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Методологія соціологічних досліджень

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Class Dimension of Social Inequality

In this article we look at some of the most influential theories of class, which try to explain class inequality in west and east European societies.

Social stratification is considered as a system of social inequality, social differentiation, based on differences in the occupied position and functions performed. Social inequality is the basis of stratification of society and is perceived as its main feature. The theory of social stratification reveals the essence of social inequality in such factors as social status, social role and prestige of functionally describing the social structure.

Key word: social inequality, social stratification, social class, social status**,** class scheme, class society**.**

Formulation of Research Problem and Significance of it. Modern societies are unequal and class is one of the most influential explaining variables of inequality.

Any society is characterized by unequal distribution of material and symbolic benefits, rewards and opportunities in respect of individuals and social groups. Social inequality is caused by unequal distribution of abilities and power (economic, political, administrative and spiritual) in the social structure of society. Social position in the context of social inequality is hierarchically arranged and described by their relationship to other positions in terms of location and direction of social distance. In the most general form of inequality means that people living in conditions where they have unequal access to scarce resources, material and spiritual consumption[1].

Analysis of Recent Research on this Issue. This paragraph should be started with the fact that in sociology two traditions of explaining the social class structure of society coexist:

1) Marxist, which was originated in the writings of K. Marx and neo-Marxist, which was continued in the works of E. O. Wright;

2) Weberian (M. Weber) and neo-Weberian, the brightest representative of which is J. Goldtorp. Although he denies his belonging to neo-Weberians we can still identify him with this direction.

Both Weberian and Marxist tradition interpret classes as a set of structural positions that are opposed to classes as collective social actors. K. Marx denoted a class a set of specific structural positions by term «class in itself», opposing it to «class for itself». In his turn, M. Weber usually called the structural position of representatives of a certain class by the term «class situation» or «economic class».

These approaches to class analysis by K. Marx and M. Weber have several common features. Both authors considered socio-economic relations as a base for classes, emphasized the impact of these relationships on the material interests of actors and actually viewed the class relations as a possible base for solidarity and conflict. The differences between the two approaches are reflected in their central ideas – the concept of exploitation by K. Marx and the idea of life chances and social action by M. Weber.

[1] Institutionalized inequality or in the terminology of P. Shtompka, the emergence of a strong hierarchy of privilege and deprivation on access to desired goods and values is a consolidation of unequal starting positions for the new generation, transmission has already achieved wealth and high social status of children and, conversely, the deprivation of «losers» and their descendants on important economic, political and cultural resources of society, which blocks them from ascending mobility.

In general, in the works of many sociologists «the concept of class is open for multiple interpretations – as a status group, as a professional group, as a group by income and group of authority», i.e. the notion of social class covers heterogeneous social objects depending on the theoretical context which is invested in this term by different authors [14, 42].

We believe it is appropriate to appeal to the notion of «social class» that was offered by M. Weber. Thus, the researcher claims social class to be:

1) some set of people who are united by a specific causal component that affects life chances;

2) this component is represented exclusively by economic interests only in purchasing goods or gaining profit;

3) this component is due to the current situation in the market of goods or the labor market [8, 172].

These points, as M. Weber continues, refer to «class situation», which can be expressed as typical chances to obtain additional product, external life conditions and personal life experience. Because theses chances are determined by the amount and type of authority in disposing goods or skills. The term «social class» refers to any group that emerged in this class situation.

It is worth noting that western concepts of social stratification, including M. Weber's multidimensional approach acquire high prestige. Thus, in specific studies of Soviet and post-Soviet social structures sociologists base themselves on famous Weberian stratification triad (property, prestige, authority) in order to understand how different elements correlate in both of these structures (in particular, such analysis can be traced in the writings of T. Zaslavskaya, R. Ryvkina, V. Radayev, O. Shkaratan, O. Kutsenko, O. Yacouba, S. Makeiev, E. Starikov, V. Ilyin, S. Balabanova, N. Tikhonova and other researchers).

Stratification Triad (Economic Situation, Socio-professional Status and Administrative and Managerial Positions) Forms Theoretico-Methodological Framework of This Study. When distinguishing social classes, we will follow exactly this approach – multidimensional stratification using a specific set of criteria that reflect the position of an individual or a household in different social fields.

So, we'll start with a description of multidimensional stratification criteria, described by M. Weber [8, 180].

The first factor – a class – according to M. Weber is, in fact, a common economic position that provides a basis for joint actions.

The second factor that determines the position in society is a status. «The status situation» in the terminology of M. Weber – is any typical component of a people's life destiny which is determined by their positive or negative social evaluation. The basis of status groups is prestige, and differences in status lead to differences in life styles, behavioral patterns, skills etc.

