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## Theories of information societies in the context of network identity

In the modern social philosophy the problem of determining the ontology of the social reality that followed the industrial society is topical as never before. Topicality and variability of the problem resulted in creating an abundance of theoretical concept of society, which often oppose. The article uses the notions of «information», «modern», «network» societies as equal, since having different methodological and research base, these categories come from the analysis of one and the same social phenomenon: formation and development of the new type society that is different from the industrial and post-industrial societies. Such a society features the increasing role of information, knowledge and information technologies, increase in the number of people engaged in information technologies, communications and manufacture of information products and services, creation of global information space ensuring the effective informational interaction between individuals via the access to global information resources, informational products and services, which in its turn brings up the problem of personality adaptation to the altered social and cultural environments. The article discusses the theories of M. McLuhan, A. Toffler and M. Castells as theorists of post-industrial society, who consider the communication technology as a decisive factor of the process of forming this or that social economic system. The authors analyze problems of network communities existence, their influence on a human and his identity in the context of these theories.

*Keywords:* post-industrial society, information society, communication, Internet, network societies, computer technologies, identity, civilization development.

### *Introduction*

As electronic mass media and information technologies develop and computer technology improve, in communication and social studies discussion grows about the functions of communication media, role of information in life of the society and tendencies in building the information society.

Thus, for example, new communication forms that are called intertextual emerge on the Internet. This, what goes on between symbols and texts in the network generates further symbolic sequence and symbolism development on the Internet.

### *Methods and Materials*

Research of the information society is a multi-discipline research sphere, and social and cultural analysis allows solving the principal problems: in which direction and what for current social situation is developing and what axiological component of this process is. Synthesizing character of the social and cultural analysis of the information society sets out the direction of forecasting its further development, search for new reference concepts. Potential of the social and cultural methodology allows for accumulating information about the social and cultural reality, studying the personality social adaptation process. The phenomenon of information society can be considered as a specific modification of social and cultural paradigm requiring adequate analysis in terms of determining the importance of the information and communication factor as a dominant one in the coordinates of the modern social processes.

### *Results and Discussion*

In this regard interest is drawn to three names: M. McLuhan, A. Toffler and M. Castells as theorists of post-industrial society, who consider the communication technology as a decisive factor of the process of forming this or that social economic system.

McLuhan shows that development of both economic and social political infrastructure of the industrial society would have been impossible without cardinal change in communicative strategies that caused invention of the lithographic press. Concept of «electronic society» can be identified as a leading concept of his

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theory. Attention of McLuhan in general is focused on television and other media, and on information technology development. Important aspects of the information technology, in his opinion, are:

– mosaic of television image structure representing the whole world as a set of messages that are not joint by unambiguous logical relation (when, for example, in a short period of time a news program shows various-scale information at various shooting angle from all sorts of regions and epochs);

– resonance (mutual effect) of these messages in the consciousness perceiving them, which overcomes the mosaic fragmentation and combines them into a holistic semantic unity established by perception.

At the same time, the most appropriate means for the retention of the integrity of perceiving a rapidly updating mosaic and resonant reality appears to be the myth. «We actually live according to the myth laws and integrally, as once before, but we continue to think with the formulas of the former discrete space and time of the pre-electricity century» [1].

Continuing his research, McLuhan detects that in the modern age not only television perception, but all the vital activity of the modern society have become to be performed more and more in accordance with the principle of mosaic resonance: via telecommunications, mass media and computers electricity in some sort extends the central nervous system to the form of «global hug», where everything turns out to be interrelated, and as a result, the so-called «global village» is formed. «The globe associated with electricity is no larger than a village», writes McLuhan [2].

Today all social networks from Odnoklassniki to Twitter can be called «global village». In many chats, there is a tendency to build virtual extended families, where chat participants «play» in a family accepting «virtual roles» of father, mother, children, aunts and uncles of various kinship degrees, brothers and sisters, therefore on a gaming basis creating a certain prototype of the extended family lost during the urbanization. Such virtual families are quite stable in time, and such a «game» can last throughout the entire time of the chat's existence as a virtual community, and new chat visitors can eagerly accept the rules of this «game» entering this virtual family as its members.

