

**Slavo Kukić<sup>1</sup>**  
University of Mostar  
Faculty of Economics  
Mostar  
skukic@hotmail.com

**Original research paper**  
UDC 316.1 (497.6)  
DOI: 10.7251/SOCEN1407021K  
Accepted 12. 3. 2014.

## **Methodological issues in contemporary sociology of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

### **Abstract**

*Contemporary sociological science is increasingly being characterized by a positivist, therefore, the orientation on the empirical research of social problems. If there is, however, about the Bosnian-Herzegovinian sociology, there are many unexplored issues in the field of empirical sociological research - and the greater is the number of causes of it. Methodological problems, of course, are one of the major manifestations of those causes- the problems in the area of quantitative as well as those in the field of qualitative sociological research. Some of the other dimensions of the problem should not be ignored - the issue of ethics in sociological research, the problem of a single database in the field of sociology, as well as the research in the field of social sciences in general, and the like. And all of that is analyzed in the context of this paper.*

**Keywords:** *sociological research, white spots, methodological problems, quantitative research, qualitative research, ethics, database*

### **1. Introduction**

The development of sociology as a separate scientific discipline has, as far as the former Yugoslavia, and thus the area of BiH is concerned, on the surface, among other things, launched and conceptual differences concerning the fundamental epistemological and methodological issues. Theoretical discussions about them, however, have not hindered, but were a driver of further development of sociology as a science. In addition, after all, are witnessing a number of new works, but also the sociological names in the last forty years or something more.

---

<sup>1</sup> Full time professor, the corresponding member of ANUBiH, e-mail: skukic@hotmail.com

All this, however, does not mean that all problems are thus adapted to the field of sociology as a science. On the contrary, many of them burden this science and today. Their detection is again invaluable for the further development of this discipline. What are those problems? And to which of them, because of the importance that they have for the sociology, we would have to pay attention first? The aim of this paper is to emphasize some of them, especially those of methodological nature.

## **2. Orientation on the empirical research as a new trend**

Since the seventies of the twentieth century in the BiH sociology - as well as in the other parts of the former state - is more and more pronounced the orientation towards the empirical research.<sup>2</sup> In the first plan, in other words, is beginning to puncture the positivist approach to the study of social problems. The step forward in the empirical research, however, is notably characterized by the time after the 1990. The reason for this is, among other things, related to the fact that that time, but also the first thirteen years of the century in which we live, is characterized by social crisis - the time of the dissolution of the former state and the establishment of the new one, the time of war, and political and social transition, the time of the social turmoil with which we live and so on. And such is the inexhaustible source of the sociological empirical research.

Pursuant the emphasized, in the last fifteen or more years have been realized the large number of empirical sociological research. In relation to them, unfortunately, there is no single database in order for more accurate assessment to be possible. However, a large part of the research is possible to be reached, due to, primarily, the possibilities of the web browser, but also the other sources of scientific information.

If you rely, however, on the information that can be reached by that route, and if it is taken as a criterion for grouping the research, the holder, the research financier behind the biggest part of the research are various international associations and institutions<sup>3</sup>, but also the international foundations<sup>4</sup>. It would

---

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the theoretical premises that have been realized, a significant impact on this orientation had the appearance of the Supek study "The Examination of the Public Opinion" - whose first edition was printed already in 1961, after which it underwent three editions. Its meaning is directly related to the fact that it showed that every knowledge about man and society, and about man's social behavior, has its empirical dimension.

<sup>3</sup> Among them, among others, are emphasized UNDP, Transparency International, Gallup Balkan Monitor, etc..

<sup>4</sup> Among them are, among others, USAID, the Open Society Fund, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the Heinrich Boell Stiftung and others.

be unfair, in the end, to ignore and the results of the national institutions dealing with research and theoretical work - results primarily of the faculties of social sciences and humanities, and individuals from their compositions, but also some institutes, whether they are operating within the faculty or as a stand-alone institutions.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. Problems in the area of sociological research**

#### ***3.1. Unexplored issues in the field of the empirical sociological research***

If we look at the research in the last fifteen years, according to the object of their interest, in them, with no doubt, are touching the edges of the various social problems, characteristic of BiH as a state and as a society. But only some of them were, at least as far as the available databases are concerned, able to extract as fields with respect to which the scientific research curiosity has the constant sign - the phenomenon of corruption, first of all, that after the war is in the focus of everyone whose research interest was the Bosnian-Herzegovinian empiricism.<sup>6</sup>

But sociological research would be wrong to be reduced only to the dimension of the corruption investigations. Outside the range of interest, namely, are some social problems. A large number of public opinion surveys is organized, for example, to monitor citizens' attitudes towards BiH as a country, to explore the phenomenon of social capital and social trust, to examine the perception of trends that are expected in the future, to assess the level of individual optimism or pessimism, to research the estimates and expectations with respect to the Euro-integration and so on.

