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The Phenomenon of Communication in Contemporary Humanities Research (Based on the Work of M. Castells)

The article discusses the phenomenon of communication in contemporary humanities research based on the work of Manuel Castells, whose papers allow for understanding communication as a fundamental mechanism of organization of social relations, power, culture and identity under the conditions of the information age. Special attention is paid to the analysis of key concepts of Castells' theory, such as «network society», «space of flows», «timeless time», «mass self-communication», which disclose the new morphology of the society based on network forms of coordination, global circulation of information and transformation of the public sphere. The goal of the article consists in revealing theoretical and methodological potential of the Castells' work for interpretation of digital media, network communities, symbolic power and new forms of collective and individual identity. The methodological base of the research comprises social and philosophical, hermeneutic and comparative-analytical approaches that allow for combining philosophical, sociological and culturological levels of analysis. The article makes a conclusion that in contemporary humanitaristics, communication acts as an explanatory principle, and Castells' concept remains one of the most productive frameworks for the research of social and cultural transformations of late modernity. It is demonstrated that Castells' optics is especially valuable for studying digitalization, mediatization of daily life, restructuring of the mechanisms of social impact and change in the status of the humanitarian knowledge itself, which is increasingly more included in the analysis of forms of life that are mediated by network, platform and communication. Research results may be used in preparing papers in communication philosophy, mediatheory, culturology, sociology, digital anthropology and modern epistemology.

Keywords: communication, Manuel Castells, network society, information age, digital media, space of flows, public sphere, symbolic power, identity.

Introduction

The communication phenomenon in modern humanities research takes one of the central places, since it is this phenomenon through which we understand processes of identity formation, culture reproduction, symbolic forms circulation, designing of power and arrangement of collective life. If in classic theories communication was commonly understood mainly as transfer of information from a sender to a receiver, in the cutting-edge humanitarian science such an understanding appears to be insufficient [1]. Today, communication becomes not only an auxiliary technical mechanism for message exchange, but also a fundamental environment, in which social discourses are produced, norms are fixed, reality images are formed and influence resources are re-distributed. This transformation is most clearly manifested under the conditions of the network society, where information flows and interactive forms of interaction radically change the sociality fabric itself. In this context, research of the work of Manuel Castells appears to be methodologically and the-

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oretically justified, since it is he who most consistently proved that communication in the information age becomes a key to understanding modern society as a whole [2].

Relevance of this topic is defined firstly by the growing role of communication processes in the life of late contemporary societies. Secondly, today communication acts as the most important mechanism of the symbolic power, since social agenda is formed, values are legitimated and collective concepts are modeled through the communication. Thirdly, humanitarian knowledge itself undergoes a communicative turn (culture, politics, identity and even subjectivity are increasingly often interpreted through communicative forms of their existence) [3].

In the light of the foregoing, it becomes clear that analysis of the phenomenon of communication requires a complex philosophical and sociological optics that is capable of detecting the method of the society structuring in communication.

Degree of the problem status evidences the interdisciplinary nature of this research field. Communication has been studied in philosophy of language, hermeneutics, phenomenology, structural and poststructuralist thought, sociology of mass communication, culturology, media studies and political theory [4]. Given the whole diversity of the existing approaches, most studies are either focused on particular aspects of communication (language, media, discourse, interactions), or discuss it as a derivative from existing social structures. Conceptual importance of works of M. Castells consists in that he offers another perspective. Communication by him is understood as a structure-forming principle of the network society, as a space where social relations are re-arranged. Therefore, Castells' paradigm allows for combining analysis of technologies, culture, power and identity within a single research logic.

The object of this research is communication as a social and cultural phenomenon in modern humanitarian knowledge. The research subject is the interpretation of communication in the works of Manuel Castells as a form of organization of social relations, power and culture under the conditions of the network society. The objective of the paper consists in detecting theoretical and methodological potential of Castells' concept for understanding communication in modern humanities researches.

