

THE PLACE OF IDEA AND IDEOLOGY IN THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

This article examines the place of idea and ideology in the structure of social consciousness through philosophical, sociological and communicative approaches. The central thesis is that an idea functions as a meaning-generating, future-oriented and value-synthesizing element of social consciousness, whereas ideology transforms selected ideas into a stable semantic system, institutional practice, source of social legitimacy and mechanism of collective mobilization. The study reveals the functional role of idea and ideology within the interaction of everyday, theoretical, political, legal, moral, religious, aesthetic and scientific forms of social consciousness. Methodologically, the article relies on system-structural, historical-logical, hermeneutic, comparative and discourse-analytical methods. The findings show that idea and ideology are not peripheral ornaments of public thought; rather, they occupy a central position in processes through which society interprets itself, hierarchizes values, strengthens social solidarity, justifies modernization goals and develops moral immunity against information risks. At the same time, the article argues that ideology should not be reduced to propaganda or political rhetoric: it should be understood as a normative-communicative system that links production of meaning with ethical responsibility, legal culture and civic participation. The paper therefore proposes a stratified model of social consciousness in which idea represents the generative core of meaning and ideology represents the integrative architecture that connects meaning with institutions, identity and action.

Keywords: Social consciousness, idea, ideology, spirituality, value system, communicative legitimacy, national identity, civil society.

Introduction

The problem of the place of idea and ideology in the structure of social consciousness belongs to the most important questions of contemporary social philosophy because it concerns the way in which society understands itself, organizes its memory, justifies its institutions and projects its future. Social consciousness is not a passive mirror of economic, political or cultural life; it is a complex field in which meanings, values, norms, beliefs, symbols, expectations and collective emotions are produced, contested and renewed. Within this field the idea and ideology perform different but interconnected

functions. An idea is a concentrated form of meaning that gives intellectual direction to human activity; it arises when social experience is generalized into a principle, image of the future, ethical demand or theoretical proposition. Ideology is a more systematic and socially embedded configuration: it selects, connects and stabilizes ideas, translates them into value hierarchies, provides narratives of belonging and legitimizes forms of collective action. Therefore, the study of social consciousness cannot be limited to the description of opinions or attitudes; it must reveal the inner architecture through which individual cognition becomes shared orientation and through which shared orientation becomes institutional conduct. Classical philosophy already treated consciousness as a mediation between being and action, while modern sociology demonstrated that consciousness is historically shaped by social relations, communication and symbolic power. In the context of contemporary societies, this issue has become even more urgent, because digital communication, accelerated modernization, pluralization of worldviews and global ideological competition have turned the sphere of social consciousness into a strategic space of cultural security and civic development. In Uzbekistan, the constitutional guarantees of freedom of thought, speech, conviction, access to information and freedom of conscience create a legal foundation for the development of a plural and responsible public consciousness. The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 gives special importance to human dignity, civil society, legal culture, social justice and spiritual development, while the Strategy “Uzbekistan-2030” links national progress with educated, healthy and spiritually developed generations, rule of law, security and stability. These normative orientations show that the analysis of idea and ideology is not merely abstract speculation; it is connected with the practical tasks of strengthening civic identity, protecting society from destructive information influence, developing critical thinking and ensuring harmony between national values and universal human principles. The scientific relevance of the present article lies in the need to clarify the conceptual difference and structural interdependence between idea and ideology within social consciousness. If the idea is confused with ideology, theoretical analysis becomes too narrow, because every creative insight is treated as an instrument of group interest. If ideology is reduced to manipulation, society loses the possibility of understanding positive, integrative and value-forming ideological processes. Conversely, if ideology is idealized without critical criteria, it may become dogmatic, exclude pluralism and weaken reflective thinking. A DSc-level philosophical approach must therefore avoid both extremes: it should reveal the constructive role of ideology in organizing social consciousness and at the same time establish criteria that distinguish normative civic ideology from closed doctrinal pressure. The purpose of this article is to determine the place of idea and ideology in the structure of social consciousness by analyzing their essence, levels, forms of manifestation, functions and laws of development. The research tasks are: first, to define social consciousness as a stratified and communicative system; second, to determine the semantic and axiological nature of idea; third, to interpret ideology as a socially organized system of meanings and

norms; fourth, to identify the relation of idea and ideology with political, moral, legal, religious, aesthetic and scientific forms of social consciousness; fifth, to propose a conceptual model explaining their integrative function in contemporary society. The hypothesis is that idea and ideology occupy a mediating position between social being and social action: they transform lived experience into meanings, meanings into values, values into norms, and norms into collective orientations. This hypothesis allows us to understand why societies with weak ideological self-reflection often experience fragmentation, moral indifference or vulnerability to external manipulation, whereas societies with open, humanistic and legally grounded ideological culture can combine modernization with identity, pluralism with solidarity, and freedom with responsibility.