Many social problems have, however, remained beyond the reach of empirical research, and with the vocabulary of Josip Županov<sup>7</sup>, they appear as a kind

---

<sup>5</sup> Among them, with no doubt, the most prominent position belongs to the Institute for Social Research, Faculty of Political Science, University of Sarajevo, under whose auspices has been the largest concentration of sociological and political science studies in the last ten or twelve years.

<sup>6</sup> The study of corruption, however, in the emphasized the time, is mostly done among the international organizations and associations - primarily Transparency International - which is known for the continuous measurement of the index of perception of corruption - then the European and American foundations and institutes which in BiH have their offices, and domestic institutes and non-governmental organizations.

<sup>7</sup> Josip Županov (1923-2004) is a prominent Croatian sociologist, the member of the Academy, one of the leading sociologists in the former Yugoslavia.

of “white spots” in sociological research.<sup>8</sup> In the context of this type of analysis, them, or at least some of them, are possible only to touch.<sup>9</sup>

One of the major problems of contemporary Bosnian society is, without any doubt, the question of its social stratification - and the consequences it leaves behind. Separating the narrow layer of the social rich on one, and the mass of disenfranchised and without basic prerequisites for the existence on the other side must produce social tensions, social frustration and hostility. In addition, the more insignificant is becoming the middle social class, and this fact imposes the necessitates of thinking how in the Bosnian experience can be confirmed the thesis about social bipolarization as the trend of social development which is observed and globally, difficult to bypass in the future.

In direct relation to this, however, is another social problem - the phenomenon of unemployment. And it would, with no doubt, had to be detailed and continuously engaged in sociological science, both because of the phenomenon, and the fact that related to it are many others.<sup>10</sup> This phenomenon is, in fact, in BH sociology of the twenty first century touched only sporadically. Or more specifically, in relation to it, according to the available data, in the past ten years has been no serious sociological monograph published.

Directly related to unemployment are, then, as a social problem and the problem of poverty and social resistance. And they are, as well as unemployment touched only in the context of other research or questioning of public opinion that under the magnifying glass, and extremely limited, have a growing number

---

<sup>8</sup> Raising the question what would that spots mean, Županov answered that under them is to understand the social phenomena of which we have no scientific or empirical data, or we have it very little. In other words, if there where were no systematic sociological research we would face the stark whiteness (Josip Županov, Preface to the book, *The Young shortly before the third millennium*, in: Vlasta Ilišin and Furio Radin, *The Young shortly before the third millennium*, Zagreb: Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, National Institute for the Protection of Family, Motherhood and Youth. 2002, p.9).

<sup>9</sup> In the following analysis, attention is reserved only for a part of a broad spectrum of BH. social problems which, objectively, represent an inexhaustible source of sociological research and sociological theoretical interest.

<sup>10</sup> Unemployment in BiH in the late 2013 was at the level of 45% (according to unionized champions, it exceeds that figure). In July of 2013, for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina were employed 685,773 people, while in the same month was registered 553,036 of unemployed. If we compare, however, the unemployment rate with others in Europe, the figures are even more worrying - almost twice higher than, for example, one in Spain as the country with the highest percentage of unemployed in the EU (24%), more than double the rate in Greece (22%) and so on. Equally, or even more, warns the fact that youth unemployment reaches 60% of the total youth population (see Business Journal, <http://www.poslovni.hr/svijet-i-regija/bih-skupo-placa-nezaposlenost-mladih-253207>, and <http://www.poslovni.hr/svijet-i-regija/u-bih-bez-posla-553-tisuce-osoba-253091>)

of social problems at the same time. About a systematic sociological approach, however, can be difficult to speak.

One of the problems that would, with no doubt, had to be comprehensively addressed is the public role of religion in post-communism. Sociology would, for example, had to turn to questioning the relations of the church - including lay movements - against a number of social issues. Among them, among others, is possible to stress the relationship of the church and state, the issue of religion and sex education in schools, the issue of Sunday work, the equality of smaller religious communities, and the like. It should then turn to analyzing the issues related to the fact of the high trust of public in the Church, but also the problems of modern development in relation to the issue of secularism and separation of church and state - the public, according to some estimates, is characterized by a relatively high level of criticism towards binding the church with the state and so on. Questionably would then be to engage in a comparative analysis of the situation in BiH and the European region, but also in a number of other issues regarding the public role of religion.

In the post-war BiH sociology needed attention has not been paid even to the sociology of the old. Among sociologists, namely, if there is to judge by the available data, there is no need of genuine interest in the study of the difficulties of the social life of older population, and the causes of those problems - the problem of the social vulnerability of pensioners above all, but also many others in direct contact with them. Sociological studies of this kind, however, are gaining in importance. The reasons for this are manifold - increasing the share of pensioners in the total population, the demographic aging of the population, as well as some others.

