

Research possibilities of value-normative transformations of Ukrainian society from the perspective of existential sociology

Abstract

The paper outlines the prospects of research of value-standard transformations of Ukrainian society in the context of existential sociology. The basic prospects, which rest on the corresponding theoretical categories, are correlated with the boundary situation, authenticity and sense-life orientations. Besides, the author emphasizes the importance of high-quality research of individual and collective existential experience. The author has also noted some theoretical problems of existential sociology which need further solution (problem of boundaries of value hierarchies, problem of the structure of existential experience, etc.).

Keywords: *existential sociology, crisis of consciousness, existential experience, value hierarchies, boundary situation, authenticity, sense-life orientations*

In recent years, the state of social instability of modern society is becoming a debate topic for sociologists and representatives of other social sciences more often. In these discussions, there is a relative agreement on the definition of several common causes of social instability, including termination of the ideological confrontation between the Soviet Union and Western countries, the processes of globalization and a new wave of scientific and technological progress, which has led in the last decades, among other things, a revolutionary change in the field of communication technologies. All of these reasons are united by their complex interdependence with the transformation of social values and norms. In light of the analysis of rapid social changes of one of critical and unresolved research problems is the understanding of deep existential essence of dynamics of value-normative structure of society.

It cannot be said that sociologists don't pay enough attention to the problem of transformation of value-normative structure of society. Thus, in classical sociology the concept of social anomie has been strongly propagated (E. Durkheim, R. Merton), which explains the transient states that occur when one system is replaced with another. Among the most noticeable modern researchers of social changes and their normative-value measurement — R. Robertson, Z. Bauman, U. Beck, A. Giddens, P. Sztompka, S. Eisenstadt, J. Ritter, R. Inglehart can be mentioned. In Ukrainian sociology, the problem of value-normative aspects of social transformation has become one of the pivotal central ones in the last decades (M. Shulga, E. Golovakha, N. Panina, V. Khmel'ko, V. Paniotto, V. Bakirov, E. Yakuba, O. Kutsenko, L. Khizhnyak, E. Zlobina, N. Sobolev, et al.). Attempts to outline the main features of changes of social values and norms in existential sociology are reflected in the works of E. Tiriakian, J. Douglas, M. Bolle de Bal, where the value structure of society is primarily regarded as a structure of consciousness.

Typically, value-normative structure of society is determined in sociology with the help of categories of stability/instability. Instability is viewed as a heterogeneity of social processes and phenomena, on a theoretical level, that leads to total disintegration of a social system. The instability can be viewed as the opposite of social order. From a philosophical standpoint a dichotomous pair of order is chaos, that is, an absence of any connections and forms. For a social system, order is based on relationships that are related to the agreed social norms supported on the level of socio-cultural reality, that is, through a complex of moral values shared by members of society.

For Ukrainian society after the collapse of the Soviet system instability was the main feature of social life and added to the socio-psychological state of the population a negative¹ disposition, signs of social depression and mass cynicism. There was a destruction of not only institutionalized social norms, but also moral values, and that the destruction occurred in a situation where formation of a new value system began to focus on a polar opposite of the sociocultural model of Western society. Besides, fundamental changes in value-normative structure of Ukrainian society were strengthened by changes in Western system of moral values and norms itself, caused by the growing propensity for globalization.

In my deep belief, *existential sociology* may become one of the most relevant theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of rapid changes in value-normative structure of society and the emergence of social instability due to this state, directed at research of deep and critical social problematics and combining within itself possibilities of theoretical and empirical analysis. Primary study of value-normative structure of Ukrainian society from the perspective of existential approach may be directed toward a few main courses, consideration of which is the purpose of this research.

Borderline situation. To the first potential course of the existential approach should be attributed analysis of the collapse of the soviet society as a socially borderline, in which, as a result of value-normative system transformation, was revealed a previously hidden, existential reality devoid of former rational-

¹ Further study of the negative identity phenomenon in the post-soviet society was conducted by Russian sociologist Gudkov L. [Gudkov, 2004].

ized forms, which carried out a protective function¹. Using the terminology of phenomenological sociology, borderline situation can be described as the destruction of the natural setting and exceed the bounds of value-normative structures of consciousness. At that, a characteristic feature of the borderline situation is its necessity, i.e. the inability to eliminate it from one's own experience. A borderline situation may be either accepted, and in that case, its influence acquires a constructive character, or rejected, which leads to its destructive effect.

In the context of Ukrainian society a particular interest represents examination of existing results of sociological studies in the context of classic determination of borderline situation in existentialism (Jaspers' in particular). Thus, empirical studies rather point to the population's moral degradation, destruction of the highest universal values, low rather on moral degraded population, the destruction of the highest universal values, lower degree of actualization of sacral and life interpretations. At first glance, this statement is contradicted by the fact of widespread revival of religious institutions, but this institutional revival doesn't necessarily mean a corresponding revival of sacral and universal values, and demands an additional examination². While according to Jaspers and other representatives of the existential approach, as a result of a borderline situation (clashes with death, suffering etc.), automated psychological and behavioural patterns are destroyed in a structure of personality, that could cause a mobilization of a higher spiritual level and open a possibility for a qualitative transition from materialistically hedonistic, egoistic separation (lower levels of consciousness) to the condition of inner wholeness, that generates altruistic values (higher levels of consciousness). Therefore, the borderline situation can be defined as a source of such phenomena of subjective reality, as "religious experience" (W.James), "peak experience" (A.Maslow), high degree of "existential fulfillment" (A.Laengle) etc. [James, 2010; Maslow, 2003; Krivtsov, Laengle, Orgler, 2009].

