

IDELOGY



Emrah BOZKURT

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Introduction

Today, the exact meaning of ideology creates some confusion. The content of the article deals with the definition of ideology as a term, its meaning process and how it is understood today. In addition to these, it was mentioned that ideology is used in two senses and what are the criteria for something to be an ideology. The issue of how people's ties with ideologies should be understood and whether people can have ties with more than one ideology were discussed. It was emphasized that there can be a personal ideology and it was pointed out that ideologies do not necessarily have to have political practices. Regarding the comparison of ideologies with religions, it was questioned whether there are beliefs within the teachings of ideologies. What kind of beliefs these beliefs are were mentioned. In general, the article tried to draw boundaries on the definition of ideology and how it should be understood, and drew attention to the view of the ideology itself and the connection of individuals with ideologies, i.e. that this is also perceived as an ideology.

What is Ideology?

Ideology was formed by combining the word "idea" and the English suffix "-logy". When we look at Oxford Dictionaries, we can realize that the original form of this suffix is "-ology". The two basic meanings of the term idea are: "an idea or proposition of an idea of a possible course of action" and "a purpose or goal (for a specific idea)". Considering these two meanings together actually gives us an extremely important definition. In this sense, an idea means to put forward an idea or idea of a possible plan of action towards a goal. In other words, it is quite possible to interpret it as a plan, a path, a procedure or even a method. The fact that its synonyms are "plan", "design", "project", "aim" supports what I am saying. Another meaning - which is given as a sub-meaning of the second meaning - is "an opinion or belief". It translates as "an opinion or belief". When we look at these three meanings, the general conclusion is as follows: "Idea is an idea, a plan, a discipline that is acquired and adopted as a result of an act of reflection as a plan of action and a roadmap for a specific goal". In this respect, it is a method for reaching the goal. If we return to the suffix "-ology" and look at the term ideology, ideology is: "refers to a specific discipline and plan pursued towards a specific goal, i.e. a method". In this context, we can say that the term ideology refers to a specific method pursued towards a specific goal.

The Emergence of Ideology

In the late 18th century, the French philosopher and social scientist Antoine Destutt de Tracy used the term ideology as "a scientific discipline of knowledge". According to Tracy, ideology was "the study and systematic understanding of ideas in the minds of individuals". However, the current widespread use and meaning of the term has been shaped by the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Before moving on, let us elaborate on Tracy's phrase "a scientific discipline of knowledge". He means that an ideology must be studied and understood in a systematic way. He does not see an ideology as just a collection of random or personal thoughts, but as a field that needs to be studied with scientific methods. He says that an ideology can be understood correctly only after it is analyzed systematically. He emphasizes that this can be done through scientific methods.

On the other hand, this phrase, "a field in which the ideas in the minds of individuals should be studied and understood in a systematic way", emphasizes that ideology is a discipline that aims to make generalizations, not only based on the personal beliefs of individuals. That is, ideology does not only examine the thoughts of individuals, but also takes into account the general views of society, social dynamics and cultural factors. Therefore, ideology is a tool used to understand and explain the mindset of a society. This puts forward the idea that ideology should be studied systematically at the individual and societal level. To make this more understandable, let's think like this: Group A has its own ideas, its

own perspective on the world, and when dealing with this group, knowing which ideology it belongs to will facilitate the analysis. We can say that it is that ideology that allows us to generalize and perceive the opinion about group A by saying that group A thinks about this and that.

The Meaning Process of Ideology

Many terms undergo a change in meaning over time. When we look at Marx and Engels' influence on the meaning process of ideology, they defined ideology as “ideas that serve social class interests and do not accurately reflect social realities”. This definition treated ideology as part of the class struggle and in this sense was used to criticize ideologies such as socialism and capitalism. They treat ideology as a product of ideas used to legitimize the interests of a group or class. According to them, ideology is a reflection of the conflict between social classes and serves the interests of a particular class. Marx and Engels argue that ideology is used to legitimize social structure and class relations, to preserve the existing order and resist change.

For example, in capitalist society, there are ideologies that are used to protect and legitimize the interests of the capitalist class. These ideologies try to justify capitalism by emphasizing universal values such as freedom, equality and justice. However, according to Marx and Engels, these ideologies are actually used as a tool to protect the interests of the capitalist class and serve to mask real social relations and contradictions. Similarly, according to Marx and Engels, there are ideologies that criticize socialism. Used to protect the interests of the capitalist class, these ideologies seek to denigrate socialism in various ways and distract public attention from real class contradictions. For example, they reject socialism by portraying it as destructive, utopian or contrary to human nature. They treat ideology as part of the class struggle and, in this sense, see it as a false or incomplete reflection of social realities. Therefore, their approach to ideology includes criticism of the existing social order and a call for change. In the light of these ideas, it is possible to say that ideology has become more politicized.