The questions are, with no doubt, everywhere the inexhaustible source of sociological research. But in the Bosnian society they are more pronounced than in the societies in recent history that have not experienced a fundamental change in the political and social system. Such a change, namely, as a result had a radical changes in the social system, but also in the value of the system at all. In the place of the collectivist, for example, come the individualistic values - the values of materialism and pragmatism above all. This change in the system of values, and the form and intensity of its manifestations have not been explored sufficiently. Indeed.

On the other hand, the BiH experienced and the terrible war, and a war with pronounced ethnic sign, and it was not even bypassed by the ethnic conflicts that have kept the premise and after its completion. Accordingly, in respect of the time prior to the nineties of the twentieth century, is changed the nature of the collectivist values. In the place of the former collectivist values of the socialist system - that are related to the phenomena of class and brotherhood and

unity - have the breakthrough the values of the nation and the heroic code.<sup>11</sup> In the connection with the emphasized, one of the areas that sociological science should take more seriously than in the past, is the question of the consequences of the last war on the social relations, especially on the inter-ethnic relations.<sup>12</sup>

The consequences of the post-war climate of the inter-ethnic relations can be experienced in other areas as well. From the perspective of sociological research, and they are, of course, of the great interest. One of them, certainly - although it is extremely wrong to tie it with the inter-ethnic relations - is the phenomenon of violence as a serious social problem. Let us recall, for example, only the most radical forms of the supporter riots and violence that accompanies it. And that, in contrast to the BH environment<sup>13</sup>, here almost has no serious sociological treatment. In addition, in the terms of Bosnian society, this phenomenon goes beyond the cheerleading rampage - although the consequences in that context are also warning.<sup>14</sup>

The issue of alcoholism and drug addiction, and the various forms of its abuse, is the part of the social problems of the modern world. Spared of them, however, is neither the Bosnian society. Both alcoholism and drug abuse are a problem in the focus of interest of scientists with different profiles. With the search of available databases, however, it is evident that they as a social problem in BiH are dealt primarily by medics, psychiatrists in particular, and a little less intense by psychologists. The interest of sociology as a science is, unfortunately, largely absent. We emphasize “unfortunately” because both alcoholism and drug addiction produce effects that are sociologically extremely indicative. In addition, the war actions were the one and the other type of addiction - drug addiction in particular - further stimulated as a form of “strengthening” the war moral. The end of the war and the processes of the post-conflict stabilization, were not used enough for one or the other type of addiction to be discouraged. And that, again, has the other negative social effects - all worthy of more serious research of sociological approach than that which is given to mark today.

There is a large area of the sociological research interest and in the field of rural sociology and city. Both spaces today represent an inexhaustible source of sociological interest. Sociologists would, for example, more intense than before,

---

<sup>11</sup> Josip Županov, *The Same*, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> This is a question, indeed, that in the last ten years, as part of the “Early Warning System”, is delt by an expert team of UNDP. However, for this approach can be argued that, from the perspective of serious sociological analysis is sufficient. Completely contrary, it is just another scratch on the surface and no serious theoretical ambition.

<sup>13</sup> Srđan Vrcan, *Football - Policy - Violence*, Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Croatian Sociological Association. 2003.

<sup>14</sup> It is sufficient to recall the football match between Široki Brijeg and Sarajevo in October 2009 and the fans’ hooliganism that ended with a loss of a young human life.

deal with the problems of urban devastation, environmental pollution, the phenomenon of destruction of Bosnian villages and rural life forms and so on. If we make, however, a more detailed insight into the sociological research conducted, and these issues were treated only superficially. And not only that. Even those who were to rural sociology and city devoted, as a rule, remained at the level of theoretical achievements, without questioning the BH empiricism.<sup>15</sup>

Sociologists in the past fifteen years, have not paid enough attention and to the phenomenon of depopulation as a social problem. On the phenomenon of depopulation has, after all, warned the latest census.<sup>16</sup> Even the glimpse, in fact, warned that the issue of depopulation is dealt mostly by others - especially demographers. Their dealing with depopulation, is not questionable. But there is no doubt that this phenomenon can not and must not be reduced only to its demographic dimension. Quite the opposite. The phenomenon of depopulation is a broad field of research of social psychologists, and sociologists. Only in this case, if we access it multi-disciplinary, it is possible to provide a more complete and better scientific insight into the depopulation as a growing social problem. In the situation, however, when it is not dealt by those who should - scientists of different scientific disciplines, including sociology - the phenomenon of depopulation is left to the superficial analysis of others - journalists, politicians, self-appointed analysts, mostly to people without the necessary skills.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the end, is traditional and underdeveloped, and society in transition. All those factors as a result have a range of other social problems characteristic for this type of society. How, however, are they comparable to the other transitional societies - those in the area of Europe, primarily - and to what extent is possible a comparative analysis in relation to the developed societies of the modern world? All of these, and many other issues, are possible sources of serious sociological analysis - and they at this moment, are simply lacking.