So, if the collapse of the soviet society is societal borderline situation, then a few key questions arise. Can we say that after 1990's turmoil a significant portion of population has got its higher value orientations and higher levels of consciousness actualized? If yes, then why such actualization hasn't led to successful social changes? Answering these questions, two assumptions can be made: 1) a gradual resolution of existing social differences and growth of social integration and solidarity – social tendencies are a form of social catharsis, under which actualization of higher values is only just conceived, while the critical state is retained, but its level decreases³: 2) an accumulation of social contradictions takes place and

¹ In addition to post-soviet transformations, collective borderline situation study in Ukrainian society can be used for examination of such historical events, as Second World War, Chernobyl catastrophe with its long-term consequences etc.

² Thus, L. Bevzenko noted a whole array of contradictions in the analysis of the religious life of Ukrainians. In particular, religion in Ukrainian society does not actually perform regulatory functions, and religious people, in comparison to non-religious, are less satisfied with their lives, more likely to experience anxiety, fear and depression, feel more lonely [Bevzenko, 2010: p. 440].

³ It can be said, that this assumption is confirmed in general by data of the nationwide Ukrainian monitoring of Sociology Institute of NASU.

withdrawal from borderline situation is observed, as well as disdain for it, that over time can lead to even more profound stage of crisis. Subsequent detailed examination of both assumptions is extremely important from a sociological standpoint, however, the fact that in general higher value attitudes get actualized in individuals in borderline situations, is fixed in some quantitative researches of the last years in Ukraine. For example, comparing answers to the question “In what do you see the meaning of life?”, N. Khodorivskaya notes that the measure of reflexivity in relation to one’s spiritual “I” turns out to be somewhat higher among group of people who have survived difficult situations (look table 1) [Khodorivskaya, 2010: p. 306].

Table 1

The vision of the meaning of life in relation to the experience of living through difficult situations, %^a

What do You see as the meaning of life?	Lived through difficult situations, N = 1203	Didn't live through difficult situations, N = 597
With peace of mind, in harmony with oneself, in harmony with nature	42	38
In the implementation of creative ideas	14	11
In achieving the heights of professional career	14	12
In popularity, public recognition of one's achievements	3	2
In well-being of one's family, children and grandchildren as one's extension	72	64
In great love to a woman/man	26	21
In social justice, civil concord	28	25
In the democratic development of society	16	15
In material prosperity	54	50
In ability to live for one's own pleasure	23	19
In ability to stay modern and learn and use new technologies	10	8
In ability to successfully plan and organize one's actions	21	16
In something else	2	1
In nothing	2	2
Hard to say	5	6

^a All suitable answers could be selected.

By analyzing characteristics of reflection in Ukrainian public consciousness, N. Khodorivskaya comes to conclusion that reflexivity and clarity of assessment of events depends on social distance in relation to evaluated object, from “close” to “acquaintances” and then “abstract”. “ In difficult circumstances, “ she writes, — reflexivity is activated in relation to those objects, entities, processes that are more inclusive in a difficult life situation; activates the reimagining of the spiri-

tual “I”; the space of consciousness “narrows” in a certain way and abstract ideas become even more blurred [Khodorivskaya, 2010: p. 307]. This observation has, in our opinion, crucial meaning for understanding of the mechanisms of borderline situation evaluation and for explanation of value transformations of consciousness. On its basis we can assume that due to situation’s borderline level of awareness of individual is reduced on a scale and at the same time enhanced by concentration. This change may be explained by the fact that while experiencing a deep crisis individual’s consciousness goes beyond rationally abstract thinking, gets unequated with him and concentrates in existential experience, that is, in integrity of actual experiencing of one’s existence. Thus, the increase of awareness in this case means concentration of attention and narrowing of consciousness to the level of specifically experienced reality, and also rejection from abstract patterns that do not meet this reality. In other words, contents of subjective reality begin to be perceived the way they are here and now, without equation of awareness with value and time (past, future) measurements of consciousness, because they are forms of abstraction and ways of reducing awareness of living through the existential experience. If this assumption is true, then it requires asking at least two more important questions about why the borderline situation and caused by it negative experiences generally lead to going beyond the established value structure of consciousness, and what are the characteristics of social activity, devoid of its value-normative content. The last of these questions can be formulated as follows: Can an individual be a full-fledged subject of social interactions without preponderance in them of value-rationalized perception of reality?

The focus on the here-and-now and a high degree of vigilance of consciousness without equating it to evaluative thinking and derived emotions — all this is one of the most important aspects of living through a borderline situation. Successful overcoming of borderline situation depends on the adaptive ability of acceptance of negative existential experience, where rational thinking and emotions, timing, setting goals and meeting the needs play only a secondary, instrumental value in comparison to being present in an existing situation. If an inversion of concentration on rationally evaluative or emotionally evaluative levels of consciousness occurs, as well as if present experience is the only mean of achieving future goals, departure from the “now”, then there emerges a stable negative state, which can have very detrimental consequences. In other words, a successful strategy to overcome a borderline situation is to consider the existential experience as a goal and not as its means.

