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SOCIOLOGY AFTER POSTMODERN OR THE «VIRTUAL RATIONALITY» OF METAMODERN AS A PERSPECTIVE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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Ukrainian sociologists have long been sounding the alarm bell about the decline in interest for sociology and the catastrophic fall of contest for admission to high school in Ukraine for the relevant specialty. The author analyzes data from researches that differ in scope and location, and shows that the situation around sociology is characteristic not only of Ukraine. The emphasis on the analysis of the objective reasons for the decline of sociology allows us to conclude that these reasons are closely related to the transition of modern-postmodern-metamodern and symbolize the picture of the difficulties that contemporary science as a whole has faced in this transformation. Further reasoning within the framework of the theories of modernization and postmodernization of society leads the author to the conclusion that modernity as the "kingdom" of science and rational understanding of the world was replaced with postmodern denial and deconstruction of metanarratives, emphasis on irrationality, plurality, epistemological and ontological pluralism, when rationalities could vary and be supplemented by each other. Metamodern tries to reconcile the conflicting rationalities of previous moderns, bringing scientific intellection into the space of culture and at the same time offering a new rationality, conventionally designated by the author as "virtual", which is capable of combining the "hard" rationality of physical space with the multiple and even unreal rationality of virtual space. But then how can this relate to sociological science and practice, with the need to predict social processes? Here the author identifies several serious contradictions and considers the possibilities of promoting sociology, which are closely related to the metamodern ideology and may be interesting to colleagues.

Keywords: sociology, modern, postmodern, metamodern, virtualization of society, virtual rationality.

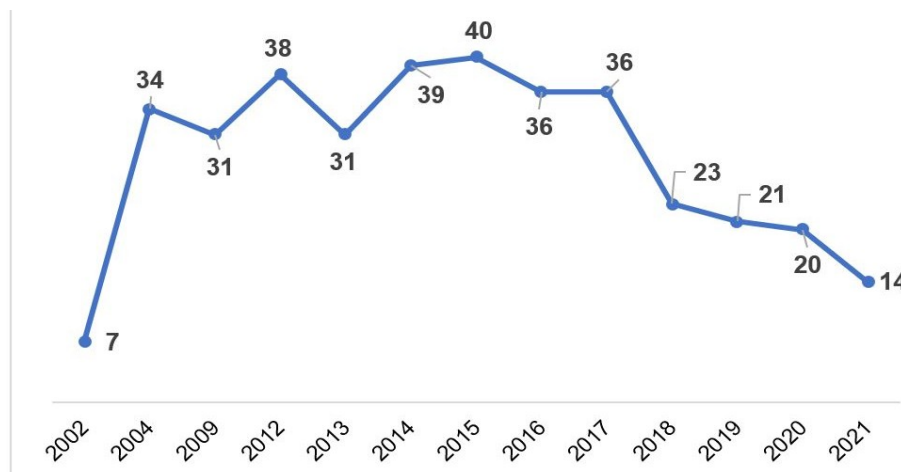
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Для цитування: Романенко С. Соціологія після постмодерну або «віртуальна раціональність» метамодерну як перспектива розвитку соціології. *Вісник Харківського національного університету імені В. Н. Каразіна. Серія Соціологічні дослідження сучасного суспільства: методологія, теорія, методи*. 2024. Випуск 52. С. 18-30. doi: <https://doi.org/10.26565/2227-6521-2024-52-02>

Problem statement. The current state of Ukrainian sociology is very disappointing. It is unpopular in society; there are practically no competitions for the specialty "Sociology" in Ukrainian universities. And this is not only the personal feeling and experience of the author, caused by the recent "departure to Otherworld" of very successful in the past Odessa school of sociology, associated with the names of Irina Popova, Nelly Pobeda, Emma Gansova. What seemed to be "made for centuries" sank into oblivion within a few years, and the remaining followers were scattered in all directions. We can talk for a long time about the past merits of sociology. For example, it was sociologists who predicted, described and measured the current social order – the information society, and proposed theories and methods that are still used by specialists in other fields of knowledge: political scientists, economists, demographers when analyzing contemporary society. At the same time, reproaches against sociologists are heard both from the lips of citizens and from the lips of sociologists themselves.

Analysis of recent research 2and publications. The sluggish debate about the scientific status of sociology continues in scientific publications to this day. In Ukrainian society, these trends have acquired a special scope. Sociologists are treated condescendingly at best. Self-affirmation by "kicking" sociologists is a national sport for Ukrainian politicians and journalists. And sociologists themselves are not shy to talk about their problems, which include, among other things, weakness and insufficiency of theory [1], shortage of qualified personnel [2], inability to obtain foreign research grants, poor knowledge of the latest information technologies and foreign languages, lack of publications in foreign publications, etc.

Against the backdrop of all this, sociological research data (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology) shows us a downward, literally "diving" downward curve of the popularity of sociology. For example, the traditional measurement of the attitude of the Ukrainian population to the data of sociological surveys, the last of which was conducted in December 2021 [3], indicates that the level of trust has practically returned to the "low start" position around 00s, when the President of Ukraine Leonid Kuchma signed the Decree "About the development of sociological science in Ukraine" [4].



Picture 1. The balance of trust and distrust in sociological centers (percentage of those who trust, minus the percentage of those who do not trust)

The situation in the world is also difficult. The year 2016 was significant in terms of the decline in public confidence in the results of sociological research, when one after another the results of sociological support for the US elections and the Brexit procedure were called into question [5]. The next US elections in 2020 also did not help restore the shaky confidence in the capabilities of sociology.

