Social Factors in the Digital Government Formation in Russia

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Abstract: Transformation of the e-government into the digital one is analyzed in the context of postmodern socio-economic factors. The stages of implementing accessibility and openness of executive authorities in the framework of administrative reform in the Russian Federation are presented. The weak and strong sides of forming accessibility of authorities in the electronic environment are identified. The risks of the digital divide associated with factors not only of an economic but also of a status nature are identified. Data on the use of digital communication by the population related to the conditions of social and spatial development are presented. The article considers the target directions of the transition to the digital government technology platform and the expected results in the short term. The transition from electronic to digital development of public administration is defined as a path to project management based on the creation of a new material base and the implementation of the principles of sustainable development. The social components of the transition – elimination of social Internet exclusion-are shown.

Keywords: *E-government; digital platform; digital divide; administrative reform; authorities' openness; globalization.*

How to cite: Vasiliev, V.P., Dekhanova, N.G., & Kholodenko, Y. A. (2020). Social Factors in the Digital Government Formation in Russia. *Postmodern Openings*, 11(2Sup1), 317-326.
<https://doi.org/10.18662/po/11.2Sup1/195>

1. Introduction

The transformations taking place in modern society, associated with the postmodern period, globalization, digital revolution, and emergence of fundamentally new forms of communication, affect all aspects of its life. The entire existing social and economic order, the principles of social management, social relations, the labor market and the structure of employment are being modernized. Large-scale transformations are taking place in the sphere of public administration.

The information society of the XXI century is at the stage of a qualitative transition to a new technological basis. Digital communications and new digital management platforms provide new opportunities for creating and implementing management decisions at the macro level. Management using digital technologies and new technology platforms raises questions about the use of models and management tools in a new way. However, digitalization of public administration is within the boundaries of the general information and communication environment and its dynamics. The creation of new infrastructure objects in the form of digital platforms, quantum computers, and the growth of broadband Internet should first create conditions for a socio-economic breakthrough along the chain of innovation – factor productivity – income of the population – quality of life (Evans & Gawer, 2016; Markeeva & Gavrilenko, 2019; Morvan et al., 2016). E-government is becoming an important factor in sustainable development (United Nations [UN], 2018).

According to Morgeson and Mithas (2009) e-government research is still in its initial stage. Although the volume of publications is growing, the first relevant articles only appeared in the 90's, and did not receive much importance until the early 2000's. However, with the consolidation of the Internet its use as a viable platform to conduct business, some solutions were created to provide interaction between government, taxpayers and citizens (Almeida, 2014). Nowadays, e-government is a very important topic, both in terms of theory, research and government policy (Morgeson & Mithas, 2009; West, 2000). Among the most famous scientific studies in this area are: developing fully functional E-government (Layne & Lee, 2001), the evolution of e-government among municipalities (Moon, 2002), E-government and the transformation of service delivery and citizen attitudes» (West, 2005), the utilization of e-government services and the problems of citizen trusts» (Carter & Belanger, 2005), Linking citizen satisfaction with e-government and trust in government (Welch et al., 2006), analyzing e-

government research: perspective, philosophies, theories, methods, and practice (Heeks & Bailur, 2007), interaction between states and citizens in the age of the internet: "egovernment" in the United States, Britain, and the European Union (Chadwick & May, 2003).

2. Main activities and prerequisites for the e-government formation in Russia

The following groups of factors can be identified as the main prerequisites for the e-government formation. First, it is the need to reduce the cost of managing and servicing the population (an economic prerequisite), which is especially important in the context of updating the problem of improving the public administration efficiency, reducing the cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus. The economic factors that directly affect the possibility of spreading the practice of e-government can also include such a socio-economic factor as a sufficiently high level of income of the population that allows people to use the appropriate gadgets (Kuprjashin & Solov'jov, 2016) Second, the emergence and development of information and communication technologies (technological background). This prerequisite is particularly important in the context of the "digital transition" or "digital transformation" in the XXI century. And, finally, third, a very important factor in the implementation of the idea of e-government is the development of civil society, social and technological literacy of the population (social background) (Dekhanova & Dekhanov, 2019).