The indicated aspect of living through an existential experience was considered in detail by G. Marcel and E. Fromm in context of separation of two ways of human existence — “to be” or “to have”, and in contemporary studies, a psycho-physiological explanation of mechanisms of such separation was proposed by Russian experts in disaster medicine, A. Kluev and A. Kachalkin, in their relativistic concept of mental activity, based on years of researching the role of the human factor in air disasters. According to this concept, person’s mental activity is divided into five levels — intuitive subconscious activity, intellectual activity, emotional activity, reflexive activity and intuitive superconscious activity. “Internal process of human consciousness refining of perceived information, — A. Klyuev and A. Kachalkin write — may be either synchronized in time with ob-

served (controlled) by an external process or observers consciousness operates in a desynchronized modes - falling behind in time from the observed (controlled) process or outstripping it” [Klyuev, Kachalkin, 2000]. Of five listed types of mental activity, only at its intuitive superconscious level a conformity of subjective time and real process time is observed, and exactly this level of consciousness can be activated in borderline situations, whereas at other levels lagging occurs (for example, intellectual activity) or forestalling (emotional activity) of real time¹.

It should not be forgotten that the specificity of societal borderline situation in Ukrainian society is not only connected with the post-soviet macro-processes, but also with everyday negative states, typical for any society and associated with loss of loved ones, illnesses, financial problems, etc. As of 2010, about 67% of Ukraine’s population has lived through various difficult situations. In particular: 11.3 % – had a serious illness, surgery; 14% – were faced with a serious illness or death of loved ones; 22.6 % – had experienced great financial difficulties, when there were no means to even buy essential products; 21 % – had lost social optimism and hope for situation in the country to change for better; 16.2 % – felt their own helplessness facing governments lawlessness etc. [Ukrayins'ke supil'stvo, 2010: s. 547]. It can be argued that negative features of living through post-soviet transformations is closely intertwined with various personal crises, and often personal, at first glance, difficulties are an integral part of social problem. For example, even death of a loved one from illness can be linked to a wider social context and inability to provide timely and adequate medical care because of low income, etc.

A feature of living through borderline situations at both macro and microlevels is person’s suffering and one’s experiencing of negative states of varying degrees of severity. In this sense, the study of borderline situations in Ukraine can be implemented in the context of a such industry trend as the sociology of sufferings, active development of which is observed today in Western sociology [Social Suffering, 1997; Wilkinson, 2005] and foundations of which were laid in the early XX century by German sociologist F. K. Müller-Lier, who argued social conditionality of almost all forms of individual suffering [Müller-Lier, 2007].

As for the borderline situation, two important aspects of suffering can be discussed. On the one hand, after living through suffering one’s perception of parts of existing experience gets changed, those that didn’t provide satisfaction before – their value and meaning enrichens. That, what for borderline situation was taken for granted, now declares its importance. In folklore, this idea is encapsulated in the proverb “We never know the value of water till the well is dry”. On the other hand, suffering, tested in a borderline situation, lays a deep fear of recurrence of such events and becomes an incentive for action. In this respect, there are many examples, when, after living through hardships, especially in childhood or adolescence, an individual achieves great success in life, consider things that happen more seriously, attaches great importance to self-improvement. At the same

¹ A potential direction for further research of this temporal aspect of existential experience may become the development in structure of existential sociology, theory of psychological time of personality and a method of causometry E. Golovakha and A. Kronik [Golovakha, Kronik, 1984].

time, there is a limit to internal tensions, under which fear and depth of negative impact of experienced events take uncontrollable forms and destroy personality. The latter aspect is typical for various forms of addiction (alcohol, drugs, etc.), manifestations of the syndrome of war etc. These most serious consequences of living through a borderline situations were deeply analyzed by the founder of logotherapy (method of existential analysis), F. Frankl, on the basis of his own experience of being in a concentration camp during the Second world war [Frankl, 2000, 2009].

Thus, the aftereffects of borderline situation can be developed in one of two main courses — destructive or constructive. Analysis of mechanisms of development of these areas is, at the micro level, in my opinion, extremely important for understanding of larger-scale value changes in Ukrainian society. If to turn again to research data of NASU's Institute of Sociology, then, for example, when asked the question: "in your opinion, which of these statements is more consistent with the situation in the country?" 53.4% of respondents chose the saying "it's hard to live, but one can endure"; 29.8% of respondents believe that "further tolerance of our plight is impossible"; and only 9.5% of respondents believe that "it's not that bad. and it's liveable" (another 7.5% of the respondents chose the option "it's hard to say") [Ukrayins'ke suspil'stvo, 2010: s. 549]. These and other macro indicators can give a General guideline for the analysis of collective borderline situation and possible ways of development of social changes in Ukrainian society.

