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## THE INFLUENCE OF IDEOLOGY ON THE RESEARCH ABOUT THE CLASS STRUCTURES

**Abstract:** *Ideology is an important determinant of sociological research. The influence of ideology is particularly present in studies of class-layered structure of society. This effect can best be shown in the example of our sociologists. They were operating on the assumption that there was the possible development towards a classless communist society. In line with this assumption they were creating more or less developed theoretical and hypothetical frameworks for research on class-layered structure of society, with a high degree of caution given the strong presence of the ideological thinking. In the situation of the prevailing ideological opinions our social scientists had to develop a strategy to promote scientific thinking. Today, the sociology is also in the unenviable position. It is burdened by a neoliberal ideology that does not see the society as a separate entity. Social scientists are pushed into the background of the ideology of those who have a current social power in order to be realized.*

**Key words:** *science, ideology, social structure, social groups, social classes, social strata.*

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## Introductory considerations

Science is caused by a variety of social determinants that can accelerate or impede its development. One of the important determinants is certainly an ideology. It is manifested in the opposite of scientific results and ideological opinions during the long historical period. To explain this contradiction it is necessary to bear in mind that the interests of social groups are best expressed in their ideologies. In fact, their ideology is shown as a rationalization of their group interests. But if the ideology of certain social groups remains solely the interests of streamlining, it is unlikely to become the ruling consciousness. So there is a need for a higher degree of rationalization, or that special interest group shows as an interest of the society. That is the way the different interests are masked by rationalization. This rationalization of group interests is the ideology as false consciousness. Of course, the false consciousness is not false consciousness. Ideology is not a lie. Because the one who lies knows what the truth is, and the one who owns the ideological thought is not aware of deceiving themselves and others. Thus, in its development ideology is the first particular consciousness that rationalize the interests of particular social groups, and then it becomes totalitarian. There are a multitude of particular ideologies and one of them becomes a totalitarian. Totalitarian ideologies always show separate as a general. But it also tends to show the ideological consciousness as scientific. So there are often occurred fierce oppositions of scientific results and ideological opinions. The best example are the suffering of Giordano Bruno, Galileo and others. They shook the look at the world by their scientific contributions and inflicted a heavy blow to the ruling ideology. Their sufferings were confirmed to be valid in Lenin's saying: 'If geometrical axioms affected human interests, attempts would certainly be made to refute them.'<sup>99</sup> Of course, not all scientific problems are equally exposed to the influence of ideology. It can be assumed that the influence of ideology is strongly expressed in the study of class-layered structure.

In sociological discourse in particular there is examination of the influence of ideology on sociological research. For example, Merton focuses attention on the influence of liberalism and totalitarianism on scientific thinking. Mills has also made significant contributions in this field, noting that the empirical character of sociological research is subordinated to ideological concepts. Mills is particularly interested in various factors which determine the influence on sociology. He is interested, above all, in the influence of liberalism on sociology. For example, American sociologist Mills explains the influence of liberal ideology on a tendency that the research deals with the empirical detail. American social scientists start from the premise that behind every social

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<sup>99</sup> Lenin, V. I. U., *Selected Works*, Volume I, second book, Culture, Belgrade, 1948, page 69.

phenomenon is a large number of causes, which are each for himself, a little important. Therefore, it is a pluralistic theory of the cause. This comes in handy to the liberal police for the implementation of reforms through a series of incremental measures of limited scope. Thus, the idea that the causes of many social events are multiplied and each taken for themselves, a little important, fit the liberal pragmatism. 'Pluralist theory of causes is an important *ideological component* of American liberalism. Using this theory the reality is obscured and important causes of social phenomena are concealed. *The theory of pluralism* of causes is reducing the power of scientific thought so that it could discover more significant and deeper causes of social movements. Class ideological ingredients in this theory are very clearly demonstrated.'<sup>100</sup>

