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THE ROLE OF THE UN AND UNESCO'S INFORMATION DIPLOMACY (based on materials from UNESCO Courier journal)

Leyla Muradzada*

Abstract. The article examines the role of UNESCO in shaping the ethical and humanistic foundations of the global information society. Unlike most international institutions, UNESCO pays special attention to the scientific and moral aspects of technological progress, the promotion of freedom of expression, equal access to information and cultural diversity. Based on the analysis of some articles from the UNESCO Courier journal, as well as key intergovernmental programs – the of Information and Communication Technology, Memory of the World Programme and Information for All Programme the study highlights the organization's contribution to the formation of digital ethics and knowledge societies. Special attention is paid to the concepts of technological diversity and media literacy as strategies for digital decolonization in the face of the emerging “algorithmic empire.” The article also explores the role of youth as active participants in digital transformation and bearers of new ethical values.

Keywords: UNESCO Courier journal, digital transformation, information diversity, UNESCO programs

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РОЛЬ ООН И ЮНЕСКО В ИНФОРМАЦИОННОЙ ДИПЛОМАТИИ (на основе материалов журнала «Курьер ЮНЕСКО»)

Лейла Мурадзаде*

Абстракт. В статье рассматривается роль ЮНЕСКО в формировании этических и гуманистических основ глобального информационного общества. В отличие от большинства международных институтов, ЮНЕСКО уделяет особое внимание научным и моральным аспектам технического прогресса, поощрению свободы выражения мнений, равному доступу к информации и культурному разнообразию. В исследовании, основанном на анализе некоторых статей из журнала «Курьер ЮНЕСКО», а также ключевых межправительственных программ- программы информационно-коммуникационных технологий, программы «Память мира» и программы «Информация для всех», подчеркивается вклад организации в формирование цифровой этики и обществ знаний. Особое внимание уделяется концепциям технологического разнообразия и медиаграмотности как стратегиям цифровой деколонизации в условиях зарождающейся «алгоритмической империи». В статье также рассматривается роль молодежи как активных участников цифровой трансформации и носителей новых этических ценностей.

Ключевые слова: журнал «Курьер ЮНЕСКО», цифровая трансформация, информационное разнообразие, программы ЮНЕСКО

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BMT VƏ YUNESKO-NUN İNFORMASIYA DİPLOMATİYASINDA ROLU (UNESCO Courier jurnalının materialları əsasında)

Leyla Muradzadə*

Abstrakt. Məqalədə UNESCO-nun qlobal informasiya cəmiyyətinin etik və humanist əsaslarının formalaşmasında rolu müzakirə olunur. Əksər beynəlxalq institutlardan fərqli olaraq, YUNESKO texnoloji tərəqqinin elmi və mədəni aspektlərinə, ifadə azadlığının təşviqinə, informasiyaya bərabər çıxışa və mədəni müxtəlifliyə xüsusi diqqət yetirir. UNESCO Courier jurnalının bəzi məqalələrinin, eləcə də təşkilatın kommunikasiya sahəsini əhatə edən proqramlarının təhlilinə əsaslanan tədqiqat YUNESKO-nun rəqəmsal etika və bilik cəmiyyətlərinin formalaşmasına verdiyi töhfəni vurğulayır. Yeni yaranan "alqoritmik imperiya" şəraitində rəqəmsal dekolonizasiya strategiyaları kimi texnoloji müxtəliflik və mediasavadlılığı anlayışlarına xüsusi diqqət yetirilir. Məqalədə gənclərin rəqəmsal transformasiyanın fəal iştirakçıları və yeni etik dəyərlərin daşıyıcıları kimi rolu da müzakirə olunur.

Açar sözlər: UNESCO Courier jurnalı, rəqəmsal transformasiya, informasiya müxtəlifliyi, YUNESKO-nun proqramları

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1.Introduction

Unlike most international institutions, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Affairs (UNESCO), since its inception, has focused not on political debate, but on the scientific study and ethical understanding of modern problems facing humanity. UNESCO is a kind of knowledge laboratory that unites the world's leading scientists, culturologists and politicians in the development of universal recommendations for Sustainable Development and peace.

Since the middle of the twentieth century, UNESCO has played a key role in shaping the concept of the Information Society, linking technological progress with the humanistic principles of freedom, responsibility and equality. The creation of the Communications and information sector in 1990 marked a turning point that marked the transition from simple knowledge exchange to a systematic policy in the field of information ethics, media literacy and knowledge acquisition.