Authenticity. To second important direction of existential post-soviet studies of value-normative transformations we ascribe their analysis through prism of dichotomy of authenticity/fictitiousness. In general, authenticity¹ can be defined as degree of internal coherence of true and declared values of an individual, as well as one's compliance with outside world and acceptance of actual reality, resulting, eventually, in correspondence of highest inner values and social behaviour. In other words, inauthentic individual has negative moral well-being and his actions do not correspond with the deep value orientations, and in extreme form — even declared values. With that, highest level of authenticity can be considered identification of individual's consciousness with one's *direct experiencing of one's own existence*, and exactly this dimension of authenticity can be achieved in borderline situations.

Transformation of the value structure of Ukrainian society shows that this process has two main levels; the first is destruction of formalized social norms, and the second is destruction of moral standards that are based on formal social norms. In conditions of social instability in the last decades in Ukraine, a system of formal social norms began to artificially institutionalize, based on the principles of universal morality inherent in the Western model of society, whereas the factual mass violation of these principles made such norms declared only by their character. These processes have led to development of a parallel, informal "institutionalized" structure of social values and norms that largely contradicts formal system. Ukrainian sociologists call this phenomenon a system of "dual social institutions", in which there is an "immoral majority" [Golovakha, 2002; Golovakha, Panina, 2001]. In this regard, Golovakha E. and N. Panina write: "...we can

¹ For more details on existential idea of authenticity, see: [Wild, 1965].

formulate the hypothesis that only when institutionalization is doubled a very peculiar “institutionally hyperwholesomeness” of Ukrainian society based on consent of people to live in a such institutional space, where there are both old and new institutes are functioning, providing with its contradictive co-existence availability of all necessary for social integration and stability attributes of institutionality” [Golovakha, Panina, 2001: p. 17]. Ukrainian sociologists note that duality of institutional structures should reflect the corresponding dualistic state of mass consciousness, which is based, among other things, on ambiguous attitude toward two social systems - capitalism and socialism. Such ambivalence is a manifestation of social anomie, that is, the state of transiting from one moral-normative system to another. However, according to E. Golovakha and N. Panina, the specificity of post-soviet reality is that existing mutually exclusive value-normative systems are not antagonistic, and are consistent parts of one type of consciousness.

The phenomenon of authenticity can be better revealed through its association with such states as congruence, deprivation and internality/externality. In the most broad sense congruence¹ (lat. — proportionate, appropriate) is seen as internal equality or correspondence of elements of the system. On the socio-psychological level of congruence presents itself as internal consistency of personality, its integrity, expressed in such characteristics as honesty, truthfulness, matching verbal and nonverbal behavior, consistency of values and beliefs. Congruence represents a degree of conformity of real and ideal “I”. A high degree of conformity indicates presence of a single, ultimate goal, defining state, activity and personality’s behaviour. Among the main causes of incongruence, as a rule, are distinguished by fear, insecurity, mistrust, different forms of dependence, low level of self-awareness, stress, conflicts, etc.

Congruence has a close relationship with the state of deprivation, which is viewed as impossibility of ample satisfaction of needs. In sociology, it is customary to distinguish absolute and relative deprivation. Under absolute deprivation, a person or a social group can’t meet their basic needs and do not have access to relevant material and social resources. Relative deprivation is viewed a subjectively endured discrepancy between valuative expectations and ability to implement them. Analyzing the theory of deprivation, P. Sztompka writes: “...even if people are extremely poor, but take it for granted as a provision of fate, providence or as an accordance to a predefined to social status, then a revolutionary unrest does not occur. Only when they begin to wonder what they must have by right, and feel the difference between what is and what could be, then a sense of relative deprivation emerges there” [Sztompka, 1996: p. 379]. Close to deprivation is a state of frustration. By convention, if deprivation emerges in cases when person didn’t previously possess benefits that are desirable for him/her, but are unattainable in the present period of time, then in case of frustration, a person has previously had the desired benefits and lost them for some reason. There is an opinion, that deprivation indicates a lack of possibilities to satisfy one’s needs,

¹ One of the first definitions of congruence was suggested by an American psychologist K. Rogers [Rogers, 1994].

while frustration reflects the consequences of such dissatisfaction. If so, we can say that deprivation leads to frustration.

An important feature of the concept of authenticity is a reflection of the degree of internality/externality factor of personality that in existentialism is reflected in the concept of “pure/impure faith” (J.-P. Sartre). According to this concept, to live in an unclean faith (externality) means shifting the liability for their actions on external circumstances and other people, whereas the opposite condition of “pure faith” (internality) presupposes that an individual willfully makes his/her life choices and bears full responsibility for them. It is a question not only of specific actions of an individual, but also, importantly, about subjective foundation of such actions. Thus, even under conditions of significant preponderance of external circumstances, an individual is left with freedom of their semantic interpretation, however small a degree of freedom it may be, and in this regard, Sartre speaks of a man being doomed to be free as a fundamental modus of existence.