Similar concepts are found in other theorists too. For example, Karl Popper has developed the idea of changing social conditions which he called progressive technology, social engineering a step by step. So, it is started from the premise that only incremental change can lead to practical results. If they are in it and they accept some ideas regarding society as a whole, it does not mean that it can access the modification of the entire society. We can, for example, accept the idea of common good, but again the social changes are taking place only through small adjustments. Objectives to be achieved by this adjustment can be different, but still achieved step by step, through careful comparison of the expected results with those obtained in order to immediately notice the undesirable consequences of reforms undertaken. Therefore, Popper believes that they must avoid too extensive and complex reforms. With such reforms can be seen the causes and consequences in order to know what is really happening and to what such a reform actually leads. Of course, this does not exclude any major reforms. As an example, Popper says that successive changes of the class structure of society or a fairer distribution of income are lead by a series of measures. But these changes are constantly subjected to critical scrutiny and constant adaptations. That is the way the unintended consequences can be eliminated or reduced.<sup>101</sup>

Weber's commitment to value-neutral science can be interpreted primarily as an effort to ideologically neutral sociology. Alvin Güldner points out that the Weber developed its conception of sociology as a neutral science for practical reasons. In fact, Weber was also fighting for the autonomy of universities. He was burdened with the problem of free practicing sociology. It was necessary to remove harmful political interference. At the same time, it was a struggle against the university professors who have used political and ideological positions, and were winning students in that way.

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<sup>100</sup> Todorović, A., *Some problems of the sociology of knowledge*, Professional Associations of students in University of Niš, Niš, 1979. page 136.

<sup>101</sup> Look up: Ristić, L., *Methodological technicism of Karl Popper*, Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Banja Luka, Banja Luka, 2004.

## **Ideological and scientific thinking**

Every ideology consists of the certain courts of value, which are used to express the position of the subject towards social reality. Science also includes courts of judgments. For example, every assessment of scientific results is imposing the court of the values about those results. In fact, it is estimated if the result is true or false. According to that, the court gives value. However, the scientific and ideological values of the court are significantly different. This primarily refers to the social sciences. Natural sciences have acquired a certain ideological independence and emancipation. Social sciences are ideologically sensitive because they are facing social problems, which enable man to master social processes and patterns. 'In this very complex process is intertwined a number of factors, from the usual earnest desire of scientists to discover the scientific truth about social phenomena, through the action of class interests in the process of scientific research and the use of its results, to sensitive ideological and political views that scientists advocate or are required to observe.'<sup>102</sup>

To determine the concept of ideology we would have to find a feature which distinguishes ideological thinking specifically from unideological. Of course, these characteristics must be common to all ideological positions. In this sense, an important characteristic is the interested group that stands behind a certain position. Interested group conditions that the ideological attitudes are mainly courts of value. These views express lasting subjective response of a group on a social issue, phenomenon or event. Therefore, the response is not only current or uninterested but more durable and group interested. Response arises from the position of the group, its needs and aspirations, and this is a key reason that the ideological positions are believed to be true. In contrast to the ideology, science is not based on belief in the veracity of their testimony but on proving the truth. If statements are not proven they are only scientific hypothesis.

Our goal is not to explore various definitions of ideology. It seems to us that it is acceptable definition of the ideology the one that gave Mihajlo Popović. Sociologically speaking ideology is more or less *organized group or system of concerned opinions, attitudes and ideas that are undoubtedly believed to be true and which express the interests and aspirations of certain classes, strata, and sometimes much of society. The social function of ideology is mostly in ideological orientation and mobilization of a particular class or most of society to achieve certain class or, more broadly, social interests.*<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Popović, M., *Problems of social structure*, the Belgrade publishing and graphic Institute, Belgrade, 1974. page 279.

<sup>103</sup> *The same*, page 284.

