Netocracy as a Mechanism of Implementing Political Management

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Abstract—**Active development of technological processes and quick entrenchment of Internet communication mechanisms into all the spheres of human activity inevitably provided capabilities for formation of a barrier-free communication environment that forms communities out of its participants. Initially, formation of the net community was based upon trust to the resource itself. The development of social networking sites and blogs allowed any Internet user to play a role of media author and to share their experience. Thus, there was a fast shift of accents from the importance of a resource to the importance of the user themselves, the one who creates and communicates the user-generated content. Social discourse starts forming on the foundation of the personal experience of the Internet-media authors. The process of political management was extended with a phenomenon of Consumer-Generated Media (CGM), based upon information media content. This algorithm of shifting management accents witness to a possible new round of development of netocratic management processes and that of netocracy itself.**

Keywords—internet communication, netocracy, network technologies, networking, blogs, user-generated content

I. Introduction

Society is a dynamically-developing organism, subject to discrete changes due to both internal and external influencing factors. The state by its nature has a number of mandatory attributes helping perform control over societal and territorial integrity. As a rule, these mechanisms of social life are implemented by means of a law-enforcement system. However, a wave of information and global communication transformation brought up new challenges for every state. The first of such challenges is ingress of Internet technologies into every sphere of human activity, and, as a result, total modernization of social foundations and state management capabilities that previously were stable for decades. Many states, both developing and developed, are trying to catch up with the modern trend and implement various information platforms, similar to the Russian Electronic Government. However, it is only one of many formal ways to use the electronic communication.

With the development of information and communication (networking) technologies, a new stage started in the development of democratic processes. Now, using modern communication technologies (employing a messaging service or Internet voting), one may obtain a real possibility to involve almost all active citizens into the process of making significant political decisions, thus creating a true and efficient popular control over the activities of state and municipal authorities [1]. Direct democracy and direct management of the state without intermediaries become practically possible.

The modern means of communication facilitate inclusive form of online voting for every socially important issues without censorship or any limitations. A free, independent and multi-sided discourse is formed on the World-Wide Web for any socially important issues. A number of researchers believe that is allows implementing elements of popular sovereignty. Thus, political Internet communications facilitate efficient mutual relations between the authorities and the society.

II. Political Communications Analysis

In essence, network and Interned-based electronic communication became a feature of all the areas of social activities: from use for personal satisfaction in entertainment, information search and performance of professional functions, to forming public sentiment. Here, it is necessary to emphasize a key aspect of electronic communication: its barrier-free nature. Thus, formation of the public sentiment bases upon Internet resources without considerations for state borders. Popular sentiment has been for several years formed through the Internet resources, many of which function in foreign states. Communication through social networking sites has become very significant and already exceeds the influence of traditional communication means. Today, Facebook has over 2 billion registered users.

Leaders of different countries openly discuss and sometimes accuse the social networking sites in influencing the key political decisions, including voting for the national leader.

Political communication has become a process of transmission of political information during which it shuttles from one part of the political system to another and circulates between the political and the social system. In other words, it is creating, sending, receiving and processing of messages that will influence politics as a result. This influence may be indirect and its results may appear with a certain delay [5].

The Internet has provided a capability of barrier-free environment with respect to geographical, territorial and linguistic borders. Thus, Internet facilitates formation of more and more new social bonds that rests upon, among other, communality of political interests of its audience. The

mechanism of involvement and use of Internet resources provided a possibility for integration into worldwide and globally important communicational and political processes, forming dialogs. During the socio-political dialogs between the agents, who often serve as oppositional elements of the communication sphere, conflicts or collisions of interest are formed between various social groups. As the society is always in dynamic development, such conflicts of interest are permanent and undergo various stages of their development.

Content received through Internet communication is vast and various. However, limitless possibility of momentarily getting any information content brings about a number of risks, as information may be used by any social group for its own goals, such groups may be destructive or terrorist structures.

Naturally, the ambivalence of Internet communications brings about a great number of conflicting judgments; «on the one hand, they (communications) are treated positively as they create conditions for new media, increase their number, develop typological characteristics, thanks to which the audience may not just get information on social changes, but satisfy its informational interests and improve their knowledge. On the other hand, they are seen as negative due to consequences of destructive and destabilizing nature: Media communication revolutions facilitated transformation of information into a tool that allows controlling the society (manipulating it, forming its mental and behavior concepts)» [6].

Internet users have become active agents in political events thanks to mass distribution of personal blogs and pages through social media. Bloggers have more and more influence over the political processes in the Russian Federation, largely thanks to political connotations in the blogosphere. If previously blog publications were sparsely read, under the modern conditions they are reprinted in traditional media, discussed on forums and put into ratings at specialized portals. Thus, nicely noticed intricacies of politically important phenomena quickly find their public resonance and make authorities and members of political and administrative elite of the country to react to the political connotation of blogged messages [1].