The third factor – parties is an association by beliefs and goals. Parties are related to the acquisition of social authority, collective actions and achieving certain goals. Party always requires the unity of ideology as it is connected with common achieving of goals.

At the modern stage of class analysis, class is defined, rather, by the criteria of market and labor situations (if you use the terminology of J. Goldtorp). Market situation refers to material rewards and life chances (such as paying additional benefits, insurance and other material goods by an employer), security and opportunities for career promotion. The labor situation is related to the nature of solving labor problems, production technology and structure of social relations in the control system of the firm. Considerable attention is paid to the process that is outlined by structuralization in which classes may transform from economic categories into socially significant groups [12].

Thus, in his discussions about the class E. Gidens pointed meant as a key term of «market» which he considered to be not only the system of economic relations, a field of activity in class of owners, the working class, middle class, but also the foundation of government. For E. Gidens notion of stratification is general, while the term «class» is a partial manifestation of stratification. Generalizing the usage of the term «class» in practice of modern sociological and socio-antoropological studies, E. Gidens ranks different classes (top, middle, lower class). In fact these ranked classes are represented, according to him, by certain social groups [3, 205–241]. As in the process of analysis we use the notion of «class» and «strata», it is appropriate to separate these categories in order to avoid substitution of these concepts. Thus, by the term «strata» sociologists define social differentiation within the hierarchically organized society. Often the content of this concept is no different from content that is attached to the concept of «class». In those cases where these concepts are distinguished, the term «strata» is used to denote the groups within a «class», allocated on the same grounds as «classes». Strata includes the set of people with some common sign of status of their position in society, feeling connected to each other by this community.

Alternative concepts of class structure. Variety of criteria and indicators gradually leads to a convergence of original theoretical foundations for the allocation of the social class, and as N. Tikhonova notes, more authoritative role is played by authority and qualification resources, which are determined taking into account their various combinations of specific positions of an individual in the system of industrial relations [15, 40].

In theory of capital by P. Bourdieu, the system of stratification is directly associated with the presence and amount of capital of various kinds. Thus, P. Bourdieu interprets capital, following the logic of K. Marx, as accumulated labor (in its materialized or incorporated form in the individual). P. Bourdieu uses the concept of total capital as a collection of resources and pays attention to the fact that the distribution of total amount of capital between its main types, determines the distribution of a class into subclasses [1, 31–32].

Thus P. Bourdieu singles out three main types of capital – economic, cultural and social (in the future work of researchers additional types of capital appear – imperious and symbolic).

Multidimensional space is provided by the presence of different types of capital, and opportunities for participation in various practices and fullness of appropriate competence is historically defined [1, 13, 32]. According to P. Bourdieu, positions in sphere capital always correspond to specific installations and dispositions as well as dominant practices (lifestyle), there are three elements (according P. Bourdieu), which determine the topology of social space: the positions (location in space); dispositions (habitus), practices (selection, implemented on the basis of taste). That correspondence which is empirically determined and interpreted by the whole set of historical, political and cultural circumstances of a particular country, lets us talk about social classes as a category [1, 37].

Therefore, from a sociological point of view class is not only class position, disposition and practice, but also realized and not deniable by individuals consolidation with this complex and all following from it consequences for their social well-being. M. Castells, for example, defines the relation to the production of knowledge and resources based on its concept of social stratification [11, 499]. In the information era, the era of the dominance of information technology in all spheres of life, according to M. Castells, the new dominant professional structure is being formed. It is comprised of three sectors: production of values, production of relations and production of decisions. Each of the productions functionally heterogeneous positions is analytically distinguished. In the production of values there are strategists, researchers, integrators, operators, maintenance personnel. In the production of relations – producers of networks, position of the network users, disconnection from the network. In production of solutions – the position, participants and performers of decision making.

Goals and Objectives. The purpose of this paper is the study of social inequality measurement in NEE and EU societies. The main dimensions of social inequality are economic status, education and professional status and political status. Based on measured data we build a comparison between the generalizations described above countries. Thus, the analysis included NEE societies, such as Romania, Russia Federation, Slovenia, Ukraine, and, for comparison, the countries of EU (Poland, when it comes to quality of life analysis also included Germany).

The Main Material and Perspectives for Further Research. The concept of «economy class» includes the following principal elements: market position, employment position and material position. So, *Market positions* of social groups include *ownership the (economic situation), management and socio-professional position.* Items of property is characterized by the volume and nature of the resources on which group presents their rights.

