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SOCIAL DISTANCE IN VOJVODINA

Sociology and social distance

Sociological researches of social distance last for almost a century. Although the researches of social distance mostly belong to the form of sociometric quantitative procedures, where the attention is primarily on the measurement of degree, intensity and direction of personal and group relations (Bogardus, 1947: 306) – as closing or distancing – the essence of social distance has deep roots in the classic sociological theory and significant implications for core issues of modern sociology, above all in regards to that permanent and dynamic part related to the social stratification as unequal systematic distribution of key social resources: social power, social reputation and material wealth. The importance of the social distance arises, primarily, from inseparable connection of social distance with basic sociological issues of social structure and social stratification, regardless of the theoretical approach. Nevertheless, we should underline that firm connections of social distance with basic theoretical issues do not necessary have to lead to infinite and more vague theoretical discussions on social structure and stratification, nor to the attempts to pronounce “the death of classes” or to perform synthetic culturalization of the phenomenon of inequality (Pakulski and Waters, 1996). On the other hand, the analytic separation of social distance from social structure and social stratification provides a special approach to the issues of social structure, through empiric accessibility and measurability of the social distance. In case the social distance is understood as one of the aspects of the theoretical postulate on (functional) unity of the society (closing and integration), and also the aspect of those theoretical postulates leading to the necessary historically conditioned social discrepancy (distancing and disintegration), we have to assume that these theoretical postulates are empirically accessible through this social distance, or at least some of their aspects. In other words, if the social distance, based on the previous core theoretical postulates, leads to either integration or disintegration, and/or solidarity or anomy, than it is «empirical variable, changing for the same society from time to time and differing among various societies» (Merton, 1964: 26-27) same as the core sociological categories of integration and solidarity.

Social Distance in the Context of Crisis

Prior to the presentation and analysis of the results of the research of the social distance in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina from 2002, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the wider social-political context which left a significant mark on the last decade of the twentieth century. The beginning of the nineties marked a deep crisis in then Yugoslav society, in its internal structure, projected through re-composition of values and normative coordinates. Already fragile membrane of privileged social statuses of socialistic nomenclature, as well as artificially created and preserved social stratification, decomposed under raids of repressive politics of the former regime of Slobodan Milošević, radical nationalism of the new elite and war-torn economy. Multi-decade attempts to mask the huge social distance and blur it with truisms on unity and equality, collapsed along with the old economic order.

Same as many times before, war destruction and deep social disorganization were the opportunity for the new types of dramatic social stratification and huge social distances. Finally, the beginning of the end of decades of crisis, during the year 2000, announced the new economic and politic restructurings, with conjunctional fluctuations and new stratification criteria of the society. In relation to that, we should emphasize that a lot of attitudes forming the data on social distance in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina are mostly the result of the long-term crisis, as well as the motivation to evaluate the personal social status and the social statuses of the others in the light of democratic changes.

Social Distance in Vojvodina: Continuity or Discontinuity of Research?

Even though it belongs to the theoretical and research topics of sociology, as well as other related sciences, the social distance has not been researched intensively and more systematic during the last few decades in this region. We can say that there is a quasi continuity in the researches of the distance, but more in the researches of ethnic distance than social (Đurić, 1986). Bearing in mind its indicative multiethnic and multicultural character, Vojvodina was usually the subject of research of the ethnic distance, as well as special forms of social distance. Besides Đurić's research of the social distance of the socio-professional groups, there are just a few researches which have been focused on the social distance of those social groups (social strata, socio-professional groups and social classes), which represent the basis of the social and stratification structure and upon which relations and distances depends the total social dynamics. As one of the more important reasons for the lack of such researches on social distance we may state the "commonly accepted"

and politically controlled opinion that the socialistic order “does not recognize” the class, class differences and deep stratifications, hence neither the more significant social distances. However, the deep and very consequent social, political, cultural and economic changes in which Serbia was caught at the beginning of the nineties, and consequently Vojvodina, showed the mimicry of the socialistic regime and disclosed the deep social differences. From the end of the eighties and during the nineties the autistic transition in Serbia substituted the covering and suppressing of the social differences with deep, sudden and extremely risky social stratifications. Surely, there are no transitions (of social structures and complete social systems) without new and sudden forms of stratification and crisis, but there is no transition without their resolution and mitigation. That means that the obligatory initial crisis had to be overcome by new social and economic re-structuring, which would provide the continuous process of legitimate positioning of social groups at the market and would create the opportunities for the social mobility and gradual changes of their social statuses (hence the market position). Bearing in mind the absence of the key factors of transition, the social distance in Vojvodina is, as we will see from the compiled results, on one hand showed certain continuity (constants) with pre-transition period, but, on the other hand, the indicative differences in closing and/or distancing between different social strata.

