Transformation of the Socio-Political Sphere in Digital Era: Some Problems of Value-Normative Harmonization

Mamychev Alexey Yurievich1, Kim Alexander2, Miroshnichenko Olga Igorevna3, Ostrovsky Vladimir Aleksandrovich4 & Tereshchenko Victor Viktorovich4

1 Department of Legal Foundations of Administration, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia
2 Department of International Relations and Law, Institute of Law, Vladivostok State University of Economics and Service, Vladivostok, Russia
3 Department of Theory and History of State and Law, Far Eastern Federal University, Vladivostok, Russia
4 Department of Political Science and Ethnopolicy, Southern Russian Institute of Management, Russian Academy of National Economy and State Service under the President of the Russian Federation, Russia

Correspondence: Mamychev Alexey Yurievich, Department of Legal Foundations of Administration, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Moscow, Russia. E-mail: mamychev@yandex.ru

Received: May 23, 2019      Accepted: July 1, 2019      Online Published: July 10, 2019
doi:10.5539/jpl.v12n3p26                  URL: https://doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v12n3p26

The study was carried out with the financial support of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research in the framework of research project No. 19-011-31031

Abstract

The article problematizes the functioning, on the one hand, of traditional value-normative regulators, ensuring socio-cultural integrity and social and political dynamics, and on the other, the development of standards for the development and application of digital algorithms, autonomous robotic systems and artificial intelligence. It discusses various approaches and theoretical and practical positions that argue and model the development of a socio-political organization in the digital era, and describe fundamental changes in political communication, law and order, public-power interaction, etc.

The authors argue that the introduction of digital algorithms and robotic technologies radically changes the basic sociocultural meanings and the socio-political landscape, the formation of new types of social relations, where people, things, machines together form special modes of functioning, specific relations. The work proves that these cardinal changes require fundamentally new theoretical and methodological approaches to research, and new tools for political modeling and forecasting. The problems of legislative and ethical regulation of the processes of informatization and technological development of the society are discussed separately. The final part of the research shows that modernity poses the fundamental problem of correlating digital and socio-cultural trends in the development of political space, their contradictions and the inevitable convergence of socio-cultural, traditional socio-political dominants of development with digital trends and life forms. The article proves that harmonization of existing value-normative regulators and standards of digital algorithms and artificial intelligence systems being developed is necessary, since the latter can be a key guarantee for the formation of an effective system of social system development and its stability in the digital age.

Keywords: state, artificial intelligence, socio-cultural dynamics, politics, law, values, normative regulation, state-power decisions, ethics

1. Introduction

Currently, processes are being developed, both in the practice of thinking and in everyday peoples’ interaction, which radically changes the stable and customary foundations of sociopolitical dynamics, drastically turn over our ideas about the sociocultural reality of society, as well as about political processes and relations that are developing in it. Hence, the weak predictability of political relations and the fragmentation of the sociopolitical space, as well as the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of management decisions occur. What is the main reason of
the situation?
As a rule, the answer sounds like this: in a modern digital society, a deep crisis is evident, which manifests itself with varying degrees of intensity in various spheres of social and political organization and public-power interaction in the system of person - society - state. The concept of a “crisis” in this case is a collective metaphor that reflects the whole spectrum of fundamental general political problems that modern society faces. If we summarize all modern fundamental, theoretical and practical research in this area, we should state that these problems include:
Firstly, the loss of the dominant position of traditional (national-cultural, ethno-political, etc.) forms of political identification, as well as the development of new types of social and political mobility, digital and virtualized ways of ensuring political integration;
Secondly, the inadequacy of traditional forms of political organization, public-power relations, socio-political communication, etc. to modern trends in the digital transformation of the society. It is not a coincidence that today new theories of non-typical, mixed political regimes (and have there ever been classical forms at all!??) or innovative formats of powerful communication (for example, digital and virtual interactions of political leaders with citizens) occur;
Thirdly, the inefficiency of traditional forms of ensuring political integration and the socio-political mobilization of social groups, strata, etc., which leads to the emergence of hybrid forms of political governance, combining the established approaches, models and ways of making management decisions with algorithmic and scenario digital models (note that autonomous digital algorithms and robotic technologies that evaluate sociopolitical dynamics, introducing optimal management solutions and development scenarios, are intensively being introduced in the Euro-American socio-political space; or use of autonomous hardware-computing complexes that represent socio-political patterns and autonomously make decisions in the field of public order, law and order, etc.).
Fourthly, the inefficiency of traditional value-normative coding and legal regulation of modern forms of social and political interaction, which is currently unfolding under the influence of the “digital revolution” of social systems;
Fifthly, as the leading motivational foundations of modern political activity are not ideological and semantic elements, focus on value-normative unity and socio-political integration, but on forms of political expression, free design and change of the boundaries of social communities, development of online communication and virtualized spaces (in which, in particular, social and political processes are increasingly unfolding).
This list of socio-political can be continued, however, it is obvious that the introduction of digital algorithms, large-scale organizing and managing public processes, robotic technologies that operate on the basis of “artificial intelligence” systems, various digital technologies, etc., calls into question the sociocultural reality itself. Or otherwise, that this reality is not only and not so much social as “postsocial”, where digital algorithms and robotized technologies are used not so much “in a consultative mode” (used as tools in management decision-making), but already at the level of organizing and administrative.
2. Literature and Research Methodology Survey
Transformations of the sociopolitical reality under the influence of digital technologies are becoming one of the central areas of research, which in different ways describe and model the development of modern public relations. Here we can conditionally identify five main areas.
*The first direction* substantiates that political relations and public-power interaction in the system of personality - society - the state are completely freed from the pressure of national cultural dominants and ideological systems dominated in the twentieth century, and the processes of globalization and digitalization form