Analysis of internality and externality factors recently became one of Ukrainian sociology's ways of comprehension of value-normative transformations. “Internality and externality, writes N. Sobolev, are defined by two oppositely directed types of practical orientation in life. Internals believe desired goals are fundamentally achievable and develop a sufficiently high activity to achieve these goals, even in very difficult conditions. Externals are much more likely to believe the desired goals are unreachable or too complicated and are more passive in their implementation compared to internals” [Sobolev, 2010: p. 320]. Guidelines of internality/externality factor, Sobolev notes, are formed on the basis of subjective locus of control — a propensity of individual to charge themselves for what is going on (internal locus) or charge the external situation (external locus). An important characteristic of externals is their large exposure to the experience of negative states of fear, anxiety, insecurity, distrust, aggression. Internality and externality are also closely correlated with such personality characteristics as, respectively, optimism and pessimism with the inherent differences in the sense of life satisfaction. The internals are less susceptible to outer influence, whereas the externals, while experiencing fear and distrust, as a protective measure are more prone to self-criticism and focusing on negative aspects.

A category of existential authenticity, which includes such concepts as congruence, deprivation and the internality/externality, has wide scope of application in the context of study of value-normative transformation of the Ukrainian society. Thus, results of empirical studies indicate a low degree of social authenticity. This is confirmed by indicators such as the prevalence of external personality type over internal (respectively 46.7% and 22.2 %, according to 2010 data) [Українське суспільство, 2010: p. 324], low level of trust in almost all spheres of social life, a high level of anomalous demoralization and cynicism, etc. These characteristics suggest that Ukrainian citizens have the experience of clashes with the discrepancy between real and declared values or real and higher values. It can also express rejection of social reality due to the experience of social injustice, feelings of fear and insecurity. In addition, it is important to pay attention to connection of the predominance of external personality type with inertia of soviet social consciousness and problems of formation of civil society in Ukraine.

Life orientations. The problem of the meaning of life has always been the keynote of existential studies in philosophy, and in more recent scientific fields, where existential approach is applied. The examination of value-normative transformations of Ukrainian society through the prism of category of borderline situation and authenticity, points to the need for analysis of the valuative structures of public consciousness in which life values act as thresholds for valuative hierarchies and can be described as “existential values” [Melnikov, 2010].

In sociology a wide spread have received works of an American social psychologist Milton Rokitch, who constructed the theoretical system of values, highlighting in it two main types — terminal (values-objectives) and instrumental (values-means), each of which was presented by 18 specific subtypes. To the first type he put such values as fullness of life, wisdom, health, love, material wealth. The second type of values-means is represented by different personality traits — neatness, good manners, cheerfulness, independence, etc. From our point of view, the importance of Rokitch’s theory is that he found the problem of limitation of value hierarchies. This problem has matured in works of modern Russian existential psychologist D. A. Leontiev, in particular, in his own developed technique of extreme meanings, whereby a respondent will orally answer the questions of a researcher and each new question relates to the last received response (Question 1: “Why do people watch TV?” Answer 1: “To rest”. Question 2: “Why do people need to rest?” and etc.) [Leontiev, 1999]. This method allows to detect extreme semantic categories of a personality, which she is no longer able to explain rationally (such answers as “be happy, to be happy”). In existentialism, the main philosophical treatise of A. Camus is devoted to this issue, where he asks his famous question of whether life is worth living [Camus, 1998]. This question of Camus arises from comprehension of impossibility of the infinite rational development of a hierarchy of values, which is interrupted at a certain level and, thus, deprives a person of absolute senses, making it a “poor Sisyphus” — one of the central symbols of existentialism. However, crisis of value orientations on rational and emotional levels can be surmounted at the level of existential values that exceeds rational and emotional levels of a personality.

From the perspective of the existential approach, values are formed on the basis of recognition of objectively rational meaninglessness of existence, forcing the individual to design one’s own value system through selection and adoption of responsibility for this choice before oneself. Existential level valuative system in this case is manifested in spontaneous superconscious experience of the person and is carried out through actions rather than ideal postulates. In other words, the basis of value hierarchy lies in holistic existential experience of an individual, beyond the limits of rationally evaluative and emotionally evaluative levels of consciousness. Because value hierarchies have their rational limit, then on an existential level, their main characteristic is faith and based on it spontaneous (intuitive) knowledge. For example, a person can’t rationally explain why one has the need to self-improve, believing this question to be absurd, but at a higher super-rational levels of consciousness one “just knows” that this value is crucial for oneself. However, the existential values imply the destruction of boundaries of rationally emotional structures of personality, giving them the status of

relative formations, appearing and disappearing in a much broader context of integral existential experience.

These aspects of the formation of sense, though from somewhat different perspectives, are reflected in the concept of personal knowledge of English philosopher of science M. Polani, who argued that absolute objectivity is impossible, because it is based on personal judgments and the individual always knows more than one can prove, or express with words [Polani, 1985]. The equivalent of what we outlined above as knowledge on the level of existential experience (intuitive superconscious experience), in Polani's work acts as a notion of peripheral (implicit) knowledge, on which, knowledge of objective-rational type is based. In this case, in Polani's concept another utterly important aspect of the existential approach is reflected, which is a revision of the classical criteria of objectivity in science, in particular, proposed by M. Weber. In this aspect, the production and interpretation of scientific knowledge should not be considered in separation from personal knowledge and subjective attitude of the scientist, which should be displayed with the results of the study whenever possible. However, this requirement is rather applicable to qualitative than to quantitative researches.

