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EPISTEMOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE ORGANISATION OF HUMAN ACTIVITY IN THE TRANSITION FROM DISPARATE SOCIAL TECHNIQUES TO SOCIETAL TECHNOLOGIES

Abstract

The expansion and deepening of human-computer interaction in modern conditions have attracted attention to human activity and required its study at a new level. The article is devoted to the examination of the problems of organising human activity based on the knowledge of its key components. Epistemological approaches to thinking and knowing as directions of the development of human activity make it possible to increase the efficiency of the organisation of human activity as a whole and raise questions that can be resolved on the way of further methodology evolution. The further transition from the methodology of research and practices to social technologies that would allow purposefully producing new knowledge, on the basis of which, in turn, it would be possible to improve the quality of the organisation of human activity, seems appropriate and natural. The authors argue that the technological approach to problem resolution is useful and fruitful not only in the sphere of engineering and technical devices but also in the field of social relations.

Keywords: human activity, epistemology, activity organisation, methodology, project approach, social technology.

Introduction

The impetus for a new round in the development of the theory of activity at the end of the 20th and in the 21st century has become research and practice in the field of human-computer interaction. As Olav Bertelsen and Susanne Bødker (2003) explain, “Because activity theory understands human conduct as anchored in collective/shared practice, it addresses more than just individual skills, knowledge, and judgment, and it is not restricted to the “generic” human being. In other words, we can talk about the appropriateness of a certain tool for a certain practice, and we can study how the introduction of a particular artefact changes the practice and how practice may change the use of the artefact” (pp. 294-295). They continue: “Historically, activity theory originated as a dialectical materialist psychol-

ogy developed by Vygotsky and his students in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the twentieth century” (Bertelsen & Bødker, 2003, p. 298). More specifically, human activity is one of the central categories of Marxian philosophy, behind which there is a phenomenon that was thoroughly and actively studied by Karl Marx. The merit of Lev Vygotsky lies in the fact that he introduced Marxist methodology into psychology and built on this methodology a fruitful theory that makes it possible to solve, among other things, practical issues. “Activity systems are fundamentally marked by contradictions. In dialectical thinking (Hegel, Marx, etc.), dynamics are understood as the eternal resolving of inner antagonist contradictions (Bertelsen & Bødker, 2003, p. 302). ...Human activity is mediated by socially produced artefacts, such as tools, language and representations. This means that, in their imme-

diate relationship with their surroundings, human beings extend themselves with artefacts that are both augmentations of and external to the person” (Bertelsen & Bødker, 2003, p. 305). Olav Bertelsen and Susanne Bødker (2003) argue: “Studies of computer artefacts in use need to focus on the narrow-use activity and the handling of the computer artefact, as well as on the wider context of use and design. One of the forces of activity theory is that it allows studies of all these levels of activity to be combined” (p. 311). All this encourages us to examine some aspects of human activity in a little more detail before moving on to the question of its organisation ensured by acquired knowledge.

