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Formatting a New Sociality in the Digital Age: Experience of Belarus, Global Civilization Trends and Challenges

Abstract. The paper reflects processes of modernization of Belarus in the context of general civilizational trends of the formation of the information society and digital transformation. The author demonstrates features of the Belarusian development in the post-Soviet period, which have allowed the country to form a solid foundation for innovative changes in the economy and social sphere. Also he reveals main stages of the formation of the information society in Belarus and prerequisites for the transition to information and digital platforms of scientific, technological, socio-economic and cultural development. The author presents tendencies in the formation of a new model of society because of the active influence of high technologies on a society. He takes into account all changes at the state-administrative, socio-economic, socio-cultural and subject-anthropological levels and shows a new sociality. In this context, a socio-philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of "new sociality" is carried out as a result of a profound transformation of social structures and subjectivity under the influence of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. The dialectic of global civilizational trends and the specifics of institutional adaptation are considered using the example of the Republic of Belarus. The author examines the problem of the formation of artificial intelligence systems, the possibilities of their use in various spheres of society, the necessity of creating of ethical, cultural and socio-legal mechanisms for managing artificial intelligence development programs. The accompanying challenges and risks for humans and society arising from progress in the field of high technologies, including artificial intelligence technologies are also in the focus of the research. Considerable attention is paid to the philosophical reflection of the anthropological risks of delegating cognitive and existential functions to AI, the problems of preserving human autonomy and the construction of ethical and legal foundations for the harmonization of socio-technical development.

Keywords: Republic of Belarus; Belarusian development model; information society; digital transformation; new sociality; artificial intelligence

The late 20th and early 21st centuries have been marked by a series of pivotal social, political, cultural, and even technological developments. Among the most significant are the dissolution of the USSR and the consequent collapse of the established world order, the transformation of globalization's ideology and praxis, shifts in norms of national-cultural identity, and the rapid advancement of science, technology, and digital infrastructure. In its recent history, the Republic of Belarus has confronted all these changes, undergoing several defining stages.

The establishment of the Belarusian presidency emerged as a central aspect of the country's political transformation. The 1996 referendum effectively restructured the state system, consolidating primary authority within the executive branch. This move elicited a broad spectrum of reactions, ranging from sharp criticism to assertions of the necessity for institutional centralization amid historical uncertainty. The debates surrounding the balance between parliamentary and presidential systems of governance were less concerned with democratic theory *per se* than with the applicability of its principles to the political realities of post-Soviet states, which had yet to undergo full legal and political maturation (Gusakov 2025). In the Belarusian context, this choice was evidently driven not by abstract models but by specific historical-cultural contingencies and a perceived imperative to maintain societal cohesion.

The concentration of power enabled a focus on fundamental objectives: ensuring political stability, managing social processes, revitalizing the economy, and reinforcing cultural distinctiveness. Evolving along the lines of an "Eastern European hybrid model" (Parechina 2003), Belarusian presidential system gradually assumed the contours of an independent branch of governance, forging both symbolic and practical unity among state institutions. This provided the foundation for a resilient political hierarchy capable of steering societal transformation during a transitional period. Belarusian socioeconomic policy during this period followed a clear trajectory – pursuing evolutionary renewal without abrupt upheavals, while preserving the institutional continuity of the Soviet economic framework and accounting for the cultural traditions and mental dispositions of the Belarusian people. The development strategy adopted by the country's leadership avoided the adoption of alien templates or the temptations of eclecticism – a stance justi-

fied by an intuitive conviction in the necessity of organic, internally driven transformation rather than externally imposed solutions. The concept of a *strong state* became the cornerstone of this model, rooted in the belief that only a centralized authority could ensure social justice, legal order, sustained economic growth, and protection against the chaos that unconsolidated democracies often succumb to amidst crises of identity.

In this system, economic activity was framed as a domain for fair competition, where private initiative received support *on par* with state institutions, yet remained strictly bounded by considerations of public interest and national security. Economic endeavors were no longer viewed merely as instruments of profit but rather as a means of advancing the collective good – through infrastructure investments, industrial modernization, and employment growth. Foreign economic relations were approached through the lens of multi-vector engagement – a strategy aimed at balancing domestic needs with international risks, opening the country to new ideas and technologies while preserving independence and maintaining control over strategic sectors vital to societal and state functioning.