In this research we have used the detail classification of socio-professional and stratum groups (based on the occupation): 1. (farmer); 2. (unskilled and semi-skilled worker); 3. (skilled and highly skilled worker, security and protection officer); 4. (foreman); 5. (craftsman); 6. (chauffeur, driver, taxi driver); 7. (salesman); 8. (caterer); 9. (technician); 10. (administrative officer); 11. (teacher); 12. (jurist); 13. (economist/commercialist); 14. (policeman/customs officer); 15. (military person); 16. (executive/official); 17. (journalist); 18. (engineer); 19. (lawyer); 20. (doctor); 21. (artist); 22. (University professor/scientist); 23. (judge/prosecutor/inspector); 24. (priest); 25. (home-maker); 26. (student/pupil); i.e. class-stratum structure generated by synthetic grouping, according to the slightly modified Goldthorpe and Lockwood scheme (1969). In the scheme of these two British authors, cited in the one of the most influential studies on class structure of the society (*The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*), socio-professional groups have been synthesized in three basic class-stratum groups: 1. *white collars*; 2. middle class; 3. manual workers (Goldthorpe and Lockwood, 1969: 196-197). Taking into account the wide range and diversity of socio-professional groups and strata included in the white collars and middle class, and thus inadequately differentiation of the final synthesized classes, the scheme used in our research contains four class-stratum groups: 1. high class (lawyers, doctors, judges, executives, officials); 2. white collars: administrative officers, economists/

commercialists; engineers, journalists, professors, teachers, priests, artists; 3. lower-middle class – non-manual occupations: foremen, policemen, military persons, chauffeurs, drivers, taxi drivers, technicians, salesmen, caterers; 4. manual worker class: unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers, craftsmen, farmers and house-makers. Students and pupils are excluded from the synthesized scheme. We should point out that the detail researches would require different synthetic scheme which would be more precise in the differentiation of the socio-professional and stratum structures, as well as in their synthesizing. That would result, we presume, in at least six synthetic class-stratum groups, by separation of skilled and highly skilled workers into a separate category, as well as by more precise differentiation of wide class-stratum structure of the *white collars* into routine and inventive non-manual occupations, but that shall be the task of some other future researches.

*Results of the Research of the Social Distance in the
Autonomous Province of Vojvodina*

In this research, we used the standard Bogardus scale of social distance with minimal modifications. The social distance was related to: willingness to accept marital relations; willingness to accept neighbor relations; willingness to accept friendship (willingness and degree of the respondents to accept the relations of their children in regards to the children from other social stratum); and willingness to accept the members of certain social stratum for political functions (President of State). Five degree scale has been constructed in the range from (1) – complete rejection (do not want any contact), to (5) – complete acceptance (gladly want contact).

The overall results of the research of the social distance in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina are primarily directed to the conclusions on the existence of certain stereotypical constants which shape the social relations, and thus the social distance between class-stratum structures of society. As we can see in the Table 1, the ranked intensities of the social distance in all measured categories show the explicit stereotype toward farmers and intellectuals, making them confronting poles of the social structure.

Would you like to have:	Mean
intellectual for the President of State	4.16
intellectual for a spouse	3.83
politician for the President of State	3.74
intellectual for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.73
doctor, lawyer for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.72
doctor, lawyer for a spouse	3.71
doctor, lawyer for a neighbor	3.69
intellectual for neighbor	3.67
artist for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.65
artist for neighbor	3.60
executive for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.56
worker for neighbor	3.56
worker for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.55
clerk for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.54
farmer for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.51
executive for neighbor	3.51
clerk for neighbor	3.50
farmer for neighbor	3.49
politician for the parent of children with whom your children are friends with	3.40
doctor, lawyer for the President of State	3.40
artist for a spouse	3.32
politician for neighbor	3.32
executive for a spouse	3.22
clerk for a spouse	3.20
worker for a spouse	3.18
executive for the President of State	2.90
farmer for a spouse	2.80
artist for the President of State	2.72
clerk for the President of State	2.47
politician for a spouse	2.43
worker for the President of State	2.42
farmer for the President of State	2.27