From my point of view, in conditions of transformation of value-normative system of Ukrainian society at a grassroots level, an exceedance of valuably rational conception of reality, that was described exactly as above, occurred. Although, soviet value system has not collapsed completely, and a new system of values was also not in any absolute sensual vacuum, yet in a significant portion of the population a level of existential values related to deep foundations of social order and personal structures was exposed. As a schematic analogy of this societal phenomenon various examples of microsituations of a borderline nature may be brought, in which an exceedance of natural attitude of consciousness occurs. To these examples is related human behavior in the terms of a life-threatening situation or application of severe sanctions, actions under the influence of various temptations and insuperable moral dilemmas, etc. Social behavior in such situations opens the deepest level of valuative attitudes of personality and expresses its true life orientation. In the history of sociology a similar example of destruction of everyday norms of interaction has found a reflection in the famous experiments of G. Garfinkel, on the basis of which he demonstrated what negative impact causes destruction of usual cultural patterns and penetration beyond the socially established boundaries. In existentialism, this idea is embodied in the statement of J.-P. Sartre that the genius of a man and one's true values are manifested in concrete actions and results, and not in declared statements. Thus, the negative and destructive behaviour of a person at the destruction of the socially typical attitudes may indicate the predominance of its external and inauthentic characteristics, whereas the corresponding positive and constructive behaviour may point to prevalence of internality and authenticity.

Quantitative data on life orientations in Ukrainian society represents a broad societal panorama of this phenomenon (see table 2) [Ukrayins'ke suspil'stvo, 2010: p. 624]. Family, material well-being and inner harmony are three main life values. In this regard, a whole array of promising issues that require further research can be denoted. If to assume that existential authenticity is reflected in the prevalence of altruistic characteristics in the actions of an individ-

ual, the importance of material values can imply departure of a significant portion of the population from the borderline macrosituation. At the same time, the importance of family, as a life value, may indicate, among other things, the desire for stability and security in the context of the total social destruction of value-normative order. Thus, the value of family can be hypothetically regarded as a compensatory mechanism for the creation of microorder in situations of social uncertainty. Contradictory, in relation to these issues, is the aspect according to which the presented quantitative data can tell (if to remember, for example, “range of values” of S. Schwartz) about the values of change as well as the values of preservation [Schwartz, 2013]. That is, if peace of mind, harmony with oneself and nature are life values for a significant part of the population, then the question emerges, are these conditions inherent for individuals or, on the contrary, they are deprived of them, and strive to achieve them.

Table 2

Vision of the meaning of life in Ukrainian society, 2010^a

In what do you see the meaning of life?	%
In peace of mind, in harmony with yourself and nature	40,4
In the implementation of creative ideas	12,7
In achieving the heights of professional career	13,2
In popularity, public recognition of their achievements	2,5
In family well-being, children and grandchildren as one's extension	69,3
In great love to a woman/man	24,2
In social justice, civil concord	26,8
In the democratic development of society	15,7
In material prosperity	53,0
In ability to live for one's own pleasure	21,7
In ability to stay modern and learn and use new technologies	9,3
In ability to successfully plan and organize one's actions	19,6
In something else	1,6
In nothing	1,9
Hard to say	5,6

^a All suitable answers could be selected.

Most likely in respondents' answers these values are perceived as values of achievement, which is, again, characterizes the Ukrainian society as a society in a borderline situation and one that deflects it. In particular, it can be explained by this characteristic of authentic existential experience, as the maximum concentration of consciousness on a present “here-and-now” moment, whereas desires within the framework of values of change make present experience only a mean of achieving future goals, and this causes, in turn, a desire to escape such a present experience and enriches it with negative content, based on idealized abstract images and ideas. On the other hand, in the indicated value theory of Schwartz are attributed to values of change — autonomy, creativity, freedom, exciting life

which, generally speaking, can also be attributed to characteristics of an authentic individual. In addition to this, the contradictions of existential analysis of life orientations in Ukrainian society are complicated by the multidimensionality of the social structure, variety of demographic and status characteristics. So, interpreting the examined by us quantitative indicators, Ukrainian sociologist A. Ruchka confirms that life orientations depend on status positions, which, along with the institutionally defined meanings, provide a certain degree of variability of the sensual reality of Ukrainian society, adding senses of a personal level into it [Ruchka, 2010: p. 270-271].

The noted here fragmentary considerations on the contradictions of existential analysis of life orientations are only of preliminary nature and only outline some issues for further researches. However, in my opinion, the cornerstone of these studies can be the existential experience category, that is the experience of focusing of consciousness on specific, direct experiences, which are surpassing value hierarchy and their emotional dimension. If the focus of consciousness is concentrated within limits of value hierarchies, then it gets filled with abstract contents contributing to the emergence of negative states of personality in relation to living through a specific subjective experience. This statement, in my opinion, can be attributed both to the individual level and the levels of small and large social groups, that is, to individual and social consciousness.

