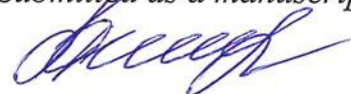


**FEDERAL STATE BUDGETARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION OF
HIGHER EDUCATION**

**RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL ACADEMY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY AND
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

SOUTH-RUSSIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT – BRANCH

Submitted as a manuscript



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**TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL PROCESSES IN POST-
CAPITALISM: STRUCTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

Specialty: 5.5.2. Political Institutions, Processes, Technologies

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation submitted for the degree of
Candidate of Political Sciences

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Relevance of the Research Topic. The global political system at the turn of the first and the second quarter of the 21st century is undergoing a period of fundamental structural transformation driven by the convergence of two mutually reinforcing processes. On the one hand, late capitalism has entered a phase of systemic crisis that cannot be overcome by market mechanisms alone and requires large-scale political intervention in the processes of resource, power, and opportunity distribution. On the other hand, the digital revolution is radically transforming the very material basis of power relations, generating new types of strategic resources – big data, algorithms, platform infrastructure, and computational capacity – control over which gives rise to fundamentally new mechanisms of political domination and governance. As a result, the political process undergoes a qualitative transformation: from the traditional struggle over territories, budgets, and legislation to the struggle for control over digital infrastructures that determine the parameters of access, visibility, and participation in public life. –

Under these conditions, an unprecedented configuration of power emerges – the structural fusion of state institutions and technology corporations through shared digital infrastructure and interpenetrating governance circuits. Technology corporations are acquiring infrastructural capabilities comparable to those of nation-states, controlling communication channels, the information agenda, and the data of billions of users. Simultaneously, states are massively integrating digital technologies into governance practices, creating systems for monitoring, forecasting, and algorithmic moderation of social processes. The emerging State-Corporate Techno-Actor (hereinafter SCTA) represents a qualitatively new form of political power organization that is not adequately described by classical theories of state sovereignty, democracy, or corporate influence, thereby necessitating the development of an appropriate conceptual apparatus for its analysis.

The existing theoretical toolkit of political science proves insufficient for a comprehensive understanding of these ongoing developments. Classical theories of political process were formulated for industrial society, with its clear separation of state, market, and civil sector, and do not account for the phenomenon of

technological fusion between public and private institutions. A theoretical gap has emerged between the recognition of the scale of digital transformation and the absence of an integral conceptual framework capable of explaining the mechanisms by which power and governance institutions are restructured in a data-centric environment.

For the Russian Federation, this issue carries direct practical relevance. Amid geopolitical turbulence and the accelerated development of its own digital infrastructure, Russia is effectively constructing a distinctive model of state-corporate interaction, the parameters of which are being determined today, while their long-term political consequences remain insufficiently theorized. The implementation of national digitalization policy projects, the introduction of artificial intelligence (hereinafter AI) into political governance, the development of super-services, and the creation of unified platforms are, in practice, constructing a new institutional architecture of state power. Understanding the mechanisms of concentration and exercise of political power under these conditions is critically important for assessing the risks of deepening social inequality, digital exclusion, the erosion of traditional forms of political representation, and for forecasting the overall sustainability of the political system.

Thus, the relevance of the research is determined by the objective necessity of a theoretical comprehension of the fundamental transformation of the political process through the prism of digitalization and the formation of state-corporate techno-actors. The study aims to fill the theoretical gap in understanding how technological infrastructure restructures political power and governance institutions, and what transformative alternatives are possible. This is critically important both for the advancement of contemporary political science in the context of post-capitalist transition and for the development of substantiated social development strategies capable of ensuring a balance between technological efficiency, political legitimacy, and social justice.

State of the Art. The conceptual foundations for analyzing the crisis of capitalism and the transition to new socio-economic formations were laid in the

works of representatives of diverse theoretical traditions. The critical tradition rooted in the works of K. Marx and F. Engels retains fundamental significance; their analysis of the capitalist mode of production, class antagonisms, and the concept of base and superstructure remains a methodological cornerstone for investigating the transformation of economic relations and their political projections.

An important contribution to the understanding of the contemporary stage of capitalism was made by French sociologists L. Boltanski and È. Chiapello, who developed a methodological vector that actualizes the socio-political analysis of the capitalist system as a phenomenon extending beyond the mere construction of market relations. Representatives of contemporary critical theory – S. Žižek, F. Ruda, A. Hamza – and sociologist G. Therborn analyze the failure of the neoliberal policies of late capitalism from the perspectives of philosophy and sociology. D. Harvey and B. Milanović develop capitalist critique through the prism of current political economy.