Thus, the movement towards e-government is not only and not so much a technological event as a socio-political and socio-economic phenomenon.

Traditionally, the main activities of e-government include:

- creating new forms of interaction between government agencies;
- optimizing the provision of government services to the public and businesses;
- reducing the influence of the human factor in the activities of executive authorities;
- supporting and expanding self-service opportunities for citizens;
- increasing technological awareness and skills of citizens;
- increasing the participation of all voters in the country's management and governance processes;
- reducing the impact of geographical location (which is especially important for the Russian Federation).

Interactions within e-government can be carried out in different directions: between the state and citizens (G2C, Government-to-Citizen); between the state and business (G2B, Government-to-Business); between different branches of government and different state bodies of the same branch of government (G2G, Government-to-Government); between the state and public servants (G2E, Government-to-Employees). The first two types of interaction with citizens and organizations correspond to the external information structure, and the last two – to the internal government information structure, built analogous to the corporate network.

The beginning of work on the e-government formation in the Russian Federation was initiated by the system of administrative reform in the early 2000s. In Russia, a Concept for the e-government formation was developed and approved as part of the "E-Russia" project. A number of tasks were identified as the implementation of the project goals, including the development of simplified, operational and effective procedures for providing public services to the population, including self-service in the provision of such services; implementation of the "single window" principle for servicing individuals and legal entities, expanding access to open information on the work of government agencies, expanding and maintaining access to such information; providing and maintaining effective "population-power" feedback.

The goal of creating e-government was to improve the quality and efficiency of public services, and ensure transparency in the executive authorities' activities. The main directions of the reforms in practice were provision of information on public services provided in electronic form, organization of providing state and municipal services on one window principle on the basis of multifunctional centers, regulation and standardization of public and municipal services.

We can state that certain steps in this direction have already been taken.

In 2018 Russia ranked 32nd among the countries in the world by the level of e-government development according to the UN Global E-Government Development Index, which is developed every two years for 193 UN member countries. The criteria include the development of online services, ICT infrastructure, and human capital. The top ten countries include: Denmark, Australia, Great Britain, South Korea, Singapore, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, France, Japan (UN, 2018). Moscow has significantly advanced to the leading positions in the same ranking among the cities (followed by Cape town, Tallinn, London, Paris and Sydney).

However, despite the length and multi-stage nature of the administrative reform process, many of the declared directions have not been implemented. The rating of government authorities' openness, based on the assessments by the population, business, performers and experts, shows dissatisfaction with the openness of Federal authorities ("The Rating Of", 2016).

Along with the technical and technological problems of digital government development, there are social factors (World Bank, 2016). World and Russian experience shows that the combined effect of using new technologies, including in public administration, is significantly reduced due to the presence of a "digital divide", especially in the field of Internet access (Van Dijk, 2005). This type of social inequality exists both for individual members of society and for territories in the context of spatial development inequality. In Russia, the digital divide has two special aspects – first, a significant layer of the poor population, which does not allow the purchase of computer equipment, and, secondly, a significant spatial extent, which causes significant costs to create a high-quality information and communication infrastructure.

3. Platform solutions in public administration: from concept to implementation

Modern achievements in the field of digital technologies allow us to formulate the transition from the concept of e-government to the creation of an e-state, the formation of a "State as a platform" (Shklyaruk, 2019)

The essence of this concept is the digital transformation of providing public services, conducting licensing, control and supervision activities, and making managerial and regulatory decisions using new technologies. Creating the "State-as-a-platform" will provide benefits to the state, business, and citizens (Lathrop & Ruma, 2010). Thus, the creation of the Platform will ensure, first of all, a reduction in the level of costs for national expenses. Second, embedding data in decision-making processes, automatic decision-making algorithms, fundamental process reengineering, and real-time monitoring of the situation. All this will lead to an increase in the speed of processes; an increase in the number of real-time economic indicators obtained from alternative sources; targeted state support; and remote facilities monitoring. Creating the "State-as-a-platform" will help businesses reduce administrative costs for control and supervisory activities of public authorities and reporting loads; it will increase user satisfaction with the quality of data and services and minimize interaction with

regulatory authorities. Citizens should also benefit from improving the quality and speed of public services and minimizing face-to-face contact with government agencies. The latter will be provided through a high proportion of digital services provided in a proactive mode, a high proportion of data submitted by citizens once, and public services personalization (Center for Strategic Development, 2018).