Ideology appears in different forms and functions and most significant are like ‘false consciousness’, as a factor of social integration, as an instrument of political legitimacy. It is not based on reality, research and testing their results. Of course, scientific knowledge can often be used by ideology as a cover for its accuracy. Problems arise when it comes to ideological processing of scientific achievements, or when the ideological value judgments are presented as scientific. So, there is a problem of ideological instrumentalization of science. It is a condition in which " scientific research procedures are not prohibited, but they are less important than what they are ideologically specified. Ideology of science is such big that even a struggle for its de-ideologisation must resort to ideological arguments. Ideological struggle for science and about science are becoming more important than science itself. Whether bourgeois or proletarian science, liberal or socialist, national or uninternational etc., Those are typical counter-ideological indicators used to mark the extent of its validity. Ideology is a major structural principle and a social science is minor, subordinated institutional apparatus of this construction, second class opinion or ‘squared ideology.’<sup>104</sup>

In the process of scientific research there are difficulties to free scientists of ideological positions. In sociological research, ideological positions occur in three ways:<sup>105</sup>

- (a) as part of its own scientific assumptions and views, where sociologist between them often makes no distinction;
- (b) as a political or other ideological point of his ideological opponents, which sociologist does not accept and that is why he criticize it;
- (c) as a subject of sociological research, for example, political opinions in public opinion polls, or value judgments in sociology of religion, art, morality and so on.

In sociological research problems are created by the ideological stances that occur in the first two ways. The first method creates immense problems, because it is an integral part of the ‘scientific foundation’, so the ideological positions are presented as a scientific attitude, as a theoretical starting point for empirical research.

### **Ideology and the concept of class relations**

Society is inhomogeneous and differentiated whole, which is structured as such by the various constituent elements and the complex relationships through which these parts are integrated in society as a whole. The basis of the structure

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<sup>104</sup> Kalanj, R., *Sociology and Ideology*, Social Ecology, Zagreb, 2009., No. 3-4. page 243.

<sup>105</sup> Popović, M., *Theory and experiment. Sociological research of classes and strata*, The Institute for Social Research of Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Belgrade, 1994, page 66-67.

of society is the social division of labor. The basic unit of social division of labor is a social role, and it is the key to understanding the position in the social structure. Therefore, the social division of labor is the basis of social stratification. The main analytical category for understanding the vertical dimension of the society is social position. A number of people with similar social positions indicates the existence of certain forms of social stratification (layers, castes, classes, estates). Forms of social stratification are more or less homogeneous. But never so homogeneous that the exploration of the differences in their box is not meaningful.

So, there are various forms of social stratification. For our discussion it is important to define the distinction between concept of social layer and the concept of social class. We accept definition of social class by Milić, since it contains three essential elements which are important for our considerations. 'Under the social layer means real social form, not abstract-analytical design or statistics group action plan. Often the various creations of this last type are called layers. As a real social form, each social class has three characteristics: (1) it is composed of persons of similar social status, and sometimes as a layer has a specific function in the social division of labor; (2) layer is a social framework in which the predominant part of social relations of the people who do not derive directly from the position in the social division of labor and are not regulated by the basic social organization happens. ... (3) The third feature of social class is similar way of life and likeness in a series of cultural characteristics, ranging from the level of education, language specifications and taste to the most basic ethical and cultural values and ideals.'<sup>106</sup>

However, among sociologists, there are inconsistencies in terminology. Thus, for example, there is the widespread opinion that the word 'layer' means the part of social class. However, most sociologists differ terms 'class' and 'layer' and 'class division' and 'social stratification'. To understand these differences it is important to bear in mind that classes are large social groups whose social status depends primarily on the relationship to the means of production, while the layers are 'large groups whose social status is based mostly on location in the social division of labor, the professional role. But in both cases classes and layers differ according to unequal participation in the distribution of economic power.'<sup>107</sup>

Class is socially organized form of social stratification. Certain social layers can, in certain circumstances turn into a class. An important condition for this change is the possibility of creation and expansion of class ideology. It is also important and the possibility of class political organization. Thus, this is

<sup>106</sup> Milić, V., *Social structure and mobility of Yugoslavia*, Faculty of Philosophy, Novi Sad, 1966, page 38-39.

<sup>107</sup> Popović, M., *Theory and experiment. Sociological research of classes and strata*, The Institute for Social Research of Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Belgrade, 1994, page 95.

about the factors which may reflect the process of scientific research class-layered structure of society. They are as well subject to scientific research, as impact factor of scientific research.