In existential sociology a similar assertion was made by an American sociologist Edward Tiryakian, who relying on the famous experiments of A. Ames, which are known as the “Ames rooms”, as well as on the theory of Talcott Parsons, who in the early 1970s, proposed the concept of “tolerable system of coordinates” (assumptive frame of reference) [Tiryakian, 1973]. According to this concept, the meaning of social reality is non-derivative of its perception, but is immanent to this perception. Thus, the perception of reality gets mediated by the semantic structure of consciousness, which cannot be perceived by itself (phenomenological principle of intentionality, “consciousness of...”), but mediates any perception. It is difficult to predetermine how my statement about the existential experience as an experience that exceeds rational and sensible levels of consciousness coincides with the given concept of Tiryakian, but in both cases the important aspect is the fact that the perception of reality has immanent meaning for the subject, much wider in comparison to stream of thought and emotions. While Tiryakian, besides this, interprets the given semantic aspect of perception of social reality none other than as the existential basis of social life. From his point of view, the given unobjectifiable semantic structures of consciousness are nothing more than culture. Unlike Tiryakian, speaking of the most authentic levels of existence, I argued, albeit hypothetically, that this level may presume exactly the unmediated, but direct perception of reality, excluding the evaluative structure-filters, while Tiryakian believes that such perception is basically impossible. In fact, the concept of Tiryakian responds to the philosophical definition of existence, for example in K. Jaspers’ view, who wrote: “Existence is that what never becomes the object, source, from which I think and act...” [Jaspers, 2012: p. 36].

Along with Tiryakian’s studies, another close concept, potentially effective in the context of existential analysis of value-normative transformations of

Ukrainian society is the so-called “Easterlin’s paradox” which, in my opinion, is an empirical proof of concept of “tolerable system of coordinates” of Tiryakian. An American sociologist Richard Easterlin even then in the 1970s stated, that economic growth after overcoming of a certain level of satisfaction of needs does not make residents happy any more. So, in developed countries the value is acquired by not absolute, but relative income. In other words, rich people are happier than poor people, but if the income of both increases proportionally, then the level of happiness will not change. Despite the unending criticism of Esterlin’s conclusions, the importance of reflecting them in existential-phenomenological mechanisms of the valuative structure of societies should be noted. On the example of Ukrainian society it can be assumed that lower indicators of happiness and life satisfaction in comparison to other countries is connected not to the deeply existential, but to to indicators of happiness and life satisfaction is not associated with the deep-existential, but with superficially evaluative, abstractively-cognitive and emotional levels of consciousness¹. The crisis of the Ukrainian society, in this case, is a crisis of consciousness, a manifestation of integration into mechanisms of reproduction of culture of negative assessments of the surrounding reality, transforming the perception of this reality in “objectively” negative phenomenon. In addition, the feature of value-normative transformations of Ukrainian society of recent years also can be considered to be a massive consolidation of protective practice of maximally possible in each specific situation of negative assessments of the present situation, whereas the real situation may be better than the declared assessments.

Many objections can be made in relation to the connection between the life orientations and measures of happiness, as well as to different methods of determination of happiness and its components. However, we conduct here all these controversial issues in order to illustrate the broader existential aspects of the study of value structures of consciousness. The point is that the variability of estimates and perceptions of social reality proves the existence of a broader existential context of consciousness, for which reality may not depend fundamentally on its internal evaluative measurements, relative in their nature. For example, if you compare Ukrainian society with developed societies of the West or the developing societies of Africa and Asia, you can get two different “definitions of the situation”. The same principle is applicable to the historical perspective, as well as to the existence of man in general, if you compare him/her with what him/her can be, given the extremely common objective conditions of biological life.

Finally, another feature of the existential study of life orientations, that must be considered, is the embeddedness of Ukrainian society in the much broader,

¹ In the survey, which was conducted in 2011 by the Gallup center, the top ten happiest countries were Panama, Paraguay, El Salvador, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, Thailand, Guatemala, the Philippines, Ecuador and Costa Rica [Gallup, 2013]. According to another survey, the happiest people live in Costa Rica, Vietnam, Colombia, Belize, while Ukraine got 100 place out of 151 [Ukrainians, 2013]. At the same time, for example, studies of Research & Branding Group show that 74% of Ukrainians consider themselves lucky, 33% believe that among their friends there are more happy people than unhappy, 15% believe that in modern Ukraine there are more happy than unhappy people [Index, 2013].

global context of value transformations. In this respect, I would suggest for the consideration, the research results of an American sociologist Ronald Inglehart. Based on comparative data, he notes that in developed modern societies a tendency for world view reorganization is observed, which can be outlined as the processes of postmodernization. As part of these processes, a strong dependence between societal indicators and the deep values of a person can be observed. The most important aspect of postmodernization is the shift from materialistic to post-materialistic values, determined by solidifying of a feeling of existential security, which originates, in turn, from adoption of physical survival as an adequate (table 3) [Inglehart, 1997].