Talking about the mass media influence on the society, McLuhan noted entering the adulthood by «generations, who with a TV of their mother have imbibed all the global times and spaces via advertisement», according to which «Democratic freedoms are largely expressed in the fact that people are not concerned with politics, but with dandruff in their heads, hair on their legs, the sluggish work of their intestine, poorly attractive breast form, unhealthy gums, excess weight and blood circulation congestive phenomena» [3]. In his last works, McLuhan showed that under the conditions of new information environment and impact of electronic networks, business and culture appear to be equal and interchangeable concepts [4]. At the same time, anticipating the situation of the 1990s, he noted that «if there are telecommunications with their global coverage, the relevant groups and organizations should use them» [5].

So in accordance with his theory, the modern stage of the society development is some «global village» reviving natural aural and visual multidimensional perception of the world and collectivity, but on the new electronic basis via the replacement of written and printed languages of communication by radio and television and network media communications.

Equally significant contribution to the post-industrialism ideas development was made by the concept of Alvin Toffler, which was set forth in his book «The Third Wave» [6]. In the introduction, the author emphasizes that his book is «not an objective forecast, and it does not pretend to be scientifically grounded» [7], and then he determines the basis for his work as a semi-system model of civilization and our relationship with it. Toffler describes the process of disappearance of the industrial civilization in terms of «technosphere», «sociospheres», «information» and «power sphere», shows which revolutionary changes each of these areas undergoes in today's world. Special attention is paid to showing the relationship between these spheres, and between the «biosphere» and «psychosphere». The «psychosphere» for Toffler is the structure of psychological and personal relationships, due to which the changes occurring in the outer world effect our private life. Changes influence both adaptive and identification mechanisms of an individual.

The main metaphor used by Toffler is a collision of waves leading to change. According to the author, the idea of waves is not only a way to arrange huge amounts of very controversial information, but it helps to see what is under its «raging surface of changes» [8].

Applying the new approach, Toffler analyzes the technical and economic, and information and communicative factors of the social development [9]. At the same time he notes that the offered by him approach to analyzing the social processes «focuses our attention not so much on historical continuity, however important it is, but on the discreteness in history, moments of continuity interruption, innovations and interruption points. He detects basic changes at the time of their occurrence and allows to influence on them» [10].

Surviving a deep crisis, the Second Wave is replaced by the Third Wave bringing new world views and new scientific and technological advances in computer science, electronics, molecular biology, which allow going beyond the limited life and philosophical concepts of the industrial period and creating conditions for eliminating its main contradiction between production and consumption. The civilization of the Third Wave contradicts the old traditional industrial civilization, since it is both high-tech, and anti-industrial. It brings a new way of life based on renewable energy sources, on production methods that exclude factory assembly lines, on new non-nuclear family, on new structure that Toffler calls the «electronic cottage», on radically changed schools and associations of the future. The emerging civilization leads us beyond the limits of standardization, synchronization and centralization.

The development of computer equipment and communications will lead, according to Toffler, to the change in the employment structure, and in combination with increasing labor intellectualization to the emergence of so-called «electronic cottages» that will allow moving of work from the office to employee's home. In addition to saving time and reducing transportation costs, expenses for providing centralized jobs, introduction of «electronic cottages» will lead, according to Torch, to strengthening of family and the tendency to revive the attractiveness of small towns and rural life style [11]. Toffler predicts that «struggle for «electronic cottage» will obviously unite not only technologists and corporations seeking to use new technical capabilities, but also a wide range of other forces: environmentalists, labor reformers in a new style, a wide coalition of organizations, from conservative churches to radical feminists, and major political groups to support that what can be considered as a new, more satisfactory future of the family» [12].

Toffler, in addition to purely technological aspects, notes trends in creating new intellectual medium based on computer networks.

Today, a lot of publications have emerged, which analyze the features of modern society addiction to global computer networks and emerging hazardous trends [13] of the prospects for democracy under the condition of cyberspace [14], and they also predict the processes of Internet self-organization as a system independent of humans. In particular, V.V. Vitkovskiy in his report at the Second All-Russian Conference «Internet and Modern Society» argued that the Internet as a self-organizing system actively counteracts the attempts of individual persons and organizations to take themselves under the administrative control and puts forward the thesis about the Internet having its own goal of ensuring its own viability regardless of global, regional economic, political and other conditions. Ultimately, according to V.V. Vitkovskiy, it can be stated that now existence and development of the Internet does not depend on the will of the humans, its creators.