Table 1

It is interesting to notice that these polarities in the overall ranked order of social distances are related to political preferences (President of State) and class-stratum structures. Thus, we can clearly see the huge difference in the degree of social distance of peasant/farmer and intellectual as possible Presidents of State (intellectuals 4.16; peasants/farmers 2.27). Likewise, the difference in the degree of social distance of intellectuals and politician is

extremely visible in relation to the possible marriage. We can clearly see in the overall order that the positive preference toward intellectuals as possible spouses (3.83) is emphasized, whereas, on the other hand, there is a huge negative preference toward the politicians as possible spouses (2.43).

We can also see this in the tables of percentage distributions (Tables 2 and 3), which more precisely lead to those elements at the scale of social distance which predominantly shaped the final attitudes. It is obvious that the elements of the scale *yes, gladly* and *no, no way* in regards to the questions on political preferences (intellectuals/peasants-farmers) for the President of State and marital relations (politicians/intellectuals) have completely opposite polarities:

Would you like to have an intellectual for the President of State:		Would you like to have a peasant for the President of State:	
	Valid Percent		Valid Percent
Yes, gladly	48.07	No, no way	34.59
Yes, I do not mind	27.45	Rather not	26.16
I do not care	19.02	I do not care	22.87
Rather not	2.89	Yes, I do not mind	10.35
No, no way	2.57	Yes, gladly	6.02
Total	100.00	Total	100.00

Table 2

Would you like to have a politician for a spouse:		Would you like to have an intellectual for a spouse:	
	Valid Percent		Valid Percent
No, no way	31.08	Yes, I do not mind	37.03
I do not care	23.37	Yes, gladly	29.88
Rather not	22.73	I do not care	24.26
Yes, I do not mind	18.07	No, no way	4.98
Yes, gladly	4.74	Rather not	3.86
Total	100.00	Total	100.00

Table 3

Social Distance and Social Mobility

Of course, the level of social distance does not only express the manifest willingness to establish closer or more distant relation with other class-stratum and socio-professional groups. Mertonian sociology has drawn the attention that the latent functions for the sociology are much more important in most of the cases. In that sense, under the manifest surface of the measurable degrees of distance, we can frequently find the latent aspiration for the change of personal social status. Maybe this is even more emphasized by Mills' assumption that the individuals in tumultuous atmosphere of everyday experience, often consciously distort the picture of their social standing (Mills, 1964: 9). Mills' findings brought the attention to the fact that the direct aspirations and activities of average people are limited within the path in which they live, i.e. their opinions and their powers are focused on restricted world of their occupation, family and neighbors (Mills, 1964: 6). This attitude of Mills strongly correlates, on empirical level, with values within the variable of the social distance. As indicated in previous tables, the received data may indicate the latent aspirations of individuals to project changes of their own social standings through possible establishment of close relation with certain class-stratum groups. In other words, the willingness to establish closer or more distant relations with certain class-stratum groups may be understood as a potential willingness for social mobility.

As the first and one of the most significant indicators of social distance, we have researched the degree of willingness to accept marital relations between different social strata. Willingness to accept marital relations between different class-stratum and socio-professional groups and occupations may show, to a significant degree, the flexibility or rigidity of the social structure, i.e. capabilities for social mobility and functioning of stratification mechanisms. In relatively closed and inflexible types of social structure, in most of the cases, the stratification mechanisms act in direction of class-stratum auto-reproduction, hence there is small possibility that the marital relations should be the dominant mechanism of social mobility, i.e. the stratification mechanism which shall classify the individuals and social groups into strata. Furthermore, the findings of this research indicate that there are differences in auto-reproduction of class-stratum statuses between different class-stratum and socio-professional groups. Thus, we can see that farmers/peasants, unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and highly skilled workers deviate from other socio-professional groups since, in most of the cases, they do not often marry the members of the same socio-professional groups. Besides, we also have to point out that the category of *intellectuals*, and than the category of *doctors, lawyers* have a dominant preferential advantage in comparison to other categories, hence a large number of members from the group of man-