### ***3.2. The causes of underdevelopment of sociological research***

Tagged problems with which BiH's sociology in the field of empirical research is insufficiently engaged, and with them the list of these problems is not

---

<sup>15</sup> In Bosnian sociology, for example, can still not be found the studies like the Ognjen Čaldarović's book, *Urban Society in the early 21st Century: A basic sociological processes and dilemmas*, which was published by Naklada Jesenski i Turk in 2011.

<sup>16</sup> There are still, however, not available and arranged statistical data structures and trends in the Bosnian population. The data, however, which are knowledgeable, alert - population is, namely, at the level of approx. 3.8 million. If, however, on the basis of these figures is evaluated, it should not surprise even if depopulation is identified as one of the most serious trends in the last twenty years.

concluded, begs the question “why”? Where, in other words, are the causes of these sociological “white spots” of Bosnian sociology as a science? Overly ambitious would, of course, be the intention to draw them all. However, some of them can be identified.

The causes are, for example, possible to find in the fact that BH sociology, thanks to the combination of various circumstances that marked the twentieth century, had a different development path than the one that characterizes the sociology of the Western societies, especially the U.S. - the orientation on the empirical research of social problems.

The causes, then, can be sought in the lack of financial support and other requirements necessary to conduct the serious research. Because the sociology was expected to be in the service of regime - that it alone gives its contribution to maintaining - and not the “devourer” of social wealth.

Relatively significant part of the causes is in the absence of a generally accepted approach to the notion of social problems in BiH. The social issues, for example, are not seen as “disintegrative phenomena that occur in people’s behavior, which in (the most) part of the public cause concern and can be prevented or mitigated by the organized social action.”<sup>17</sup> On the contrary, the war and destruction processes to which BiH is exposed after it, have caused the effects in setting priorities in the field of sociological science. That, unfortunately, are not social problems faced by modern societies, especially in transition. In the foreground here, instead, emerge questions of so called vital interest - issues of ethnicity, religions, languages, nation-states, and the like. This, of course, are not the issues that should be ignored. The problem, however is, that they have such intensity that all other more or less pronounced, are relegated to the background.

A significant part of the causes is, however, in the area of the so called methodological problems of Bosnian sociology. Sociological science, in fact, to this day, for reasons that are directly related to its recent past, did not make a more complete inventory of phenomena of relevant social problems plaguing Bosnia and Herzegovina as a society. If the records can be spoken of, they are, at the best, a product of public opinion surveys on perceptions of frequency, or the prevalence of certain social problems, and not a database using a serious qualitative and quantitative techniques of sociological research. Continuation of this analysis has, accordingly, somewhat more detailed paid attention to a group of methodological problems of BH sociology.

---

<sup>17</sup> Dražen Lalić and Marko Mustapić, *Research of social problems: White spots on the sociological map of Croatia*, Vol XXXVIII. 2007. No 3–4, p. 137.



## **4. Some methodological issues in contemporary sociology of BiH**

### ***4.1. Problems in the area of quantitative sociological research***

The conversation about the problems in the area of quantitative research in sociology can be taken at several levels - depending, for example, on the desired or agreed level of complexity, socio-professional milieu, carriers of the condition and the profession, and the like. It is possible, among other things, to ask whether the sociology in BiH has reached the level of development that is characteristic for the level of the profession? And to answer that question, it is necessary, first of all, to have the parameters by which the profession can vary in relation to the profession or possibly a semi-profession. According to one of the theoretical approaches, for example, such a distinction can be carried out on the basis of the five key determinants:

- based primarily on the degree of development of the basic theories and techniques that make up a whole and which are the basis for professional action,
- based on the degree of monopoly on the expertise,
- based on the degree of recognition of the profession by the public,
- based on the degree of organization of the profession and, ultimately,
- based on the level of development of occupationally Ethics.<sup>18</sup>

Why are the emphasized determinants important? Simply due to the fact that the methodological postulates in sociology, under the law of connected vessels, share the fate of the profession and suffer from the same ills as the profession itself. If we follow, however, that regularity, the logical conclusion is that sociology as a science in BiH does not meet in a respectable measure the emphasized markers that would have to be raised in order to reach the level of the profession - that is, more specifically, all those determinants put it on the level of a semi-profession.

If, however, is so - and at the same time the methodology in the sociology is sharing the fate of the profession and suffers from the same ills as her - it indeed seems serious question whether the methodology of sociological research is on the level of semi-profession and even methodological amateurism. If so, it means that methodology in sociological research - specifically quantitative research - is separated from the sociological profession. And, also, that it was developed outside the sociological profession.

