

PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL CIVILIZATION

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19673198>

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Abstract

This article provides a scientific and analytical examination of the prospects for the development of political ideologies in the context of digital civilization. It analyzes new forms of ideological processes emerging under the conditions of network society, digital communication, algorithmic governance, mass self-communication, digital citizenship, and surveillance capitalism.

Keywords

digital civilization, political ideology, network society, algorithmic governance, digital citizenship, platform politics, public sphere.

Introduction. Digital civilization has dramatically accelerated the production, transmission, and reception of information in human history. Alongside the economy, culture, education, and social life, this process has also fundamentally transformed the structure of political processes. Political ideology now appears not only as a theoretical doctrine or party program, but also as a communicative phenomenon continuously reproduced on digital platforms, expressed through short-form content, and updated in response to audience reactions. Manuel Castells emphasizes that, in the network society, the bureaucratic model of the state characteristic of the industrial era comes into conflict with “the demands and processes of the network society” [1]. This idea suggests that, in the digital age, ideology is also compelled to renew its organizational and communicative forms.

The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that, as the mechanisms of ideological influence expand in the digital sphere, the means of shaping political consciousness also become more complex. Social networks, search engines, recommendation algorithms, messaging channels, and digital communities are now occupying a central place in the formation of public opinion. Therefore, analyzing the prospects of political ideologies can no longer rely solely on classical political theory; it must also take into account communication theory, media studies, digital citizenship,

and data politics. Marshall McLuhan's famous idea that "the medium is the message" [2] is even more relevant in current conditions: the content of a political idea often adapts itself to the form of the platform through which it is transmitted.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the prospects for the development of political ideologies in the context of digital civilization, to identify their new forms and risks, and to theoretically substantiate the main trends of their future evolution. The objectives of the study are to reveal the mechanisms through which the digital environment influences ideological processes, assess the transformation of the public sphere, demonstrate the mobilizing potential of network communication, and examine the issue of ideological security under conditions of algorithmic control.

Materials and Methods. The study employs comparative-analytical, interpretative, content analysis, and conceptual generalization methods. The main sources selected for the research include the works of Manuel Castells, Marshall McLuhan, Jürgen Habermas, Jan van Dijk, Shoshana Zuboff, as well as UNESCO materials. These sources cover various dimensions of the topic, namely network society, the influence of media form, the digital public sphere, digital democracy, surveillance capitalism, and digital citizenship competencies. Similarities and differences among these approaches were identified and then reinterpreted from the perspective of the future of political ideologies.

Five criteria were taken as the units of analysis: first, the form of dissemination of ideological content; second, the degree to which political participation is stimulated; third, the impact on public discussion; fourth, the probability of control and manipulation; and fifth, the potential for future institutional adaptation. On this basis, a general model was developed for how ideologies may evolve under the conditions of digital civilization. Methodologically, the article is not based on a deterministic but rather on a dialectical approach: the digital environment both liberates ideology and places it under control at the same time.

Results. The analysis showed that, in the context of digital civilization, the development of political ideologies manifests itself in at least seven directions. The first direction is the networking of ideology. Whereas political ideas were previously disseminated mainly through centralized institutions, they are now spread through numerous networks, micro-communities, and decentralized communication channels. According to Castells, "the ability to shape the human mind" is the most important form of modern power [3]. This capacity is now concentrated not only in the hands of the state or major media outlets, but also in the hands of platform owners, influencers, networked communities, and

algorithmic filters. As a result, ideology is taking on a more horizontal form and is becoming a multi-centered phenomenon circulating within networks.

The second direction is the visualization of ideology and its adaptation to short formats. The digital environment gives priority to images, videos, memes, infographics, and short slogans rather than long texts. This brings political ideology closer not to complex theoretical systems, but to quickly understandable symbols, images, and identity-based representations. As McLuhan noted, the medium itself reshapes the content [2]. Therefore, in the future, ideologies will become widespread not through theoretical treatises, but through visual codes, platform-specific styles, and emotional resonance. Such a transformation accelerates political mobilization, but it also increases the risk of simplifying ideas and turning them into populist forms.

The third direction is the digital restructuring of the public sphere. According to Habermas, “Democracy is inclusive and discursive” [4]. However, inclusiveness and discursiveness do not arise automatically in the digital sphere. Although platforms provide a platform for many voices, these voices may not unite within a single space of discussion. Habermas’s approach to discursive democracy shows that, for the digital sphere to acquire real political significance, a culture of debate, argument, and dialogue must be formed within it [4]. Therefore, the future development of political ideologies will depend not only on their speed of dissemination, but also on their ability to generate critical dialogue. If the digital sphere becomes filled with noise, insults, and disinformation, ideology may turn into a tool of emotional polarization rather than a means of profound explanation.

