

Abstract

In his dissertation thesis, the author elaborates on a new position from which both information society theory and digital divide research could be analyzed as active participants in a large-scale societal reconstruction. The text begins with the reconstruction of the argumentation core of information society theories, which is then utilized when choosing their latest, most respected, and most elaborated version. In the following chapter, the author presents the composition of Manuel Castells' information society theory and its tight relationship with the digital divide issue. In the final parts of this chapter, the author reveals the key position of the digital divide issue in solving the contradictions and negative aspects of informatization. The chapter is concluded by finding out the absence of the link between digital divide and information society theory in the preceding criticism of Castells' work. In the fourth part, the development, arguments, and empirical evidence of the digital divide research are presented, followed by identification of the limits of contemporary academic digital divide discourse. In the sixth chapter, the author tries to overcome these limits by proposing a new empirical evidence better fitting model of the digital divide. The thesis is concluded by thinking over the consequences of the proposed model for not only theory and politics of information society but also for prospective synthetic research in the role of information society in the informatization process.