Among Russian researchers of post-capitalist tendencies, the works of economist A.V. Buzgalin, who studies the relationship between contemporary productive forces and relations of production, are noteworthy, as are those of political scientists L.G. Fishman and V.S. Martyanov, who developed the concept of the rentier society and analyze the specifics of the Russian trajectory in the context of global transformations. The concept of the "personaliat" by political scientist D.A. Davydov offers an alternative understanding of socio-political stratification in the context of the transition to a knowledge economy.

The issues of digital transformation of political processes and the formation of new subjects of power are investigated in the works of O.G. Mikhaylyonok, S.V. Volodenkov, and S.N. Fedorchenko, as well as in the concepts of platform capitalism (N. Srnicek), technofeudalism (Y. Varoufakis), and surveillance capitalism (S. Zuboff). The ethics of AI application in the field of political processes is separately addressed by researchers in technology policy and moral philosophy – B.C. Stahl, D. Schroeder, and R. Rodrigues.

Of critical importance to the present research are theories of the information society, network power, and netocracy. Sociologist D. Bell was the first to develop the foundational concept of the information society; P. Drucker identified the transformation of key productive resources, the evolution of the nature of labor, and the changing role of political actors (the state) in the post-industrial era. A. Bard and J. Söderqvist advanced the thesis of the emergence of a new dominant class that controls information flows and network infrastructure, anticipating many key aspects of the analysis of data-centric power. The networking of contemporary society and politics is examined in the works of M. Castells, who studied the contradictions of "networks" in the relationships between state, society, and corporations.

The theoretical frameworks of bio- and psychopolitics, developed by M. Foucault and B.-C. Han respectively, prove critically important for analyzing new forms of power over life in the context of digital transformation. Russian political scientist S.Yu. Khlystunov developed the concept of the BET-dictatorship (bio-eco-technological), analyzing the risks of total control grounded in the latest technologies of NBIC convergence (the foundation of the sixth technological paradigm) and leading to the institutionalization of a digital Leviathan – a state of total control. P. Virno's concept of the "multitude" offers a new understanding of collective subjectivity, irreducible neither to the unity of the people nor to the fragmentation of individuals in digital society. Sh. Turkle examines the paradoxes of technological connectedness and emotional disengagement. M. Fedorchenko analyzes the phenomenon of "digital melancholy" and the libidinal economy of the contemporary age.

In the area of theoretical elaboration of ideological projects for the post-capitalist future, the works of P. Mason – who develops the concept of digital socialism – T. Scholz and N. Schneider – who elaborate practical models of platform cooperativism – and N. Srnicek and A. Williams – who propose a scenario of post-capitalism premised on total automation, technological democracy, reduction of working time, and universal basic income – deserve particular attention. Russian

researcher and entrepreneur G. Kopanov has also developed a theoretical model of the cybernetic state. The idea of unconditional basic income as a key element of post-capitalist transition has been developed by J. Vanderborcht and P. van Parijs. M. Yunus proposes the concept of a "three zeros world."

Thus, the state of the art is characterized by the existence of a well-developed theoretical base for analyzing the transformation of capitalism and the emergence of new forms of political organization; however, a comprehensive political science analysis of the formation of the state-corporate techno-actor, the transformation of socio-political antagonisms, and the institutional adaptation of the Russian political system to post-capitalist tendencies remains insufficiently developed.

The **aim of the dissertation** is accordingly the development of an integral concept of the transformation of political institutions and governance mechanisms in the context of post-capitalist transition, revealing the nature and logic of the formation of the state-corporate techno-actor, as well as the substantiation of the specifics of the institutional adaptation of the Russian political system to global digitalization processes through the formation of a model of the digital "platform-state."

To achieve the stated aim, the following research objectives are identified and addressed:

– to determine the specifics of the political process under conditions of late capitalism through the analysis of political redistribution as a response to systemic crises, and to identify the factors limiting systemic development toward justice;

– to systematize the theoretical concepts of post-capitalist transition and identify the key tendencies of political change projected therein;

– to develop an analytical model "resources-actors-mechanisms-institutions" for studying the dialectics of structural and institutional changes in political processes, and to determine the scenario trajectories of these transformations;

– to analyze the process of formation of the state-corporate techno-actor (SCTA) as a qualitatively new actor of political power, to identify the mechanisms of its functioning, and to examine the forms of legitimation of data-centric power;

– to investigate the structural transformation of socio-political antagonisms in the context of SCTA formation, and to determine the specifics of cognitive-informational, technopolitical, biopolitical, and global contradictions;

– to systematize ideological projects of legitimation and limitation of data-centric power, and to determine their institutional implications;

– to analyze the process of digitalization of political governance in Russia and to identify the contours of the formation of the Russian version of the SCTA through the concept of the "platform-state";

– to investigate the transformation of Russian political institutions and mechanisms of power legitimation, and to determine the specifics of the transition to an outcomes-based performance model and the role of digital participation;

– to determine scenario vectors for the development of the Russian model of post-capitalist political governance and institutions, taking into account internal contradictions and external challenges, and to propose directions of state policy for implementing the priority scenario vector of development.