---


post-classical and post-humanitarian forms of political integration and communication.\(^4\)

Wherein, the formation of postclassical meanings is also associated with the development of global virtualized symbols and images, abstract ideological and semantic platforms that significantly change the processes of identifying political actors\(^5\), the formation of a political culture of society, the adoption and implementation of significant political, socio-legal and other management decisions. The dominant problem in Western European research projects is the search for the foundations of a political system and a civil outlook that would ensure the development of “global citizenship”\(^6\), which is not connected with cultural traditions, nations and ethnic groups, but with global “constitutional legal identity”\(^7\).

The second group of studies focuses its “research efforts” in modeling the future specifics of the development of social and political relations. In this regard, it is argued that fundamentally new relations await us, which will unfold on the basis of a different ideological paradigm\(^8\). Relations here are interpreted very widely, they involve: on the one hand, traditional subjects (subjects of law, political actors, etc.); and, on the other hand, the so-called “actants” (things, technologies, robotic mechanisms, digital algorithms, etc.) involved in these relations and having a significant impact on their character and orientation\(^9\).

Moreover, the researchers emphasize that this socio-political space is a complex network of relationships that are already “playing out” not only between people, but also “non-human actants”, where robotized technologies (implementing important social functions), digital algorithms (decision makers and distributing social resources), artificial intelligence systems (organizing and managing social processes), etc. are endowed with individual activity.\(^10\) For example, in Western European humanitarian discourse, doctrinal legal provisions and ethical standards are being developed, focused on new forms of relations, which are designated as actor networks, assemblages, social-technical assemblies, and so on. These new forms and models of relationships are interrelated and interdependent activities of a person, things, technologies, etc. They are called “assemblies”, i.e. the activity of both human subjects and technologies, where the latter have a corresponding psychological, physical and symbolic influence on a person, as one of the participants in these relations.\(^11\)

Note that the concept of “assembly”, which is actively used today in modern research, is a scientific metaphor whose task is to “oust” traditional concepts on which the normative regulation was based: social relations, political order, political system, political regime, political traditions etc.\(^12\).

The third direction in modern studies also analyzes the unfolding processes of social and political subjectivation, which in their essence testifies to the social and political revolution in the 21st century. It is substantiated that the emergence of new subjects in the sociopolitical, legal, economic and other life activity of society always leads to cardinal transformations of all spheres of life activity, and these subjects themselves, going to the forefront of history, move the world and technological progress.


Today this “process of subjectivization” is at the center of the political, legal, philosophical, reflections, they are associated with the most fundamental changes in the organization and functioning of social systems, the breaking and reassembly of the political system, the rule of law, and so on. In other words, cardinal changes in people's thinking are always accompanied by the emergence of new subjects, their conflict with the existing system of social, legal, economic and other subjectivization, as well as the subsequent upholding of their rights and the status of "new subjects of history", which entails the formation of a fundamentally different configuration legal, political, economic and other organization of society.

At the same time, the description of this new political subject, which will move historical progress, is rather abstract. These are special networks in which it is difficult to single out a specific (in the traditional system of social and political coordinates) subject, these networks of actors themselves are a new subject; or a new subject is designated as an indefinite set (i.e., a peculiar post-classical form of the subject as opposed to citizens of the state, people, political subject, etc.) organized into network interaction on the basis of free and mobile forms of a private and public organizations.