ual occupations, regardless of the high degree of possible auto-reproduction of class-stratum statuses, want the marriage with intellectuals. Although in the scope of this paper, we can not dedicate significant attention to intellectuals, taking into account their high level of preferences in regards to marriage, political preferences and friendship of their children (and based on that, presumably of the parents, as well), we can only mention that the social role and significance of intellectuals in the modern world is becoming more vague, hence this research does not give a clear picture what do respondents mean under intellectuals. Bearing in mind that the category of intellectuals is highly correlated with the category of doctors, lawyers, we can assume that the most of the respondents identify the intellectuals with highly educated and well paid technical intelligentsia, and not with left-orientated critical intellectuals (on differences between technical intelligentsia and intellectuals see: Gouldner, 1979; Manhajm, 1978; Marinković, 2003).

Would you like to have for the spouse:								
Occupation of the respondent:	worker	peasant	clerk	executive	politician	intellectual	artist	lawyer, doctor
farmer	3.67	4.00	3.07	2.80	2.40	3.40	2.53	3.07
unskilled and semi-skilled worker	3.57	3.24	3.33	3.29	2.52	3.29	2.79	3.52
security and protection officer	3.71	3.19	3.52	3.09	2.51	3.30	3.03	3.35
foreman	3.59	3.12	3.47	3.18	2.18	3.71	3.06	3.59
craftsman	3.52	3.06	3.31	3.22	2.49	3.45	3.21	3.40
chauffeur, driver, taxi driver	3.47	3.32	3.42	3.05	2.37	3.21	2.53	3.11
salesman	3.47	2.97	3.26	3.39	2.50	3.60	3.26	3.69
caterer	2.93	2.47	3.03	3.27	2.50	3.70	3.10	3.73
technician	3.26	2.83	3.22	3.18	2.35	3.77	3.34	3.69
administrative officer	3.23	2.84	3.39	3.33	2.45	3.76	3.11	3.58
teacher	2.75	2.45	2.91	2.94	2.18	4.14	3.49	3.75
jurist	2.80	2.50	3.10	3.25	2.35	3.90	3.10	3.45
economist/commercialist	2.81	2.64	3.25	3.44	2.32	4.18	3.38	4.05
policeman/customs officer	3.35	3.29	3.76	3.18	2.65	3.94	3.41	3.88
military person	2.50	2.88	2.88	2.13	1.75	3.75	3.00	3.13

	worker	peasant	clerk	executive	politician	intellectual	artist	lawyer, doctor
executive/official	2.86	2.76	3.28	3.28	2.45	4.24	3.66	4.03
journalist	3.06	2.35	3.00	3.06	2.71	4.41	3.76	4.12
engineer	3.25	2.86	3.20	3.17	2.51	4.12	3.47	3.69
lawyer	3.00	2.43	2.57	3.14	2.57	4.57	3.86	4.57
doctor	2.35	2.30	2.55	2.95	1.95	4.50	3.65	4.45
artist	2.76	2.47	2.59	2.65	2.53	3.59	3.71	3.59
University professor/scientist	2.14	2.29	3.00	3.57	3.29	4.57	4.14	4.14
judge/prosecutor/inspector	2.80	2.00	2.60	2.80	2.20	4.40	2.60	3.60
priest	3.33	2.67	3.33	3.00	2.00	4.67	5.00	4.67
house-maker	3.30	2.88	3.12	3.07	2.19	3.72	2.84	3.70
student/pupil	2.90	2.42	2.99	3.51	2.72	4.15	3.87	4.06
mean	3.18	2.80	3.20	3.22	2.42	3.83	3.32	3.71

Table 4

Through synthesizing of socio-professional groups into class structures, we can clearly see the absolute domination of intellectuals, as the category with which most of the respondents of all classes would establish marital relations, as well as the high degree of possible class auto-reproduction of manual occupations. On the other hand, we can also clearly see the high degree of social distance (huge distance) of all classes in regards to peasants (2.85). It is also interesting to notice large social distance of all classes in relation to the category of *politician* (mean 2.4) which – due to complete social and political events in Serbia in the last fifteen years – may be interpreted as the expression of complete mistrust in them. Unwillingness to establish marital relations with politicians, most likely, expresses the general mistrust in politics, but also the possible life risks that emerge as a consequence of marital life with politicians. This huge social distance from politicians is also the expression of the assumption on instability of marital and family life of the politicians.¹

Same as in other researches, here we can see the *rule of relative hope* with lower-middle class and class of white collars. Big aspiration of these classes to establish marital relations with intellectuals and doctors, lawyers (very small social distance), is in fact the expression of the aspiration for change of own status through potential marital relations. Thus, white collars show very large distance toward peasants, and very small distance toward intellectuals

1 It is not insignificant that the huge social distance in regards to possible marriage with politicians is almost equally expressed both by women (2.3) and men (2.5).