To reach this objective, it is supposed to solve the following tasks: 1) analyze transformation of understanding of communication in the humanitarian sciences; 2) reveal specifics of the approach of M. Castells to communication in the context of network society theory; 3) define how communication in his theory is related to production of power, identity and cultural discourses; 4) demonstrate heuristic importance of his ideas for contemporary humanitaristics.

Materials and methods of research

The methodological base of the paper comprises social and philosophical, hermeneutic and comparative-analytical approaches. Social and philosophical perspective allows for discussing communication as a method of social reality reproduction. Hermeneutic approach is required to interpret key concepts and semantic emphases in the texts by Castells, first of all those related to the categories of network, flow, power and communication. Comparative-analytical method gives an opportunity to compare Castells' model with earlier and alternative representations of communication, while revealing its novelty and research efficiency.

Results

In the theoretical structure of Manuel Castells, communication takes a constitutive place. The restructuring of the social morphology of the modern world is explained through communication. For Castells, information age means the occurrence of a new social structure, where networks, flows and new forms of discourse production start to play the decisive role. That is why analysis of his concepts shall be built around those categories that describe ontology of the modern society («network society», «space of flows», «timeless time», etc.).

It is this procedure that discloses the internal logic of his theory: from a new form of social organization to new modes of the space and time, and then to a new configuration of symbolic power.

Castells understands the network society first of all as a new social structure. His basic idea consists in that by the early XXI century, the network society is already not only a future project or a thesis of futurologists, but it is a «nucleus» of actually existing societies [2; 14]. At the same time, communication and information technologies assume importance only because they are incorporated into the social practices, political solutions, economic strategies and cultural forms. In other words, network is a form of organization of social relations, where various assemblies, institutes and subjects are combined into flexible but structurally effective

tive configurations. This kind of formulation of the question allows Castells to avoid ingenuous technodeterminism and to demonstrate that the point is a new morphology of the society.

It is of particular importance that network by Castells is not a strictly modern invention. Networks existed before too, but in the information age they for the first time acquired material and technological base that allows them to surpass the centralized hierarchies. As he puts it, network is a set of interconnected assemblies, whose power consists in their ability to re-structure themselves according to the changing environment, redistribute resources, exclude ineffective elements and include new ones [5]. This implies an important social and philosophical conclusion: in the network society, power is decreasingly concentrated exclusively in vertical institutions, but it is increasingly distributed among the communication channels, connection algorithms and information circulation modes. It is not accidental that Castells emphasizes that for the network difference between inclusion and exclusion is essential. The thing that is not included in the network or ceases to be functional for it, loses its structural importance. In this regard, the network acts as a selective mechanism of social relevance.

It would be a mistake to reduce Castells' model to an abstract theory of impersonal flows. One of his basic refinements consists in that the network society is not a society of isolation and degradation of social relations, but on the contrary he directly debates with the concept that the Internet and digital technologies «atomize» an individual. Castells writes that the network society is hypersocial; this means new forms of relations do not eliminate interpersonal communication, but mix with it and enhance it [6]. But this sociality takes another form, namely, the form of «network individualism», at which a human builds his/her own communication, belonging and participation networks, while including himself into and excluding from them depending on his/her tasks, moods and life projects. This means that a subject of the network society is an assembly in a multitude of intersected communication networks. Social form by Castells is defined not only institutionally, but also anthropologically; the network society produces a new type of subject, that is, a self-programming subject capable of continuous processing of information and restructuring of its relations.

If industrial society was built around discipline, standardization and time synchronization, the network society is built around mobility, ability to be simultaneously included into various communicative spaces.

Thus, category of «network society» means new morphology of the social structure.