Picture 1 summarizes public opinion monitoring data and presents the views of the older generation of Ukrainians. However, a monitoring study of Odesa high school students also indicates a decrease in interest in sociology and sociological research. Since 1993 the monitoring research "High School Student" has been carried out by the Department of Sociology of Odesa I. I. Mechnikov National University with the support of the city Department of Education with an interval of 3 years. In 1993–2006 the research was led by Professor Irina Popova. Since 2010 – by author of this article. The respondents represented the community of Odesa high school students. 2006: N=400, $\Delta=4.91\%$; 2010: N=390, $\Delta=5.00\%$; 2013: N=390, $\Delta=4.96\%$; 2016: N=397, $\Delta=4.90\%$ (N-sample, Δ -error). Since 2021 the research has been carried out by the Sociological Association of Ukraine under the direction of professor Lyudmila Sokuryanskaya. More information about the monitoring and results-2021 can be found in the report [6].

From the answers to the question whether high school students know what the science of sociology does, it is clear that interest in sociology is falling, and the balance between those interested in sociology and those uninterested repeats the picture of the KIIS study (Table 1).

The interest of schoolchildren in the data of the survey in which they took part (Table 2) is of the same type.

Table 1

Distribution of high school students in Odesa regarding their relationship to sociology 2006-2016 and balance of interest (percentage of those who are interested minus percentage of those who are not interested)

Do you know what the science of sociology does?	2006, %	2010, %	2013, %	2016, %
Yes, but I would like to know more	63,7	56,4	68,5	51,6
No, but I would like to know	23,3	15,6	16,9	18,1
No, I am not interested in sociology	9,2	21,3	14,1	21,9
They did not answer	3,8	6,7	0,5	8,4
<i>balance of interest</i>	<i>74,0</i>	<i>44,0</i>	<i>70,8</i>	<i>39,4</i>

Table 2

Distribution of respondents by interest to survey results and balance of interest

Are you interested in getting acquainted with the results of the survey?	2006, %	2010, %	2013, %	2016, %
Yes	87,4	82,1	89,5	74,6
No	9,0	12,6	10,0	17,6
They did not answer	3,6	5,3	0,5	7,8
<i>balance of interest</i>	<i>74,8</i>	<i>64,2</i>	<i>79,0</i>	<i>49,2</i>

We did not even enter the answers to the question "Are you interested in admission in the specialty Sociology?" in the table, since the number of people wishing to study sociology at universities, having overcome the research error margin in 2013, was approaching zero.

In the last stage of monitoring, which was carried out at the end of 2021, the above characteristics were not measured, but instead the authors tried to measure attitudes towards the profession of sociologist, asking questions about which professions schoolchildren consider prestigious, which they are attracted to, and which they are most likely to choose for themselves in the future [6]. The results turned out to be quite interesting. In the rating of 28 professions, sociology was in the middle in terms of prestige and attractiveness: 14,4% of respondents consider the profession of sociologist prestigious and 9,6% – attractive. But at the same time, future school graduates are in no hurry to become sociologists: only 3,6% of respondents (within the margin of error) indicated that they are ready to choose the profession of sociologist for themselves in the future. By the way, the list also offered the profession of a scientist. It was called prestigious by 27% of schoolchildren, attractive by 8,4%, but at the same time, those willing to connect their future with science turned out to be even less – 2,7%.

The picture of the loss of the leading place by classical science in general and sociology in particular is confirmed by the ratings of the most popular specialties and professions in different countries of the world [7].

On the other hand, if such trends are noticeable not only in our country, then we can ask a legitimate question: are the difficulties in the development of sociology objective and connected with the establishment of a new social order? And the reasons for the current situation should be sought in this direction. What role did postmodernist denial of the rationality of society play in this? How did information technology get involved in these postmodern metamorphoses? What is the place of sociology in the "brave new world" of metamodern?

In the scientific literature of recent years, many works are devoted to metamodern. There are very interesting attempts to describe the trends in the transformation of science, including social sciences. For example, Anita Pipere and Kristine Mārtinsone focused attention on metamodern as a phase of cultural evolution and as a philosophical paradigm applicable to the further development of social sciences [8]. In the article "The matter of mental transformation of logos" the author [9] emphasizes the value of the interdisciplinary combination of psychological and sociological approaches for the analysis of methods of cognition and for revealing meanings in the metamodern epoch. Lyubov Bevzenko, analyzing a fairly marginal paradigm in sociological theorizing – the paradigm of complexity, – sees in metamodern opportunities for its legitimation and advancement [10].

In the following arguments, it seems important to us to concentrate on relation of real/virtual, rational/irrational in integrative sociological models of sociocultural changes, which will add to the metamodern transition a spatial dimension in terms of the movement from modern to metamodern.

Objectives of the article. Thus, the purpose of this article is reduced to the analysis of objective and subjective difficulties faced by sociological science in the contemporary «after postmodern» transition, and to attempts to consider the existing problems as opportunities for the further development of such an important science for every society.

The specific tasks are the analysis of each epoch in the transition modern – postmodern – postpostmodern, the description of the driving forces and characteristic features of each social order from the point of view of informatization, postindustrialization, postmodernization and virtualization of society theories, as well as the analysis of the state and role of science in general and sociology in particular, in them. Special attention is paid to the transformation of the concept of rationality in the context of the expansion of space and the formation of virtual space as a new topos of social interaction.

Let's start with an analysis of the objective conditions, that associated with the formation of a new society, which at the moment is difficult to determine monosemantic: the metamorphoses taking place with it are so profound and rapid.