Influence of ideology on class-layered structure research can be best shown in the example of our so-called Marxist sociologists. They proceeded from Marx's ideas that the social classes are conflicted, antagonistic social groups. With this Marx's thesis needed to be harmonized with the ideological view that with the abolition of private property disappears social source of class antagonism. That is the reason why the ideological construction of 'antagonistic' and 'unantagonistic' class was created. Here, we are talking about the simplified relation between the classes. This relationship can not be reduced to the question whether the antagonism or the non-government. For example, with respect to this view it is inconceivable to talk about the conditional mutual existence between owners and workers. Interdependence provides a minimum of common interest. This mutuality of interests could clearly be observed in early capitalism, and it is also present in contemporary capitalism. If this relationship would be emphasized, and other relationships singled, we would get an ideological concept which is completely contrary to the previous one. So when it comes to researching a class-layered structure, there are opposing ideas about class relations. If they are used as a theoretical starting points in the empirical research, results are always problematic and ideologically colored. Of course, such researches are mainly promoted for political purposes. In particular, when investigating the 'antagonistic' class, the opportunity to explore what binds the classes is ideologically covered up, and when 'unantagonistic' classes are being investigated, what makes the opposing classes is being covered up. Thus, in both cases, the ideological motive is acting with hiding the actual social relations between classes, as well as other social groups within the class-layered structure of society.

In this situation, sociologists have created different hypotheses about the class-layered structure of existing society. They were starting from the assumption that there is possible development towards a classless communist society, and in accordance with this assumption they were creating the hypothesis about the class-layered structure of the transitional period. Hypotheses have been aligned with the ruling ideology. Pečujlić argued that the transition to a classless society takes place in two phases (first form a bureaucratic type of social grouping on the basis of state ownership, and then it is switched to the socio-professional grouping). Zoran Vidaković tells about the gradual loss of the elements of a class division of labor and in that process emphasizes the need to combat uncontrolled regeneration of the class division of labor. This 'chaotic' dismisses the activity of 'subjective' factors. Mihajlo Popović starts from the distribution of social, economic and political power. Therefore, this issue is dealt with from the standpoint of who and how has this

power. Changes are occurring so that the class-domination property passes to layer-political dominance. All have in common that through the development of socialist self-management will be moving towards abolition of every class and apparent domination. There was talk of building a socialist society in which there are only a layer and not the class antagonisms. So it all comes down to explaining the hypothesis of a transitional period towards a classless society.

### **Ideological biases and scientific assumptions**

In our social circumstances, ideology has made a real confusion in the study of class-layered structure of society. It was attended by certain scientific assumptions, but there was always a danger that the scientific assumption could be replaced by ideological prejudice. We pointed out the example that many of our sociologists proceeded from the assumption that socialism is a transitional period from capitalism to communist society, that would be classless. The question is: Were these sociologists proceeded from ideological prejudices or scientific assumptions? The statement that socialism is a transitional period from capitalism to a classless communist society can be a scientific hypothesis, but also an ideological bias.

If there is the ideological bias, then the reality is shown literally in accordance with a prejudice, no matter what. It is 'known' in advance that the social changes are taking place in the direction of the disappearance of social classes and the formation of layers that are not classes. But, the existence of the working class is admitted. The existence of this class was obvious. The working class is presented as a dominant class, but it is not clear in what sense is dominant. In addition, there is a logical paradox, because grading can be done only if there are differences between the classes. Later is introduced the category of *working people*, which in analytical terms means nothing. Thus, the expression of *working people and citizens* represented the plainest rhetorical phrase.

Therefore, it is reasonable to question whether the starting point was scientific assumptions or ideological dogma. To answer the question you should look the way so you will first examine the presence of ideological dogma that is spelled out as such. This dogma is about the 'historical inevitability' of creating a society without classes, without exploitation, without any social dominance. It seems to us that we could be able to hypothesize that our social scientists created a more or less developed theoretical and hypothetical framework for research on class-layered structure, with a high degree of caution given the strong presence of ideological thinking. It was like it was developing a strategy that in the situation of prevailing ideological opinions promoted scientific thinking in the clothes of ideological thinking. However, not all have been skilled in that.