(4.03) and doctors, lawyers (3.76). The similar situation is also with lower-middle class which also shows very small distance toward intellectuals (3.70) and doctors, lawyers (3.65). In relation to potential marital relations with intellectuals (4.38) and doctors, lawyers (4.20), the members of the high class correlate especially high. This strong correlation is quite understandable and indicates the emphasized aspiration for auto-reproduction of high social statuses, and especially of material wealth. The similar aspiration for auto-reproduction of social statuses is clearly noticeable also with peasants/farmers. Namely, the assumption that one of the main reasons for large willingness of peasants/farmers to establish marital relations with peasants/farmers (4.0) is actually the aspiration for auto-reproduction of statuses and reproduction of descendants who shall provide, in the greatest extent, the preservation of property – land, as the basic, and often, only capital of the peasant, but also the aspiration to provide the reproduction of cultural pattern with similar value-normative system and manner of life. On the other hand, we can assume that the auto-reproduction strategy of workers (3.57 with unskilled and semi-skilled workers; 3.71 with skilled and highly skilled workers) is based on certain *status frustration* (*certain fatalism* which expresses deep suspicion in possible changes of social statuses), which usually lead to *discarding of success goals which are typical for mother culture* (Haralambos 2002: 357). Even though, part of unskilled and semi-skilled workers obviously want the change of social status through establishment of marriage with intellectuals (3.29) and doctors, lawyers (3.52), nevertheless, most of the respondents from working class opted for the marriage with the members of lower class-stratum and professional groups (workers, peasants, clerks).

In the table where the socio-professional groups are synthesized into social classes, we can also see more clearly the auto-reproduction aspirations of bearers of certain social statuses, as well as certain ambivalences. Thus the auto-reproduction of high class is expressed with high aspiration for establishment of marriages with doctors, lawyers (4.20) and intellectuals (4.38), but clear aspiration toward the same is also shown by the members of ‘white collars’, as well as lower-middle class. The bearers of manual occupations, on the other hand, show considerable ambivalence, since they are divided between the marriage with the members of their own, working class (3.57) and wish to marry the members of the intelligentsia.

Would you like to have for the spouse:								
	work- er	peas- ant	clerk	execu- tive	politi- cian	intellec- tual	artist	lawyer, doctor
High class	2.70	2.51	2.90	3.11	2.28	4.38	3.59	4.20
White collars	2.98	2.66	3.15	3.20	2.40	4.03	3.39	3.76
Lower-middle class	3.30	2.89	3.25	3.21	2.39	3.70	3.24	3.65
Manual occupations	3.57	3.16	3.35	3.13	2.45	3.41	2.98	3.43
Mean	3.22	2.85	3.22	3.18	2.40	3.78	3.25	3.67

Table 5

Social Distance and Politics

Important issue related to the social distance are also political preferences, i.e. willingness to accept members of different social classes and stratum as bearers of the most important political functions, in this case the President of State (see Parkin, 1978). As we can see from the received results, the sample in total shows distinctive preferences toward intellectuals as potential Presidents of State, whereas the largest social distances, i.e. the smallest preference has been shown toward peasants. Same as the most other shown distances, this one, as well, shows, on one hand, certain stereotypes, while on the other, the aspiration to resolve the politic and social crises during the nineties, and above all, the lost trust in politics and politicians with a new type of politician.