The next significant category of the Castells' theory is «space of flows», which records a new logic of the spatial organization of the network society. In his definition, space of flows is constituted by material devices and organizational forms that make synchronism of social practices possible without territorial vicinity [2; 36]. In other words, the most important social actions do not anymore depend on physical vicinity of their participants. Financial markets, media systems, scientific collaborations and even social movements function as distributed processes coordinated via communication infrastructure. Space does not equal the territory anymore. It becomes an operational effect of the network connectivity.

At the same time, space of flows by Castells is not purely virtual. He specially highlights that it is not «cyberspace» in a simplified sense [2; 45]. It is formed firstly by technological infrastructures; secondly, by assemblies and hubs, via which flows pass and are redistributed; thirdly, by specific spaces of life and work of those actors who manage networks. Briefly, space of flows does not eliminate materiality, but rearranges it. Significance of a place is determined not only by its local specifics, but also by its position in the network. While exemplifying, we can say that such phenomena as a city, university, airport or financial block are important not by themselves, but as assemblies of intense connectivity.

The space of flows does not eliminate the space of places, but gets into tensional interaction with it. Castells clearly states that new historic geography will be built based on the interface of places and flows [2; 144]. Locality does not disappear, but ceases to be self-sustaining. It is included into transnational chains of information, capital, images and standards, and that is why its meaning is commonly given externally via positions in the global networks. At the same time the space of flows appears to be the space of prevalence and space of resistance simultaneously. The predominant actors use it for management and coordination. Resisting actors can implement alternative meanings and forms of local self-organization. This duality comprises the analytical force of the Castells' category, since it allows for describing globalization as conflict and asymmetric connectivity.

Restructuring of the space by Castells is accompanied by restructuring of time. He states that the network society is characterized by two new social forms — «space of flows» and «timeless time», which co-exist with earlier modes of spatiality and temporality [2; 89]. If biological time defined the rhythms of the greater part of the human history, and the industrial age developed disciplinary time, then the information age generates another mode, within the frameworks of which time collapses and loses its consistency. Cas-

tells relates this to the use of new information and communication technologies that operate in the mode of continuous acceleration and practically continuous access to data. As a result, time ceases to be a linear environment for events development and converts into an operational environment of synchronism (simultaneity).

The most significant feature of «timeless time» consists in that it violates the sequence of the past, present and future. Castells speaks about time compression and about its de-sequencing, when events, decisions, images and messages co-exist in one electronic hypertext, where different time layers can randomly connect and overlap each other [2; 123]. This is especially prominent in financial operations, media-consumption, biotechnologies, and in changing life cycles of labor and family. In such a configuration, historic experience is experienced as a series of discrete, fast passing moments of the present. Castells speaks actually about structural evanescence, when the society lives in the mode of continuous actualization, where continuance is displaced by operativeness.

Nevertheless, timeless time by Castells is not a universal destiny for everyone, on the contrary, he highlights social differentiation of time. The predominant functions and groups get access to the modes of accelerated, programmable time, while the greater part of humans continue to live under the reign of biological rhythms, labor and institutional schedules. Therefore, this is not about complete disappearance of the historic time, but about occurrence of temporal inequality, within the framework of which some actors can act in the horizon of instant synchronization and global real time, and the others remain in slower modes of social existence. Thus, temporality becomes a political category, since access to a certain mode of time is a form of power.

The most radical aspect of the Castells' theory is related to the fact that communication by him acts as a mechanism of production not only of information but also of power. He defines communication as sharing of meaning through the exchange of information, while the meaning can be understood only in the context of those social relations, in which the messages are processed [7; 33]. It follows that power in the network society cannot be reduced only to an institution of force; it is increasingly implemented via construction of discourses in the human mind via multimodal communication networks. Fundamental form of power in the network society is related to the ability to impact on the mind, form frameworks of comprehension, set the agenda and direct interpretation of the events. It is not simply control over the transfer channels; it is a fight for programming of the social imagination field itself.