The fourth group of research problematizes the concept of power in the 21st century and the specifics of public-power relations in the digital era. The authors of this direction argue the new format of power evolution, which is implemented under the influence of the digitalization of society. Here it is argued that in the political organization of society new management regimes are being formed, placing power behind society, "outside" the current system of relations. Real centers of power go to the "shadow" and depend not on specific individuals, but on a complex network of interaction between those who develop codes, programs, algorithms, etc., as well as those who actually implement and manage algorithmic complexes. In other words, political relations are mediated and regulated not only by a complex infrastructure, which is hidden from social control, public influence, but also really behind the unfolding processes in society. At the same time, the perception and evaluation of political events and processes is most accurately shaped by information “represented to us for no accidental reasons, which, however, does not reveal the interest behind it”.

The fifth line of research insists that the “cleansing” of political research from sustainable socio-cultural dominants leads to: a widespread crisis of the value-normative foundations of a public-power organization; to the destruction of state traditions that ensure the stability and reproduction of socio-political integrity and ethno-political stability, pragmatization and bureaucratization of law; spiritual and moral collapse and deharmonization of social and regulatory regulators.
Within this direction, it is argued that the new stage of the digital transformation of society, of course, has its own specific and unpredictable development directions, but such stages (cardinal changes under the influence of new technologies) were throughout the history of human development. Each of these stages lined up the configuration of the sociopolitical space in a new way, however, it was based on the sociocultural achievements of society, adapting innovations to a specific mental, sociopolitical and other specific of a competitive society. At the same time, within the framework of various research projects implemented in this direction, it is shown that the adoption of politically and socially significant decisions, the design of regulatory legal acts, the formulation and implementation of state policy indicate the preservation and strengthening of traditional value-normative systems, primarily in Russian society, ethno-confessional traditions, stable spiritual and moral standards and norms, which in the conditions of transformation of social and political organization are always have a huge role.

3. Main Part

Summarizing, we note that in the framework of the above-considered directions, the most important problems of contemporary social and political development are actualized, which serve as the ideological and conceptual basis for this project. These issues include:

1) the crisis of classical forms and technologies of political management of mass and group thought-activity of society, the gradual decrease in the significance of traditional public-power communication in the system of person-society-state;

2) the weakening of the effectiveness of social control technologies for power management, as well as the impact on the redistribution of public goods and the adoption of socially important management decisions;

3) reducing the relevance and significance of ideological platforms, political programs and traditional "technologies for transferring" private and group interests into the public sphere, which are being supplanted by new forms of publicity (networked public space) and innovative technologies of political communication (online technology);

4) weakening of the meta political (traditions, customs, symbols, images, rituals, etc.) and meta legal (mental, psychological, spiritual and moral, etc.) bases for the sustainability of the political process and the stable development of the socio-political organization of society;

5) development of atypical and non-standard forms of political communication, as well as convergence strategies for transforming the political process.

It is also obvious that another fundamental problem that today is only part of the field of social and political reflections is the formation of new types of social relations, where people, things, machines together form special modes of functioning, specific relations, in the context of which they are formed, mediated, objectified and defined each of these entities. These cardinal changes require fundamentally new theoretical and methodological approaches to research, and new tools of political modeling and forecasting, new legislative regulation, other deontological coding systems and technical regulations, and so on. It is the latter that will form the prerequisites and the corresponding framework for the stable, safe development of specific relations between technologies and people, jointly acting not only as agents, but also as architects of postmodern forms of life activity.

Currently, the general concept of regulatory and ethical regulation of relations which associated with the development, implementation and use of artificial intelligence systems, robotic technologies and digital algorithms, as well as value-normative and moral-ethical coding of software development processes, machine algorithms, and so on. Both at the level of the current national legislation, adopted doctrinal legal acts and deontological codes, and at the international legal level, not formed.

Moreover, the lack of moral, ethical and doctrinal legal bases for the development of robotic technologies and related software, as well as constitutional legal ideas and practices in this area, leads to fundamental challenges to national and global security, to a serious lag in the legal development of social relations, to the possibility of effective "legal coding" and public-power management of these processes.

It should be stated that the legal and deontological regulation of the processes of introduction and use of these technologies in legal acts, today is fragmented and unsystematic. The solution of the aforementioned problems is largely connected with the gradual and complex study of common conceptual, doctrinal and theoretical and practical issues. The resolution of the latter can be provisionally presented in five key and interrelated directions.