Toffler shows the tendencies of the introduction of computer technologies into everyday administrative work giving examples of implementing the first demonstration electronic offices and computer data transmission systems. At the same time, he draws our attention to social, psychological and economic consequences of this process, which, in his opinion, will lead to restructuring social roles and changing the employment structure.

In his work «The Rise of the Network Society» Castells carries out a detailed analysis of modern trends leading to formation of the base for the society, which he calls «network society». Reasoning from the postulate that in its nature information is such a resource that can easier than others penetrate all sorts of barriers and borders he considers the information era as the era of globalization. At the same time, network structures are both the means and the result of the society's globalization. Castells writes that «it is the network that make up a new social morphology of our societies, and the spread of 'network' logic largely effects the course and result of processes related to production, everyday life, culture and power» [15]. Thus, the power of the structure turns out to be stronger than the power structure, and belonging to this or that network, along with the dynamics of some networks development in relation to others acts, according to Castells, as the essential source of power.

Castells does not talk about the decline of capitalism, and even on the contrary, argues that the network society is a bourgeois society. However, this kind of capitalism significantly differs from its predecessors by two main features: its global character (which comes after the collapse of the Soviet block) and its basis on the financial flows network. Modern financial flows do not know borders and nationalities, financial operations occur within a fraction of a second and in this «Universal Casino», which is managed by computers, capital circulation determines the fate of corporations, family savings, national currencies and even regional economies [16].

Castells emphasizes the decisive meaning of knowledge for the new economy that relies on the «capitalist form of production» and has «information development form». Transformation processes in the economy cause major changes in the labor market. Individualization of the employment conditions actually di-

vides labor force into two categories: those who are highly qualified specialists and/or have learning abilities, and those who can perform only certain operations. Thus, labor is broken down on a global scale: capital and labor turn out to be placed into different space and time. «They live apart from each other, but they are not related to each other, because the life of the global capital is less and less dependent on a specific labor, but more and more on the accumulated volume of labor as such, which is managed by a small brain center residing in virtual palaces of global networks,» notes Castells.

Transformation processes significantly change political processes. Leadership is becoming increasingly personified, and the path to power lies through creating an image; political figures appear to be involved in the game that is performed via mass media and by mass media themselves. Castells emphasizes that «the dependence on the language of mass media, which has an electronic basis, leads to far-reaching consequences for the characteristics, organization and goals of political processes, political figures and political institutions. Ultimately, the power belonging to the mass media networks ranks second after the power of streams embodied in the structure and language of these networks».

The sign of these communities' compliance to the new architecture of the network society is their network, decentralized form of organization and self-organizing information circulation systems within the community. Castells make a conclusion that it is this decentralized, elusive nature of the network structures of social change complicates the perception and identification of new identity, as the one directed into the future, which is being developed today» [17].

Analyzing works of Castells and others, K. Young defines virtual communities as «social aggregations emerging in the Network, when a sufficient number of people within a long period take part in public discussions, experience the necessary human emotions to form a web of personal relationship in the cyberspace» [18]. And these social aggregations provide possibilities for social design of an individual in the virtual space, formation of network identity.

### *Conclusions*

Thus, A. Toffler along with M. McLuhan and M. Castells can be credited to be the first theorists who have formed a general premonition of the Internet technologies dominance, both in the field of production and in the cultural and social sphere; who was first to denote the problems of the network communities existence, their influence on humans and their identity.

Emergence of a new society organization form — information stage of development — casts doubts over the possibility of univocal interpretation of the human problem. Thus, it can be noted that personality transformation at the information stage of society development is indissolubly related to space virtualisation and broad-scale influence of the Internet. This leads to the interactive character of individual changes, instability of the content-related component of the individuality and impossibility to explicit constants of individual being.