Here, the special importance is gained by the transfer introduced by him from the classic model of mass communication to the thing that he names «mass self-communication» [7; 74]. Traditional mass communication was mainly one-directional; it moved from an institutional sender to a wide audience. With the spread of the Internet, another form emerges, in which a message can be sent from many to many, in real or selected time, and production, direction and selection of the content appear to be partially transferred to the users themselves. This form remains to be «mass», since potentially it reaches a global audience, but at the same time it is «self» — communication, since its subjects themselves generate content, select addressees and extract messages they need from the network. Thus, communication power gets more complicated.

Castells is far from the utopia of digital freedom. He particularly demonstrates that growth of the user autonomy does not eliminate mechanisms of selection, filtration and control, but on the contrary, in the communication networks forms of gatekeeping (control and restriction of access to information) still exist. Castells distinguishes between networking power, networked power and network-making power. The first term is related to the procedures of access and exclusion, the second — with the impact of separate assemblies inside of the existing network, the third — with the ability to create and program communication networks themselves, i.e. to determine their goals, formats and rules of functioning. In the field of mass communication such power belongs first of all to the owners and controllers of media corporations and platforms, who dispose of financial, legal and technological resources to arrange networks.

Relation between communication and identity by Castells is also essential. Already in his early works, he demonstrates that weakening of previous sources of institutional legitimization (first of all by national state and industrial social organization) urges people to build self-defense systems and self-concepts around identity [8]. In the network society, identity is increasingly formed at the intersection of media representations, interactive platforms and recognition networks. The Internet and digital media become an environment for collection, articulation and conflictual presentations of different types of identity. Communication here acts as an internal condition for the implementation of multiple channels of identity.

And at last, communication by Castells also serves as a mechanism for generation of cultural discourses. In his texts, culture of the network society is described as «real virtuality» [2; 17]. In such a space, mean-

ing of a separate message becomes instable, since it immediately hits the field of multiple interpretations, remixes and code conversion. As a consequence, fragmentation of discourses, chorus of codes and individualization of cultural narrative occur. This fragmentation means that the culture itself increasingly exists as a network of symbols circulation. Communication by Castells acts as an infrastructure of culture since it is communication networks, where today meanings are produced, re-processed and challenged, via which the society understands itself and its own reality.

Analytical force of the Castells' approach consists in that he radically expands the concept of communication. By him, communication is at the same time:

- form of social morphology,
- spatial order,
- temporal mode,
- mechanism of power,
- identity environment,
- infrastructure of culture.

Due to this, his theory is especially efficient for modern humanities research, since it allows for discussing the digital age as deep transformations of the conditions of collective existence themselves.

Discussion

Interpretational value of the Castells' optics for modern humanities research consists first of all in that it allows for analyzing communication from the frameworks of partial media theory and for converting it into a general method of describing modern sociality. By Castells, communication is not one of the subsystems of the society along with the economy, politics and culture; on the contrary, it is the communication networks, through which these segments become possible. That is why his approach is efficient for the philosophy of culture, political theory, anthropology, research of identity and even for rethinking of the humanitarian knowledge status itself.

Castells offers an analytical point of view, via which we can re-read the central phenomena of late modernity. First of all, Castells' perspective provides the modern humanities researches with a language for analyzing digital media as social infrastructure. Classic researches of mass media often reasoned from opposition of the sender and recipient, the center and audience [9]. By Castells, digital media are understood as network environments, where generation of messages becomes distributed. For humanities research, this means a transfer from the analysis of representations to the analysis of the communication architecture, when not only texts occur in the focus of the attention, but also visibility algorithms, connection modes, virtuality mechanisms. The Castells' optics helps to see the environment itself in digital media, where today cultural experience takes place.

Castells' approach is also useful for studying network communities. Castells does not romanticize them as «natural» forms of new solidarity, but also does not reduce them to a degradation of traditional relations. His theory allows for discussing network communities as hybrid formations, which combine cooperation and fragmentation, vicinity and distance. In this regard, the concept of «network» works as an alternative for older concepts of a group, class or stable collective. Network communities exist as they are related by the flows of exchange, recognition and joint attention. For anthropology and culturology, this is especially important, since the researcher acquires an opportunity to study community as a dynamic configuration of reputations, standards and affective references. This approach is effective for analyzing online fandoms, network activist groups, diaspora communities, professional expert networks etc.