---

<sup>18</sup> See: Benjamin Čulig, *On some development sideways of quantitative methodologies in Croatia*, presentation at the National Sociological Congress of Croatia, Split, 2007., [www.hsd.hr/docs/split2007/culig-uvodno.ppt](http://www.hsd.hr/docs/split2007/culig-uvodno.ppt)

Unencumbered access of thinking leads only to one way of conclusion - that such a claim has the foundation. After all, the methodology in sociological research is treated as a kind of a “necessary evil” - that to the chosen topic, which is a serious, topical and socially relevant, we access with data and statistical indicators that were obtained “by the way” and from the inappropriate context. And all this, in other words, is testified in favor of the thesis that with each new development “step forward”, the methodology in sociological research, in fact, is recognizably moving away from the profession. And that, again, instead of accelerating the development of sociology as a profession, instead of the sociology rising to the level of the profession, the methodology in the sociological research is becoming a purpose in itself.

In addition, after all, speak and certain methodological experiences in the sociological research. The methodological manuals, are namely, operated with a few basic techniques in quantitative data collection for scientific inference in the sociological research - quantitative techniques of examination, experiment, and, finally, the classification and measurement.<sup>19</sup>

How, though, are they actually scientifically developed in the sociological research? Although BiH does not have a database that allows secure execution of research vessels, on the level of scientific assessment, the Court is extremely pessimistic. More specifically, in the sociological research is operated only with one of a group of these techniques - quantitative techniques of examination.<sup>20</sup>

This, however, is not the only problem. Indeed, any serious analysis of quantitative instruments of interrogation techniques - ie questionnaires, tests and scales that are in the implementation of these techniques applied - refers to the methodological problems associated with the way they were created. The reasons are manifold - the fundamental principles of logical or psychological strategies in the design of instruments are not respected, the problems associated with the verbal wording of the question are not taken into the account, and the difficulties that may arise in connection with understanding the true meaning of questions in the instrument, etc. . The reasons for this, of course, can be different - from the lack of methodological knowledge in the creation of an instrument of examination, to on the other hand, the practice of “copy-paste” technology, that is the literal translation and / or the use of “foreign” instruments.

In doing so, and for a questionnaire to be designed in accordance with the requirements of the methodological field, pre-testing is almost no applied. Amateur is then often approached to the structuring of the sample on which the

<sup>19</sup> See: Slavo Kukić and Branko Markić, *Methodology of Social Sciences*, Mostar: University of Mostar, Faculty of Economics 2006.

<sup>20</sup> Under quantitative techniques of testing, in contrast, involves collecting data using questionnaires (surveys and structured interviews), testing and scaling.

survey will be carried out - with the ultimate consequence of the fact that it is not even realized on the representative sample. Finally, methodological requirements are not compatible nor with the process of the implementation of the research that uses some of the techniques of testing - testing implementers, namely, are not organizing the prior preparation with field workers that would exclude or, at a minimum reduce errors and biases that in them may occur.

The methodological approach of the statistical analysis of the empirical material obtained by applying quantitative methodologies in empirical sociological research is also problematic. Inappropriate is, above all, the use of the "entrenched" statistical routines. It remains, in fact, at the level of the simplest descriptive statistics. Beyond that, we mostly do not even go. The more complex forms of statistical processing - that are completely forgotten - would, without any doubt, allow answers that from a simple statistical analysis can not be discern.

With regard to the statistical processing is, however, indicative and another methodological problem - that the resulting statistics fail to find the "hidden" information, what hides beneath percentages, numbers, the results of crossing. Often, in other words, there is a lack of intellectual creation, the ability to connect various empirical data and the possibility of drawing conclusions that are directly still invisible. Indeed. In the interpretation of the empirical is practiced the logic of the statistical and methodological methods.

#### ***4.2. Problems in the area of the qualitative sociological research***

Unlike the quantitative methodology, which is based on a positivist scientific paradigm, a qualitative approach to research means the concentration on the "narrative description of social phenomena and the explanation of the meaning and significance of certain events, processes, artifacts for social actors that constitute them or participate in their creation"<sup>21</sup>. If we realize the qualitative research in this manner, it is likely that their implementation entails the adherence to certain principles - both in planning the project or research design and in data collection and field work and data analysis.

Some of these principles, of course, deserve to be addressed in the context of this type of analysis. Qualitative, first of all, are considered the approaches that for the case studies take parts of reality, or phenomena that are not accessible to quantitative research. Such, for example, are the occurrence of which are quite complex in their properties. Such, then, are also the phenomena that are difficult to sort out as cause-and-effect relationship, in order to then keep one of them under control while others are questioned. These are, after all, phenomena

---

<sup>21</sup> Srbobran Branković, *Introduction to the methodology, qualitative research methods of social phenomena*, Megatrend, University of Applied Sciences, Belgrade, 2007.

which are difficult to measure the intensity or generalize certain findings - such as, among others, love, faith and the notion of the transcendental way, hate, good and evil, courage, conscience, morality and so on.