Society that is Hard to Name

Presentation of the main material. Since the 60-70s of the twentieth century, the modern stage of development of society has traditionally been called information (F. Machlup, M. Porat), informational (M. Castells), post-industrial (D. Bell, A. Touraine), third wave society (A. Toffler), a knowledge society and even a wisdom civilization, which were supposed to replace the industrial society. At the turn of the millennium, when

globalist tendencies most visibly manifested themselves, scientists began to talk about a global or globalizing society (I. Wallerstein, Z. Bauman, E. Giddens) and related concepts: risk society, glocalization (U. Beck, R. Robertson), individualized/atomized society (Z. Bauman, U. Beck), consumer society (J. Baudrillard). Assessing the special role of information, communication and network technologies, some authors build the concept of a network society (M. Castells, J. van Dijk), others emphasize that digital technologies introduce the logic of virtual space into social relations, thereby virtualizing society, and say about virtual or virtualizing society (A. Krocker, M. Weinstein). There are also generalizing approaches that offer neutral names: digital/digitalizing society, which focus on its main characteristic – the change in the form of information carrier – the cause of all other technological and social changes. In other words, today there are about a dozen of concepts recognized by the scientific community that give the name to the new social order and no fewer alternative models that criticize the previous ones and propose new ones. The main feature of all these concepts is that it is the technological shift associated with the widespread introduction of information technology that can be considered as the cause of modern cultural and social transformations.

In the wave of the development and initial promotion of information technologies and the growing critical understanding of technocratic social transformations the idea of a postmodern renewal of the social system and the construction of a postmodern society (J. Baudrillard, J.F. Lyotard, etc.) as a society that sums up and completes the project of modern society has become widely popular. For our purposes, what is important is that postmodernism arose as a response to the growing "will to virtuality" [11, p. 41-42] in the ever-compacting, strictly regulated industrial world, which in the middle of the twentieth century had already cracked, and the sprouts of virtualization began to break through into it as freedom and denial of the past. But before it became a completed project, postmodernity was replaced by metamodernity (or post-postmodernity, emphasizing that it replaced postmodernity), which became a consequence, a product of hyperreality, virtual reality, informatization, digitalization of society and marks an irrevocable escape from reality, materiality, rationality, as the foundations of previous civilizations, to the use of what has never existed and does not exist, but in new realities it can be valuable and applicable. This can be called the construction of "virtual rationality", a new meaningfulness, reasonableness, practicality, scientificity and evidence, which uses in its arsenal the objects and methods of not only physical, but also virtual space. At the same time, the opposition between the rational and the irrational is leveled out, since everything is possible in virtual space. Let us trace the logic of development and unity of all these discourses, as well as the role and place of sociological knowledge in them.

Modern as the "Father" of Sociology and Contemporary Science in General

The basic ideas of informatization of society occurred in sociology in the 70s. Perhaps this is precisely why the theories of the information society seem very persuasive and logical; moreover, the authors themselves necessarily pointed out the logic and rationality of their prognostic-futurological reasoning [12]. Theories of informatization are a product of the modern epoch with its reverence for scientific knowledge, for taking it as an axiom that a rational, logically explainable world is the only correct solution. That everyone strives for rational behavior, although it is not always possible to abandon traditionalism and affectation in the individual behavior, but in general society should be characterized by forward movement along the path of rationality and progress, in which the leading role is given to science and, in particular, sociology.

The modern epoch at that time arose as a sociocultural project opposed to traditional society – a society governed by customs and traditions, a collective way of life and accordingly a traditional economy based on cooperation; class organization of society, in which there was practically no social mobility. "Love as the principle, order as the foundation and progress as the goal – that is the fundamental character of the final order which positivism starts to establish, by systematizing our entire personal and social existence through the invariable combination of feeling with reason and action" [13, p. 584]. This probably the most famous quote from Auguste Comte's "Course of Positive Philosophy" perfectly characterizes the main ideas of modern. The development of science and technology (at that time, of course, not informational) was caused by the processes of industrialization, secularization and urbanization, which led to the destruction of the traditional social order, to rationalization, optimization of social relations and individual behavior. Modern science – the most powerful and most beloved... child of modernity – has led to a radical change in views on the world. The core and essence of science is the rational procedure of cognition.

The image of a man from the modern epoch [14, p. 5-11] is associated with a special worldview based on the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment. He strives to know himself and others, logically comprehends the events happening around him, queries and demands rational answers to all questions, including religious ones, and sincerely believes in the possibility of obtaining reliable, verifiable answers to them. The words "scientific progress", "revolution", "freedom", "equality", "humanism", "human rights", belief in the possibility of universal prosperity are not just slogans for him, but a reason for action, self-development, aspiration to the future, rejecting traditional attitudes and methods, responsibility for one's choices and actions, the habit of relying on oneself, but still taking into account the actions of other equally free individuals. Exactly this has destroyed the traditional religious, communal way of life, has laid the foundations for perception of society as a system of interacting

individuals, has given an impetus to the development of empirical sociology and has made it necessary for the successful functioning of all social subsystems, since it was it that fulfilled the necessary communicational function between self-sufficient individuals, primary cells of society and social institutions. In this sense, modern sociology is a beloved child of modernity.

The concept of virtualization of society considers the "reification of society" as an important function of modernity. Reification is understood not only simply as an increase in number of artifacts or the overgrowing of human society with things, although this ultimately also has happened. The desire of modern to empirically comprehend the world: to know, to feel, to touch everything, – could not lead to this reification. Perhaps the clarifying term "objectification" would also be appropriate here, moving us somewhat away from F. Jameson's understanding and adding shades of K. Marx's interpretation. The scientific, empirical approach, the secularization of the world contributed to its reification, the rejection of everything imaginary or taken for granted, from all that cannot be objectified or presented in evidences as a fact. The modernist desire to comprehend and possess the world of nature has led, among other things, to the objectification/reification of the social order. A striking example of this is presented in the work "The Rules of Sociological Method": Emile Durkheim proposes to consider social facts as things, albeit not material, but things of the same rank and significance [15].