Simultaneously, Belarus prioritized deepening integration with various countries and regions, emphasizing not only economic ties but also cooperation in culture, science, healthcare, and education. This integration was understood not as assimilation into external systems but as an expansion of mutually enriching interactions. Central to this model was social policy as the foundational philosophy of the state – one that prioritized the well-being of its citizens, ensuring access to healthcare, education, and cultural enrichment while fostering opportunities for self-realization irrespective of economic status.

The aforementioned characteristics of the current Belarusian model of national-state and socio-economic development indicate a sufficiently stable position of the country, establishing the foundations for further sustainable growth and economic modernization grounded in accelerated scientific, technical, and innovation-driven progress. The paramount socio-economic priority remains the continued improvement of living standards and quality of life for the population, achieved through technological modernization, structural optimization of the economy, enhanced competitiveness, and qualitative advancements in healthcare, education, science, and culture.

A crucial objective – both in administrative and societal terms – is the systematic modernization of all spheres of Belarusian society, informed by global civilizational achievements and trends. In this regard, priority is given to advancements in information and communication technologies, digital transformation, and the development of artificial intelligence systems, which fundamentally reshape the material and technical infrastructure of all economic sectors while fostering a new societal paradigm with expanded potential. This strategic priority is formally enshrined in Belarusian programmatic framework, particularly in the *National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development until 2030*, approved by the Presidium of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on February 10, 2015[1].

Among other strategic government decisions governing the establishment of an information society in the Republic of Belarus, the *Strategy for the Development of Informatization in the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2022* should be highlighted. This document defined the principles of state policy in the field of informatization and outlined key directions for the advancement of the information society, taking into account a range of factors influencing its progress[2]. Equally significant was the adoption of the *State Program for the Development of the Digital Economy and Information Society for 2016–2020*[3]. The implementation of this program contributed to achieving one of the priorities of Belarusian socio-economic development – namely, fostering effective investments and accelerating growth in innovative sectors of the economy. As a result, conditions

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[1] *National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of Belarus until 2030*, available at: https://economy.gov.by/uploads/files/NSUR2030/Natsionalnaja-strategija-ustojchivogo-sotsialno-ekonomicheskogo-razvitija-Respubliki-Belarus-na-period-do-2030-goda.pdf (accessed February 03, 2025). (in Russ.).

[2] S*trategy for the Development of Informatization in the Republic of Belarus for 2016–2022: Approved at the Meeting of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers on 03.11.2015, No. 26*, available at: http://nmo.basnet.by/informatization (accessed February 03, 2025). (in Russ.).

[3] *State Program for the Development of the Digital Economy and Information Society for 2016–2020: Approved by Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on 23.03.2016, No. 235*, available at: https://pravo.by/document/?guid=12551&p0=C21600235&p1=1 (accessed February 03, 2025). (in Russ.).

were established to facilitate the efficient transformation of key sectors under the influence of information and communication technologies (ICT). This included laying the foundation for a digital economy, expanding information infrastructure, and enhancing the objectives and technological capabilities of e-government.

A pivotal development in this regard was the adoption of Decree No. 8 *On the Development of the Digital Economy*. This document redefined the legal framework governing the High-Tech Park (HTP), including the operational procedures, the scope of authority of its Supervisory Board and Administration, the residency registration process, and the regulatory requirements for its member companies. A key achievement was the introduction of unprecedented state support measures for the HTP and, by extension, the domestic IT industry as a whole[4].

To date, the Republic of Belarus, like several other nations leveraging information technology in pursuit of national interests, aligns with the strategic objective of integrating into the global information society. This endeavor necessitates addressing at least three fundamental issues: 1) the purpose of establishing *an information society*, i.e. clarifying its intended societal and economic impacts; 2) the means and pathways to achieving this goal, i.e. expanding the applications of information technology, improving access to information, and fostering political, economic, cultural, and legal conditions conducive to the growth of a national digital and technological ecosystem; 3) the allocation of *roles and responsibilities*, i.e. defining the contributions and accountabilities of key stakeholders in the information domain, including the state, institutional structures, businesses, and other relevant actors.

The Strategy for Information Society Development in Belarus is built upon a historically established education system strongly oriented toward training specialists in natural sciences and technical fields – particularly to support knowledge-intensive industries, including information and communication technologies (ICT). Given the priorities of the digital age, it is imperative to respond swiftly

[4] *On the Development of the Digital Economy: Decree No. 8 of the President of the Republic of Belarus, December 21, 2017*, available at: https://www.economy.gov.by/uploads/files/sanacija-i-bankrotstvo/Dekret-Prezidenta-Respubliki-Belarus-ot-21-12-2017-N-8-O-r.pdf (accessed February 03, 2025). (in Russ.).

to the evolving demands of the information society and the needs of the ICT research and production sector. A crucial objective in this regard is the development of an effective national educational information environment that facilitates collaboration among all stakeholders in education while fostering a national system of electronic educational resources.