One of the characteristics of the qualitative research is, then, in relation to the goals they set for themselves. This is not an explanation of the cause-and-effect relationships as in quantitative research but rather a detailed description and typology, but also an understanding of the motives and the meaning of the individual parts and events of the researched phenomena, or phenomena as a whole. Or more specifically, if the objective of quantitative research is finding it in that which is different, in qualitative research it is just the opposite - seeking different in what is the same.

What does this mean, and how does the qualitative research differ from the quantitative is possible to clarify using different examples. Take, for example, the relationship between members of a community towards traditional values. A quantitative approach to this research is based on the classification of the studied population into separate groups of people in which they can find some elements of the sameness in all members of the group. Accordingly, the researched population can be divided into several groups - for example, the orthodox traditionalists who show no interest in newspapers, people to whom the tradition is important, but are showing some interest in different views and values, and, finally, those to whom tradition is irrelevant and are prone to constant research of new styles, new value systems, new forms of life. The qualitative approach to research is, however, aimed to search for differences within what is approximately the same. In other words, qualitative approach would concentrate on, for example, exploring the differences within the group of orthodox traditionalists - searching for elements by which they can distinguish them even though it comes down to a common denominator of values. Or, more specifically, the qualitative approach concentrates on those aspects of the research that are completely inaccessible to quantitative methodology. It is impossible, for example, with the positivist approach to explore phenomena such as fear, love, hate, good and evil, guilt or responsibility, morality, religion and God, transcendent phenomena in the broadest sense, and the like. Because, to explore this kind of social phenomena is not sufficient the objective description and the explanation of them. On the contrary, to investigate them a prerequisite necessity is the understanding of their meaning and significance given to them by people in their daily lives and their relations.

And these characteristics of the qualitative methodology affect and a different approach to other aspects of the research - a different approach, for example, to the standardization of its research project, they are characterized by data obtained during the investigation, and which are substantially different from

those which you can get from the quantitative research, the fact that they are - rather than the imperative of verifiability, which is characteristic of quantitative research - essentially defined by a completely different imperative of the persuasiveness of the description of the studied subjects, etc.

Understood in this way, it is logical that in the function of the operational qualitative sociological methodology are also the appropriate techniques to collect empirical data - including, above all, content analysis (although it may be a quantitative technique of the methodological paradigms), case studies, focus groups, depth interview and, finally, watching. How much, however, are these techniques used as a tool in domestic sociological research? The simplest - they could rather be treated as excesses than as regularities of the sociological research. And therefore, every praise would be deserved for the effort towards the organized effort of the sociological profession - no matter how here was questionable - to pay collective attention to sociological castes.

### ***4.3. Other methodological issues and problems of the BH contemporary sociology***

While with this, the list of methodological issues in contemporary sociological science of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not exhaust, in the context of this analysis, attention is drawn to two more. One of those groups that deserve the theoretical attention is, without doubt, the question of ethics in sociological research - as, indeed, and research in the field of social sciences in general. In doing so, however, must be mentioned how this would be quite wrong, therefore, for a question of ethics, to be reduced to a single dimension. On the contrary, it includes the need to question the commitment of researchers to society, questions of their professional integrity, preferences to the scientific deceits, the issue of resistance to various pressures and external influences, the question of the protection of human research and identity, the security of empirical data and information, and the like. In the group of noteworthy methodological issues could then be found a place and for the issue of a single BH database in the field of sociology, as well as research in the field of social sciences in general. Because without that and such databases sociology almost does not even have the theoretical chances to rise to the plane of the profession. The continuation of this analysis is, in other words, thinking about the addressed methodological problems.

#### ***4.3.1. Ethics as a precondition of sociological research***

There are many reasons why it is important to comply with the ethical standards in scientific research, including research in the field of science sociology.

Some of them, of course, applies in particular to note. One of such reasons is, with no doubt, in relation to the need to promote specific research goals such as, for example, the promotion of knowledge, truth, and avoiding the mistakes. And these goals, for example, is impossible to promote on the inaccurate empirical data or, possibly, the data that were falsified and are not the result of the empirical research.

The adherence to the ethical standards in scientific research is, then, important due to the fact that research often involves collaboration and coordination of a large number of individuals from different disciplines and institutions. Ethical norms and standards, in other words, promote values important for teamwork - values such as trust, responsibility, mutual respect, honesty, and the like. Many of the ethical norms are - as, for example, the standards relating to the protection of copyright - designed in a way to protect the intellectual property of the author, but at the same time to encourage the collaboration.