In the sociocultural dynamics of Pitirim Sorokin, modern corresponds to a sensual culture, which is based on the empirical perception of the world through the senses and rational thinking, when the main value is the person, his health, comfort, well-being and longevity. The purpose of social institutions of the sensual phase of development is exclusively utilitarian: preservation of human life, protection of possession and property, peace and order, happiness and well-being of society as a whole and the ruling elite [16]. Max Weber places emphasis on the presence of rational institutions and the coercive apparatus of the social institutions of his contemporary society, and the individual himself represents the upper limit of meaningful behavior, for sociological research he is its only bearer [17].

Ultimately, in modernist discourse, society is perceived by a person not only as a process of interaction/communication with people around him, but as a complex system of actually existing institutions of the state and civil society, it acquires the character of objective reality, is embodied/objectified in social institutions – a complex of universal and abstract norms that regulate the interaction of people and transform this interaction into a system of social roles. And in this sense, modernist sociology has a clearly defined object of study and clearly understood research methods.

Postmodernity Double Impact

In the second half of the twentieth century the conflict between science and the imaginary/virtual acquired a visible character; it was embodied in the postmodern state – distrust of metanarratives (big theories, mass ideologies) such as absolute freedom, the knowability of the world by science, the need to conquer nature for the well-being of man and humanity. According to postmodernists, mastery of nature and control over social processes by no means freed humanity from hunger, diseases, natural disasters, injustice and oppression. Society as a single integrity is no longer an object of study, but a consequence of "paranoia of common sense", and therefore, according to Jean-Francois Lyotard, we, sociologists, are losing the subject of study [18]. The decomposition of grand narratives leads to the atomization of society, to the transition of social groups into a state of a mass of "individual atoms thrown into the absurdity of Brownian movement" [18, p. 15] under the influence of information obtained from language games. This is how social connections arise in modern society. But then the study of society is reduced to the study of language games, and exactly they are proposed as a general research method.

As a result, critique of modern sociological practices: such as the development of methods for rationally measuring society's condition and mass sociological research, led to the fact that sociology almost lost its special method of studying society. A particular virtue for postmodern sociologists was to build a scientific career without conducting mass sociological research. Fortunately, during this period, sociologists, gravitating towards the empirical study of society, focused their efforts on developing the qualitative methods and their widespread testing in social analytical practice, which ultimately made a fairly extensive contribution to the development of the sociological methods. However, the seeds of doubt sown in the capabilities of the sociological method had a significant impact on the attitude of society towards sociology as a whole.

In the categorical apparatus for describing new times a person of the postmodern epoch no longer appears as a rationally acting or psychologically designated subject, but dissolves in the forms of language order or presentation of cultural meanings. Thus, the communication component becomes essential in the postmodern condition of society, and "that language assumes a new importance. It would be superficial to reduce its significance to the traditional alternative to manipulatory speech and the unilateral transmission of messages on the one hand, and free expression and dialogue on the other" [18, p. 16], but, on the other hand, this feature of modern communication cannot be excluded from consideration. That is why J. Bataille, J. Deleuze, J. Baudrillard return to modern scientific circulation the Platonic concept of simulacrum as a simulation, a fake, a pseudo-thing, something that opposes the "real", when signs and symbols acquire greater power and meaning

than real things and actions [19], and this is a manipulation with the virtual as something that does not exist. There is a virtualization of social institutions in every sense. Firstly, as an ironic simulation of values, norms, structure and functions, when some elements lose their meaning over time or are filled with a different meaning. Secondly, as the creation of alternative institutions in the virtual space, what can be defined as the double institutionalization in which we find ourselves today, and more over we enthusiastically provide accountability to such twin institutions. In this creation of mannequin institutions postmodernism is clearly manifested as a continuation of modern after its ideas have exhausted themselves.

In a postmodern society a person is increasingly immersed in the process of simulating modern institutional practices. Language games make it possible to simulate environmental activity, not so much protecting nature as fighting the modernist principles of its conquest. For example, newfangled environmentally friendly methods of generating electrical energy (wind, solar power plants) are not yet capable of replacing hydrocarbons or nuclear energy, which are so hated by everyone, but the active fight against them, as a heritage of modern, continues. At the micro level everyone strives to use biodegradable plastic and energy-saving light bulbs, thus clearing their conscience of the problems of polluting the world's oceans and saving energy. At the same time, we don't think about how much water our "sterile" postmodern world requires for daily showering, washing an incredible amount of clothes or consuming bottled water; how much energy will be required to recycle energy-saving light bulbs and batteries; how many disposable items we use in everyday life; how much electricity is consumed by constantly turned on gadgets, routers and chargers left in the socket; how much electricity we waste in mobile devices, constantly charging/discharging their batteries, just to surf the Internet or view posts on social networks. In the economic sphere, rational consumption and advice to live within one's means are replaced by recommendations to live on credit using the virtual capabilities of modern banking systems. Although the family is still declared as a primary value, but the functions, norms, and social roles of this institution are changing unrecognizably. All these daily simulational practices are moving us further along the path of virtualization of society.

Why did the ideas of postmodernism arouse such interest and widespread acceptance in their time? From our point of view, because they made it possible to include elements of the virtual, imaginary, bright, attractive, albeit irrational, into the boring, ordinary, strictly regulated reality of modern. Instead of boring evidences and ordered, unambiguously interpreted facts, there is an easy, fascinating language game that interweaves polysemy, irony, eclecticism and allusions, alternative, often mutually exclusive points of view. Let it be an imitation, let it be difficult to prove and implement in practice, let it be leading to unpredictable consequences, but it is impressive, is allowing you to agitate supporters and opponents, and most importantly, is allowing you to use what does not exist. Postmodern has realized the will to virtuality and has pointed out the path for our high-tech civilization to rush further.