Human Activity in the Dialectic of the Whole and the Fractional

It is in the activity that a human being becomes human, manifests himself/herself in his/her quality of a human being, self-actualises. Society, in its turn, is understood as a concrete historical form of joint activity of people. At the same time, the structure of human activity is rather complex and is constantly becoming more complex with the development of mankind. In view of this, the specialisation of the activities of people is carried out, and such specialisation at the same time increases the efficiency of such activities, and to ensure the unity of human activity composed of sundry types of activities, cooperation of people takes place. Specialisation leads to the formation of social communities in which people are grouped on certain grounds, entering into some relationships with each other, while cooperation establishes and consolidates relationships among communities. Relationships are the interdependencies of the elements of any system, and the relationships are universal. As Vladimir Lenin (1977) rightly noted when studying the “Science of Logic” by Georg Hegel, “every concrete thing, every concrete something stands in different and often contradictory relations to everything else, ergo, is itself and another” (p. 124). As for a human being, it is in relationships with other human beings that he/ she becomes a human being. The joint activity makes people human, and thus a human being is a metamorphosed society, and society is a metamorphosed human being. According to Hegel’s proper remark, “The *relationship of the whole and the parts* is the immediate relationship; hence, the thoughtless relationship and the process of the identity-with-itself turning over into diversity” (Hegel, 2010, p. 203). It is worth pointing out the term “thoughtless” (originally the whole phrase reads [with the preservation of the spelling of the publication]: “*Das Verhältnis des Ganzen und der Theile* ist die unmittelbare, daher die gedankenlose Verhältnis und Umschlagen der Identität-mit-sich in die Verschiedenheit” (Hegel, 1845, p. 123)), which is quite important in Hegel’s philosophy. Georg Hegel defines the concept of “thinking” in two ways: “*Thinking* as an *activity* is thus the active universal and, more precisely, the universal that acts upon *itself* in so far as its accomplishment, i.e. what it produces, is universal. Represented as a *subject*, thinking is a *thinking being*, and the simple expression for a concretely existing [existierenden] subject that thinks is *I*” (Hegel, 2010, p. 51). (in German [original spelling]: “Das *Denken* als die *Thätigkeit*, ist somit das *thätige* Allgemeine, und zwar das *sich* bethätigende, indem die *That*, das *Vervorgebrachte*, eben das *Allgemeine* ist. Das *Denken* als *Subjekt* vorgestellt ist *Denkendes*, und der einfache Ausdruck des existierenden Subjekts als *Denkenden* ist *Ich*” (Hegel, 1845, pp. 26-27)). It is obvious that describing the relationship of the whole and the parts Georg Hegel keeps in mind the first meaning of “thinking”, to wit thinking as activity. Although, in our opinion, activity cannot be reduced to thinking, it is important to clarify Hegel’s approach to the relationship in order to better understand the role of relationship in the joint activity of people.

Human activity, manifested in relationships with other people, is the same, but the nature of

social relationships in which a human being is included can be different. Let us follow Hegel's reasoning and conclusions: "What is one and the same in this relationship (the relation to itself that is on hand in it) is thus an immediately *negative* relation to itself and, to be sure, as the mediation to the effect that one and the same is *indifferent* to the difference, and that it is the *negative* relation to *itself* that repels itself, as reflection-in-itself, towards the difference, and posits itself, concretely existing as reflection-into-another and, in the reverse direction, conducts this reflection-into-another back to the relation to itself and to the indifference" (Hegel, 2010, p. 203). Thus, in a single, in fact, human activity, its structural elements and varieties can be distinguished.

Human activity is structured in some way. Structural components of human activity can be perceived as certain types of activity. There are a number of grounds for identifying certain types of activities. For example, according to the content of the activity itself, it can be divided into mental and physical or into theoretical and practical. Such a division has been known for quite some time. For example, in the view of Aristotle, "the person with experience seems wiser than those who have any perception whatever, the artisan wiser than those with experience, the master craftsman wiser than the manual laborer, and the contemplative arts more so than the productive ones" (Metaphysics I (A) 1, 981b 30 – 982a) (Aristotle, 1999) David Ross gives another translation of the same passage: "...the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense-perception whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the masterworker than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of Wisdom than the productive"(Aristotle, 1928) More than a half century later it was re-published by J. Barnes with small editorial changes (Aristotle, 1984) Earlier David Ross in his commentary to Aristotle's Metaphysics in Ancient Greek suggested a slightly simplified translation of this fragment: "...the experienced man is thought

wiser than the man who has only sensation, the artist than the experienced man, the master-artist than the manual worker, the theoretical than the productive arts" (Aristotle's Metaphysics, 1924). Although in these words of Aristotle the correlation of types of activity is seen, they are elucidating the structure of human activity, and the structure itself presupposes, in its essence, hierarchy. This is especially evident in the original text in ancient Greek: "ὁ μὲν ἔμπειρος τῶν ὁποιανοῦν ἔχοντων αἴσθησιν εἶναι δοκεῖ σοφώτερος, ὁ δὲ τεχνίτης τῶν ἐμπείρων, χειροτέχνου δὲ ἀρχιτέκτων, αἱ δὲ θεωρητικαὶ τῶν ποιητικῶν μᾶλλον" (Aristotle, 1924, p. 5). In particular, this meaning is conveyed by the grammatical construction provided by particles "μὲν... δὲ..." (signifying "as for... whereas..."), which expresses the contraposition and which Aristotle repeatedly uses in his writings.

