THE DISCOURSE-ANALYSIS AND ITS ROLE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES

This article is devoted to the place and role of the category of discourse, as well as the method of discourse analysis in contemporary social and political research. The author focuses on the methodological reasons and intellectual origins of present-day theories of discourse. The article discusses the various options for the analysis of discourse, including an example of an explication of the political discourse in the ontology of Martin Heidegger undertaken by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. However, most attention is paid to post-structuralist analysis, in the form in which it is represented by the founders of the Essex School of discourse analysis Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

The term «discourse» came into circulation in social and political studies of not so long ago, but has already become quite popular. Discourse is a way of organization and constructing knowledge about some object or phenomenon, that is, a set of ideas, images and practices that defines even forms of knowledge, methods of discussion and behavior. In contrast to the semiotic analysis, discursive approach is interested not only in the question how representation can be implemented, but also what are the consequences of these implementations. It supposes the analysis of how the organization of knowledge and power relations in society are linked to each other, how this organization regulates the behavior, designs identity, and how it defines modes of representation and ways of investigation of phenomena and related practices. But the most important thing is that this approach allows us to dissect the underlying mechanisms and causes of violence and discriminatory practices.

In present days there are many approaches to the analysis of discourses, each of which is an inter- or transdisciplinary. Jorgensen and Phillips believe that the most productive among such approaches will be three of them: the theory of discourse Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, the critical discourse analysis and the discursive psychology. All three approaches are based on the principles of social constructivism,
which should be understood as a general scientific principle but not the theory. From the perspective of social constructivism an identity and a society can not be regarded as a priori values, because they are constructed in two ways: discursively and interactively. Thus, approaches that analyze discourses can be defined as a fundamentally anti-essentialist and antifundamentalist perspective in political studies.

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