However, the postmodern epoch turned out to be quite short. The postmodern cynical and ironic denial of modern should have been replaced by some more pragmatic idea. Postmodern, which was considered by many as an epoch replacing modern, today appears rather as a transitional stage between "modern" and a "brave new world", which is conventionally designated as post-postmodern. The point is not even in the name or number of prefixes post-, but in the fact that postmodernism, trendy in its time, has formed public attitudes bearing the stamp of disappointment on the ideals of the Enlightenment, has shaken the belief in the omnipotence of rational comprehension of the world, knowledge and science and, thereby, has abolished aspiration to the future and faith in the progress of human society.

The environmental issue has turned out to be the cornerstone and has put an end to the modern project. It became evidence of the end of human's unlimited domination over nature and pointed to the impossibility of the utopian hopes of the New Age for the complete and comprehensive conquest of nature by a man [20]. The belief in the omnipotence of science and technology has led to the loss of the general spiritual condition of human forms of knowledge that go beyond the boundaries of communicative competence and analytical mind. There occurred a gap between the sphere of spirituality and the sphere of richness, which led to the displacement of spirituality from the spheres of politics and economics. Postmodern takes on the role of a brake, delaying the onset of what was actually supposed to come after the collapse of the utopian historical and philosophical expectations of modernity: destruction. Man's destiny is to destroy himself. But only first he must become worthy of this; for now – not yet. The postmodern epoch represents the time that remains for people to become worthy of death [20]. Right here, rationality is replaced with the praise and glorification of the irrational. The role of reason and science in the postmodern version seems exaggerated.

At this same stage the contradiction between the goals of creators of sociology as a positive science, far from all kinds of games, based on the achievements of the exact sciences, striving for empirical confirmation of conclusions, verification of results, becomes obvious. And in general, the difficulties of the exact sciences faced with, become explainable. Language games will not help to diagnose patterns of voting behavior or to launch a satellite into orbit. But in the brave new world only those sciences will "survive", that have incorporated language games into their

arsenal and any developed theory "is useful, namely as a generator of ideas..., and a scientist is before anything else a person who "tells stories". The only difference is that he is duty bound to verify them" [18, p. 60].

Post-postmodern Catharsis

Considering the chain "modern-postmodern-post-postmodern", we stopped at the fact that the postmodern atomization of sociality in flexible networks of language games was not the end point. The fight against modernity – the ideas of scientific progress and rationality – was not long-lasting; one generation was enough, and today more and more often authors come to the conclusion that postmodernity, as an idea that denies modernity, has exhausted itself [21]. It is replaced with the concept of metamodern, as one that comes after postmodern, and is also "with", "between" and "beyond", while continuing modernity and constantly oscillating between the enthusiasm of modernity and postmodernist ridicule, moving from apathy to hope. Later there appeared a clarification which indicates that the prefix "meta" is used in the meaning "above" [22]. And the emphasis here is placed on the fact that this is not a theory, not a philosophy, not a program, not a manifesto, not a movement, not even a concept. Metamodern is "a structure of feeling, a mood, an attitude "dependent"... on the overall state of the organism, its level of energy, the level of resources at its disposal for coping with environmental challenges"; it is the degree of stress that results from the relation of resources to the challenges it faces. It is also a universal, holistic feeling that touches on economic, political, and perhaps environmental crises, and rises the alternative ways of thinking; it is the democratization of computer technologies that brings the possibility of developing a collective consciousness as much as it allows for an unprecedented level of control. In demographic this is, in particular, the maturation of generation Y (millennials), who want to lead a life different from their parents [22]. Such unpretentiousness for scientific status, however, should not be deceptive and misleading. After all, postmodern also first emerged in the form of postmodernism as a set of styles in art and a state of culture after modernism.

Thus in metamodernist practices the description of language games itself represents a specific language game, and, in fact, the authors propose a new language for describing our time, where deconstruction, parataxis, imitation are abandoned in favor of est-ethical concepts of reconstruction, myth and metaxis [21], where postmodernity remains only one of many possible discourses, where seemingly incompatible, contradictory ideas are combined, and at the same time, none of them, in principle, have anything to do with the truth, and we ourselves choose it (the truth) based on our chosen system of meanings. From our point of view, this approach is a direct consequence of the processes of digitalization and virtualization of society, is a demonstration of the victorious logic of the virtual, when everything is possible, even things that can never happen. This is the new "virtual rationality", which now uses not only language game, but actively combines it with visual and audio series, reinforces it with new artefacts in the form of metamodern art and, thanks to a fully formed virtual space, acquires the character and status of objectivity, evidence, the possibility of rational comprehension, and therefore cannot simply be transferred to the status of irrational or fictional/unreal.

Metamodernity proposes to describe an emerging sensuality, the key characteristics of which could be naivety, sincerity and seriousness, where the tactics of simulation/imitation are replaced with myth and metaxis (which also continues to erode the boundaries between the virtual and the real and feed a new "virtual rationality"), melancholy with hope (albeit fictitious, having no basis in reality), and exhibitionism with engagement. The lack of directionality of such fluctuations repeats the logic of postmodern, in a point that people do not move towards a natural but unknown goal, but pretend that they are moving towards it in such a way, that give them opportunity to develop. This is movement for the sake of movement, a search for truth without a firm intention to find it. Postmodern is uninteresting, unpromising, and modern is impossible, but such a constant return to the past is neither an attempt to laugh or parody, nor an attempt to mourn or fill nostalgic. You need to look back in order to see the future. The authors also precisely indicate the place assigned to metamodern: a-topic metaxis. It is a place for which there is no place, a territory with no borders, a position with no limits [21]. This confirms our thoughts about the virtualization of society about the development of "virtual rationality" as the engine of transformations in postmodernity and after it, and is another indication of the virtuality of metamodern ideas and their "objectification" in the now fully formed virtual space [23].