Knowable Activity and Activity's Knowing

In the structure of thinking as an activity, Georg Hegel pays special attention to knowing (Erkennen), paying tribute to Aristotle and his attitude to knowledge, while noting, nevertheless, that "this knowing does not yet know [*weiß*] itself as the activity of the concept, something which it is only *in itself*, but not *for itself*" (Hegel, 2010, p. 292). Speaking about drives to sublimate the one-sidedness of the objective and the subjective world, Georg Hegel points out that "the former is the drive of knowledge [*Wissen*] to truth, *knowing* [*Erkennen*] as *such*, the *theoretical* [activity]; the latter is the drive of the *good* to bring itself about, *willing*, the *practical* activity of the idea" (Hegel, 2010, p. 291). Therefore, Georg Hegel, unlike Aristotle, does not establish a hierarchy in relation to theoretical and practical activities but reveals their dialectical interaction. Vladimir Lenin underlines this conclusion of Georg Hegel: "Very good is §225 of the **Encyclopedia**, where 'knowing' ('theoretical') and 'will', 'practical activity' are depicted as two

sides, two methods, two means of destroying ‘one-sidedness’ and subjectivity and objectivity” (Lenin, 1977, p. 190). Studying §213-§215 of the Hegel’s Encyclopedia and appreciating the presentation of dialectics in these paragraphs, Vladimir Lenin draws attention to the fact that “here, the coincidence of logic and epistemology, so to speak, is shown in a remarkably ingenious way” (Lenin, 1977, p. 174). (Traditionally, in Russian a word “gnoseology” ([“гносеология” in Russian] like in German “Gnoseologie”) is used instead of “epistemology”, although a word “epistemology” exists in Russian language, and the word “epistemology” is used in the present translation of a Russian text as it is more habitual for an English language reader. Meantime, some modern Russian authors try to distinguish between “epistemology” and “gnoseology”, considering that the former is dedicated to the relationship “object-knowledge” while the latter is devoted to the relationship “subject-object” (see, for instance, Vechtomov, 2013, p. 14) But such a formulation of the problem can just cause bewilderment: knowledge can only be possessed by the bearer of such knowledge and can exist together with this bearer, while the bearer of knowledge is the subject of activity, whoever (Idea, human being, isolated “I”, etc.) he/she is. An object exists independently of knowledge about it, but knowledge about such an object arises in the subject of activity and becomes an attribute of such a subject from the moment of its occurrence.) Thus, epistemology coincides with logic in both Hegelian and Marxist philosophy since both philosophies are based on dialectics. Meanwhile, the fundamental opposition of these two doctrines is that in Hegelian teaching, the idea is considered to be an active subject, and in Marxism, the human being himself/herself is a subject of activity. Since its inception, Marxism has been focusing on human activity. A well known thesis 11 of the “Theses on Feuerbach” by Karl Marx: “Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it” (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 3)

(originally in German: “Die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden *interpretiert*; es kömmt drauf an, sie zu *verändern*” (Marx & Engels, 1969, p. 7). It can be seen that the translation accurately conveys the meaning of the original phrase in German, and it shows that one of the fundamental foundations of this teaching is action. The activity-based approach is characteristic of Marxism in the field of epistemology including. This directly follows from the second thesis: “The question whether objective truth can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a *practical* question. Man must prove the truth - i.e. the reality and power, the this-sidedness of his thinking, in practice. The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question” (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 1). The German version allows one to draw attention to some peculiarities: “Die Frage, ob dem menschlichen Denken gegenständliche Wahrheit zukomme – ist keine Frage der Theorie, sondern eine *praktische* Frage. In der Praxis muß der Mensch die Wahrheit, i.e. die Wirklichkeit und Macht, Diesseitigkeit seines Denkens beweisen. Der Streit über die Wirklichkeit oder Nichtwirklichkeit des Denkens – das von der Praxis isoliert ist – ist eine rein *scholastische* Frage” (Marx & Engels, 1969, p. 5). For example, the word “Diesseitigkeit” obviously stresses that Marxist epistemology lies in materialism. This thesis reflects a dialectical approach to the correlation of the theoretical and practical in human activity, including in activity dealing with acquiring knowledge.