METHODS

The methodological basis of the study is interdisciplinary but philosophically integrated, because the object under analysis cannot be fully understood through one discipline alone. The first method is the system-structural approach, which treats social consciousness as a multi-level formation consisting of everyday and theoretical consciousness, public psychology and ideology, individual and collective representations, rational arguments and emotional-symbolic images. This approach makes it possible to determine the structural position of idea and ideology not as isolated concepts, but as elements that connect cognitive, axiological, normative, communicative and institutional layers of society. The second method is historical-logical analysis. It allows the article to distinguish between the historical forms through which ideology appeared in different epochs and the logical features that remain stable despite historical change. For instance, in early modern political thought ideology could be associated with doctrine, in classical Marxism with the relation between consciousness and material interests, in Mannheim's sociology of knowledge with socially situated interpretation, in Gramsci's theory with hegemony and cultural leadership, and in contemporary discourse theory with the symbolic organization of power and identity. The third method is hermeneutic interpretation, used to understand idea and ideology as systems of meaning that require contextual reading. Ideas do not exist only as abstract propositions; they are interpreted by communities, encoded in language, transmitted through education, represented in rituals and embodied in social memory. Therefore, their meaning depends on the horizon of interpretation within which they are accepted, criticized or transformed. The fourth method is comparative analysis, which enables the distinction between universal and national dimensions of ideology. Universal ideas such as justice, dignity, freedom, responsibility and solidarity become socially effective only when they are translated into historically specific institutions, cultural codes and civic practices. This method is especially important for understanding how national ideology can remain open to universal human values without losing its own cultural substance. The fifth method is discourse analysis, used to investigate how ideological meanings are constructed through language, media, education, political communication

and symbolic representation. In modern society, ideological processes increasingly occur not only through classical institutions but also through digital platforms, visual culture, algorithmic information flows and everyday communicative networks. Discourse analysis therefore helps reveal the mechanisms by which ideas gain legitimacy, become normalized, or turn into stereotypes and conflicts. The sixth method is functional analysis. It identifies the main functions of idea and ideology in social consciousness: cognitive explanation, axiological evaluation, normative regulation, integrative solidarity, mobilizing orientation, identity formation, legitimization of institutions, critical reflection and protective immunity against destructive influences. The research material consists of classical and contemporary philosophical literature on ideology, sociology of knowledge, social consciousness, discourse and communication; constitutional and strategic documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan; and theoretical generalization of social-philosophical concepts relevant to the development of civic culture. The selection of sources follows three criteria: conceptual significance, relevance to the problem of social consciousness, and applicability to the analysis of contemporary society. The article does not conduct an empirical survey, because its purpose is theoretical reconstruction and methodological modeling. However, the proposed model may serve as a basis for future empirical research into public opinion, value orientations, civic identity, youth consciousness and ideological resilience in educational institutions. The methodological novelty of the article lies in the attempt to synthesize structural, communicative and axiological perspectives. Structural analysis shows where idea and ideology are located in social consciousness; communicative analysis shows how they are transmitted and legitimized; axiological analysis shows why they are accepted as meaningful and morally binding. The article also applies the principle of normative balance: ideology is analyzed neither as inherently false consciousness nor as unquestionable truth, but as a socially necessary system that must be evaluated according to openness, human dignity, rational justification, moral responsibility and legal compatibility. This principle is consistent with constitutional pluralism and the requirement that public life should develop on the basis of diversity of political institutions, ideologies and opinions. Thus, the methodology of the research combines critical rigor with constructive orientation: it recognizes the risk of ideological dogmatism, but also demonstrates the impossibility of a society without orienting ideas and value-based ideological structures.