For all their apparent "frivolity" metamodernists have noticed a rather important detail of contemporary culture – the need to reproduce children's sincerity, innocence, naivety and simplicity in the world of adult cynics [21]. Metamodern, unlike postmodern, is no longer in a fight with modern, the ideas of rationality and science, but offers its virtualized light version, which sets out the necessary minimum of the heritage of modern epoch, such as "do not insert your fingers into the socket" and "wash your hands before eating". This is a kind of modern emulation with emphasis on a new virtual rationality. From our point of view, this is a fundamental point in order to assess the place of science in metamodern. This is no longer a deity, as in modern, to whom there were sacrificed time, strength, health and lives, and not a fight against deity, as in postmodern, but an icon in the red (icon) corner.

Today metamodern is the most developed concept. However, quite independently of each other, other post-postmodern researchers came to similar conclusions and assessments. For example, the author of digimodern Alan Kirby notes that postmodernism must be replaced with a new paradigm of cognition, which is emerging in the context of digital technologies and contemporary social circumstances. The merging of the real and the virtual

through digitization is the essence of digimodernity. He also states infantilism, sincerity, childishness, and mythology as the cultural dominants of post-postmodernity, notes the realism of the new mythology, embodied in a variety of pseudo-documentary projects, and the infinity of narrative, implemented in an infinite number of infinite universes [24, p. 279-280]. In this vein, it becomes clear the question that is quite often seriously asked by adults from monitor screens: "What superpower would you like to have?" This, it seems to us, characterizes the depth of the current generation's immersion in virtual rationality.

Robert Samuels' automodern [25, p. 175-203] focuses on how new technologies are reshaping the fabric of social relations. High-tech globalization creates modern in reverse, where politics turns out to be a matter of business and entertainment, and science is popularized and turned into a commodity. Continuing D. Bell's ideas about the epoch of disunity automodern notes that, despite the globality of the Internet, which has united everyone, the gadgetization of society becomes a means of isolating subjects in a cocoon of their own cultural preferences, in which a person tries to hide from the vibrations of the public sphere. Trying to analyze various spheres of sociality, automodern emphasizes the virtualization of the space of social interaction, irony, frivolity, and a mixture of the real and the virtual. The social turns into the remains of a society permitted by neoliberalism, a loose set of "weak ties". It becomes something technical, cross-cutting and conditionally open, the space between you, me and our friends. It can no longer be localized only in real or virtual space, it is everywhere.

Gilles Lipovetsky considers hypermodernity as another step on the path to overcoming postmodernism. He emphasizes that the new world is the world of the second modern [26, p. 158], in which the object is replaced with attributes/simulacra of the object and declares the disappearance of the body, the destruction of the body by virtual reality, which describes one of the mechanisms for building a new virtual rationality. The value of new technologies is that they allow interaction with such simulated/virtualized objects without any restrictions. Hypermodern is modern in reverse. If modern is associated with seriousness and growing up, then hypermodern is associated with a return to childhood and the infantilization of society. If in modern the rationality of the Modern Times dominated, then in hypermodern the virtual rationality dominates.

A distinctive feature of altermodernity (Nikolas Bourriaud) is its temporality, or rather the perception of reality as a combination of many temporalities [27, p. 257-258]. Since, thanks to the Internet, there are no unexplored places left, the only area in which there can still be a secret is not the spatial, but the time continuum. Contemporary creativity closely interweaves text and visual image, time and space, mixes various national cultures, signs and symbols peculiar to different historical periods, thereby erasing any boundaries, including temporal ones. This is another one stroke to the understanding of virtual rationality, in which everything is possible, even what happens in another time dimension.

Cosmodernism (planetarism by Christian Moraru) involves a "unique synthesis of science, culture, religion and society", in which everyone will have the opportunity to become an active participant in a common culture and in a new spirituality "free from all dogmas". Cosmodern consciousness "is the path to a new solidarity that transcends political, ethnic, racial, religious and other boundaries". The modern world is seen as "a network of ideas and images, people, cultures, religions and spiritualities" united by the power of imagination [28]. Namely the virtuality/imagery of the world gives it universality, thanks to which a person, endowed with special tools (language and general culture), gliding around the planet (the image of which is the well-known photographs of the blue planet from space), feels at home everywhere.

Performatism (Raoul Eshelman), another embodiment of metamodern, is felt as an epoch whose contours are barely discernible, and we can only perceive its naivety and simplicity and, most importantly, feel love for it. Love is the optimal condition for innovation [29]. The proofs and clear arguments of modern, or the allusions, paradoxical statements, ironies and endless cross-references of the postmodern language game, are replaced with performance/presentation endowed with a holistic force of feeling that resists to dissipation in surrounding contexts, in which we may either believe or not. In the context of our reasoning, this is another way of virtualizing rationality through the rationalization of the virtual.

All these discourses, like a mosaic, complement the overall picture of metamodern. What they also have in common is that society is tired, or perhaps simply is no longer able to perceive the deconstruction, arrogant irony, and relativity of postmodern. It has fulfilled its role: it has shaken the confidence in the ideals of modern, has changed our ideas about the world from orderliness and certainty, to unreliability and unpredictability. In the context of worsening of global problems of humanity (climatic, economic, political, demographic), which in the last quarter of the 20th century used to be solved almost exclusively through postmodern incantations and simulational practices, humanity is returning to the lost universal ideas of sincerity, simplicity, faith, hope, love, a kind of naive new romanticism, that is a departure into the world of fantasies and dreams, into the virtual world. It is no coincidence that almost all of these theories are called "...moderns", since they, like a pendulum, swing from an intuitive sense of vital importance and the need of modern rationality to the virtual lightness of postmodern, from irony to sincerity and back... But a return to the harsh reality of modern is no longer possible, simply because it is not desirable. This is the modern, in which rigid logic based on rationality is replaced with the logic of the virtual, where everything is possible, even what can never happen. This is modernism on the ruins of modern, or

rationality for those who do not know what it is. Metamodern is the logic of culture, the dominant ideological structure, the boundaries of the worldview of the 21st century [22].