The issues of interaction between theory and practice acquired special interest and significance in the eyes of representatives of various doctrines and sciences in the 20th century. This interest and significance remain in the 21st century, as evidenced by a number of publications that use the aphorism “There is nothing more practical than a good theory” (Vansteenkiste & Sheldon, 2006; Del Boca & Darkes, 2012; Alter, 2016). Though the majority of scholars indicate Kurt Lewin as

an author of this aphorism, he himself did not claim to be its inventor and wrote: "...A businessman once stated that 'there is nothing as practical as a good theory' (Lewin, 1999, p. 36). Meantime usually, his other work is cited in connection with the mentioned aphorism (Lewin, 1952, p. 169) (it was published after his death). However, the same phrase or a slight variation of it was pronounced or written earlier by some other scholars: Ludwig Boltzmann (physicist and philosopher), his teacher Gustav Robert Kirchhoff (physicist), Friedrich Wilhelm Hagen (psychiatrist). The earliest publication contained a similar phrase that I could find, and it was a book of 1873 entitled "Basic Lines of a Theory of the Curriculum, Initially for Elementary and Middle Schools" by Friedrich Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1873) (pedagogue). It has the following motto on the cover and on the title page: "Einer richtige Theorie ist das Praktischste, was es gibt" (there is a typo on the cover – "giebt" instead of "gibt"), which might be translated into English as "A correct theory is the most practical thing there is". The source of the motto is not specified. Be that as it may, thoughts about the practicality of a right theory echoes the ideas of Karl Marx presented in the second thesis, and this anticipated certain problems of discourse that remain relevant in the modern world. By the way, as it is known, Karl Marx wrote the "Theses on Feuerbach" in 1845, and they were first published by Friedrich Engels in 1888.

Positivism, in its turn, focusing on empiricism, contributed to a better understanding of certain aspects of human activity. The development of positivism led to the emergence of analytic philosophy, which in its evolution in the 1960-70s came to the gradual ousting of the epistemological scope of problems. Richard Rorty (1980) called it "the demise of foundational epistemology" (p. 315). Nevertheless, even in the 1960s, contrary to the dominant trend, separate articles appeared on epistemological issues within the framework of analytic philosophy. One of the examples is a widely known article, "Is Justi-

fied True Belief Knowledge?" by Edmund Gettier (1963, pp. 121-123). And at the beginning of the 21st century, various issues of an epistemological nature attracted the attention of representatives of analytic philosophy. With the growing attention to epistemic problems among the representatives of analytic philosophy, there has also increased interest in past works in this field, so this is not by chance that the mentioned Gettier's article was re-published along with its translation into Spanish in 2013. An added bonus for readers of the Spanish-language version of the article is additional comments, including on cited texts (absent in the original English version) (Gettier, 2013). Other publications on epistemic topics have also appeared in the 21st century (for instance, an Anthology of epistemic works in 2008 (Sosa, Kim, Fantl, & McGrath, 2008)). Thus, in the 21st century, various issues of epistemology remain relevant for sundry philosophical doctrines and teachings.

Meanwhile, epistemology develops not only by itself but in interaction with other spheres of human thought. In particular, the relevance of epistemological research is associated, among other things, with the need to ensure the effectiveness of the human activity organisation, which has intensively developed in the 20th and 21st centuries. At the same time, knowing, in its turn, is a type of human activity and, accordingly, is organised in some way and, of course, needs the best organisation possible for its efficiency.