Key priorities for advancing the ICT industry and scientific research include: 1) establishing cutting-edge software production at leading Belarusian universities and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus; 2) developing and implementing supercomputing and distributed computing technologies; 3) creating an export-oriented services sector specializing in automated design for complex products and technological processes, as well as engineering and technical documentation development.

From a *civilizational perspective*, the advancement of high technologies and the implementation of the digital agenda ultimately lead to the formation of a new model of social development – referred to here as *new sociality*. For Belarus, as well as for other nations, this emerging paradigm undoubtedly fosters progress across all spheres of societal activity. However, it also introduces distinct risks and challenges that must be identified and mitigated in a timely manner. The defining characteristics of this *new sociality* manifest at multiple levels. At the level of *governance*, it is increasingly evident that traditional administrative structures are undergoing substantial transformation. The state is evolving toward greater flexibility, humanizing its functions, and transitioning to a service-based model of interaction with citizens. This shift necessitates a re-evaluation of the roles of both governmental authority and civil society, the latter of which no longer operates as the rationally ordered Enlightenment-era institution but increasingly takes the form of decentralized, spontaneous, and at times conflictual self-organization. This phenomenon demands comprehensive philosophical and legal analysis, critical scrutiny, and intellectual support. Without such interventions, this nascent social model risks becoming either subject to soulless technocracy or vulnerable to informational chaos.

From an *economic perspective*, the *new sociality* emerges not merely as a tool for enhancing efficiency, but as a means of humanizing the very logic of economic development. Artificial intelligence,

automation, and platform-based solutions elevate the economy to a new level of planning, yet paradoxically re-center it around the human being as the focal point of this emerging social paradigm. A foundational concept in this framework is *service* (or *social service*) – not as a peripheral function, but as a universal form of productive and social activity. It would be erroneous to perceive this mode of activity as non-labor or virtual in nature: on the contrary, service epitomizes the fundamentally human orientation of the entire economic system. This is a targeted form of engagement, oriented not merely toward the consumer, but toward the individual as a person. Everything that is created must align with the fundamental question: *Who is this needed for, and why?* Even material goods, when contextualized within their social significance, can be understood as services if they are regarded as the outcome of intentional interaction between producers and society. Under these conditions, the economy ceases to function solely as a system of exchange; instead, it becomes a domain of socially meaningful values – one in which technology must serve humanity, not substitute for it.

From *a civilizational perspective*, the emerging *new sociality* is characterized by a departure from earlier paradigms of societal development, where culture was regarded as both the foundation and primary arbiter of civilizational progress. As Nikolai Berdyaev notably emphasized, culture is intrinsically tied to national and *grounded* identity, whereas civilization embodies an *international* nature (Berdyaev 1990). This dichotomy has sharply intensified in contemporary times. Cultural values, once shaped within the boundaries of specific nations and states, are now instantaneously disseminated, replicated, and frequently detached from their original spatial and temporal contexts. This shift raises critical questions about preserving national-cultural identity – not merely as a rhetorical concern but as a philosophical and operational challenge: How does one maintain authenticity without regressing into archaism? How does one engage with global influences without sacrificing uniqueness?

An overemphasis on the national dimension of culture – while disregarding the broader civilizational trajectory – condemns culture to stagnation, rendering it static, self-contained, and incapable of meaningful dialogue. Conversely, the unmitigated dominance of the civilizational component is equally perilous, as it erodes

distinctiveness, dissolves the particular into the universal, and substitutes depth with mere dynamism. Thus, the crucial task of contemporary cultural development is not to resist change but to actively shape it, cultivating both internal resilience and deliberate openness in tandem.

From an *anthropological perspective*, this *new sociality* not only places *human beings* at the very center of profound transformations in inner structure, worldview, and mode of existence, but imposes demands of unprecedented speed and intensity upon them, far surpassing what was deemed conceivable until recently. Information flows proliferate exponentially, events unfold at an overwhelming pace, and the individual increasingly functions not as an autonomous agent but as a conduit or relay for these inundating currents – leaving little room for reflection or deeper comprehension. This dynamic engenders not merely *social fatigue* but a fundamental anthropological distortion – *a rupture* between the essential nature of human beings and the functional expectations imposed upon them in the digital age.

