. Walter proposed a typology of "models of youth transitions" based on the typology of social protection models. It includes four models: "insufficient protection" (Mediterranean), "liberal/minimal" (liberal), "employment-oriented" (conservative-corporatist), and "universalist" (social-democratic). Walter emphasizes the need to expand the analysis to social protection and cover other institutional areas, such as education and the labor market [6].

Since the 1980s, a whole field of comparative literature has been developed on the impact of education systems on youth employment. In 1982, M. Maurice, F. Selye, and J.-J. Sylvester analyzed the links between the training system and the production organization, comparing France and Germany [7]. They demonstrated that these institutional areas are complementary even though the "social relationships" in the two countries are different. In Germany, vocational education and training occupies a central place in the education system, affecting almost half of the age group. This is illustrated by the presence of production workers in the education system—employers and trade unions are important participants in the system. In France, the education system is completely separated from the production world. As a result, the proportion of students in the vocational education system integrated into the scientific system is small.

A few years later, P. Ryan and P. Garonne proposed a typology of "youth regulation" systems, referring to the comparison above of France and Germany [8]. Distinguishing between the "internal labor market" and the "professional labor market," to which a third "external labor market" was subsequently added, they identified three systems of youth regulation: "regulated integration" (access to work is guaranteed by a strictly regulated education system, as in Germany), "selective exclusion" (access to jobs in the secondary labor market after graduation to obtain the necessary skills that will then allow you to get a quality job in the primary labor market, as in France) and "competitive regulation" (weak labor market regulation, in which access to jobs is based on competition among candidates, as in the UK). Three elements are important here: types of skills ("specific" and not transferable between companies or sectors, or "general" and transferable), types of labor markets (in relation to types of skills), and the place of the state in regulation (regulation by the market or by the state).

Models of youth "transitions" in Europe.

Van de Velde's book on youth "transitions" in Europe [\[9\]](#), inspired by the typology of social protection models, focuses on four countries: Denmark, Great Britain, France, and Spain. She analyzes how young people enter adulthood in their country, examining in detail the social security system, education, the transition from study to work, and family cultural models.

The Mediterranean model, illustrated in the study by the example of Spain, is a "logic of family affiliation," the purpose of which is to "settle down," that is, to leave the parental home solely to create their own household. Leaving parents is directly related to entering the labor market, marriage, and the birth of the first child. The model is based on the family primacy strategy: the family cares for young people who do not receive direct assistance from the state.

The liberal model, illustrated by Great Britain's example, is a "logic of individual emancipation," the purpose of which is to "take responsibility." The possibility of early entry into the labor market and individualistic norms allow young people to become autonomous quite early.

The social democratic model presented by Denmark is a "logic of personal development," the purpose of which is to "find yourself." In this model, the state provides benefits, allowing young people to live and increase their experience in a relatively flexible way. Here, unlike in the UK, access to autonomy appears very early and is accompanied by a long study period.

Finally, the continental model, illustrated by the example of France, offers a logic of "social integration," the purpose of which is to "find your place." It offers a hybrid set of strategies that borrow from Mediterranean countries (minimum income is not available for those under 25) and the promotion of autonomy in Scandinavian countries (individual housing allowances).

However, Van de Velde chose France as a typical example of a continental model, which caused some confusion. Walter referred to France and Germany as "employment-oriented models." Although France and Germany, at first glance, are similar in their Bismarckian social protection regime, youth transitions in them are very different—they move from study to work in completely different ways, and skills are formed in different ways. Therefore, the problem of comparing France and Germany remains open, as well as the difference between the regimes of social protection and the formation of skills.

Subsequently, a new typology was proposed that resolves this confusion due to a clearer structuring of the two areas of literature [\[10\]](#). In fact, there are two types of government intervention to promote the autonomy of young people. On the one hand, the state can solve the transition issue from study to work by applying strategies in education and employment: this is the problem of "economic citizenship." On the other hand, it can help young people (by providing, for example, family benefits, unemployment benefits, housing benefits, and student support): this is the problem of "social citizenship."

Models of social citizenship of youth.

Let's consider two models of social citizenship of youth. It can be of the "family type." Youth is seen as a continuation of childhood. Therefore, young people are treated like children: parents still have to take care of them, which means that benefits are most often directed at them and not at young people who maintain a dependent status in the social protection system. Here, the age restrictions for access to benefits are quite high, about 25

years old. Moreover, as it is assumed that the child is studying, students are mainly supported through family benefits (family allowances and tax benefits for families) or student grants, which depend on the parents' incomes.

The social citizenship of young people can be "individualized." In this case, young people are considered adults when they reach civil adulthood. Here, the age restrictions on access to benefits are relatively low, about 18 years old. As young people are no longer considered children, even when they study, family policy is not aimed at supporting students, who, on the contrary, receive serious support (scholarships and/or loans) regardless of their parents' incomes. Since this assistance does not depend on parental income, it benefits the vast majority of students, unlike family grants, which are provided only to a minority.

Now, we will distinguish two strategies of economic citizenship. The first is "inclusive": its goal is to give every young person a minimum level of skills that allows them to get a job. To help young people get a job, the emphasis is primarily on education and training [\[11\]](#). It is assumed that the employment policy will compensate for the educational policy, and low-skilled youth will get a second chance. This strategy also focuses on investing in human capital [\[12\]](#).

The second strategy is "selective." Its goal is to provide skills to only the best: the goal is not to guarantee everyone a minimum level of education but to rank students, creating an elite. The elite education system generates profound inequality among young people, leading to a high dropout rate. For low-skilled youth experiencing difficulties in the labor market, the employment strategy aims to promote access to any employment. Employment policy is not focused on human capital but instead seeks to reduce the cost of youth labor (through lower minimum wages or exemption from social contributions) and/or create atypical jobs for less productive young people.

Integrating these two dimensions, four models of social citizenship of young people differ: "securing citizenship" (individualization and inclusive strategy) of the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands); "controlled citizenship" (family and inclusive strategy) of continental countries with a vocational training system (Germany, Austria); "refusal to citizenship" (family and electoral strategy) of the Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy, France, Belgium and Luxembourg); and "second-class citizenship" (individualization and electoral strategy) of the Anglo-Saxon countries (Great Britain and Ireland). Due to the difference between economic and social citizenship dimensions, the comparison of France and Germany regarding youth transitions is solved—in one dimension, the countries are really similar (family social citizenship), and in the other, they differ.

Conclusion

We have considered various strategies for structuring the transition to adulthood. To explain the different models of youth "transitions," several institutional areas, such as the type of socially oriented state and the specifics of the transition from study to work, must be considered.

The interaction of these strategies gives different models of youth transitions. Although many European researchers argue that age policy is important in this regard due to the aging of society and the growth of "gray power," most of the works devoted to this issue refute the hypothesis of bias in favor of the elderly: these studies emphasize important interethnic differences depending on the modes of distribution of social assistance, types of

capitalism, as well as growth strategies. In this paper, we conclude that young people should be considered part of society as a whole, and, therefore, to understand how they move into adulthood, it is necessary to see the full institutional, political, and economic picture. In general, it can be assumed that the models of "youth policy" and youth "transitions" need further study, filling in certain gaps and answers to a number of topical issues.

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