The Meaning of Ideology Today

Today, the term ideology is used broadly to refer to a particular political, social or cultural system of thought or beliefs. Ideologies shape the way people understand and organize the world and often form the foundations of political, economic and social order. For example, different ideologies, such as liberalism, capitalism, socialism, communism, support and defend particular political and economic systems. Ideologies often play an important role in defining the values, identity and goals of a society or group. Nowadays, ideologies have also become a definition, the inability to define people without including them in a group has led to this misguided approach. For some people, it serves as a means of humiliation. Statements such as “I have my beliefs, he has his ideology” give the impression that ideologies are something to be shunned. These attitudes can always be seen in ideological conflicts. Today, although ideology is not negative as a term, it draws a negative image in the perception in use. People's hatred of different ideologies is reflected through this word. Phrases such as “you have an ideological approach to this issue” show this image.

Criteria of Ideology

Ideology should be evaluated in two ways, one as the ideology itself and the other as the ideology of individuals. When we evaluate ideology in itself, let's try to discuss what the criteria for something to be an ideology might be. When we start from the definition of ideology, it must be pursuing a goal. Examples of what these goals might be are social change, political regulation, cultural transformation or the realization of ideals. Accordingly, it must contain systematic methods to achieve

that goal. This is important, it should not be a mass of unsystematized, floating ideas. This can happen in individual ideologies, but not in the ideology itself; if there is such a structure, we can say that it is not an ideology, it remains an idea. In addition, an ideology must be based on values or beliefs. This is already linked to the goal, upon which methods can be developed. These values or beliefs can be the basic principles, ethical norms and ideals that a society or group values. To summarize, for something to be an ideology, it must have a goal, systematic methods to achieve that goal, and values or beliefs to legitimize those goals.

The Ideology itself and one's connection to it

As we mentioned in the previous topic, there is ideology itself and there are ideologies of a person. One can connect with only one ideology or with more than one ideology. This may sometimes be due to the fact that ideologies cannot answer all areas for a person, or it may be due to the fact that a person finds some parts of an ideology satisfactory and some aspects of an ideology unsatisfactory. This can lead people to adopt more than one ideology and there is nothing wrong with that. Sometimes they may adopt some ideologies and form their own opinions on some issues. Some ideologies may have teachings in all areas, while others may not have them in all areas and may only focus on one subject. In this case, the person's worldview on that subject is explained by that ideology. For example, a person who belongs to a religion may also adopt a political ideology. For example, a person who belongs to Islam may also be a socialist or a capitalist or a liberal. Another example is that a person may adopt a secular lifestyle and yet his/her economic views are capitalist, or he/she may have a secular lifestyle but his/her economic views are socialist. A person may be forming a worldview by creating a package of ideologies. This can be interpreted as creating one's own ideological package. It is also possible to call all these commitments of a person an ideology, which means the whole ideological package of the person. In these cases, in order to call the person ideological, the term ideological is used in reference to his/her commitment to whichever ideology he/she has adopted in the specific issue under discussion. For people with this attitude, the use of ideology is related to their affiliation, not a direct reference to an ideology.

Can People Adopt More Than One Ideology?

We have partially clarified this issue in the previous topic. Let us try to elaborate a little more here. A person's thoughts and beliefs can be complex and include different ideological approaches or philosophical views. For example, a person may support liberal economic policies while at the same time having a more conservative or classical mindset on social issues. In this case, the person has adopted more than one ideology. In other words, he/she has created an ideological package for himself/herself. Here, when referring to his/her ideology, one can emphasize his/her connection with those in this package, not the ideologies themselves. This multiple ideology adoption can be influenced by factors such as a person's life experiences, education, cultural background and personal values. People are often equipped with complex and diverse intellectual structures and can combine different ideological views. In some cases, however, a person may experience a conflict or inconsistency between different ideological views. In this case, one may prefer one ideology over another on a particular issue or adopt different ideological approaches to a particular situation. It is important to note that ideology is determined according to fields. In other words, one cannot be both a capitalist and a socialist in the field of economics. If he takes some of the teachings of these ideologies and combines them, then he creates another ideology and these other two ideologies are not mentioned. To summarize the issue, people can directly adhere to an ideology or they can adhere to different ideologies depending on their field. They can go beyond this and create an ideology for themselves by taking some parts of the teachings within

ideologies. In addition to all these, they can take some of the teachings within ideologies and create some of them with their own ideas.

Can there be a personalized ideology?

It is not correct to consider ideology only on the basis of a group or society. A person has his or her own system of thoughts and values, independent of the group or society, and this can be considered as his or her own unique ideology. Therefore, one's own thoughts and beliefs can be part of one's personal ideology. On the other hand, for one's thoughts or beliefs to become an ideology, they must first be systematized. That is, one's ideas must be organized in such a way that they form a system of thought as a whole. This system of thought represents an ideology based on one's beliefs, values and goals. A jumble of ideas floating around in one's mind is not an ideology. It becomes an ideology when these ideas are systematized and directed towards a goal. A person's ideology may be a system based solely on his or her own thoughts and beliefs, and there may be no others who subscribe to this ideology. In this case, personal ideology remains part of individual identity.