The Object of the Research is the political process under conditions of post-capitalist transformation, encompassing the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunities among state, corporate, and civil actors in the context of digitalization and the formation of data-centric governance mechanisms.

The Subject of the Research is the institutional mechanisms of concentration, conversion, and application of political power and political governance under conditions of the formation of the state-corporate techno-actor, manifested through the transformation of decision-making systems, legitimation, resource redistribution, and civic participation in the digital environment – examined with reference to the Russian political system.

Theoretical and Methodological Foundation of the Research. The theoretical and methodological foundation of the research consists of an interdisciplinary synthesis of conceptual approaches drawn from political science, critical social theory, economic sociology, and science and technology studies.

The methodological foundation is constituted by the neo-Marxist tradition of analyzing capitalist relations, which examines political processes through the prism of contradictions in modes of production, accumulation, and resource distribution. This approach makes it possible to conceptualize digitalization not as a neutral technological process, but as a qualitative transformation of the material basis of power relations that gives rise to new forms of exploitation and antagonism. The critical political economy of digital capitalism complements this foundation with an analysis of the specifics of value extraction from intangible assets – data, attention, cognitive capacities, and social ties – which differs radically from classical capitalist mechanisms of wage labor exploitation.

The conceptual apparatus of the research is constructed on the basis of theories of post-capitalist transformation, including accelerationist concepts of technologically mediated transition to new forms of social organization, ideas of digital socialism and cybernetic planning, and concepts of the rentier society and personaliat as new forms of stratification under conditions of production automation. Of particular significance are the theories of platform and surveillance capitalism, which analyze the transformation of market coordination mechanisms into algorithmic governance systems.

Institutional analysis is grounded in neo-institutional theory, which conceives of political institutions as relatively stable rules, norms, and practices that structure political behavior and resource distribution. The concept of path dependency serves to explain the inertia inherent in institutional change. Institutionalism is further applied to analyze the adaptation of traditional political forms to conditions of digitalization through processes of functional conversion, institutional layering, and institutional drift.

The concept of the state-corporate techno-actor has been developed within the framework of the dissertation as a synthetic analytical category integrating elements of actor-network theory, concepts of hybrid political subjects, and research on public-private partnerships in the technological sphere. This concept treats the emerging actor not as a simple coalition of state and corporate entities, but as a

qualitatively new entity with its own operational logic, grounded in control over infrastructures and data as strategic resources of power.

Theories of political process are employed to analyze the dynamics of the redistribution of power, resources, and opportunities among various political actors under conditions of digitalization. The structural-functional approach enables identification of the transformation of the basic functions of the political system – interest articulation, demand aggregation, decision-making, implementation, and evaluation – under the influence of algorithmic systems and platform coordination mechanisms.

Digital research methodology encompasses the critical analysis of algorithms and platforms, artificial intelligence, the social and political effects of big data, and the study of the platform economy and its political implications. The concept of data-centric power developed in the work draws on theories of bio- and psychopolitics and algorithmic governmentality, which examine the ways in which digital technologies transform subjectivity, behavior, and the possibilities of political action.

Comparative institutional analysis is employed to identify the specifics of the Russian model of the digital platform-state in juxtaposition with Western liberal-democratic and Eastern authoritarian-technocratic models of digital political governance.

Empirical analysis methods include the study of regulatory and legal acts governing digitalization processes in the Russian Federation, analysis of strategic documents and national projects, examination of statistical data on the implementation of digital technologies in public administration, and expert assessments of the effectiveness of digital government-citizen interaction platforms. Discourse analysis is applied to identify the dominant narratives legitimating the digital transformation of political processes and the mechanisms of constructing public consensus around strategies of technological development.