1) The dominant orientations to solving the problems of legal regulation of fundamentally new attitudes,
generated by the digital transformation of society, the introduction of robotic technologies and artificial intelligence systems in human life, are “similarity” and “instrumentalization”. In the first case, conceptual, legal, and legal-technical arrays are oriented, first of all, towards the improvement of the current legislation and the formation of new legal complexes based on the principle of “similarity”, i.e. similar and familiar “algorithm” of normative coding of social relations. At the same time, it is obvious that the development of “digital relations”, the interaction of people and machines, the development process of AI itself, is not only poorly predictable, but also hardly fits into the traditional theoretical and legal framework (traditional ideas about the subject of law, forms of realization of law, legal liability, etc.).

2) The second orientation to the “pulling up” of legal regulation to the needs and demands of “digitalization” is connected with this, which reduces the essence and social role of law to a purely instrumental one. Note that the “digitalization of society” leads to the transformation not only of the current legislative system, but also of the legal system, theory of law and legal culture of the society. In the modern concept of legal and ethical regulation of artificial intelligence and robotic technologies everything is turned upside down, it should not be about the “instrumental possibilities” of law, but about the “image of the future” of social and legal order taking into account the fundamental transformation of the social system under the influence of digitalization and algorithmization of social reality, about serious theoretical and legal changes and legal reform of society as a whole.

3) The spread of digital technologies is considered as the next stage in the improvement of human tools that continue and (or) functionally replace it (person). If the latter’s autonomy is allowed within the framework of regulatory coding, it is only at the deliberative, auxiliary, ensuring, i.e. functioning in an instrumental mode (for example, receiving, processing and presenting relevant information, forecasting possible options, etc.). At the same time, the person is left with the “fundamental right” to make decisions and implement managerial functions. However, at the present stage, it is obvious to the attentive observer that it is precisely the distinction between deliberative and managerial abilities that is rapidly erased in the process of applying and developing artificial intelligence and robotic technologies. Modern “robotic events” have already begun to blur the line between the purely deliberative and managerial role of smart machines.27

4) Another gram of problems and contradictions of sociopolitical and socio-legal development is connected with the transformation of the theory of both the political subject and the subject of law (legal theory of the subject). Distribution of digital technologies, autonomous algorithmic systems, robots, their use in organizing the political process (for example, election campaign, elections, etc.), in the interaction of people as digital intermediaries (mediating the digital interconnection of two or more people) or as real acting actors (for example, a legal consultant, digital assistant, autopilot, etc.) significantly changes the traditional system of building and deploying social relations in society. Today, this is one of the key issues that has been developed in the framework of political, philosophical, and legal reflection.28

This problem can be conditionally and analytically decomposed into four groups of interrelated aspects, which are solved in modern scientific research, both independently and in systemic interrelation with the issues of digitalization of public relations.

Firstly, the obvious fact is that in modern reality fundamentally new objects of social interaction are being formed, which act not only to activate and stimulate conscious-volitional human activity, but also act as objects of legal relations, closely intertwined with the legitimate interests of citizens. All this undoubtedly determines the substantial expansion, specification and modification of the theory of legal relations, the structure and types of the latter, which should simulate the functioning of autonomous digital technologies as intelligent systems that implement not only a certain activity in the socio-legal sphere, but also a number of cognitive functions. In addition, take into account the complex nature of changes in the nature and direction of legal relations under the influence of digital autonomous systems (the latter can hardly be simply attributed to individual relative legal events or force majeure cases).

Secondly, this is a group of problematic issues related to both security and ethical standards and sociocultural requirements, which today are poorly developed in the field of software development, implementation and application of digital technologies and autonomous algorithms in political (for example, accounting and processing of social requests, opinions, expectations, etc., which are the basis for making managerial and legally


28 Konstitucionno-pravovaja politika sovremennoj Rossii: idei, prioritety, cennosti, napravlenija (The constitutional legal policy of modern Russia: ideas, priorities, values, directions), (2018). Moscow: INFRA-M, RIOR.
significant decisions) and the legal life of society (electronic and automated forms of justice, control algorithms and law enforcement). Here it is important to consider a number of aspects:

1) it is necessary to formalize the above-discussed norms, standards and requirements, which, on the one hand, should be adequate to the specific relations and directions of development of digitalization processes: on the other, to fit (or at least take into account) into the current value-normative system of society (national and international) - legal levels;

2) it is necessary to predict and simulate the impact of such norms, standards and requirements on the development of the robotic technologies and artificial intelligence systems, individual autonomous systems and robotic technologies. Currently, there are only projects of such ethical coding of the development of RT and AI. For example, the version of the ethical standard “Ethically Aligned Design” for creating robots and artificial intelligence of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), which justifies that autonomous devices and intelligent systems should operate on the basis of a system of human value-normative and ethical regulators, in accordance with universal standard of human rights and freedoms.

