

Cherniak K. Analysis of the value system in the context of the influence of the ideology of neoliberalism: theoretical conceptualisation

Although neoliberalism is one of the most discussed phenomena in social and political sciences which influence has been emphasized both by apologetics and critics, it has still lacked broad theoretical background and empirical data. Particularly, consequences regarding neoliberalism and its influence on public consciousness (and value system as its part) mostly are based on secondary data analysis. Moreover, neoliberalism itself usually is considered as a monolithic phenomenon nevertheless it is consisted of different, sometimes even opposite, ideas and concepts, which can be divided in at least three different forms – ideology, economic and political doctrine. Hence, there is a problem of the absence of sociological knowledge about the character of the influence of the ideology of neoliberalism on the social value system and the absence of the investigatory sociological framework for the studying of the influence and the understanding of neoliberalism in its different forms.

Regarding that among all the forms of neoliberalism exactly the ideology can have a direct influence on the public consciousness there was decided to start the creation of the sociological framework from the creation of the framework that allows to investigate the value system in the context of the influence of the ideology of neoliberalism.

In the study the ideology of neoliberalism is defined as one of the sects of the ideology of liberalism that appeared in 1970s and defends supreme market freedom, a limitation of government activities to the guarding of borders and the control of implementation of legislation, and encourages the concentration of the thought of an individual on themselves, their achievements and their satisfaction.

To form the sociological framework of the studying of the value system in the context of the influence of the ideology of neoliberalism it has been chosen to create a separate model of a value system that is consisted of certain value orientations. The model is based on the several cross-cultural studies, on the one hand, and on the characteristics of the ideology of neoliberalism, on the other. Particularly, there was made a list of neoliberal values and models of behavior that was then divided into a few thematic categories.

These categories were compared to the existed models of value systems in cross-cultural researches. As a result the several value orientation that can describe the value system under the influence of the ideology of neoliberalism were chosen.

Thus, based on the specific characteristics of neoliberalism emphasized in studies of theory and history of neoliberalism, on the one hand, and on the different theories and methods of cross-cultural researches, on the other, the ideology of neoliberalism was separated as a specific phenomenon and the special model of value orientations that allows to analyze the value system in the context of the ideology of neoliberalism was created. The model consists of six value orientations: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, long-term orientation versus short-term orientation, independence versus dependence from the government and material orientation versus orientation to non-material. The model can be used to compare one society in different periods of time as well as several different societies in one period of time to define the cultures that are more or less oriented to neoliberal values.

This study has become the first step of the creation of the specific sociological framework for the investigation of the influence and the understanding of neoliberalism in its different forms. In the long-term perspective it offers wide challenges to more detailed and theoretically grounded investigation and understanding of neoliberalism as a complex phenomenon. In terms of more substantial abilities of the analysis, the model that was created allows to conduct a research of a state and changes of the value system in the context of the ideology of neoliberalism both in a one society and in a variety of societies with different social and historical background.

Key words: neoliberalism, ideology, value system, cross-cultural studies.