The meaning of the ethical standards is, of course, to help through them the construction of a sense of a responsibility of scientists to the public. In this position, among other things, are all determinants that contribute to the protection of the identity and integrity of the persons involved in the research.

Ethical standards can also be in the function of building public support for scientific research. It is a lot, for example, likely the existence of readiness for funding scientific research in case that it is developed the sense of confidence in the quality and the integrity of the research, but in the case that all of this is missing.

Finally, with many of the ethical standards in relation to scientific research are promoted other important moral and social values - social responsibility, human rights, research work that is consistent with the law, health and safety, etc. Ethical gaps in the research, more specifically, can significantly harm the people and the public in general.

Ethical dilemmas, whether it is a sociological research, can occur at all stages of the research process. They may, for example, occur at the very beginning, at the stage of collecting and using sources of literature. In order, however, to avoid them, the prerogative is ethical behavior towards other people's intellectual property and copyright law. And that behavior, in turn, implies an obligation for downloading each others' theoretical knowledge and empirical results to be accompanied by a reference to the source. The obligation of such behavior, after all, derives from the laws governing intellectual property and copyright. If such behavior is not followed by, the statutory rules, the most common consequence is the plagiarism - whether it is the plagiarism of other people's or our own tests. And this, in other words, means that the obligation to state sources, exists and in the case of the acquisition of parts of our own texts, where it is important that

ethical behavior excludes the possibility of taking their own texts as a whole, but it can go only to the extent specified by the rules of the code of ethics.

Ethical problems or doubts, then, can occur in the preliminary design phase of research. Researcher, however, is not prohibited from undertaking the research project of other researchers. If you decide for that, however, the rules of the ethical conduct require to be fully quoted the source of the taken project in order to meet the attitude of respect towards other people's intellectual property.

Ethical dilemmas also arise in addressing the respondents, therefore, people involved in the process of research and who serve as evidence to test the hypotheses. How to avoid this type of ethical problems or, however, reduce it to a minimum? Among other things, it is possible if we respect the right of potential examinees to be fully informed about the research that we want to realize, if then, from them on the basis of full information we obtain the consent to participate in research, if it is fully ensured the anonymity of respondents, but also their consent in connection with the presentation of the data obtained in this investigation, and the like.

Ethical problems can occur and during the gathering of the empirical data for scientific reasoning. And they can be avoided only if the researcher while collecting the data all the time preserves the objectivity of the research, if he captures the accurate and complete data and avoids selective approach in the decision which of them to take and to not lie to the respondents - in order to finally get them to participate in the research -either in conjunction with procedures or in connection with the duration of the research process and the like. Finally, in case you are in the collection of empirical data using a research agency, their involvement should be stopped solely on jobs of data collection, without being drawn into other activities that are reserved for the researcher's creative contribution - in which all the others have nothing to do.

Discussing the six domains of the research ethics, Kenneth Pimple believes that the ethical concerns of each research focuses around three categories of care - around the question, first of all, is it true, then, is that fair and, finally, in connection with the question whether it is wisely.<sup>22</sup> First, the question "is it true" implies that the empirical data must correspond to reality. Otherwise, if they are fictional or possibly forged, is not secured the criterion of truthfulness - and then, justifiably the question arises whether such a science is a good science?

On the other hand, the question "is it fair" involves a number of sub-questions - the relationship between researchers, that the question of authorship and copyright on the one hand and plagiarism, confidentiality and sincerity of the other hand, then the question of the relationship between researchers and the

---

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth D. Pimple, *Six Domains of Research Ethics: A Heuristic Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Science and Engineering Ethics*, 2002. No. 8, pp.191-205



research subjects (how complied are the rules of the so-called. informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, deception, the research risks and benefits, and the like), the issue of institutional integrity, then the relationship between researchers on the one side and their sponsoring institutions, funding agencies and the government on the other.

In the end, the question is whether all this is wise, what is, in other words, the relationship between research and the public good - whether it will more specifically, all lead to a better world in the future.

### **5. Unique database as a prerequisite for the uplift of sociological science to the plane of the profession**

Unique database is, in terms of modern science, one of the necessary pre-conditions of opportunities to uplift the science to the plane of the profession. This assumption, however, whether it is about the sociology as a science, is not assured. More specifically, at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina - and even its immediate administrative units - there is no possibility of insight into individual achievement, but also the scope of the sociology of a science as a whole. All this, again, does not enable the creation of any reliable picture of scientific achievements or individuals, or sociological community of BiH.

What to do to overcome this state of affairs? One of the lines of action is, without doubt, the establishment of a single vase of data that provides insight into the individual and sociological achievements of the scientific community.