RESULTS

The results of the research can be summarized in several interrelated theoretical propositions. First, social consciousness should be understood as a structured unity of meanings through which society becomes aware of its existence, values, contradictions and historical tasks. Its structure includes at least five layers: the cognitive layer, where society explains reality; the axiological layer, where it evaluates phenomena according to good and evil, justice and injustice, dignity and humiliation; the normative layer, where evaluations

are converted into rules and expectations; the symbolic-communicative layer, where meanings circulate through language, education, religion, art, media and public discourse; and the institutional-practical layer, where consciousness influences law, policy, family, community, civic associations and everyday behavior. Idea and ideology are located across all these layers, but their roles differ. The idea is primarily a generative unit of meaning: it condenses experience into a principle and opens a horizon of possible action. Ideology is primarily an integrative architecture: it organizes ideas into a worldview, connects them with values and institutions, and gives collective life a relatively stable direction. Second, idea occupies the central place in the creative dynamics of social consciousness. It is the point at which society moves from perception to interpretation and from interpretation to projection. A society without ideas may still have customs and habits, but it lacks a conscious vision of development. Ideas such as human dignity, enlightenment, justice, national independence, interethnic harmony, social solidarity and rule of law become constructive when they are grounded in ethical responsibility and rational reflection. They become destructive when detached from humanistic criteria and turned into absolute slogans that suppress freedom and dialogue. Third, ideology occupies the central place in the organization and reproduction of social consciousness. It transforms separate ideas into a system of social orientation. In this sense, ideology performs an explanatory function by interpreting the past and present; a prognostic function by imagining the future; an evaluative function by distinguishing socially desirable and undesirable tendencies; an integrative function by strengthening belonging; a mobilizing function by directing collective energy; and a legitimizing function by connecting institutions with accepted values. These functions do not necessarily have a negative meaning. The negative form of ideology appears when these functions are monopolized, when disagreement is treated as hostility, when myths replace rational argument, or when value language hides domination. The positive form of ideology appears when ideas are open to criticism, when national interests are harmonized with universal principles, when public communication respects dignity, and when institutions embody declared values. Fourth, the research shows that idea and ideology mediate between different forms of social consciousness. In political consciousness they appear as visions of citizenship, sovereignty, justice and public order. In legal consciousness they become respect for law, awareness of rights and duties, and trust in constitutional norms. In moral consciousness they manifest as responsibility, honesty, solidarity, tolerance and compassion. In religious consciousness they interact with questions of meaning, conscience, transcendence and moral discipline, while remaining compatible with the secular and plural legal framework that guarantees freedom of conscience. In aesthetic consciousness they are expressed through symbols, images, architecture, music, literature and collective memory. In scientific consciousness they appear as theoretical paradigms, methodological principles and rational critique. Therefore, the place of idea and ideology in social consciousness is not confined to political ideology; they operate throughout the entire spectrum of social meaning. Fifth, the study