Social and professional positions include a set of standard indicators, the level and quality of education, professional qualifications, job status and forms of employment in the labor market.

Managerial positions are the kind of intermediate link between ownership and socio-professional positions, as they related to both characteristics as an official position, and with the ability to dispose of one or other capacity resources.

Thus,

1. The Economic SItuation. The main feature and acute problem of contemporary post-Soviet economy is a significant amount of shadow segment, which includes shadow wages, hiding transactions from taxation. In this regard we should pay attention to the fact that official statistics on wages, various social transfers do not reflect the real picture of income differentiation. With the middlebrow GDP and low income per capita, the large polarization of incomes proceeds. Shadow revenues not only impose its imprint on the dynamics of

income, but there is also a factor of deep inequality of their distribution between different segments of the population growth of social contradictions. For comparison, consider the situation in the dynamics of the GDP with other countries of East-Central and Western Europe.

Tabl 1

GDP index

Country	GDP (in billions)		GDP growth		GDP per capita	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Russian Federation	1,221,991	1,479,819	-7,8	4,0	8,615	10,440
Ukraine	117,227	137,929	-14,8	4,2	2,545	3,007
Poland	430,645	468,585	1,7	3,8	11,288	12,271
Bulgaria	48,568	47,714	-5,5	0,2	6,403	6,325
Romania	161,110	161,623	-8,5	0,9	7,500	7,538
Slovenia	49,158	47,762	-7,8	1,2	24,101	23,267
Armenia	8,541	3,309,668	-14,3	1,0	2,769	2,996
Georgia	10,766	9,264	-3,8	6,4	2,241	2,620
Germany	3,330,031	3,309,668	-4,7	3,6	40,659	40,590

Source: http: //data.worldbank.org/indicators

Western Europe is a kind of standard, so for comparison chose Germany, which traditionally is considered a country with a high quality of life and is characterized by not too sharp income differentiation. As we can see from the table, the highest GDP per capita is typical for Germany. Among the countries of East-Central Europe, the highest indicator is in Slovenia, Poland and Russia, the lowest GDP per capita is in Georgia. As for the rate of GDP growth, the positive trend is typical for Georgia (GDP growth is the highest among all the listed countries), Russia and Ukraine, the lowest GDP growth observed in Bulgaria and Romania.

The most revealing indicator is the Gini index, which is widely used in international comparative reporting and classification according to World Bank characterizes the uneven distribution of income in different countries. This figure is a reflection of inequality in society, illustrates the scale of the gap between the most prosperous and least prosperous parts of the population.

Tabl 2

Gini index

Country	Gini index
Russian Federation	42,2 (2009)|(↑)
Ukraine	27,5 (2008)|(↓)
Poland	34,2 (2008)|(↑)
Bulgaria	45,3 (2007)|(↑)
Romania	31,2 (2008)|(↑)
Slovenia	28,4 (2008)|(↑)
Armenia	30,9 (2008)|(↓)
Georgia	40,8 (2009)|(↑)
Germany	27 (2006)| (↓)

Source: http: // *www.**cia**.gov*

Gini coefficient is a very high level of inequality in the range around 50–60 %, high – in the range around 40–50 %, moderate – in the range around 30–40 % lower – in the range around 20–30 %. When analyzing the data recorded in the table, quite interesting is an indicator of the dynamics of Gini index. Thus, lower levels of this indicator (and it is considered to be a positive development because this fact shows the gap between higher and lower classes of society) is typical only for two countries – Ukraine and Germany. For all other countries the growth of the Gini Index is typical.

2. Socio-professional position. When building a professional and educational criteria international standard classification of occupations ISCO-88 was used. The structure of ISCO-88 is a four-level hierarchical system of ten occupational groups that are differentiated on the basis of skill level (including the presence of some measure of education), labor market and the tasks: legislators, senior officials and managers,

specialists, professionals, specialists of medium qualification level; clerical employees, service sector workers and trade enterprises, skilled agricultural workers, skilled workers and industrial workers of related professions, operators and assemblers at industrial plants, unskilled workers, representatives of the armed forces[1].

Describing the processes of tremendous growth in various countries of the modern world O. Kutsenko insists that the modern world shows the historical changes of radical bipolar structure to multiple social order in which the middle class is able to recover and play if not crucial, then very important role. Due to the result of reflection on the emergence of «new class» offensive theoretical and sociological phases stand out:

1) the theory of a new class of bureaucrats and managers;

2) the theory of knowledge class, professionals and intellectuals;

3) official theory of work class, a class of experts, the new higher class. The set and sequential change of them reflects not only the theoretical benefits of research and style, but, above all, real changes in the industrial societies of the late XX century [13, 167][2].