The worldview of contemporary individuals is rapidly deviating from classical ontological foundations. Life is increasingly experienced as fragmented, episodic, and devoid of coherent meaning. Notably, alongside technological advancement, the prevalence of various forms of behavioral deviation has risen –from internet and gaming addictions to neo-behavioral syndromes emerging at the intersection of virtual and real modes of existence. Rather than merely being immersed within digital environments, individuals are now beginning *to dissolve into them*. It has become evident that human cognitive and emotional resources cannot keep pace with the velocity of technological change. A particularly alarming symptom, however, is the widespread inability among many to generate independent meaning: in an era of information saturation, people increasingly rely on prefabricated templates proliferating in the media sphere, without interrogating their origins, structure, or underlying values. This phenomenon gives rise to what is termed *clip consciousness* – a superficial, fleeting, and reactive mode of awareness, incapable of sustained attention, critical engagement, or creative reinterpretation.

This anthropological shift, which poses a threat not only to human intellectual but also existential well-being, inevitably leads to

a crisis of worldview – a disorientation regarding life's fundamental coordinates. The boundaries between the authentic and the artificial, the experienced and the simulated, the corporeal and the digital, are growing increasingly blurred. Within this chaos, individuals struggle to sustain a sense of their *inner core* – the very center around which their identity is constructed. To confront these challenges effectively, what is required extends beyond mere educational or professional competencies. It demands profound philosophical reconsideration – a return to foundational questions: What does it mean to be human in the era of *new sociality*? What is our purpose? Where lie the limits of individual freedom in relation to our growing dependence on an ever-accelerating techno-world?

To summarize the above, we can argue that contemporary civilizational progress and the accompanying new temporality of social practice have, in many respects, outpaced the capacity for theoretical foresight regarding these processes, i.e. the capacity of social theory. Social theory most often emerges belatedly as a product of generalizing rapidly evolving practices. Within this context, it is critical to emphasize that the new condition humanity is entering demands novel intellectual technologies and a new type of knowledge – one capable of facilitating the effective selection of both necessary information and corresponding behavioral orientations and competencies. To put it even more precisely: the emerging sociocultural and technological reality necessitates a new type of subject, one organically suited to this reality. All attempts to enhance human cognitive functions, potential *chipization* of individuals, the development of intelligent robotics, neurointerfaces, and similar advancements are precisely aimed at this objective. From a *traditional humanistic perspective*, however, such a trajectory of scientific and technological progress appears – to put it mildly – unbecoming of *homo sapiens*, long regarded as the *pinnacle of nature*.

Nevertheless, artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, as part of a *new sociality*, are becoming deeply embedded in everyday life across diverse domains – ranging from household, medical, and scientific-educational applications to military-industrial and space exploration endeavors. These technologies are advancing rapidly worldwide. For instance, Belarus showcased its achievements in this field at the *2nd IT Academgorodok Forum Artificial Intelligence* that took place in 2023. Significant attention has been drawn to Belarusian

academic developments in AI for space exploration, healthcare, logistics, public transportation, computer vision, sports analytics, and other fields. The forum also introduced *BELAI.BY*, Belarus's national AI platform. Both in Belarus and globally, considerable emphasis is placed on the legal and ethical implications of integrating AI into social practice. A pressing concern in this regard is the substantial lag in regulatory frameworks governing AI compared to the technology's rapid evolution.

However, the prospects for humanity itself appear less optimistic amid AI's swift progress. As we increasingly "delegate" physical and, subsequently, intellectual functions to machines, the very architecture of everyday cognition undergoes transformation: certain skills erode, while others shift toward alternative cognitive strategies. This raises the risk of a peculiar "cognitive monoculture", wherein external service mechanisms begin to supplant internal processes of orientation, memory, and reasoning. Consequently, individuals risk becoming not merely adjuncts to technology but also beings whose creative agency gradually diminishes – as key operations, from navigation and planning to data analysis and decision-making, can now be (and already are) performed by AI tools.

The theoretical horizon of this process can easily be radicalized: if IT systems can already manage transportation, optimize payments, conduct dialogue, configure decision-making in governance and jurisprudence, reflect upon their own experience, and autonomously refine it, then the emerging *socio-technical world* appears functionally self-sufficient and ostensibly capable of operating without direct human involvement. Yet this proposition contains a methodological flaw: the issue lies not merely in the computational capacity of algorithms, but in how we design the coexistence of humans and machines. The exclusion of human agency from the infrastructure of decision-making risks not progress, but the erosion of subjective autonomy. For this reason, the imperative today is not total automation, but a calibrated *architecture of coexistence* – one that deliberately preserves and institutionally safeguards the spectrum of human competence.