The fourth direction is the expansion of digital democracy and civic participation. Jan van Dijk notes that digital democracy can “enhance participation in political decision-making by citizens” [5]. Indeed, online petitions, digital campaigns, discussion platforms, and mobilization through social networks have expanded the boundaries of citizens’ involvement in political processes. This situation creates new audiences and new mechanisms of legitimation for ideologies. From now on, the viability of an idea is demonstrated less through an election program than through interaction, reposts, comments, trends, and digital collaboration within online communities. Therefore, the ideology of the future will be interactive: it will seek to involve the audience not merely as listeners, but as co-authors.

The fifth direction is the algorithmization of ideology. On digital platforms, which political content becomes visible to whom, which message is prioritized, and which topic becomes popular depends not only on human choice, but also on algorithmic selection. This makes the ideological field dependent on new types of

mediators – platform norms, ranking systems, recommendation mechanisms, and data models. Zuboff describes surveillance capitalism as “a new economic order” and as a source of “a new instrumentarian power” [6]. This conclusion is highly important for the future of political ideologies: ideological struggle in the future will take place not only between contents, but also over the algorithms that make such contents visible.

The sixth direction is the platformization of ideology and its reliance on data. Political organizations are increasingly depending on data analysis, audience segmentation, micro-targeting, and real-time monitoring. As a result, ideological activity is being divided into communicative packages aimed at specific segments rather than into a general appeal. On the one hand, this increases efficiency; on the other hand, it weakens a shared collective imagination. Different groups may see different versions of the same ideology. Thus, in the future, political ideologies will become not a single text, but a multilayered communicative architecture adapted to different audiences. This may increase the flexibility of ideology, but it may also reduce its coherence.

The seventh direction is the strengthening of the need for digital citizenship and ideological stability. UNESCO materials on digital citizenship emphasize that modern education should focus on “critical thinking and ethical decision-making” [7]. This recommendation provides an important methodological conclusion for the future of political ideologies: in the digital environment, ideological stability is ensured not only through official propaganda, but also through the development of media literacy, critical thinking, fact-checking skills, and digital ethics. In the future, ideological security will be formed at the intersection of education, civic culture, and platform politics.

Based on the results of the analysis, a generalized model of the prospects for the development of political ideologies was proposed. According to this model, ideology in digital civilization is characterized by five main features: hybridity, that is, the combination of traditional and digital forms; adaptability, that is, rapid updating according to audience reactions; platform-dependence, that is, dependence on media infrastructure; data-orientation, that is, reliance on data and analytics; and emotionality, that is, the strengthening of emotional mobilization. This model shows that political ideologies are not disappearing completely, but are changing their forms and methods. The digital age does not weaken ideology; on the contrary, it makes it more dynamic, less visible, and in some cases imperceptibly embedded in everyday communication.

A deeper interpretation of the results also revealed the internal mechanisms of ideological transformation. First, in digital space, political ideology increasingly

functions as an identificational signal. A user may not read a long programmatic document, but through a certain sign, hashtag, color, symbol, video style, or tone of speech, they quickly understand which political position they are closer to. For this reason, in the future ideology will move closer not to a system of complex texts, but to multilayered semiosis, that is, to a system of signs and symbols. This indicates that, in political communication, style itself is also becoming an ideological resource. A change in the medium also produces a change in the content, because the rhythm of the platform, the length of the frame, the language of the headline, and the recommendation algorithm all affect how an idea is perceived.

Second, digital civilization places ideologies into a regime of constant testing and remounting. In the traditional political sphere, once an idea had been formed, it was transmitted to the broader public in a relatively one-directional manner. Now, however, a message is measured in real time through audience reactions: which post was shared more widely, which video received more comments, which phrase attracted more interest. As a result, ideology can turn into a statistically optimized product. Such a situation makes political content more effective, but it also increases the likelihood of weakening its principled and long-term dimensions. This is because content that immediately attracts attention is often sharper, more emotional, and simpler than content that offers complex explanation.

Third, in the digital environment, political ideologies become increasingly personalized. This process unfolds in two forms. On the one hand, the personal image and lifestyle of a political leader begin to appear more important than the idea itself. On the other hand, each user receives a political message tailored to their interests, location, linguistic characteristics, emotional tone, and previous behavior. As a result, the general ideological field becomes fragmented and personalized ideological streams emerge. This increases the effectiveness of political communication, but it may also narrow the shared conceptual space of society's members. In particular, when the same event is presented with entirely different meanings to different audiences, it negatively affects democratic consensus.