2.UNESCO programs and formation of the information society

In the structure of the communications and information sector, there are two main institutions: Division of Freedom of Expression and Media Development and Knowledge Societies Division and the Executive and Administrative Offices. They coordinate the implementation of three intergovernmental programs –

The International Programme for the Development of Communication (1980), Memory of the World Programme (1992) and Information for All Programme (2001) [UNESCO, 1980].

Each of these programs reflects a certain stage in the understanding of the digital transformation of mankind. The International Programme for the Development of Communication promotes freedom of the press, pluralism and professional training in the field of mass media. Memory of the World Programme is aimed at preserving the documentary heritage and ensuring equal access to it. Information for All Programme focuses on issues of Information Policy, Media and information literacy, linguistic diversity, and digital ethics.

Thus, UNESCO to propose a unified concept of the "society of knowledge" based on four principles:

- freedom of expression,
- universal access to knowledge,
- quality education for all,
- respect for cultural and linguistic diversity.

UNESCO's 2003 recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace laid the foundation for

international standards for digital equality and open knowledge sharing [UNESCO, 2003].

3.The ethics of the digital society and the challenges of modernity

With the development of Information and Communication Technology, new questions have emerged regarding freedom of speech, privacy and ethical responsibility of users. UNESCO considers these topics within the framework of intergovernmental forums- the World Summit on the Information Society, internet management forums, as well as the activities of the Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development.

UNESCO reports emphasize that the digital revolution is Dual in nature: on the one hand, it opens up unprecedented opportunities for education and communication, and on the other, it poses risks of inequality, cyber dependence and human rights violations. The organization argues that access to information is a necessary but inadequate condition for building a Knowledge Society; true knowledge implies the ability to critically perceive, interpret, and participate.

Within the framework of the Information for All Programme, the Code of Ethics for the Information Society was prepared, as well as international projects were implemented to support Media-Information Literacy, protect documentary heritage and promote multilingual content [UNESCO, 2013].

The journal UNESCO Courier, the first issue of which appeared in 1948, occupies a special place in the intellectual history of the organization. Since its inception, it has turned from a bulletin into a world cultural phenomenon – a place where ideas, cultures and civilizations meet. The mission of the publication from the very beginning was connected with the promotion of the ideals of UNESCO – peace, mutual understanding and cooperation between peoples. Published in six UN official languages and presented in digital format since 2006, the magazine reflects the desire for universalism and intercultural dialogue. The revival of the "Courier" in 2017 with the support of the people's Republic of China became a symbol of the restoration of the humanistic tradition in the context of global changes [UNESCO, 2017].

Modern publications, including the collection «Transforming Ideas. Selected Articles. Volume I: Thinkers» indicates that the journal remains an integral part of the UNESCO mission. His publications unite thinkers, philosophers, scientists and artists who comprehend the problems of the XXI century – from the personality crisis to the ethics of artificial intelligence.

"Courier" is a platform of critical humanism that discusses issues of justice, sustainable development, cultural diversity and technological responsibility.

4.Algorithm empire and digital inequality crisis

The modern era is characterized by an unprecedented concentration of power in the hands of technological corporations that control digital communications,

infrastructure and knowledge flows. These processes form a new geopolitics – "algorithm empire", where the dominance of information becomes the equivalent of political and cultural influence. In response to this challenge, scientists, philosophers and journalists put forward the concepts of technological diversity, media literacy and digital pluralism as the main means of digital decolonization and preservation of epistemological sovereignty.

Domenico Fiormonte notes that the struggle for control of digital knowledge is not only technological competition, but also a form of neocolonial conflict, in which the global North continues to impose cultural and technological standards on the global South.

Standardization of communication protocols and software tools within the framework of this "algorithm empire" leads to a decrease in cultural and linguistic diversity, turning users into dependent subjects of monopoly platforms [The UNESCO Courier, 2022].

Fiormonte relies on the ideas of Gramsci and Innis, emphasizing that technology is never neutral – they bear the imprint of the ideological attitudes of their creators. Therefore, technological superiority becomes epistemological domination, where the forms of knowledge that arise "on the periphery" are excluded.