The Place of Sociology in the Metamodern World. Asociological Nature of Metamodern Ideology

In this part of the article, we will summarize our reasoning about the transformations of science and rationality and will try to answer the main question posed at the beginning: what will be the place of sociology in this new public discourse and in the dominant ideological construct, if we trust our feelings and assume that metamodern adequately reflects contemporary realities? Sociology as a science of the modern epoch was built on rationality, humanistic principles, and faith in the power of the human mind and humanity as a whole. Its task was to study society by using the methods of the same degree of accuracy as methods of natural science. Among its functions many sociologists, including Irina Popova, Elena Yakuba [30, 33], especially emphasized the ideological function, while sharing the concepts of ideology as a system of ideas that express and protect the interests of social groups, and also gave an idea of society through the prism of these interests, and of sociology as a science that reveals the patterns and mechanisms of the real development of society. "If ideology is focused on social interest, then sociology is focused on a true reflection of social processes" [30, p. 19]. At the same time, the authors warned about the danger of turning sociology into a political instrument, which had always been hanging like a sword of Damocles over the scientific nature of sociology.

Alain Touraine in "The Return of the Actor" directly stated that "sociology was created as an ideology of modernity", quite often it served as a justification for the activities of politicians of various stripes, but most often it was the ideology of the center, social integration and identification of national society with modernity [31]. Therefore, we can safely talk about the sociological nature of the modern's ideology, in the sense that, starting with de Tracy's project, it sought to rely on scientific knowledge about society. The ideological function of sociology was to understand the process of genesis and spread of ideologies, to study and classify them, to understand why and how they arise, whose interests they express. And on the basis of this knowledge to build your own worldview, getting rid of misconceptions and prejudices and relying on unbiased scientific knowledge about society. Postmodern language games changed the nature of ideologies to anti-sociological [31], since the ability of sociology to rationally understand and explain society was questioned, and the "will to virtuality" turned ideologies into simulacra.

Metamodern ideologies can be characterized as asociological. They are characterized by the fact that they rather use old ideological labels without much desire to study, to understand what they are, why they were created. Virtual rationality has turned living paradigms, ideas and practices into image presentations and performances, into online games, into battles between representatives of different ideologies without a deep immersion in the ideas, meanings and knowledge of sociology. Perhaps this is what about the picture of the monitoring's [6] last stage results from the introduction to this article tells us: when a fairly positive attitude towards science in general and sociology in particular does not arouse much interest and desire to engage in them, to immerse in the scientific understanding of ongoing social processes, which, along with insufficient funding for the scientific sector in Ukraine, creates a picture of stuff deficit and causes the threat of an outflow of young scientific personnel to other areas of employment.

Another point concerns the actual problems of Ukrainian sociology, which are associated with the weakness of its civil society, as the main customer and consumer of sociological research, both theoretical and empirical. The formation of Ukrainian statehood began during the sunset of postmodern, when the "meaningless Brownian movement" of atomized social groups (according to Lyotard) reduced to zero the chance of creating interacting and closely intertwined associations and public organizations. Therefore, domestic empirical sociology turned out to be in demand by disparate politically engaged groups interested in manipulating sociological research data. This can explain the numerous scandals surrounding completely valid data from sociological centers and the frightening appearance of the balance curve of trust and distrust in the results of sociological research from the introduction to the article. And most likely, this situation will persist until Ukrainian sociology finds its true owner – Ukrainian civil society. In order to avoid entering into a difficult scientific discourse regarding ideology and civil society in the final part, let us borrow metamodern ideas of naivety and childish spontaneity, and present a view of the new history of Ukrainian sociology in the form of a parable "About the Piggy and the Truffle".

Ukrainian sociology in its history of formation and institutionalization reminds... a piggy that found a precious truffle in an outlandish forest, brought it to its owner, but there was no owner. The old one – civil society from the times of the USSR – evaporated, the new one was never discovered. And it had to try the truffle itself. Appreciating all the charm and unusualness of the taste, it began to offer the truffle to everyone it could find. But others didn't need it: some didn't like the taste, some didn't like the look, some didn't like the smell, some didn't like the price... And since then, the poor half-starved piggy has been running through the forest, digging up truffles, bringing them to people who are willing to take them on any terms, even unfavorable ones. Some people pay for it, but very little. Others try it for free, grimace and spit, saying it's disgusting and of little use. Still others, having learned from overseas media about the magical properties of truffles, expect that it will

solve all their problems. They buy, try, get disappointed, some even take the unfortunate piggy to court, saying that this truffle is not so magical, and the piggy is a liar! Soon, there appeared real scammers, who, calling themselves piggy's disciples, place an advert on the Internet: "We sell truffles inexpensively!" And under the guise of truffles, they sell fakes to gullible, trustful buyers, which in their turn cry even louder that the piggy is a rogue! Meanwhile, the piggy keeps rushing about, fussing, looking for and teaching followers. At first, they were there, although not too numerous. But since it was not possible to establish a truffle business, the crowd of followers melted like snow. In the end, only those who were able to appreciate its originality and unusualness remained. And to this day with all their might they bring to people difficult, sophisticated methods of truffle's searching...

Of course, comparing domestic sociology with a piggy, even a very cute one, is not correct, and sociological knowledge is not a truffle, especially since truffles are sold much more easily in our country than the services of sociologists, as the history of its noble origin and use takes root more easily in the consciousness of the Ukrainian consumer than the idea of the need for sociology. But it should be noted that in the metamodern world sociology is still the only civilized way to loudly express your opinion and to find out the opinions of others. And most importantly, it is necessary within the country: for the domestic market, civil society, and politics. Therefore, neither foreign grants, nor publications in foreign languages, nor recognition of foreign colleagues will save us, Ukrainian sociologists. It is necessary to bring up, to educate the consumer in one's own country, to cultivate the understanding that sociology is not a luxury, but a necessary element of communication between various social groups that find themselves in the condition of disunity, atomization, individualization, etc. But how to educate?