Expansion of innovative technologies and formation of a new type of society facilitate distribution and monetization of intellectual content. At the current stage of information society development, researchers actively discuss total informatization and ubiquitous increased role of information and knowledge in the modern society. If we are going to discuss the share of information communication, information products and services in the global economy, we may openly say that this share is significant and is constantly increasing. The need in intellectual property also significantly increases; the owners of original intellectual goods and products often become the richest people on the planet. To support his, let us note, that the richest people are the owners of transnational corporations specializing in creation and distribution of information products, goods and services (Microsoft, Google, Apple, etc.)[2].

This property is often not externalized; many information products function without binding to tangible medium. Information resource owners take up the top positions in the social stratification. Their capabilities of having an information impact on socio-political processes allow speaking about information-communication authority that some researchers dubbed Netocracy.

The mechanism of building the social discourse that forms public sentiment is based upon universal access to the distributed information. The discourse does not appear as a deterministic system, as it may regularly undergo a risk of influence from information streams.

Development and transformation of media found, upon other, on the Internet communication platform, initiated creation of more effective communication mechanisms, supported by user experience. Such realistic form of communication was initially used in the area of advertising and marketing. However, currently, this mechanism is successfully integrated in the practice of forming social relations and civic society. Thus, the process of socio-political relations was extended by a phenomenon known as User-generated content (UGC or Consumer-Generated Media (CGM), which is based upon media information content created by users themselves from their personal experience. Social discourse starts forming on the foundation of the personal experience of the Internet-media authors.

It should be noted, that as the social position is formed from the experience of a specific Internet user, the significance of the communication platforms themselves (sites, blogs, social networking sites) undergo transformation.

Taking into account appearance of such phenomenon as consumer-generated media in the Internet, it become obvious that information product may be produced by users of the communication platforms themselves, thus, the main political costs are not with the content, but with the resource used to generate information and create its political costs» [4].

Expansion of Internet communications forms a new social perception of reality. The user content includes Web forums; Blogs; Social networking sites. Due to this, this mechanism of applying electronic communication is a productive and efficient method of forming the social capital.

III. OUTCOMES

The ongoing shift of accents in managing the Internet communications has brought forward the role of the authors of the produced information; a transformation of emphasis took place in the blogosphere, thus, the key figure nowadays is not the resource, but the author. Thus, appearing top bloggers form the user content that influences the perception of the social phenomena. Active commenting, reposts and retweets are becoming key indicators of the agent's leadership. Here, it is practical to recall that the mechanism of controlling the social consciousness has shifted in the electronic medium, from the degree of importance of the resource to the importance of the agent of the political and social information themselves.

In the Interned, members of the traditional society are differentiated, participants of the barrier-free net community may spontaneously line up behind a personalized user-generated content.

Moreover, this algorithm of shifting management accents witness to a possible new round of development of netocratic management processes and that of netocracy itself, as proposed by A.Bard and J.Sönderqvist [3].

Nowadays, the question is about a possibility of controlling the Internet communication on behalf of individual users, which may be used to implement not just the possibility of forming a new class of authority and socio-political elite, but control of information streams in the global space.

Exerting influence of the netocracy through the net makes the authority rhizome-like and non-hierarchic. Under hierarchic structure, subordinates know about the higher authority, rules of behavior, but the network is anonymous and hidden [7].

At that, the information stream formed by the end user from their personal experience is often generated with accompanying photographic and video materials as visual aids for the opinion presented. This fact serves as an additional instrument when constructing the social position and may play a role of a contributing factor. J. Habermas stated that during communication there is a need for communicational and instrumental rationality, at that, a certain communality of interests between the agents is required [8].

IV. CONCLUSION

Transmission of information connected to the so-called visuals, complements the general perception of integrity of the socially important phenomenon. As there are no real geographic borders in the information space of the global information network between the sender and recipient of the information, there arise realistic prerequisites for formation of information influence of a supra-national nature, and a society may be formed beyond the framework of certain geographic borders or certain legal systems.

However, construction of a global information society is connected to appearance of leading agent or agents, influencing the formation of the public opinion that has no geographic or linguistic borders and is resting upon the agent's figure. Here, trust to the netocratic agent comes forward and is measured by media activity of Interned users. The degree of influence of the information resource itself moves into background.

Thus, control of information streams is based upon personal experience of the leading user of one of the Internet platforms. Depending on the degree of trust to this netocrat, citizens are mobilized to form resonating social phenomena.

Consequently, this mechanism demonstrate capability of supra-national control of social processes, expansion of audience based upon horizontal binding in the Internet communications. Localization of information stream may have no territorial belonging, and the degree of trust is measured by popularity of Internet propagandist or netocrats.

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