Thus, a single platform of interaction for civil servants, business and citizens is being developed; the "state for citizens" model of state participation is being formed. Ultimately, this model can provide a competitive public administration system in the long term.

Platform solutions may have a broader meaning than the availability of public services to the public, or project management of social projects. The state-business platform can act as a phenomenon of increasing international competitiveness in the global world, based on a new technological foundation for creating value chains based on the production processes robotization. The fourth industrial revolution that has already started and the combination of technologies from the physical, digital and biological worlds affect political, social, and economic systems (Schwab, 2016).

Another area of platform solutions is a new way of creating human capital (Boston Consulting Group, 2017; McKinsey Global Institute, 2015). According to G. Becker, "human capital is formed by investing in a person: in general and professional education, spending on raising children, health care, searching for information, changing jobs, migration, and other investments that somehow contribute to the development of the human productive force, contributing to its cultural and intellectual growth." (Becker, 1964). Due to the worsening of the unemployment problem, the need for professional development and retraining of the employed population, educational platforms are already being created on the basis of large publishing houses and universities, including those with state support.

Most of the elements of e-government formation in the Russian Federation are reflected in the Passport of the "Digital economy of the Russian Federation" national program approved by the Presidium of the presidential Council for strategic development and national projects dated December 24, 2018 (Order no. 1632/2017, 2017).

The national program includes 6 Federal projects, one of which is "Digital public administration". The Federal project pays special attention to the transformation of state (municipal) services. The target state of state and municipal services provision, including:

- registry model of their provision;

- proactivity;
- extraterritoriality;
- typification and standardization of the priority regional and municipal services;
- multichanneling;
- machine-readable description of the service delivery process;
- exclusion of human participation in the decision-making process of providing priority public services;
- unified system for collecting feedback from service recipients;
- other ways to improve the provision of public services.

The key point in the theory of digital public administration is the concept of "super services" - complex public services related to a specific life situation.

So, currently, the Ministry of digital development and communications of the Russian Federation, together with the concerned authorities, is working on the following supervises applicable to ordinary citizens:

- childbirth;
- loss of a loved one;
- individual housing construction;
- allowances and benefits registration;
- changing the surname;
- registration at the place of stay.

There are also services aimed at the business community, among which opening a business can be distinguished, for example.

4. Brief conclusion: platform solutions as a mechanism for creating the "state for citizens"

The e-government formation is impossible without digitizing the functioning of the state apparatus, creating conditions for full-fledged project management in all areas. The beginning of such transformations is laid by reforming the public service (retraining, motivation, formation of new state thinking and creation of new platform solutions). The Federal project provides for the creation of a number of automated information systems and platform solutions, including:

- typical cloud solution for automating project activities of public authorities;
- platform for interagency interaction of data exchange, including normative reference information;

- search and recruitment platform;
- single window of digital feedback, including appeals, complaints, including on public functions, and services;
- digital platform for interaction between the participants of strategic planning at all levels;
- system for managing the life cycle of a capital construction object based on information modeling.

In Russia, new forms of technological solutions for public administration that simplify and reduce costs in the process of interaction between government agencies, businesses and ordinary citizens are being formed. The "state for citizens" model of state participation is being developed. Its priority is to meet the needs of citizens and businesses in a short time and with minimal labor and financial costs. At the same time, the state is beginning to introduce new platform solutions that help improve the quality of management and regulatory decisions, as well as reduce transaction costs when interacting with public authorities. In the medium term, this model can create effective conditions for the formation of a competitive, socially oriented and high-tech public administration system.

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