The potential applications of AI in broader sociocultural and sociopolitical modernization remain uncertain – particularly in shaping state policy priorities, governance, and the development of democratic institutions and systems. A fundamental tenet of

any democratic system is the ability of individuals to freely express their will, coupled with the political system's capacity and willingness to aggregate the opinions and sentiments of the majority to inform decision-making. Historically, individuals have relied on personal experience and knowledge when making choices. However, the widespread adoption of AI introduces not merely the temptation but, in some respects, the imperative to defer to 'its' judgment. This shift presents new opportunities for manipulation – both at the individual and collective level – posing significant risks to democracy and social stability. In essence, democracy becomes heavily dependent on a small minority of AI developers and potential third-party actors. To illustrate, in the *Global Risks Report 2024* (based on a survey of participants at the World Economic Forum in Davos), "AI-enabled misinformation and disruption" ranks as the second most pressing global risk – surpassed only by extreme and uncontrollable natural/climatic factors[5].

The issue of human potential – its status and evolution – within the modern socio-techno-cultural landscape has gained relatively recent prominence. This environment is characterized by the rapid proliferation of digital and informational technologies, including AI, and the increasing integration of various aspects of human existence into the techno-digital realm. Today, this phenomenon has become a central concern across numerous academic disciplines, driving the development of conceptual and methodological frameworks not only in philosophy but also in sociology, economics, legal studies, cultural theory, psychology, techno-science, cognitive sciences, and beyond. However, this intellectual inquiry remains far from conclusive due to several factors, not least the ongoing scholarly debate regarding the merits and drawbacks of contemporary digital technologies and their impact on societal and governmental priorities.

Within this spectrum of issues, the topic of AI warrants particular attention, especially concerning its interpretation through philosophical inquiry. Since its inception, philosophy has centered on the study of consciousness – human self-awareness, humanity's

[5] Global Risks Report 2024, *World Economic Forum*, available at: https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024 (accessed January 28, 2024).

place in the natural world, the apprehension of external phenomena, and, by extension, the examination of knowledge and the emergence of science (initially within the domain of philosophy) with its conceptual and categorical frameworks. This process has given rise to evaluative judgments, value hierarchies, and ethical norms – all forged through humanity's protracted sociocultural evolution, marked by both achievements and upheavals, loosely characterized as a form of natural selection.

AI represents an entirely novel link in this evolutionary chain – one foreign to the organic world and thus termed *artificial*. It is the product of human intellect, shaped by a historical trajectory of development and governance. *Artificial intelligence*, however, currently lacks such a foundation. Consequently, it is imperative to harness the normative resources of philosophical ethics to devise mechanisms for the constructive socialization of AI systems. This stands as a pressing imperative in fostering productive collaboration between philosophers and AI engineers.

A second and no less critical task pertains to recognizing that the advancement of scientific and technological progress stems from the continuous deepening of knowledge, the penetration of human thought into the essence of phenomena, and the generation of creative ideas – all of which undergo verification according to established criteria of truth and epistemic justification. These achievements are the result of centuries of work in epistemology, logic, and the methodology of science – an endeavor scarcely attainable within the framework of autonomous AI development confined to narrow technical expertise. In other words, the prospects for artificial intelligence – particularly, so-called *strong AI* – must be grounded in interdisciplinary approaches, involving philosophers, psychologists, linguists, legal scholars, and other experts in the social sciences and humanities.

In this context, it becomes imperative to comprehensively study the challenges of human, societal, and state adaptation to existence in a new (digital) reality characterized by intensified informational and communicative processes. Equally crucial is the systematic development of principles and mechanisms for strategic planning and governance within networked communication environments, aligned with the strategic objectives of socioeconomic and state development.

Today, the technological tools of civilizational advancement are being refined and multiplied, yet the humanistic meanings and goals of progress often fade from view. In other words, while nearly anything seems possible from a technical and technological standpoint, socio-cultural and ethical considerations impose certain *red lines* – boundaries that neither individuals nor society as a whole ought to cross. Consequently, the key philosophical and existential challenge of our time lies in bridging the growing value gap between the capabilities of the socio-technological world and the humanistic ideals and meanings upheld by humanity.

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