Castells' optics is equally important for analyzing symbolic power. One of his key provisions consists in that in the network society power increasingly depends on the ability to program networks, set rules, connect various contours of communication and impact on semantic frameworks of perception. This is not about simple censorship or ownership of mass media in its classic meaning. Power moves to the level of designing the field of possible, that is deemed to be significant, reliable, emotionally convincing and politically acceptable. For humanities research, this opens a possibility to study power as a process of semiotic and media formation of the reality. From this point of view, media analysis coincides with political philosophy, and research of culture with hegemony analysis.

This very logic makes the application of Castells' theory to the public sphere transformation especially efficient. The public sphere can be understood as a space of communication of ideas and projects generated by the society and addressed to the decision-making institutions. Under the conditions of the network society, such a publicity cannot anymore be described only by the terms of a national state, parliamentary discus-

sion or classic popular press. It is restructured around global media systems, interactive networks and multiple attention scenes, where the governmental institutions, corporations and regular users participate in an asymmetric but mutually interconnected fight for public significance. For political theory and media researches this is crucial, since this allows for avoiding a too narrow Habermasian model [10]. Castells' optics helps to see that today publicity is formed at the intersection of global flows and platform logics, therefore, issue of democracy cannot be separated from the issue of media architecture of the society. This demonstrates the critical potential of the Castells' approach. He reproves the illusion that digital publicity automatically democratizes the society. His analysis demonstrates that new public sphere is internally contradictory, because it expands the opportunities for participation, but at the same time it enhances significance of collective attention from the network selection structures. This means that from one side, digital communication actually creates conditions for new citizens' initiatives, discussions and faster spread of counter narratives; on the other side, the same infrastructure facilitates polarization, sporadic nature of political engagement and sensitivity of public opinion to manipulative mechanisms. For the modern political philosophy focused on researching discourse and cultural criticism, this is significant enough. Castells' theory indicates that public sphere shall be studied not as a neutral market of ideas, but as a field that is structured by communication power (in this regard Castells gives a realistic map of modern publicity).

The Castells' perspective has a separate significance for the analysis of new forms of identity. Under the conditions of technological and globalizational restructuring of the society, identity becomes one of the main sources of discourse for social actors. For humanities research, this means an important shift. From now on, identity cannot anymore be understood only as an inherited attribute, rigidly rooted in territory, ethnicity, confession or class position. In the network society, it acquires media-communicative nature. Identities are formed, articulated, recognized and challenged in the communication networks, where symbols, narratives, practices of self-representation circulate with high speed and on a global scale. The Castells' optics allows for discussing identity as a result of continuous work on attributing oneself under the conditions of multiple communication intersections. This is especially efficient for the analysis of conflict, hybrid and multilayer identities. In the digital environment, a subject appears to be included simultaneously into several networks (local, national, transnational, professional, cultural), therefore, identity becomes a fluid configuration that is supported by various modes. For humanities research, this means that identity analysis shall combine semiotic, institutional and technological levels. It is necessary to study not only self-designations and symbols, but also those platform bases, through which these symbols are legitimated and converted into politically significant positions (according to this point of view, the Castells' theory is useful both for the analysis of network nationalisms, and for studying online religiousness, and for studying how marginalized groups create spaces for their own visibility).