Does Ideology Have to Have Political Practice?

Ideology does not necessarily have a political side. We define ideology as a system of thought that expresses the worldview, beliefs, values, ideals and goals of a person, a particular group or a society. This system of thought may not be limited to the political sphere; it may also be cultural, religious, economic or philosophical. Holistically, some ideologies may include the political side, but some ideologies may not include political issues, which does not mean that they are not ideologies. Although in our perception ideologies are like political formations, there are also ideologies that have nothing to do with politics and that determine one's own way of life. For example, there are ideologies such as Aestheticism, Minimalism, Transcendentalism. Aestheticism is a school of thought that emphasizes beauty and aesthetics. According to this ideology, people should fill their lives with the search for beauty and the importance of aesthetic experiences should be emphasized. Aestheticism argues that art and aesthetic experience can enrich people's lives, but does not focus directly on political goals. Minimalism is a lifestyle and philosophical approach based on the principles of simplification and simplicity. Minimalists aim to increase happiness and satisfaction by avoiding unnecessary consumption habits and adopting a simple lifestyle. This ideology is not political, but represents a personal lifestyle or philosophical stance. Transcendentalism is a movement that emerged in American literature and philosophy. They promote a life in harmony with nature and emphasize personal insight and spirituality. Transcendentalists focus on issues such as individual freedom, love of nature and spiritual exploration, but not directly on political goals.

Is There Belief in Ideology?

When some people compare ideologies with religions, they claim that ideologies do not contain beliefs in order to distinguish them from religions. But this is a misconception, and we have already touched on this a little bit in previous issues, that ideologies are usually based on certain beliefs and values. Another important point is that we have included goals among the criteria for ideologies, and goals are generally tied to beliefs. The belief that something can happen determines the goal of the ideology. On the other hand, when we look at the connection between people and their ideology, beliefs play a big role here too. Beliefs are one of the important elements that form the basis of and support ideology. Ideologies usually reflect a particular worldview or way of life, and behind these views is a particular belief system. These beliefs may include basic principles, ethical norms, ideals and assumptions about human nature that a particular society or group holds dear. For example, the ideology

of liberalism reflects beliefs such as individual freedom, equality and the importance of a market economy, while the ideology of communism represents a belief in social equality, common property and the possibility of a classless society. These beliefs shape the ideology's goals and form a framework that supports the ideology. However, these beliefs are not necessarily common only among those who adopt the ideology; those with different ideological views may hold different beliefs.

Is There Belief in God or Figures in Ideology?

In ideologies, as in religions, there is usually no direct belief in a deity. While in religions the god or gods play a central role, in ideologies such a belief in a deity is usually absent or not mandatory. While ideologies usually focus on social, political, economic or cultural goals, they do not emphasize a metaphysical or spiritual dimension as in religions. However, some ideologies, unlike religions, may have elements such as specific leader figures and symbolic deification of the ideology. For example, in totalitarian regimes, leader figures are often seen as symbols of the ideology and criticism or questioning of the ideology is not tolerated in the same way as in a religious faith. In some cases, however, for the adopters of certain ideologies, the ideology can become a kind of religious or dogmatic belief system. In this case, the commitment and belief in the ideology may be characterized by dogmatically accepted truths and questioning or criticizing the ideology may become taboo.

Conclusion

The complex nature of the concept of ideology today is explored in depth through several aspects that are addressed in this study. First, debates on the origin and definition of ideology have revealed the diverse perspectives of scholars from different disciplines. Defined by Tracy as “a scientific discipline of knowledge”, ideology has retained its meaning in the context of class struggle by Marx and Engels until today. Today, however, the term ideology is used not only in political contexts but also on a broader social, cultural and even personal level. The diversity and uniqueness of ideology allows each individual to form their own systems of thought and belief. By combining different ideological views, people can create their own unique package of ideology. This is influenced by factors such as one's life experiences, cultural background and personal values. Thus, ideology is not only a political practice, but also a personal identity and lifestyle.

On the other hand, the presence of beliefs within ideologies is controversial. Some tend to define ideologies as faithless in order to distinguish them from religions. However, ideologies are often founded on certain values and beliefs. These beliefs shape the ideology's goals and values and create a framework that supports the ideology. In addition, some ideologies may include elements such as the symbolic deification of leading figures. As a result, the concept of ideology is complex and multifaceted and takes on different meanings in different cultural, political and individual contexts. This article has provided a basis for understanding the definition and diversity of ideology and emphasized its relevance today. In this framework, it is important to see ideology not only as a political practice but also as a personal identity and lifestyle. In this respect, the diversity and specificity of ideology allows people to express different thoughts and beliefs and enriches social diversity.