identifies several laws or regularities of formation and manifestation. The first regularity is social rootedness: ideas emerge from concrete historical experience, needs and contradictions, but they do not mechanically reflect them; they interpret them. The second regularity is value selection: society does not preserve all ideas equally, but selects those that correspond to its identity, interests and moral horizon. The third regularity is institutional mediation: ideas become stable only when supported by education, law, family, mahalla, cultural institutions, media and public associations. The fourth regularity is communicative reproduction: ideology lives through language and dialogue; when communication becomes weak, ideology either formalizes into empty slogans or fragments into competing micro-narratives. The fifth regularity is critical renewal: a healthy ideological system must renew itself through education, scientific reflection, public discussion and responsiveness to social change. The sixth regularity is the balance between continuity and innovation: social consciousness needs historical memory, but it also needs creative adaptation to modernization, technological change and global interaction. Sixth, the results allow us to propose a stratified model of the place of idea and ideology in social consciousness. At the deepest level there are existential experiences and needs: security, dignity, identity, justice, belonging and development. At the second level these experiences become ideas: conceptual images of what society considers meaningful and desirable. At the third level ideas become values: criteria by which actions and institutions are judged. At the fourth level values become ideology: a structured worldview and normative orientation. At the fifth level ideology becomes communication: narratives, symbols, educational content, media messages and public discourse. At the sixth level communication becomes practice: civic participation, legal behavior, institutional trust, social solidarity and moral responsibility. This model demonstrates that ideology is not an artificial layer imposed from outside; it is a necessary stage in the transformation of social experience into conscious collective action. At the same time, the model shows that ideology must remain connected to its ethical source: if it loses connection with dignity, justice and truthfulness, it degenerates into manipulation. Seventh, in the conditions of contemporary Uzbekistan, the place of idea and ideology in social consciousness should be understood through the tasks of building a humane state, strengthening civil society, developing legal culture, supporting spiritual development and protecting informational security. The strategic documents of national development emphasize the formation of educated, spiritually mature and socially responsible generations [2; 3]. This orientation requires not mechanical repetition of ideological formulas, but the development of critical, creative and civic consciousness capable of distinguishing constructive ideas from destructive ones. The result is a theoretical conclusion: the most important function of ideology in modern society is not to close consciousness, but to organize freedom responsibly; not to replace thinking, but to give thinking a value-based direction; not to eliminate diversity, but to transform diversity into civic solidarity.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of these results requires a careful distinction between several theoretical traditions. In Marxian analysis ideology was often understood in connection with material relations and the problem of distorted consciousness, although the same tradition also showed that ideas can become material force when they are accepted by social groups. Mannheim broadened the issue by demonstrating that knowledge and interpretation are socially situated, which means that no worldview is completely detached from the historical position of its bearers. Durkheim's sociology helps explain why collective representations are necessary for social solidarity, because society requires shared symbols and moral categories in order to maintain integration. Berger and Luckmann showed that social reality is constructed and maintained through institutionalization, legitimation and everyday knowledge, which is directly relevant to the transformation of ideas into ideological common sense. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is important because it reveals that ideological influence is not only coercive; it also operates through cultural leadership, education, consent and the organization of common meanings. Habermas adds another criterion: legitimate social consciousness must be connected with communicative rationality, public argument and the possibility of critique. Althusser emphasizes the role of institutions in reproducing ideology, while contemporary discourse theorists such as Fairclough and van Dijk show how ideology is embedded in language, media and social interaction. Castells demonstrates that network society changes the conditions of consciousness formation, because power increasingly operates through communication networks and the programming of information flows. When these approaches are synthesized, a more complete picture emerges: ideology is not simply falsehood, doctrine, propaganda or worldview; it is a socially organized mode of meaning-production that can be emancipatory or manipulative depending on its relation to truth, freedom, dignity and institutional accountability. This distinction is especially important in the study of social consciousness, because social consciousness always contains both spontaneous and organized elements. Everyday consciousness includes habits, emotions, stereotypes and immediate experiences. Theoretical consciousness includes systematic knowledge, concepts and principles. Ideology stands between them: it translates theoretical ideas into accessible symbols and translates everyday concerns into broader narratives. This intermediate position explains its power and risk. Its power lies in the fact that it can make abstract values socially effective; its risk lies in the fact that simplification can become dogmatization. Therefore, the development of ideological culture requires critical literacy, philosophical education, historical knowledge and ethical sensitivity. In practical terms, the place of idea and ideology in social consciousness can be evaluated by asking several questions: Does the ideology help individuals understand their dignity and responsibility? Does it strengthen respect for law and human rights? Does it cultivate solidarity without suppressing pluralism? Does it protect youth from nihilism, extremism and information manipulation without isolating them from global knowledge? Does it allow public criticism

and renewal? These questions are not external to ideology; they are criteria of its maturity. In the context of Uzbekistan, this discussion has particular relevance because modernization is being carried out in a society with rich historical memory, strong communal traditions, religious and secular cultural layers, and increasing integration into global information space. The constitutional principle of ideological diversity means that the state and society must not seek uniformity of thought, but must create conditions in which constructive ideas can compete, cooperate and serve the public good. At the same time, the strategic aim of spiritual development indicates that pluralism should not turn into moral fragmentation. The challenge is to develop a civic ideology based on human dignity, enlightenment, patriotism, tolerance, responsibility and respect for law. Such ideology should not be understood as a rigid doctrine; it is better described as an open normative framework that gives society a shared language for discussing common goals. The relationship between national ideology and universal values is also central. If national ideology becomes closed, it risks provincialism and defensive isolation. If it dissolves completely into abstract universalism, it loses cultural depth and emotional legitimacy. A mature ideological system must combine national memory with universal humanism. It must recognize the value of mother tongue, history, cultural heritage and intergenerational continuity while also affirming the importance of science, gender dignity, legal equality, interreligious tolerance, ecological responsibility and global cooperation. This balance corresponds to the deeper structure of social consciousness, because social consciousness is always both particular and universal: it belongs to a concrete community, but it asks questions about truth, justice and human destiny that exceed any single community. The digital dimension adds another layer to the discussion. Today ideas circulate faster than institutions can evaluate them. Social networks can democratize expression, but they can also fragment attention, spread misinformation, intensify emotional polarization and create ideological bubbles. In such conditions, the place of ideology in social consciousness changes from vertical transmission to networked contestation. Educational institutions, universities, cultural organizations and public intellectuals must therefore move from declarative ideological work to dialogical and analytical work. Students and citizens need not only ready conclusions, but also methods for evaluating information, distinguishing argument from manipulation, recognizing value conflicts and participating responsibly in public discourse. This is where philosophy becomes practically important. Philosophy teaches conceptual precision, self-reflection and the ability to see the relation between freedom and responsibility. The topic of idea and ideology in social consciousness should therefore be included in humanities education not as formal terminology, but as a living analytical instrument for understanding modern society. Another important issue is the relation between ideology and morality. Ideology becomes socially dangerous when it separates collective goals from moral limits. A goal may be nationally attractive, but if it justifies humiliation, exclusion or violence, it contradicts the humanistic foundation of social consciousness. Conversely, ideology becomes constructive when it organizes