This trend leads to epistemism – the systematic destruction of alternative forms of knowledge [Epistemism, 2022]. Digital colonization manifests itself not only in the field of Information production, but also in infrastructure architecture – from data centers to machine learning algorithms that reproduce inequality and consolidate economic dependence and cultural subordination.

5. Technological diversity as a digital decolonization strategy

Fiormonte and the Chinese philosopher Yuk Hui propose to look at technological diversity as the right to choose and "reject" universal digital models. Techno-diversity is not only a plurality of technical solutions, but also an opportunity to create technologies that are rooted in local culture, language and ecology [UNESCO, 1992].

This position opposes the idea of global standardization and offers an alternative:

- development of local digital ecosystems based on the principles of sustainability and cultural diversity;
- support for Southern initiatives such as the flock Society (Ecuador), Redalyc and AmeliCa (Latin America), which develop models of open access and information sovereignty;
- promotion of Southern dialogue, strengthening the independence of regional technologies and forms of knowledge.

Thus, technological diversity becomes a philosophy of digital resistance, which provides not only access to technology, but also control over their meaning and purpose.

6. Media literacy as a tool against digital hegemony

French researcher Divina Frau-Meigs focuses on the other side of digital inequality-data manipulation. In the era of Post-truth and algorithmic selection, media education is of strategic importance as a form of digital self-determination [The UNESCO Courier, 2023 (A)].

Frau-Meigs argues that critical perception of the media is not only an educational problem, but also a form of civil resistance. His concept of "new levels of media literacy" includes three user roles:

- researcher analyzing sources and contexts;
- data verification analyst;
- content creator who knows the ethical consequences of his actions in the digital environment.

This approach forms a new model of the citizen – a critically minded digital subject that can recognize manipulation and maintain information autonomy.

It is media literacy that creates the link between digital decolonization and technological diversity: it allows societies not only to consume digital content, but also to rethink the power structure in the digital space.

7. Youth and the formation of digital identity

Materials from journalist based in Caracas, Venezuela Mariana Souquette and a doctoral candidate at the School of Journalism and Communication, University of Oregon Hadil Abuhmaid show that the younger generation is a central participant in the processes of digital transformation. Latin American and Middle Eastern youth are not just consumers, they are active data creators and translators who transform social media into laboratories of identity and political participation [The UNESCO Courier, 2023 (B), The UNESCO Courier, 2023 (C)].

Nevertheless, the contradictions of the digital age are manifested in the youth environment:

- growing distrust of traditional media and the transition to network forms of communication;
- high sensitivity to fakes and misinformation in the absence of critical analysis skills;
- the risk of loss of cultural specificity in the conditions of algorithmic content unification.

These observations confirm that without the systematic development of media literacy and digital education, it is impossible to implement the principles of technological diversity and digital sovereignty. Only a

combination of local cultural practices and critical thinking can oppose the global homogenization of the information space.

8.The new ethics of the digital future

Digital decolonization is not the process of dismantling old structures, but the creation of new, fair relations between knowledge, culture and technology. Techno-diversity becomes an ethical category that expresses the right to the diversity of forms of knowledge and methods of communication. Media literacy is a tool that provides conscious participation in the digital community.

Together they form a new paradigm of digital humanism, in which technology serves not as a means of control, but as a means of cultural and epistemological equality.

As Fiormonte points out, the world is changing and those who used to be on the periphery become role models. This is the essence of digital decolonization: the restoration of peripheral sound and the recognition of the multiplicity of ways of knowledge and development.

9.Conclusion

UNESCO occupies an important place among international organizations that combine technological progress with humanistic principles. His activities in the field of communication and information are aimed at the formation of a knowledge society based on freedom of expression, equal access to information, cultural diversity and digital ethics.

An analysis of the Information for All Programme, Memory of the World Programme and some issues of the Courier UNESCO journal shows that the organization is forming a single model of digital humanism, where technology is perceived as a means of development, not control. In the context of growing digital inequality and the “empire of algorithms”, the ideas of technological diversity and media literacy are becoming strategic tools for digital decolonization and the maintenance of epistemological sovereignty.

UNESCO pays special attention to young people as active participants in digital transformation and carriers of new ethical criteria.

Thus, the new digital future ethics shaped by the organization is based on the interplay of knowledge, culture and technology and paves the way for a fair, inclusive and sustainable knowledge society.

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