How, however, to come to that? Modern information technologies, of course, this option significantly simplify. But in order for their services to be counted on, previously is required a consensus of the scientific community in the field of sociology of science - and then, if there is one, and the specific actions that would be operationally feasible.

It would, for example, have to exist the unique Center for database - at ANUBiH, the Society of sociologists of BiH, which is yet to be established, at a third location. It could, of course, with the same aim be taken in advantage the existing entity associations, but in this case for the same job had to be established the jointly Center for database. All of this, it is true, searches and material resources, but it would also be the beginning of a new and serious approach to business that is both strategic and very serious.



## 5. Instead of a conclusion

All pronounced orientation towards the empirical research is, with no doubt, the feature of the contemporary sociology of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such an orientation has to thank the support that empirical studies are provided by the various international associations, institutions and foundations, as well as the efforts of local institutions dealing with research and theoretical work - universities and institutes of social sciences and humanities, and individuals in their compositions.

Despite this, however, are still present many unexplored issues in the field of empirical sociological research - the question, for example, of the social stratification of the Bosnian society, the phenomenon of unemployment, poverty and social resistance, the public role of religion, the question of problems of the old and retired population, the problem of changes in social system, and the system of values in general, the question of the consequences of the last war on the social, especially on the inter-ethnic relations, the phenomenon of violence, alcoholism and drug addiction, sociology of the town and village, the phenomenon of depopulation as a social problem of modern societies in general, issues that are related to BiH as a transitional society, etc.

There are various causes of this state of affairs - from different developmental trajectories, which BH sociology had in relation to the sociology of Western societies, through the lack of financial support for the more serious sociological research to the methodological problems that the sociological science in this area encountered.

If it is talked, however, about the methodological problems of Bosnian sociology, they are evident in many aspects of its manifestations - both in the area of quantitative and qualitative field research. And both of them are directly related to the fact that sociology is still not able to separate from the level of a semi-profession, as well as methodological amateurism, that the methodology in sociological research is treated as a "necessary evil", and thus moves away from the profession and, in a way, becomes a purpose in itself.

With this indeed a question of methodological problems of Bosnian sociology are not exhausted. Worth to note in particular are those relating to compliance with ethical standards in scientific research - because of the ethical questions that lurk in all phases of the research process - from collecting literature and project development research to realization of the empirical research. Because, throughout the whole process, the sociologist researcher himself, in connection with the subject of research, of course, is forced to ask the same ethical questions - is it true, is it fair and, ultimately, is this a good idea, or whether will all this lead to the better world in the future.

On the other hand, part of the problem of Bosnian sociology is in fact related to the lack of a unified database that could serve as one of the prerequisites of achieving the serious insight into individual achievement, but also the scope of sociology as a science in general - and thus the assumptions of the possibilities to uplift the Social Sciences to the plane of the profession.

## Literature

- Benjamin Čulig. On some development sideways of quantitative methodologies in Croatia. Split: presentation at the National Sociological Congress of Croatia, 2007. [www.hsd.hr/docs/split2007/culig-uvodno.ppt](http://www.hsd.hr/docs/split2007/culig-uvodno.ppt),
- Branković, Srbobran Introduction to the methodology, qualitative research methods of social phenomena, Belgrade: Megatrend University of Applied Sciences, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/23863224/Metodologija-naucnog-istrazivanja.2007>.
- David B. Resniku, What is Ethics in Research & Why is it Important? <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis/>,  
<http://www.poslovni.hr/svijet-i-regija/bih-skupo-placa-nezaposlenost-mladih-253207>  
<http://www.poslovni.hr/svijet-i-regija/u-bih-bez-posla-553-tisuce-osoba-253091>
- Kukić, Slavo and Markić, Branko. Methodology of Social Sciences, Mostar: University of Mostar, Faculty of Economics.2006.
- Kukić, Slavo and Markić, Branko. (the manuscript for printing), “The methodology and technology of scientific research”. 2014.
- Lalić, Dražen and Mustapić, Marko. Research of social problems: White spots on the sociological map of Croatia. Vol XXXVIII. 2007. No 3–4: 133–149.
- Pimple, Kenneth. Six Domains of Research Ethics: A Heuristic Framework for the Responsible Conduct of Research, Science and Engineering Ethics (2002), 8, 191-205
- Tkalac Verčić, Ana, Sinčić Ćorić Dubravka and Pološki Vokić Nina, (2010.), Handbook of research methodology. Zagreb: M.E.P. d.o.o. 2010.
- Vrcan, Srđan. Football - Policy - Violence, Zagreb: Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Croatian Sociological Association. 2003.
- Županov, Josip. Preface to the book, The Young shortly before the third millennium, in: Vlasta Ilišin and Furio Radin, The Young shortly before the third millennium, Zagreb: Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, National Institute for the Protection of Family, Motherhood and Youth. 2002.