Some Issues of Activity Organisation

The problems of organising human activity retain their significance in modern discourse in various teachings and schools of philosophy. One of the contemporary ways of organising human activity is elaboration and putting into practice a project. People have been using the elements of the project approach for a long time, even before they discovered, realised and studied

the project approach, mastered its application on a scientific basis, just as people used, for example, the fire long before they discovered its physical and chemical essential character. Natural and social phenomena develop according to their own inherent laws, the discovery of which does not mean that the phenomenon itself did not exist before the discovery and that certain effects produced by the phenomenon could not be used with a certain success. However, only the scientific mastering of any phenomenon and the laws of its existence and development creates the conditions for taking full advantage of the opportunities inherent in the phenomenon itself.

The project is one of the phenomena structurally related to expedient human activity. Due to the fact that purposeful activity has been inherent in people since the emergence of mankind, those or that elements, systemically combined into what is today called a project, were consciously and unconsciously included in the composition of purposeful human activity. The human activity itself, in the end, turned into an object of reflection and research, which led to a number of discoveries, including in regard to such a phenomenon as a project.

As David Allen, Andrew Brown, Stan Karanosios, and Alistair Norman (2013) rightly conclude, “that activity theory addresses difficult issues regarding culture and technology in a materialist way... through an abiding focus on activity systems as contradictory unities of subjective and objective aspects in ongoing development” (p. 850). Turning to the organisation of activity, one may note that a person (an individual or a group), with the help of a project approach, can draw up his/her/its activity to achieve a desirable goal, moving from values to actions. In fact, the values that are formed in social communities but are reflected and fixed in the individual conscious of people, in fact, control needs. Values are formed over a fairly long time, but at the same time, they are stable and also change slowly under the strong and more or less constant and prolonged influence of various

factors. Values and necessities are in dialectical interaction: certain necessities are turned out on the basis of values, but certain values are formed under the influence of necessities, which, although driven by values, in general, have greater flexibility and mobility than values. At the same time, necessities affect interests. Interests, when they are realised by people, encourage them to act. Taking their cue from the satisfaction of their deliberate interests, people enter into some kind of relationship. And relationships are manifested in opinions, which in their turn motivate people to commit certain actions. It should be noted that actions carried out for a long time can lead to a significant change in the situation, and such a change in the situation, which is, in fact, the formation of fundamentally new living conditions, can, over time, affect the change in value orientations.

Actually, the importance of a well-thought-out expedient activity was indicated even by Confucius (孔夫子), albeit in very general terms. Describing one of the main characteristics of a *jūnzǐ* (君子), which might be translated as a “gentleman”, a “man of honour”, a “superior man”, a “man of high morality”, at the request of a disciple, Confucius in his treatise “The Analects” (論語) pointed out: “先行其言，而後從之” (Soothill, 1910, p. 163) [為政，十三] (in the original text, the characters are arranged in a column from top to bottom). The phrase might be translated as: “He first formulates his words (elaborates his theory), and then follows what is required by them (it)”. This derives from the meaning of the characters: 先 – “first”, “previously”; 行 – “to do”, “to be occupied with”; 其 – a possessive pronoun (“his”, “her”, “its”, “their”); 言 – “word(s)”, but may also mean “a doctrine” or “a theory”; 而後 – “and then”, “only then”; 從 – “to do as required” “to listen to”, “to follow”; 之 – a third person pronoun (“him”, “her”, “it”, “them”). It should be noted that other authors translate this passage in a different way. Due to the importance, in our opinion, of this