collective effort around moral values: dignity of the person, responsibility before society, care for the vulnerable, honesty in public life and respect for cultural diversity. Legal consciousness is equally necessary. Without law, ideology can become emotional mobilization without institutional restraint. Without ideology, law can become formal procedure without moral energy. The mature structure of social consciousness requires their interaction: law gives ideology boundaries; ideology gives law value-based legitimacy. The same applies to science. Scientific consciousness protects ideology from mythological closure, while ideology can orient scientific development toward human needs and social responsibility. The discussion therefore leads to a general conclusion: idea and ideology occupy a central, mediating and integrative place in social consciousness, but their quality depends on the degree to which they remain open to truth, dialogue, law and moral responsibility. A society does not need less ideology in the primitive sense of eliminating values; it needs a more mature ideological culture that can distinguish creative idea from empty slogan, civic solidarity from blind conformity, and national identity from exclusionary nationalism.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical analysis conducted in this article confirms that the place of idea and ideology in the structure of social consciousness is central, mediating and system-forming. Social consciousness is not a random collection of opinions; it is a historically formed and communicatively reproduced system of meanings, values, norms and symbols. Within this system the idea performs the role of semantic origin and creative impulse. It concentrates social experience, reveals contradictions, formulates values and opens the horizon of development. Ideology performs the role of integrative structure and practical orientation. It connects ideas with collective identity, institutional legitimacy, moral norms and civic behavior. The difference between them is therefore not a difference between truth and falsehood, but a difference between level and function: an idea generates meaning, while ideology organizes meaning socially. The research has shown that idea and ideology operate across all forms of social consciousness: political, legal, moral, religious, aesthetic, scientific and everyday. Their manifestation depends on historical experience, cultural memory, institutional mediation and communicative environment. The main regularities of their formation include social rootedness, value selection, institutional support, communicative reproduction, critical renewal and the balance between continuity and innovation. These regularities demonstrate that ideological processes cannot be reduced to official discourse or political slogans; they include education, family, media, art, law, scientific knowledge, religious and moral communication, civic participation and everyday interpretations of social reality. The article proposed a stratified model in which existential needs become ideas, ideas become values, values become ideology, ideology becomes communication, and communication becomes social practice. This model allows a more precise understanding of why ideology is necessary and why it must be critically regulated.

A society without shared orienting ideas risks fragmentation, indifference and vulnerability to manipulation. A society with closed and dogmatic ideology risks stagnation, exclusion and loss of freedom. The constructive path lies in developing an open, humanistic, legally grounded and intellectually responsible ideological culture. For contemporary Uzbekistan this means harmonizing national identity with universal values, spiritual development with critical thinking, modernization with historical memory, and civic solidarity with ideological diversity. The constitutional guarantees of freedom of thought, expression, information and conscience, together with strategic priorities of human dignity, civil society and spiritual development, provide a normative framework for such an approach. The scientific novelty of the article consists in defining idea as the generative core of social meaning and ideology as the integrative architecture of social consciousness. The practical significance lies in the possibility of applying this model to civic education, philosophical teaching, youth policy, ideological prevention, media literacy and the development of a culture of dialogue. Future research may empirically examine how different social groups understand national ideas, how youth interpret ideological narratives in digital space, how educational institutions cultivate ideological immunity, and how legal and moral consciousness interact in the formation of civic identity. The final conclusion is that the development of society requires not the mechanical multiplication of ideological formulas, but the elevation of social consciousness to a level where ideas are meaningful, ideology is responsible, freedom is connected with duty, and national development is understood as a morally justified and intellectually reflected common project.

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