It is equally important that the Castells' optics allows for raising the question of culture in a new way. In his works, network society culture is understood as a multilayer system of code circulation under the conditions of «real virtuality». For humanitaristics this opens an opportunity to analyze culture as a process of network arrangement of images, texts, memes, audio and visual forms. This approach is efficient for studying digital popular culture, fan practices, meme ecosystems, platform story-telling and hybrid forms of collective memory. The Castells' theory here allows for avoiding two extremities. Extremity of reducing the culture to technologies and extremity of old humanitarian idealism that discusses culture as an autonomous domain of discourses, which poorly depend on their media form. If the optics demonstrates that cultural meaning has always been integrated into the technological infrastructures, therefore, the cultural analysis shall take into account not only symbolic content of a message, but also its network route, modality of its spread, replicability.

At last, one of the most interesting interpretational opportunities of the Castells' approach is related to the change of the humanitarian knowledge itself under the influence of the communication technologies. It's important to make a point here. Castells does not create a separate «theory of digital humanitarian sciences» in a narrow sense, but his concept gives a general epistemological frame, within which humanitaristics starts to differently understand its own subject and its own methods. If the society is structured by networks and flows, the humanitarian knowledge cannot be satisfied by a description of closed cultural values, stable canons and linear stories; it shall work with distributed subjects (text networks, discourse circulation routes, transnational media spaces, cultural archives, dynamic communities etc.). It is illustrative that modern digital humanitarian approaches increasingly often use network models for cultural processes mapping [11]. This is a symptom of humanitarian imagination restructuring, which the Castells' theory helps to conceptualize.

Therefore, importance of Castells for contemporary humanitaristics consists in that he has radically expanded the subject of the humanitarian analysis itself. His concept allows for studying:

- digital media as culture infrastructures,
- network communities as new forms of sociality,
- symbolic power as a fight for discourses programming,
- public sphere as conflict network of communication scenes,
- identity as a product of media self-designation,
- humanitarian knowledge as a disciplinary field that has to restructure under the impact of interaction with network forms of life.

Conclusion

The analysis performed allows for making a conclusion that in contemporary humanitaristics communication acts as one of the basic explanatory principles, which discloses the mechanisms of production of sociality, methods of cultural codes circulation, modes of formation of collective identity and forms of symbolic organization of power.

That is why, discussion of the theoretical heritage of Manuel Castells appears to be methodologically justified and efficient, since his concept of the network society allows for registering the historic frontier, where communication ceases to be only a means of information transfer, and becomes a structure that arranges space, time, social relations, institutional processes and logic of social reproduction under the conditions of the information age.

Special value of the Castells' approach consists in that it provides an opportunity to combine several analytical levels that in traditional research often exist separately:

1. Philosophical level, which raises the question on transformation of human experience, identity and intersubjectivity.
2. Sociological level, which studies networks, institutions, power and new forms of social coordination.
3. Culturological level, which analyzes the processes of discourse generation, identity structures and changes in symbolic environment.

In this regard, works of Castells have a status of a wide interpretational model that allows for understanding fundamental restructuring of the society under the impact of information and communication technologies, global flows of data and network forms of interaction, and that is why they can serve a central case for studying the phenomenon of communication in the field of contemporary humanities researches.

Therefore, the phenomenon of communication in the cutting-edge humanitarian knowledge shall be understood as a key to the interpretation of contemporary social reality, while the works of Castells provide one of the most integrated and conceptually rich frameworks for this that allow for detecting a principle in communication, through which general cultural dynamic of late modernity is disclosed.

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Қазіргі гуманитарлық зерттеулердегі коммуникация феномені (М. Кастельс шығармашылығы мысалында)