It is no coincidence that today many researchers argue the need for the formation of a universal (global) standard for the development of artificial intelligence systems and robotic technologies, which would first have a general character and form universal framework standard-value requirements and ethical standards in this area. For example, a number of leading countries in the field of digital transformation of public relations have formed a framework European Declaration, which defines not only the general principles of cooperation in the field of creation, development and implementation of artificial intelligence systems, but also defines universal ethical standards in their using. In the future, according to a number of analysts, it is possible to create and adopt the Universal Declaration of Robotics and the Convention of ethical standards for the development of software based on artificial intelligence systems.

Thirdly, the fact that the digital transformation of public relations causes the formation of new objects and subjects of national and international security is obvious. These fundamental changes require fundamentally new security systems, a rethinking of the theory of social and legal responsibility, a new legislative regulation. It is the latter that will be able to create a safe environment for specific relations between technology and people, form adequate liability regimes, and so on. For example, in this direction, it is proposed to create international and national systems of insurance of liability for injury to health, rights and freedoms, the legitimate interests of legal entities in the process of using robotic technologies and introducing artificial intelligence systems. The speed of development and the level of autonomy of the latter makes the problem of identifying the guilty subject responsible for the damage, a very relevant and complex procedure. In this regard, it is necessary to develop a system of compulsory insurance of risks, potential threats associated with the operation of digital technologies and robotic systems.

Fourthly, we should also point out the problem that is most often ignored when discussing the issues of legal and ethical coding of the development of artificial intelligence systems and robotic technologies. Although the latter is paramount in the formation of effective regulatory systems. We are talking about the problem of harmonization of existing legal and regulatory systems that regulate the vital activity of society and ethical standards for the functioning of artificial intelligence systems and robotized technologies. Emphasize again that this is a key problem that must be posed when developing any draft normative, adequate and efficient coding of the development of digital relations.

All created by man and a variety of social regulators at all levels, including the regulatory, must act in concert and as consistently as possible. Otherwise, we will face a crisis of regulatory systems, which will be replaced by abstract algorithmic systems, free from socio-ethical standards. It is harmonization that can act as a guarantee for the formation of an effective system for the development of a social system and its stability in the digital era.

4. Conclusion

The striving of a number of researchers to “purify” political communication from all national, cultural, spiritual and moral leads to virtualization and primitivization of political space, and therefore to conscious withdrawal in research projects: from solving complex problems of organizing a sociopolitical organization as a complex and multi-structured society; from understanding ethnonational and other mechanisms that ensure the sustainability of public-power relations and the peculiarity of the national political process; from identifying the real causes of sociopolitical conflicts and deformations of political, legal, socio-cultural institutions and practices.

In this regard, the fundamental problem of the correlation of digital and sociocultural trends in the development of political space, their contradictions and the inevitable convergence of sociocultural, traditional socio-political dominants of development with digital trends and life forms remains unsolved. Let’s repeat once again that the harmonization of existing value-normative regulators and the standards being developed for digital algorithms and artificial intelligence systems is a key guarantee for the formation of an effective system and, thus, in general for the development of a social system and its stability in the digital era.

It seems to be a wrong conceptual conclusion of a number of researchers that key conflicts and contradictions in the 21st century will be connected with the confrontation on the public arena of socioculturalism and digital technologies, robotized and social systems. We think most probably the situation looks quite opposite: a number of individuals, practical studies indicate convergence (convergence, fusion, mixing, and movement towards each other) of sociocultural achievements and technological innovations (they themselves are products of the sociocultural environment). For example, stable archetypical forms of assembling social communities are reproduced in virtual space, delimitation is realized (defining the boundaries of the virtual community, establishing virtual markers, symbols, etc.) and identification (defining other strangers, procedures for joining the community.). So, we can see the interweaving of traditional forms and innovative technologies (for example, in the process of structuring online communities, standards and authorities are established, a system of value-regulatory regulators, etc.

It is obvious that all these processes will form a fundamentally different value-normative system and daily practice, radically transform the forms and methods of public-power interaction. In this regard, the study of the transformation of social and political relations under the influence of digital transformation, including description of the specifics of their evolution and key areas is as an important theoretical and methodological task, and also a practical one, because it will ensure the formation of an adequate strategy of political management and technologies of social and political integration.

Copyrights
Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.
This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).