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A PROJECT FOR THE STUDY OF COMMON-SENSE
IDEOLOGIES OF CULTURE

The paper is based on the concept of social character of the constructs of common-sense knowledge put forward by P. Berger and T. Luckmann (1983), P. Berger (1973), and P. Berger and M. Kellner (1977). The conception of ideology derives mainly from works by K. Mannheim (1936), J. Habermas (1978), and A. Touraine (1977). The proposition to treat culture as ideology comes from P. Gaudibert (1971). Ideas concerning the research methods are my own though they have been inspired by a number of authors, especially by A. Touraine's "methode de l'intervention sociologique" and by certain ideas of ethnomethodologists like W. W. Sharrock, R. J. Anderson (1980) and P. Eglin (1980).

Common-sense knowledge as ideology

In taking action in the world individuals and groups impose on it their own meanings and form their own orientation systems which allow them for evaluation, choice and definition of aims, as well as for the determination of methods of action. In other words individuals act according to their common-sense knowledge of reality. Common-sense knowledge contains "implicite" two premises, which are false in the field of theory, yet accepted as self-evident in common-sense knowledge.

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Common-sense knowledge (1) taken for granted its own intersubjectivity and (2) derives from (1) a conclusion of the objective character of common-sense views on reality.

"Implicite"-adoption of these principles often leads to "explicitly" expressed opinions of falsity of all, other than own, modes of world perception. Such a position generates ideology, since I denote by this term all one-sided views on reality.

Ideology is thus any definition of reality from the viewpoint of one of the social actors (individuals or groups).

Ideology, interaction and sociology

The sharing of a world-view is a necessary condition of efficient interaction. The common world-view is never given or ready-made but, on the contrary, it is being continuously "worked out" in the process of interaction.

Interaction is a process which constructs, maintains and modifies a consistent reality that can be meaningfully experienced by individuals. P. B e r g e r and H. K e l l n e r (1977) define interaction as "nomosbuilding processes" or simply "nomic processes".

Let me stress once more that I have adopted here the concept of a dynamic, and not static, character of the knowledge of reality. What is perceived as given reality (data) must be recognized as being the result of a social action, of decisions or transactions, of dominations or conflicts i.e. as such or other forms of social interaction.

The sociological analysis must accept and apply the above concepts. A description of society from any other than interactional standpoints is ideological and not scientific since the investigator employs in it a one-sided point of view. It is most often his own construct of reality taken as self-evident or, as in the so-called "verstehende Soziologie", a point of view of an actor of social action. In the latter case the investigator's own ideology is replaced by some one else's.

According to A. Touraine, whose views I accept without reservations, the central principle of sociological analysis is that

"the meaning of conduct must be explained not by the consciousness of the actor or by situation in which he is placed, but the social interactions in which he is involved. Sociology and analysis of social interaction are synonymous terms" (T o u r a i n e, 1977, p. 7).

We should observe that ideology may perform two contradictory functions: it may enable and preclude interaction. It enables interaction (and guarantees its undisturbed course) when it is shared by the actors. On the other hand it precludes or curtails interaction whenever it makes it impossible to share the mode of perception of a partner.

In order to assure the undisturbed course of interaction most actors try to impose their viewpoint (ideology) on others. In such instances ideology conceals its ideological character by referring to "objective truth" and obviousness, or to norms and "status quo". Thereby it masks real social relations.

According to A. Touraine real relations get revealed through conflict. In a situation where an open i.e. institutionalized conflict does not occur in the social movement sociological investigation becomes more difficult but it is still possible. In any case, in order not to become an ideologist a researcher must maintain a distance to ideologies involved in the interaction; he must remain independent. "In order to achieve this independence without which his work is impossible, he must throw all his weight into the task of reestablishing the nature of the social relations thus concealed in order to let those speak that have no voice, in order to break the power of ideological discourse and the false evidence in the categories of social practice" (T o u r a i n e, 1977, p. 10).

The imperative: "to let those speak that have no voice" serves as a motto for investigations undertaken in this paper.

The conception of research

Ideology is a holistic vision of the world. For practical reasons, it is justifiable to extract from it certain fragments of reality and speak of family ideology, ideology of illness, work,

healthy food etc. In the present project we shall concentrate on the ideology of culture.

The word "culture" is used here in its standard meaning in the Polish language. In colloquial Polish "culture" is a common name denoting literature, poetry, art, music, theatre and film. Such is also its meaning in the present study.

The problem of democratization of culture is an important social issue and thereby an object of sociological analysis. Let me account briefly for the importance of the problem. Firstly, in the face of the loss of political sovereignty literature together with art, religion and historical consciousness constituted factors maintaining Polish national identity. They are still regarded to be factors of national integrity. Secondly, it is accepted that culture constitutes a value in itself and that contacts with it result in the formation and the development of personality. Hence, in our society of "planned socialism" realization of the postulate of social equality consists in securing equal access to books, theatres etc., while any inequality in access to cultural values is treated as an index of social stratification on equal terms with income, occupation, education etc. Thirdly, it is accepted that through literature, film, theater etc. culture develops understanding of one's own situation and supplies means for verbalization of one's interests. For these and other reasons attempts are made in Poland to democratize the access to culture. These attempts have had some effect but not enough to satisfy expectations. This is why I am putting forward a hypothesis that one of the factors these effects is the discrepancy between the official ideology of culture and ideologies of common people.

In other words, various social groups develop in their own ways their national identity, perfect their own personalities, and use different means and spheres for expansion.

The aim of the present paper is to work out proper research methods for a study of these common-sense ideologies.

Methods of research

I am proposing a basic assumption that ideology exists through interaction, reveals itself in interaction, and that it can be studied only through interaction.

As a consequence of this assumption research should be conducted in the form of interaction (conversation) with a group of several persons. Since we have assumed that ideology reveals itself through conflict the researcher should be aggressive, only as much, however, as to be able to maintain contact with his interlocutors. "Aggression" means here nothing more than a presentation of his point. The researcher presents his own views ("own" for we assume that he knows them best) in such a way as to provoke the participants. Another suggested technique is to precede the research session with a test of cultural incompetence of studied persons. A subsequent group discussion should be an occasion for presenting "excuses". Another requirement of the proposed technique is that results should take their final shape in the course of research. Re-working of the results "at home" is not permitted. The researcher should put down and discuss with his group the form of a report and register all points of agreement and dissent.

A comparison of the proposed technique
with the technique of interview

Traditional technique (interview)	Proposed technique
1. Conversation with all persons, in turns.	1. Conversation with a group.
2. Respondents speak of some "other" than actual reality, i.e. of their views.	2. Research itself creates a situation which is the object of study (here and now). Respondents do not talk of their views. They actually present them.
3. Researcher tries not to reveal his attitudes.	3. Researcher provokingly demasks his attitudes.
4. Results are edited by "coders".	4. Results are recorded on the spot as a result of "part-

nership" collaboration between researcher and his group. It helps to avoid coding inadequacies.

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PROJEKT BADAŃ NAD POTOCZNYMI IDEOLOGIAMI KULTURY

Artykuł prezentuje zasady wyznaczające sposób prowadzenia wywiadu, który umożliwić ma rekonstrukcję potocznych ideologii kultury. Środkiem umożliwiającym osiągnięcie tego celu jest wywołanie dyskusji w grupie osób badanych, którym przedstawiono instytucjonalną wersję ideologii kultury pozostającą w sprzeczności z ich przekonaniami.