The results of our reasoning indicate that the anti-sociological discourse of postmodern was replaced in metamodern with a softer a-sociological one. In other words, opposition and denial were replaced with a calm acceptance based on the merits of the past. Taking into account the metamodern course towards naivety, infantilization, and childishness, it is necessary to offer content on accessible platforms that is designed for ease of perception and understanding and is aimed at the younger generation. This is not about babying and flirting with viewers/readers. They will not be intimidated by difficult categories, explanations for which they will find on the Internet, and then they will be able to use them in their own language games, supported by videos and performances. But it is essential to retain the author's style, sincerity and conviction. It is not surprising that our academic publications are not popular with non-professional audiences. They are too boring to read precisely because of the loss of that very sincerity and authorial involvement, which instantly disappears after meeting all the requirements for article or monography. Metamodern practices also dictate marketing strategies based on language games. The creation of fairy tales and legends is a necessary attribute of any successful brand. It is necessary to collectively shape the image of sociology just like a truffle! Yes, it's expensive, yes, it's time consuming, yes, it's ugly and smells strange, but it's a symbol of wealth and success. Likewise, sociology needs to be positioned as something quite simple, but very rare, labor-intensive and requiring professional attention, and therefore precious and necessary for the well-being of all social subsystems.

Of course, this approach is not ideal and can cause a lot of side effects, for example, in the form of primitivization of sociological knowledge, etc. But let us hope for the resistance and durability of Ukrainian scientific schools and their ability to self-purify. And besides, that will be another story...

Conclusion. To summarize our reasoning in the most general way, it is necessary to emphasize that, being in constant oscillation "above" and "between" modern and postmodern, metamodern revives, rehabilitates and returns metanarratives, a new rationality, albeit virtual, to scientific circulation. On the other side of the pendulum – the acceptance of any ideas and extremes, the bringing together of opposites, the avoidance of dichotomies, the ironic postmodern interpretation of events – establishes rather a kind of big theories game, and at the same time marks a turn towards interdisciplinarity in science. In addition, these same processes make the real and the virtual complementary worlds, bring into the real world the results of myth-making, the acceptance of which requires childlike naivety, openness and receptivity, an optimistic view of the changes taking place, focus on the present and on the metaphor of life as a path. Access to virtual space makes it possible to synthesize an integral sociocultural space, without contrasting high and low, mass and elite, rational and irrational, without boundaries and limits; consider many ideas at the same time, perceive and assimilate even completely opposite ones.

Metamodern sociology is an understanding sociology that admits that the processes of informatization, globalization, and virtualization have made society such complex and ambiguous that its study cannot be reduced to a single metanarrative. But on the other hand, the multi-paradigm nature of sociology is in this case its advantage, its "superpower", which can offer adequate explanations for any situations and combine different poles of social reality. Metamodern methodology of sociology is not an opposition between quantitative and qualitative methods, online and offline, big data and empirical research data, but a balanced mixture that combines the depth of qualitative methods and the evidence of quantitative ones, the ease of collecting online and the representativeness of offline, the integrity of information from big data and the depth, rigor of empirical

research. I would like to hope that the metamodern path of sociology is the path to its new development for the benefit of society, social groups and each individual.

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СОЦІОЛОГІЯ ПІСЛЯ ПОСТМОДЕРНУ АБО «ВІРТУАЛЬНА РАЦІОНАЛЬНІСТЬ» МЕТАМОДЕРНУ ЯК ПЕРСПЕКТИВА РОЗВИТКУ СОЦІОЛОГІЇ

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Українські соціологи вже давно б'ють на сполох через зниження інтересу до соціології та катастрофічне падіння конкурсу до вітчизняних вищих навчальних закладів на відповідну спеціальність. Автор аналізує дані різних за обсягом і місцем проведення досліджень і показує, що ситуація навколо соціології характерна не лише для України, а і світу в цілому. Акцент на аналізі об'єктивних причин занепаду соціології дозволяє зробити висновок, що ці причини тісно пов'язані з переходом модерн–постмодерн–метамодерн і символізують картину тих труднощів, з якими зіткнулася сучасна наука на цьому непростому шляху перетворень. Подальші міркування в рамках теорій модернізації та постмодернізації суспільства приводять автора до висновку, що на зміну модерну як епохи «царювання» науки та раціонального світорозуміння прийшло постмодерне заперечення та деконструкція метанаративів, наголос на ірраціональності, множинності; епістемологічний та онтологічний плюралізм, коли раціональності можуть змінюватися та доповнюватися одна одною. Метамодерн намагається примирити суперечливі раціональності попередніх «модернів», привносячи науковий інтелект у простір культури та водночас пропонуючи нову раціональність, умовно позначену автором як «віртуальну», яка здатна поєднувати «жорстку» раціональність фізичного простору з множинною і навіть нереальною раціональністю простору віртуального. Але як така віртуальна раціональність може бути пов'язана з соціологічною наукою і практикою, з необхідністю прогнозування соціальних процесів? Тут автор виділяє декілька серйозних протиріч, розглядає можливості просування соціології, що тісно пов'язані з метамодерною ідеологією і можуть бути приводом для дискусії з колегами, які займаються дослідницькою, викладацькою діяльністю та стурбовані проблемами просування соціології в сучасному метамодерному світі.

Ключові слова: соціологія, модерн, постмодерн, метамодерн, віртуалізація суспільства, віртуальна раціональність.

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