In any case, sociological thinking was intertwined with the ideological thinking. This means that sociologists are always in a position to solve the problem of how to think scientifically under the weight of ideological thinking. In addition, the influence of ideology is reflected in the quality of sociological scientific potential. Mihailo Popović believes that ‘there are plenty of grounds to claim that the premise of Marxist sociologists about the possibility of building a socialist society had some factual basis, that it was not clear ideological bias. Major changes in economic and political relations in contemporary capitalism, such as the nationalization of large enterprises and entire industries, the adoption of labor legislation, the establishment of the so-called. Welfare state tell very convincingly that there was a significant socialization of capitalist social relations. If Marx's prediction that the proletarian revolution will break out first in the developed capitalist countries didn't happen, there have been some *important socialist modifications* of capitalist social relations, which show clearly that the socialist ideas of social equality and justice are not only utopian but also some real opportunity, a real social tendencies, whose realization depends on a number of favorable conditions and circumstances in the development of a country. On the other hand, the socialist revolution in Russia and later in Yugoslavia, China and some other countries have pursued the same tendency of socialist modification of social relations in these countries, of course in a different way and essentially in different methods, which are characteristic for the construction and operation of totalitarian social systems.’<sup>108</sup>

In direct response to the question whether our social scientists were talking about the scientific hypothesis or ideological bias, Popović said: ‘If the Marxist sociologists used scientific analysis of existing, actual social relations and realistically possible tendencies of social development, if they were sufficiently critical in the review, and in predicting the possible development, if for them wasn't crucial what ruling politicians and ideologues claimed and has been ‘outlined’ in party documents, then their sociological assumptions about the transformation of the class-layer structure of a socialist society were the *scientific* assumptions rather than *pure ideological* preconceptions.’<sup>109</sup>

Scientist differs from ideologist because he predicts for what is realistically possible based on the tendency of social development, and ideologist unreservedly believes that it must happen. The scientist uses a critical scientific arguments, present evidence for and against, and ideologist does not bother with this and simply states that it should and has to happen because of human ideals. Of course, the ideologist is then in conflict with other ideologist who has different ideals and they are mostly both in conflict with the scientist. In a pure

<sup>108</sup> Popović, M., *Theory and experiment. Sociological research of classes and strata*, The Institute for Social Research of Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Belgrade, 1994, page 74-75.

<sup>109</sup> *The same*, page 75.

form among themselves the scientists can not be in conflict, they can only give various arguments, the ways of scientific thinking and other. However, when the combination of scientific and ideological opinion shows up, conflicts are inevitable.

Of course, without research it is not possible to determine how much at our social scientists was present scientific awareness, and to what extent ideological. This should be the subject of special investigations. But, when it comes to researching a class-layered structure of society some typical examples of the influence of ideology can be identified. An example will show Zoran Vidaković. He begins by asserting that there was a dual nature of 'state socialism'. He then combines his scientific views with the views of the ruling ideology. It is an ideological position, formally, in the first place. Scientific attitude that follows essentially negates the previous ideological stance as well as a starting point that it is a dual nature of 'state socialism'. In fact, Vidaković says that 'on one side of the revolutionary concentration of social power in order to meet the immediate interests of the working masses and the acceleration of the material and social foundations of the developed socialism ....'. Then, in the same sentence continues that 'on the other side of the formation of the socio-economic relations analogous to the capital and wage labor, and tracking the relevant trends in social stratification and clustering, in the political and ideological processes.'<sup>110</sup> The first paragraph is clearly ideological. Ideological is also a starting point that there is a dual nature of economic and political system. Such an attitude can only serve as an ideological tool to justify the current situation, with the alterations that do not change its essence. However, here is evident the scientific contribution because in that dual nature is present one side which is related to a critical view of reality.