Would you like to have for the President of State:								
	work- er	peas- ant	clerk	executive	politi- cian	intellec- tual	artist	doc- tor
High class	2.02	1.90	2.00	2.72	4.10	4.44	2.85	3.43
White collars	2.24	2.14	2.35	2.87	3.71	4.28	2.69	3.33
Lower-middle class	2.47	2.26	2.46	2.86	3.64	4.06	2.73	3.39
Manual occupations	2.64	2.51	2.67	2.99	3.75	3.94	2.69	3.41
Mean	2.41	2.26	2.45	2.88	3.72	4.13	2.71	3.37

Table 6

In that sense, the high degree of preferences toward intellectuals is most likely the result of the assumptions that the intellectuals are neither clearly, nor tightly connected with particular party, political-ideological or some closer group interests. We may say that they are also on the layman level of the public opinion *freefloating intelligentsia*. Moreover, it is assumed that such degree of distance is the result of trust in knowledge, and not in political skills (or rather political rhetoric), as well as the trust in a new kind of technocratic modern government. On the other hand, the large degree of social distance toward peasants is probably the result of perception of peasants as stereotypic politically *uninterested* social stratum, which basic interest is directed toward land, tradition and agricultural work, and not toward modern social trends and general interests. Besides, the stereotype peasant often implies the opposition toward modern *knowledge*. When we compare the individual distributions of attitudes (in percentages) comprising this type of social distance, between the preferences toward peasants and intellectuals as potential Presidents of State, we recognize clear, almost inversely proportional scheme:

Would you like to have a peasant for the President of State:		Would you like to have an intellectual for the President of State:	
	Valid Percent		Valid Percent
No, no way	34.59	Yes, gladly	48.07
Rather not	26.16	Yes, I do not mind	27.45
I do not care	22.87	I do not care	19.02
Yes, I do not mind	10.35	Rather not	2.89
Yes, gladly	6.02	No, no way	2.57
Total	100.00	Total	100.00

Table 7

Conclusion

Same as in previous researches of this basic social phenomenon, which show all relevant features of social structure and stratification, this research has also shown that there are certain social constants – relatively permanent social distances of larger and smaller degree – between social strata in the stratification structure. As one of the basic results, we can specify the large degree of willingness (and hope) of social strata for social mobility, which is especially expressed in that aspect of the social distance related to the possible establishment of marriages with members of certain social strata. On the other hand, the majority of peasants (farmers) are willing to accept the marital relations with members of the same social stratum, which

indicates the high potential of auto-reproduction of social statuses. That also implies to the intellectuals and highly professional occupations, whose members are most ready for marriage with the members of their own social stratum. On the other hand, the aspiration of the members of lower-middle stratum (clerks, administrative staff, technicians, jurists) for change of their own social status through marriage with members of higher social stratum is visible, hence we can say that the presence of the rule of relative hope and belief in the possibility of social mobility is one of more important motivation factors in revitalization of the complete middle class in Vojvodina, regardless of the fact that here it is expressed through potential marital relations, and not also through some other, more important factors (economic and educational). Somewhat more expressed closeness toward intellectuals and doctors, lawyers on inter-generation level is also visible in that aspect of social distance (small social distance; desired closeness), related to the possible friendship of children whose parents belong to higher social stratum. This leads to the conclusion that the changes of social statuses and possible social mobility are significantly projected onto the next generation. Nevertheless, we have to notice that those are not significant differences; hence these relatively equal distances indicate social tolerance, at least in the case of social background of children.

Would you like to have members of the following classes/stratums as parents of children with whom your children are friends:								
	work- er	peasant	clerk	execu- tive	politi- cian	intellec- tual	artist	lawyer, doctor
High class	3.56	3.54	3.53	3.56	3.49	3.85	3.77	3.87
White collars	3.54	3.54	3.55	3.57	3.43	3.80	3.71	3.76
Lower-middle class	3.54	3.48	3.53	3.56	3.37	3.71	3.62	3.71
Manual occupations	3.58	3.52	3.52	3.50	3.34	3.57	3.52	3.59
mean	3.55	3.52	3.53	3.55	3.39	3.72	3.63	3.71

Table 8

Beside these characteristics of social distance in Vojvodina, it is also important to emphasize certain stereotypes (as constants) shown primarily toward peasants, as the social stratum toward which the respondents in general show large social distance in all measured aspects. Furthermore, extremely large social distance has been also shown toward politicians, most likely in significant degree as the result of their role in recent social and political events.

Finally, we can say that, besides the stereotypic constructed social distances toward certain social classes, strata and socio-professional groups, the researched sample does not show more significant social distances, which leads to the assumption on absence of possible disintegration or social destabilization processes.

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