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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**Ideology and the Social Sciences. Edited by Kinloch, Graham C. and Raj P. Mohan. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000, viii + 206 pages, US \$62.50. Hardcover. ISBN 0-313-31289-3.**

YVES LABERGE

*Université Laval, Québec City, Canada*

This overlooked book appeared in the series “Contributions in sociology” (Number 131), from the Greenwood Press, in 2000. Most of the chapters were first published as a whole, two years earlier, in a special issue of the *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* (1998), which was then edited by Raj Mohan. We find here those 11 updated and expanded articles, plus one new contribution by Loïc Wacquant about “scientific censorship” in U.S. sociology (chapter 10).

In chapter 1, Graham Kinloch and Raj Mohan present their book as “focusing on the ties among the subjective traits of social scientists, the contexts in which they conduct research, and the kinds of ‘knowledge’ they produce” (p. 1). Therefore, the reader should understand that this is a book raising questions about sociologists’ self-awareness, reflexivity and the many ideologies occurring or conflicting *into* the everyday practice of social sciences. These questions are raised and discussed from chapter 2, in which the co-editors succeed in articulating and comparing such concepts as ideology, as well as beliefs, myths, science and social science. Here, ideologies are defined in many ways, but firstly as “systems of evaluations that attempt to explain our experiences in understandable and logical terms” (p. 9). It becomes clear right from the beginning that the study of ideologies as social systems should be seen as crucial in social sciences. Taking from the works of Paolo Freire and others, the co-editors also argue that a “Refusal to acknowledge the central role of ideology is itself an

ideological act that prevents citizens from becoming full participants in their own governance.” (p. 9). For that reason, it is clear that one should not foresee anytime soon “the end of ideologies”. Although not comprehensive in any sense, chapter 2 brings a very good mapping for the study of ideologies, as being made in the following pages.

Each of the ten following chapters could be placed into one of two categories: some are theoretical reflections about how ideologies operate in modern societies (like chapter 3 about “The theory of sociological thought and the research process”); other essays introduce specific case studies about how ideologies can bring some influence into the academia, following Pierre Bourdieu’s insight about French universities and the subjective process of research (for instance in his provocative book titled *Homo Academicus*, published in 1984). Later on, the authors of chapter 5 analyze some of the professional ideologies that can be observed among Finnish sociologists, asking some Scandinavian scholars about their preferences among sociological problems and what would be their favorite author in social sciences. In this case, we get answers such as Joachim Hirsch, but also Habermas, Foucault, Durkheim, Bourdieu and Elias as privileged authors, followed by “cultural studies”, “women’s studies”, “ways of life” as preferred topics (p. 58). Also in the more theoretical perspective, chapter 8 compares the opposing views of two influential French sociologists, Pierre Bourdieu and Raymond Boudon, about the status of science and academia in modern France (p. 109). In this case, their respective conceptions of sociology are still seen in France as nothing less than two opposing ideologies, or in other words, two different ways of conceiving social sciences that could not be reconciled. It might have been useful to bring into this debate the concept of paradigm in the social sciences, as suggested by Patricia Harris (in chapter 11, p. 159), in order to understand those dominant thoughts like postmodernity, but I suppose the contributors had enough topics in hand with concepts such as ideologies and myth.

In the last part centred on biography and reflexive sociology (chapter 10), we get various points of view from some postgraduate students about their own theoretical choices (chapter 11).

Finally, chapter 12 presents the autobiographical sketches of two academics who analyse through their own professional experiences in various countries the professional ideologies and the subtle ways in which racism could appear among colleagues, in several departments of sociology.

As a whole, *Ideology and the Social Sciences* can be seen as a durable collection of timely essays. It brings some valuable intuitions and clear conceptual demonstrations about how academics can be influenced by the ideologies in which they seem to strongly adhere. The concept of ideology used in these pages mainly refers to contemporary societies (specially Europe) and addresses current matters with clear examples; the authors succeed in avoiding those abstract discussions that we sometimes encounter with the philosophical study of ideology. In sum, I believe that this fine book might be a useful addendum for graduate students either in social theory, history of sociology (for chapters 3 and 7), philosophy of science (chapters 8 and 9), epistemology and for those scholars who would like to bring, as Bourdieu often wished, “a sociology of sociologists”. However, it should not be used as an entry door for the study of ideology. This book is not easy to find in stores, but it is still available in its hardcover version, and can also be ordered directly from the publishers’ web site.

### References

- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Homo academicus*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1984.
- Kinloch, Graham C. and Raj P. Mohan. 1998. “Professional ideology and the social sciences.” *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology* 35(2).