According to researcher of transformational change in post-Soviet society, O. Kutsenko, the theory of knowledge class, intellectuals and intelligentsia emerged as a reaction to changing social reality of Western society. However, this class as a social force is most clearly presented in transforming societies of state socialism [13, 179].

His class position is determined by the intersection of the axes:

1) Employment (competent professional work);

2) Education (availability of higher education that meets the diploma qualification);

3) Impact (defined autonomy work situation, social or technical control).

Countries of the middle class are Switzerland, Denmark, and Finland. We must say that in this table, the new middle class is represented by professional managers, professionals, employees and other non-manual work (semi-lower managerial and office staff, merchants and service sectors).

3. Administrative and managerial positions. According to J. Goldtorp, class position is determined by the relationship of employment (government or autonomy in the workplace) and the labor market (income, guaranteed income, career prospects and income).

At the same time researcher uses additional criteria:

1. Differences between employees and owners;

2. Differences between firms by number of employees (over 10 or less than 10 people);

3. Differences between the nature of professions (need or do not require physical labor).

As a starting point of the class diagram E. Wright considers the three main positions in the class relations of capitalism [6]: bourgeoisie, which owns and controls its own means of production, provides social control over the workforce; the proletariat, which possess neither property nor even control over their own workforce and labor; petty bourgeoisie, which owns and controls its own means of production, but has no control over hired labor.

Conclusion and Perspectives for Further Research. This paper gives an outlook on one of the core problems of sociology – issues of class dimension of social inequality. The research is carried out on the basis of theory and methodology of class analysis. In the study of state socialism, the emphasis is on comparing the idea of stratification of society with the idea of class structure of society. Theoretico-methodological framework of this study is stratification triad of M. Weber (economic situation, socio-professional status and administrative and managerial positions). Into account this model learns how

[1] We should say that exactly changes in ownership structure lead to the changes in social stratification, «new» middle class is a leader in the class structure of the information society, which includes managers, scientific-technical and humanitarian intelligentsia. As a part of the total workforce, new middle class moved working class and its relative share in employment exceeded 50 %. The most common occupational group in this heterogeneous and complex categories were lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers, schools and universities, managers and leaders at the highest and most functionally appropriate positions.

[2] Thus, according to O. Kutsenko, the idea of a «new class» in the prospective of the Soviet society in the early 80's was developed by M. Woslenskiy [9]. In his work he reasonably proved that the «new class» of Soviet society – nomenclature, government – represented a in essence, the ruling caste, deliberately concealing the fact of its existence and trying to hide in the mass of employees, and so become even more noticeable.

different stratification dimensions correlate in the structure of social inequality, to determine the potential of social classes.

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Кузьмук Ольга. Класовий вимір соціальної нерівності. У цій статті розглянуто деякі з найбільш впливових теорій класу, які намагаються пояснити класові нерівності в західному та східноєвропейському суспільствах.

Соціальна стратифікація розглядається як система соціальної нерівності, соціальної диференціації та заснована на розходженнях у займаній посаді й виконуваних функціях. Соціальна нерівність є основою розшарування суспільства та сприймається як головна її особливість. Теорії соціальної стратифікації розкривають сутність соціальної нерівності в таких поняттях, як соціальний статус, соціальна роль і престиж та, зі свого боку, функціонально описують соціальну структуру.

У статті здійснюється вимірювання соціальної нерівності. Основними вимірами соціальної нерівності є економічне становище, освіта, професійний і політичний статус. На основі отриманих даних реалізовано порівняння та побудовано узагальнення, що описують відмінності в характері соціальної нерівності західноєвропейських і східноєвропейських суспільств.

Ключові слова: соціальна нерівність, соціальна стратифікація, соціальний клас, соціальний статус, класові схеми, класове суспільство.

Кузьмук Ольга. Классовое измерение социального неравенства. В этой статье рассмотрены некоторые из наиболее влиятельных теорий класса, которые пытаются объяснить классовые неравенства в западном и восточноевропейском обществе.

Социальная стратификация рассматривается как система социального неравенства, социальной дифференциации, основанная на различиях в занимаемой должности и выполняемых функциях.

Социальное неравенство является основой расслоения общества и воспринимается как главная её особенность. Теории социальной стратификации раскрывают сущность социального неравенства в таких факторах, как социальный статус, социальная роль и престиж и функционально описывают социальную структуру.

Ключевые слова: социальное неравенство, социальная стратификация, социальный класс, социальный статус, классовая схема, классовое общество.