Fourth, in digital civilization, ideological competition is accelerating more and more. Previously, political competition was linked mainly to election periods, party congresses, or official press cycles. Today, however, the political agenda is updated not daily, but hourly, and sometimes by the minute. Trends shift rapidly, topics displace one another, and emotional waves on social networks can exert broad influence within a short period of time. Under such conditions, ideologies increasingly need the ability to respond quickly, adapt, and provide interpretation, rather than relying only on a theoretical apparatus developed through long preparation. The political organization of the future will become not only a center

for the production of ideas, but also a communication laboratory operating in real time.

At the same time, the analysis also showed the relationship between three levels in the development of political ideologies. The first level is the micro level, that is, the user's daily media consumption, reactions, and identification. The second level is the meso level, that is, the connections among platforms, communities, parties, bloggers, and media networks. The third level is the macro level, that is, the state, legislation, global technology corporations, and international information flows. In digital civilization, ideology is shaped precisely through the interaction of these three levels. Neither an exclusively top-down analysis nor an approach focused only on user habits is sufficient. In order to correctly assess future prospects, these levels must be examined together.

Discussion. In the context of digital civilization, the development of ideologies is also closely linked to the transformation of political institutions. If parties, parliaments, and civil institutions fail to renew their communication models, they may become disconnected from digital audiences. However, renewal is not limited to simply opening a page on social media. Institutional modernization also requires transparency, rapid accountability, open data, interactive dialogue, and forms of participation that correspond to the logic of networks. Otherwise, the official institutions that mediate between political ideology and society may weaken, and their place may be taken by unverified digital actors. This, in turn, may deepen the crisis of legitimacy.

The digital age is also transforming the language of political ideologies. Classical ideological style was often solemn, normative, and programmatic in character. Today, however, audiences tend to prefer simple, fast, and image-based language. As a result, political ideas are expressed in new lexical and semantic forms: short sentences, visual slogans, ironic expressions, codes borrowed from popular culture, and even emojis are turning into ideological signals. This tendency makes communication more popular and accessible, but it may also damage the depth and precision of concepts. Therefore, in the future, political ideologies will exist in two language regimes: a mass digital short-form language and a deep theoretical-analytical language. A disconnection between these two may lead to ideological confusion.

The issue of ideological security also requires separate discussion. In the digital environment, false information, fake visuals, manipulative editing, and coordinated propaganda can reach large audiences within minutes. For this reason, the future of political ideologies is determined not only by their creation, but also by their capacity for protection. Protection here does not mean prohibition, but

rather verification, analysis, evaluation, the formation of digital ethics, and teaching users to make conscious choices. It is no coincidence that UNESCO materials emphasize critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and democratic competencies [7]. This direction will further strengthen the relationship between political ideology and education in the future.

From a practical point of view, at least four conditions are necessary for a positive future of political ideologies. The first is transparency and accountability in platform governance. The second is the regular development of citizens' media and information literacy. The third is the strengthening of two-way communication mechanisms between official institutions and the digital public sphere. The fourth is the development of ethical norms for the use of data in political communication. If these conditions are met, the digital sphere can become not only a field of struggle for political ideologies, but also a space for restoring social trust and responsibility. Under such circumstances, ideology develops not as an external slogan, but as a system of conscious values that guides civic behavior. This, in turn, directly contributes to preserving the stability of national political thought under the pressures of the digital age.

The final generalization shows that digital civilization is redefining political ideologies in three ways: first, it is changing the architecture of their dissemination; second, it is changing the psychology of their reception; third, it is changing their sources of legitimacy. In the previous era, legitimacy relied mainly on institutions, historical tradition, and ideological consistency. Today, to these are added visibility on platforms, audience participation, network resonance, and indicators of digital trust. Thus, the ideology of the future will be evaluated not only by what it says, but also by where, how, through whom, and under what algorithmic conditions it is expressed. This conclusion opens new methodological horizons for studying the development of political ideologies in the context of digital civilization.

Conclusion. In the context of digital civilization, political ideologies are not disappearing; rather, they are moving into new communicative forms. The results of the analysis showed that the future development of ideologies will be characterized by networking, visualization, algorithmization, platformization, datafication, and the strengthening of emotional mobilization. At the same time, depending on the quality of the digital public sphere, the level of citizens' competencies, and the transparency of control mechanisms, this process may produce either positive or negative outcomes. The most important task for the future is not only to adapt political ideologies to the digital environment, but also to harmonize them with critical thinking, open dialogue, and democratic responsibility. Only under such conditions can digital civilization turn ideology not

into an instrument of manipulation, but into a factor of conscious citizenship and social development. If future empirical studies clearly demonstrate the relationship between algorithmic recommendations, youth political participation, platform ethics, and national ideological security, then theoretical conclusions will be further strengthened and enriched by practical strategies.

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