The **scientific novelty** of the dissertation consists in the development of a comprehensive concept of the transformation of political processes and governance

mechanisms under conditions of post-capitalist transition, based on the analysis of SCTA formation and the emergence of data-centric power, as well as the identification of the specifics of the Russian model of institutional adaptation to global digitalization processes. The elements of scientific novelty are specified in the following propositions:

1. The concept of the political process under late capitalism as a system of political redistribution of power and resources in response to structural failures of the digitalizing economy is substantiated; its distinctive features, unlike analogous redistributive mechanisms of preceding eras, are determined by qualitatively new limiting factors – corporate technological control over data and digital infrastructure, practices of "managed lag" under conditions of exponential technological acceleration, and competition among dominant actors for digital assets – which in turn conditions the distinguishing characteristics of contemporary institutional change.

2. An analytical model "resources-actors-mechanisms-institutions" is proposed for studying the dialectics of structural and institutional changes in the emerging post-capitalist transition, identifying three possible trajectories of transformation: platform reconfiguration, institutional disintermediation, and hybrid institutionalization.

3. The concept of the state-corporate techno-actor is developed as a symbiotic complex premised on the complementary asymmetry of capabilities between the state and transnational digital corporations, implementing a qualitatively new type of data-centric power.

4. Within the framework of the concept, a systemic interconnection is identified between cognitive-informational, technopolitical, biopolitical, and global socio-political antagonisms and the process of SCTA formation: it is demonstrated that the emergence of the SCTA constitutes a qualitatively new field of political struggle, restructuring the configuration of these contradictions and determining the specific modality of their unfolding under conditions of data-centric power.

5. A comparative analysis of ideological projects legitimating data-centric power and the SCTA is conducted, with identification of their institutional implications and alternative trajectories of post-capitalist development.

6. The concept of the digital "platform-state" is substantiated as a distinctive Russian model of adaptation to the formation of the SCTA, characterized by the integration of hierarchical power-administrative structures with digital platforms of network coordination, a combination of elements belonging to liberal-democratic, administrative-statist, and technocratic systems, and a shift in legitimation mechanisms from procedural-electoral to an outcomes-based performance model – thereby forming a hybrid model of political organization while preserving the risks of intensified digital control.

7. Scenario vectors for the development of the Russian model of post-capitalist institutions are determined, taking into account the contradictions between the imperatives of technological sovereignty and the necessity of integration into the global information space, and between the efficiency of digital governance and the protection of citizens' constitutional rights; directions of state policy for implementing the priority scenario vector of development are proposed.

Practical and Theoretical Significance of the Research. The **theoretical significance** of the research is determined by its contribution to the development of political science knowledge regarding the patterns and mechanisms of transformation of political institutions and processes under conditions of structural transformation driven by post-capitalist tendencies. The developed concept of the SCTA and data-centric power expands the understanding of the actor structure of contemporary political power and can serve as a foundation for further research on the digitalization of political processes. The proposed analytical model "resources-actors-mechanisms-institutions" provides a methodological basis for studying structural and institutional changes in digital transformation policy within national contexts. The systematization of ideological projects legitimating data-centric power contributes to the theory of political ideologies in the digital age. The concept of the

digital "platform-state" enriches the understanding of institutional development trajectories of non-Western societies under conditions of global digitalization.

The **practical significance** of the work lies in the potential application of the research findings to the development of strategic documents and programs for the digital transformation of political and public administration in the Russian Federation. The identified risks associated with the formation of digital control systems, and the proposed mechanisms for ensuring a balance between governance efficiency and the protection of citizens' constitutional rights, may be taken into account in improving the regulatory framework governing the platform economy and the use of artificial intelligence technologies in the public sector. The scenario analysis of the prospects for the development of the Russian model of post-capitalist institutions provides a basis for forecasting and mitigating systemic risks under conditions of geopolitical instability.

The dissertation research corresponds to the passport of scientific specialty

5.5.2. Political Institutions, Processes, Technologies:

– Item 3 – Political power: nature, essence and functions, legitimacy. The power process and political institutions;

– Item 4 – Mechanisms and technologies of traditional and digital politics: forms and levels of organization;

– Item 8 – Political institutions: formation, development, and contemporary transformations.

Dissemination of Results. 14 works have been published on the subject of the dissertation, including 5 authored publications included in the list of peer-reviewed periodicals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK) of the Russian Federation.

The conceptual ideas of the dissertation were presented at international and all-Russian scientific and practical conferences between 2023 and 2026.

Structure of the Dissertation. The structure of the dissertation is determined by the compositional logic of the research in the process of achieving the stated aim through the sequential resolution of the identified objectives, and comprises: an

introduction, three chapters (nine sections), a conclusion, a bibliography of 249 sources, and one appendix. The main text of the work is 234 pages in length.