Research of the information society is a multi-discipline research sphere, and social and cultural analysis is meant to solve the principal problems: in which direction and what for current social situation is developing and what axiological component of this process is. Synthesizing character of the social and cultural analysis of the information society sets out the direction of forecasting its further development, search for new reference concepts that suppose for possibility of localizing this process within the socially desired direction, at the same time avoiding both excessive optimism and extreme pessimism.

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## Желілік сәйкестік контексіндегі ақпараттық қоғам теориялары

Қазіргі әлеуметтік философияда индустриалды қоғамнан кейінгі әлеуметтік шындықтың онтологиясын анықтау мәселесі бұрынғыдан да өзекті. Мәселелердің өзектілігі мен өзгергіштігі қоғамның көптеген теориялық тұжырымдамаларының құрылуына әкелді, олар көбінесе бір-бірімен қарама-қайшылыққа түседі. Мақалада қоғамның «ақпараттық», «заманауи», «желілік» ұғымдары балама ретінде қолданылады, өйткені әртүрлі әдіснамалық және зерттеу базасына ие бола отырып, бұл санаттар бірдей әлеуметтік құбылысты — индустриалды және постиндустриалды қоғамдардан өзгеше жаңа типтегі қоғамның қалыптасуы мен дамуын талдаудан туындайды. Мұндай қоғамдағы ақпараттың, білімнің және ақпараттық технологиялардың рөлінің артуымен, ақпараттық технологиялармен, коммуникациялармен және ақпараттық өнімдер мен қызметтерді өндірумен айналысатын адамдар санының артуымен, әлемдік ақпараттық ресурстарға, ақпараттық өнімдер мен қызметтерге қол жеткізу арқылы жеке адамдар арасындағы тиімді ақпараттық өзара іс-қимылды қамтамасыз ететін жаһандық ақпараттық кеңістікті құрумен сипатталады, бұл өз кезегінде жеке тұлғаның өзгеретін әлеуметтік-мәдени жағдайларға бейімделу мәселелерін өзекті етеді. Мақалада М. Маклюэн, Э. Тоффлер және М. Кастельс теориялары қарастырылған, постиндустриалды қоғамның теоретиктері ретінде байланыс технологияларын белгілі бір әлеуметтік-экономикалық жүйені қалыптастыру процесінің шешуші факторы ретінде зерттелген. Авторлар желілік қауымдастықтардың өмір сүру мәселелерін, олардың адамға және оның жеке басына әсерін осы теориялар тұрғысынан талдаған.

*Кілт сөздер:* постиндустриалды қоғам, ақпараттық қоғам, коммуникация, интернет, желілік қауымдастықтар, компьютерлік технологиялар, бірегейлік, өркениеттік даму.

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## Теории информационных обществ в контексте сетевой идентичности

В современной социальной философии как никогда актуальна проблема определения онтологии той социальной реальности, которая последовала за индустриальным обществом. Актуальность и вариативность проблематики привели к созданию множества теоретических концепций общества, которые зачастую вступают в конфронтацию друг с другом. В статье понятия «информационное», «современное», «сетевое» используются как равнозначные, поскольку, имея различную методологическую и исследовательскую базу, указанные категории исходят из анализа одного и того же социального феномена — формирования и развития общества нового типа, отличного от индустриального и постиндустриального. Такое общество характеризуется возрастающей ролью информации, знаний и информационных технологий в социуме, увеличением количества людей, занятых информационными технологиями, коммуникациями и производством информационных продуктов и услуг, созданием глобаль-

ного информационного пространства, обеспечивающего эффективное информационное взаимодействие между индивидами посредством доступа к мировым информационным ресурсам, информационным продуктам и услугам, что, в свою очередь, актуализирует проблемы адаптации личности к изменившимся социокультурным условиям. В статье рассмотрены теории М. Маклюэна, Э. Тоффлера и М. Кастельса как теоретиков постиндустриального общества, рассматривающих технологии коммуникации в качестве решающего фактора процесса формирования той или иной социально-экономической системы. Авторами проанализированы проблемы существования сетевых сообществ, их влияние на человека и его идентичность в контексте данных теорий.

*Ключевые слова:* постиндустриальное общество, информационное общество, коммуникация, интернет, сетевые сообщества, компьютерные технологии, идентичность, цивилизационное развитие.

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