The exposed attitudes are the methodological starting point for further analysis. From previous premise followed the conclusion that 'dual nature of economic and political system conditions and double character of all social institutions and political organizations, deeply contradictory position of all social groups and divergent trends in all social processes and relations.'<sup>111</sup>

So, when talking about class-layered structure, there are always two sides. For example, for the working class, on the one hand, it is said: 'social group to which the development and progress is directed the revolutionary government, is increasing sharply and in the course of industrialization becoming the creator of the predominant part of the social product; it is confirmed as the main social base of revolutionary power of whose general political support depends the survival of economical and political system,

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<sup>110</sup> Vidaković, Z., *One step back, two steps forward*, A Communist, Belgrade, 1971, page 19.

<sup>111</sup> *The same*.

protection of the immediate interests of workers makes permanent and irreparable functions in the political structure of concentrated social power ...'. On the other hand, that from the standpoint of 'antagonistic elements' in the same social structure, the working class is said to be 'in relation to the state monopoly and its functions of transformed capital gets characteristics of wage workers, subject to the domination in relations of production, in latent or open conflict with officials of monopoly ownership, deprived of power in the economic structure, and therefore suppressed, and in the political sphere, dismissed from the direct exercise of power and sent to fulfill their interests in the newly independent through the political hierarchy; exposed to the tendency of political and ideological hegemony of the intermediary that directly carry out economic and political power.'<sup>112</sup>

This scheme also applies to the other parts of the social structure. For better understanding, we offer the entire text relating to the social class control.

*'A layer of control, professional political and economic officials: on one side - part of the society over which the given historical situation have achieved the immediate interests and the revolutionary goals of the working class; political and ideological leadership, business and professional leadership, without which the working class can not ensure the supremacy of the society or to create conditions for their full release; trustees of more and more developed working class, social status and power that depends on the general political support for the workers; without a permanent and reliable politically and legally defined and ideologically justifiable socio-economic base of their own social power (private property); Addressed to the fact that its mandate should endorse the interests of the working class and the working masses; and on the other side – executive of functions of state ownership of monopolies, holder of the economic and political power alienated from work and opposed the workers; seeks for the place where social position and power in objectively possible borders are as fully as they can be independent and reproduced out of control of the working masses; establishes specific interests, especially political behavior particular ideology and the partial reliance on the relevant attributes of the working class and the ingredients that differ from those attributes; with all particular group characteristics interpolates in the process of realizing the interests of the working class and modifies the ways and it can also divert the direction in which these interests are achieved; aims to strengthen political and ideological hegemony over the working class, because it is a requirement for the effective exercise of his deep ruptured social role, and for enduring reproduction of his special social status.'*<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *The same*, page 20.

<sup>113</sup> *The same*, page 20-21.

## **Instead of conclusion**

From these examples it can be assumed that there was a strong ideological influence on sociologists and the threat of repression, and that it was consciously combined ideological and scientific thinking, in order to remain secure existence in the scientific community and scientific work. In the first period after the Second World War were the most unfavorable ideological conditions for the development of sociological thought, so it has not being developed. During this period, sociology was ideologically rejected as 'bourgeois science'. When they loosened the ideological discipline the development of sociology began with the problem of the lack of scientific personnel. Then there were conditions to infiltrate personnel unfit for sociological thinking in a sociological frame at the very beginning, but very suitable for the ideological opinion. Later it was shown that this problem is not easily eradicated.

So when it comes to sociology we have to bear in mind that its scientific potential is loaded with the personnel who are unable to see a difference between scientific and ideological attitudes. Because of that there are often conflicts among sociologists. For example, we are well-known with ideological conflicts that began in 1968. year. These conflicts have reached such proportions that they shifted focus from scientific work on the peripheral political issues. However, without a fundamental understanding of social phenomena and processes in contemporary society the development is not possible.

Today, the sociology is also in a precarious position. It is burdened by a neoliberal ideology that does not see the society as a separate entity. Social scientists are pushed into the background so that the ideology of those who have a current social power could be realized. The consequence is a strengthening process of atomization of sociology, which means developing of a sociology without society.

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