statement of Confucius for this paper, one cannot but dwell on a brief overview of its translations. Thus, William Soothill (1910) translates as follows: “He first practises what he preaches and afterwards preaches according to his practice” (p. 163) (the spelling is original, as in the text). However, he cites a different translation in his commentaries: “He first acts his speech and afterwards 從 follows up 之 his already materialised words with speech” (Soothill, 1910, p. 162). The translation by James Legge (1893) is: “He acts before he speaks, and afterwards speaks according to his actions” (p. 150). James Legge (1893,) in his commentary, recognises that “literally – ‘He first acts his words and afterwards follows them’, – adding, nevertheless. – A translator’s difficulty is with the latter clause. What is the antecedent to 之? It would seem to be 其言, but in that case, there is no room for words at all” (p. 150). Meantime, it is not clear what difficulties are meant, as the mentioned words are substituted by a pronoun (it has been shown earlier). That is why the suggested literal translation seems to be closer to the meaning of the original Chinese text. Din Cheuk Lau has his own translation: “He puts his words into action before allowing his words to follow his action” (Confucius, 1979). The translators may have been influenced by the translations in Latin, in particular, the translation by Angelo Zottoli (1879): “prius agit quæ dicit, et postea verba rem sequuntur” (p. 219). Couvreur’s French translation stands somewhat apart: “Le sage commence par faire ce qu’il veut enseigner; ensuite il enseigne” (Confucius, 1895, p. 80). Later, he slightly corrected his translation, but not significantly: “L’homme honorable commence par appliquer ce qu’il veut enseigner; ensuite il enseigne” (Confucius, 1930, p. 83). But nothing in the original Chinese text deals with education (*enseignement* in French). So, the modern English translation by Edward Slingerland looks more adequate: “He first expresses his views, and then acts in accordance with them” (Confucius, 2003, p. 12). By the way, the Russian translation is closer in its sense to the

latter translation (it may be translated from Russian as: “He first sees the deed in the word and then follows what is said” (Confucius, 1999, p. 23). In any case, the meaning of Confucius’s utterance seems to be deeper than just fidelity to the spoken word. As already noted, it is about the importance of well-thought-out in advance actions, which is significant for the present paper in the context of studying purposeful activity.

Project Approach to Activity Organisation

For a long time, people in their activity set goals and could pay attention to various factors that contribute to or hinder the achievement of the relevant goals. To achieve the goal, people thought over their activity in advance and made plans, and they organised their purposeful activity in accordance with their thoughts and plans. Gradually, people began to notice some general trends and patterns. Over time, expedient activity became the object of research, and the natural laws of purposeful activity’s accomplishment, independent of the intentions of the subjects of such activity, were discovered. Accordingly, people began to organise their activity on the basis of the known natural laws, along the way continuing their research. As it has been mentioned, elaboration and putting into practice a project is one of the ways of organising human activity. And a project is limited in time and resources interconnected set of actions is carried out according to a plan to achieve a specific goal.

Historically, ideas about the project have changed. Before moving into the fields of economics, politics, and social relations, the term “project” was used for quite a long time in engineering, architecture, etc. In other words, the original project approach was for human-made things. A project was also understood as a document prepared before its official approval (however, we note that a document is also a human-made thing). Obviously, in the manufacture of things, it was much easier to introduce project

principles than in the field of social, economic and political relations. At the same time, for quite a long time (perhaps due to the preparation of documents before their approval), the idea of the project as a proposal of some measure with the motivation for the need for such a measure and with a description of the ways and procedure for implementing such a measure has also been established.

At the same time, in the middle and, especially, in the second half of the 20th century, the idea of projects is expanding, and social, economic, financial, scientific and other projects are being developed and implemented. In other words, the project approach is no longer limited exclusively to the sphere of making things and turns into a tool for managing certain processes in a particular area of public life. Thus, the project approach is one of the varieties of an activity-based attitude to problem-solving, implying a system of purposeful actions, including elements of forecasting based on studying the situation, calculating and using available resources, implementing envisaged measures and arrangements to solve problems in order to achieve a specific planned result.

In the 20th century, referring to projects and programs allegedly prepared on the basis of a project-based approach has become a kind of fashion. The documents were and are tried to be given the appearance of a project or program, but without appropriate elaboration and use of the principles of the project approach. Usually, this is done for the sake of obtaining funding, but as a result, the effectiveness of such an ostensible “project” or “program” turns out to be extremely low. Exploring comprehensive community initiatives (which, in fact, are non-profit, local projects and programs) in the United States in the mid-1990-s, Carol Weiss (1995) found out: “None of the programs was satisfied that it had achieved either maximal *program* benefit from its efforts or maximal *evaluation* knowledge about program consequences from the evaluations it undertook” (p. 65.). She shows that such initiatives