Мақалада ақпараттық заманауи кезеңіндегі әлеуметтік байланыстарды, билікті, мәдениетті және өзара бірегейлікті қалыптастырудың басты механизмі ретінде коммуникацияны түсінуге жол ашатын Мануэль Кастельс пікірі негізінде қазіргі гуманитарлық зерттеулердегі коммуникация феномені қарастырылды. Желілік қиыстыру формаларына, ақпараттың дүниежүзілік айналымына және қоғамдық саланың трансформациясына орнықты қоғамның жаңа морфологиясын айқындайтын «желілік қоғам», «ағындар кеңістігі», «мәңгілік уақыт», «бұқаралық өзіндік коммуникация» сияқты Кастельс теориясының басты ұғымдарын талдауға айрықша назар аударылады. Мақаланың негізгі мақсаты — сандық медианы, желілік қауымдастықтарды, символдық билікті және топтық және жеке бірегейліктің жаңа формаларын ұғындыру үшін Кастельс шығармашылығының теориялық және әдіснамалық әлеуетін пайымдау. Зерттеудің әдіснамалық негізін сараптаудың философиялық, социологиялық және мәдени деңгейлерін топтастыруға мүмкіндік беретін әлеуметтік-философиялық, герменевтикалық және салыстырмалы-аналитикалық тәсілдер қамтиды. Қазіргі гуманитарлық ғылымдарда коммуникация анықтамалық принцип ретінде әрекет етеді, ал Кастельс концепциясы дәл қазіргі дәуірдің әлеуметтік және мәдени өзгерістерін зерттеуге ең тиімді алғышарттарының бірі болып қала береді деген қорытынды жасалады. Кастельстік пікір цифрландыруды, күнделікті өмірдің ақпараттық ортаға бейімделуін, қоғамдық ықпал ету механизмдерін қайта құруды және желілік, платформалық, онымен қоса коммуникативті дәнекерлік өмір формаларын талдауға көбірек бағыт бұрған гуманитарлық білімнің өз мәртебесінің өзгеруін зерттеу үшін ерекше маңызды екендігі анық айтылған. Осы зерттеудің нәтижелерін қарым-қатынас философиясы, медиа теориясы, мәдениеттану, әлеуметтану, цифрлық антропология және заманауи эпистемология бойынша ғылыми жұмыстарды әзірлеу барысында оңтайлы пайдалануға болады.

Кілт сөздер: коммуникация, Мануэль Кастельс, желілік қоғам, ақпараттық кезең, сандық медиа, ағындар кеңістігі, қоғамдық сала, символдық билік, бірегейлік.

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Феномен коммуникации в современных гуманитарных исследованиях (на примере творчества М. Кастельса)

В статье рассматривается феномен коммуникации в современных гуманитарных исследованиях на материале концепции Мануэля Кастельса, чьи работы позволяют осмыслить коммуникацию как фундаментальный механизм организации социальных связей, власти, культуры и идентичности в условиях информационной эпохи. Особое внимание уделяется анализу ключевых понятий кастельсовской теории, таких как «сетевое общество», «пространство потоков», «вневременное время», «массовая самокоммуникация», через которые раскрывается новая морфология общества, основанная на сетевых формах координации, глобальной циркуляции информации и трансформации публичной сферы. Цель статьи заключается в выявлении теоретико-методологического потенциала творчества Кастельса для интерпретации цифровых медиа, сетевых сообществ, символической власти и новых форм коллективной и индивидуальной идентичности. Методологическую основу исследования составляют социально-философский, герменевтический и сравнительно-аналитический подходы, позволяющие соединить философский, социологический и культурологический уровни анализа. Делается вывод, что в современной гуманитаристике коммуникация выступает объяснительным принципом, а концепция Кастельса остается одной из наиболее продуктивных рамок для исследования социальных и культурных трансформаций поздней современности. Показано, что кастельсовская оптика особенно значима для изучения цифровизации, медиатизации повседневности, перестройки механизмов общественного влияния и изменения статуса самого гуманитарного знания, все более включенного в анализ сетевых, платформенных и коммуникативно опосредованных форм жизни. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы при подготовке работ по философии коммуникации, медиатеории, культурологии, социологии, цифровой антропологии и современной эпистемологии.

Ключевые слова: коммуникация, Мануэль Кастельс, сетевое общество, информационная эпоха, цифровые медиа, пространство потоков, публичная сфера, символическая власть, идентичность.

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