Table 3

Valuative systems in the context of the survival prospects

Spheres of life activity	Characteristics of value systems in the perception of the prospects of survival as an unguaranteed	Characteristics of value systems in the perception of the prospects of survival as guaranteed
In politics	The need for strong leaders. The order priority. Xenophobia, fundamentalism	Smaller significance of political authority. The priority of self-expression, political participation. Exoticism/novelty – stimulating factor
In economics	The priority of economic growth. “Achievementability” motivation. The juxtaposition of individual and state property	Highest priority of quality of life. Subjective prosperity. A decline in authority of both private and governmental property
In the sexually domestic and domestic normativeness	In the foreground is maximization of reproduction, but only as part of a complete (heterosexual) family	Sexual satisfaction corresponding with individual choice. Individual self-expression
In religion	Emphasis on the importance of a higher power. Absolute rules. Emphasis on predictability	Smaller significance of religious authority. Flexible rules, situational ethics. Emphasis on the meaning and purpose of life

Despite the fact that the conclusions of R. Easterlin and R. Inglehart are more related to progressive Western societies, in my opinion, transformations of the value-normative structure of Ukrainian society which are integrated into a much broader processes of value changes, in the long term perspective will be subjected to global tendencies. Analyzing Inglehart’s conclusions (table 3), one can state, that a shift from ontic to ontological levels of social life happens on a global scale, in terms of M. Heidegger. To similar conclusions come many other sociologists as well, for example A. Giddens, who also talks about growing actualization of existential dimension in modern societies, although other than Easterlin, positions (see: [Mel’nikov, 2012]). In General, these works of sociologists and their supporters a conclusion is made that the main characteristics of postmodern values are gradually becoming self-development, evolution of consciousness, reflexivity, subjectivity, situational ethics, addressing spiritual and

religious issues, and therefore, the problem of life orientations becomes here one of the key social phenomena.

Existential experience. Along with theoretical categories of borderline situation, authenticity and meaning of life, as a fourth potential component of the study of existential aspects of transformations of value-normative structure of Ukrainian society should be referred qualitative empirical analysis of direct experience of individuals, who are living through such given transformations as subjective reality. From this position, most clearly outlined in the *California study school* [Melnikov, 2011], the long-term crisis of Ukrainian society, as has been repeatedly noted, can be seen as a crisis of consciousness, that is, as the contradictions of the semantic interpretation of an external, objective reality. Thus, empirical studies of existential experience should be focused on the understanding of social situations from the perspective of actors who are involved in them. “Existential sociology, — marked by J. Douglas and J. Johnson, is defined as the study of human experience-in-the-world (or existence) in all its forms” [Existential Sociology, p. vii]. The essence of this approach is empathetic penetration into the inner world of an individual, and his general strategy is focused on inductive analysis, where the initial point is not theoretical generalizations, but on the contrary, empirical experience without getting over him pre-designed abstractly-theoretical programme of research. This methodology is used in many near to existential sociology directions, such as, for example, grounded theory. Among specific qualitative methods, it is possible to outline participant observation, in-depth interviews, introspection, study cases, ethnographic and biographical methods, etc.

Speaking about use of qualitative methods as one of the basic principles of existential sociology, it is necessary to refine the concept of existential experience. In the most broad sense the existential experience refers to the direct experience of the individual’s own existence. From this point of view, the existence acts as the ontological basis for the phenomena of consciousness emerging as something that is reality for the individual of the here-and-now. The social dimension of existence, therefore, is a form of simultaneous collective experience of reality. At the same time, it is necessary to note the differentiation of existential experience, which includes higher and lower levels. At lower levels, in relation to reality, in this subjective or collective perception, consciousness is absent and fragmented, in the actions of the individual prevails automaticity, and its socio-psychological attitudes are external in nature. At higher levels of existential experience, consciousness is extremely focused on the direct experiencing of reality in a temporal as well as spatial relation. In the actions of the individual automaticity is destroyed and spontaneity prevails, and its socially psychological attitudes are characterized as internal.

Using qualitative methods, the research strategy of existential sociology is focused primarily on the study of existential experience in the broad sense of the term. At the same time, the specific meaning of the concept of existential experience — its highest levels can be viewed as extreme cases, clarifying averaged examples. This approach was used, in particular, by W. James in his studies of religious experience, where he is focusing on “extreme cases”, tried to clarify the es-

sence of the studied phenomenon in general. A similar strategy was followed also by A. Maslow, studying meta-demands and peak experiences of the individual.

Although in this article I relied more on quantitative data, exactly qualitative analysis of value-normative transformations in Ukrainian society is today the most demanded and relevant. Without such qualitative analysis, broad quantitative panoramas of Ukrainian realities that affect the deeper aspects of social life, will remain for sociology (with all its practical use) only a material for constructing the abstract theoretical systems.

Summary

Summarizing, we can say that in terms of the crisis of modern Ukrainian society caused by the transformations of its value-normative structure, and also due to global trends of social changes, the development of the existential paradigm in sociology is becoming most relevant and effective. In the initial stages of organizing the key issues, existential sociology can develop on the basis of interrelated categories borderline situation, authenticity and life orientations, taken in their social dimension and correlated not only with quantitative data that specifies the common reference point, but also, what's important with results of qualitative empirical studies of subjective experience. The common ground for existential approach can be considered an ontologization strategy of sociological cognition, that is, the desire for reduction of the level of abstractness of the studied social problems, as well as appeal to the existence of a man in his everyday world.

Directly on the problem of value-normative transformations an important task of existential sociology becomes identification of a value hierarchies that are structuring social life and, in particular, the detection of limits of these hierarchies and the broader existential context in which they are being constructed and altered. In addition to its other functions, existential approach also carries a humanistic message, which lies in discovering the specific experiences of the negative aspects of social transformation and, thus, a deeper understanding of social reality.

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