were evaluated formalistically before they were launched, without an understanding of what changes they should lead to. To overcome this situation, she proposed to describe the concept of the program in the form of a chain of steps, each of which ends with the achievement of a certain result. This chain should start from the very first actions in the program and lead to the achievement of the long-term goal of the program. She suggested calling this way of describing the program the theory of change (Weiss, 1995, pp. 66-81). She argues that “for all its potential problems, theory-based evaluation offers hope for greater knowledge than past evaluations have generally produced” (Weiss, 1995, p. 89). Later, colleagues supported Carol Weiss’s idea but suggested a different sequence of development of the theory of change - from the goal of the program through the chain of intermediate results to actions within the program, in other words, the development of the theory of change should occur already at the stage of planning the program (Anderson, 2004). Such recommendations seem to be reasonable and fair. However, it is unclear how the theory of change differs from the project approach. After all, the project approach to solving the problem just presupposes the determination of the main characteristics of the new situation, which would differ from the current situation for the better, the formulation of a goal based on this, which should be achieved, the fixation of tasks, the solution of each of which would bring closer to this goal, planning actions that allow solving each of the tasks, establishing the resources required for this, identifying the sources of such resources. Actually, this is how the project is being designed, as a result of which changes should take place, improving the existing situation or even replacing the current situation, which does not suit those who develop and implement the project, with a new situation, which they are striving for. Although the supporters of the theory of change have interesting and useful developments, it is not worth replacing the already established concept of the project

approach with a new term (let's remember Occam's razor). The problem that Carol Weiss faced, unfortunately, is found in other countries too. However, instead of introducing new terms, one can act in a simpler and more effective way, to wit to train stakeholders in the project approach.

As a matter of fact, practically any project starts with a problem that needs to be solved. The problem is a so-called incomplete task, which in logic is understood as an operation with a known goal, but unknown conditions for achieving it. The project reduces an incomplete task to a complete one when the conditions are known, and the achievement of the set goal is required. The complete task is already amenable to the solution, which is achieved thanks to the project approach.

Summing up the above, we can identify a number of opportunities that lie in the project approach for solving problems that have a particular social significance. *Firstly*, the project allows us *to actualise the problem*, in other words, to consider it from different points of view, in different coordinate systems, to see its non-trivial aspects, therefore, to find the optimal ways to solve the existing problem. *Secondly*, the project makes it possible to conduct a *"point target" analysis* of the state and predict the evolution of a certain problem area and to do this by optimal means in case of a well-developed project culture. *Thirdly*, the project helps to develop and propose *potential solutions* to the problem, including an innovative one, utilising previously unused methods and techniques. *Fourthly*, the project is focused on developing *an algorithm for solving problems* of various scales based on solving relatively narrow tasks within the framework of the mechanisms proposed by the project team. *Fifthly*, the project is aimed at achieving *a sustainable result of the developed way of solving the problem*, fixing the main methods, stages of work, mechanisms for solving or preventing the emergence/resumption of a problem situation. *Sixthly*, the project makes it

possible *to optimise the further search* for a solution to the problem with a negative result of the pilot project, showing the dead-end of the tested path (a negative result is also a result). *Seventhly*, the project provides tools *to ensure the effectiveness* of the forces and means (resources) used to solve the problem.

Epistemic Attitude to Activity Organisation

Despite the fact that the project approach offers both the scholar and the practitioner a universal set of principles, rules and techniques, almost every project created on the basis of this approach is individual and unique. For the proper use of the project approach, it is necessary to apply a variety of research methods, including for various types of assessment, examination and monitoring, during the designing and carrying out a project or program, which usually consists of several interrelated projects or a megaproject. However, the outstripping growth of the significance of the methods and, accordingly, the methodology was observed even before affirming the project approach. Thus, Frederick Engels (2010) noted that "Marx's whole way of thinking (Auffassungsweise) is not so much a doctrine as a method. It provides, not so much ready-made dogmas, as aids to further investigation and the method *for* such investigation" (p. 461) (in German: "...die ganze Auffassungsweise von Marx ist nicht eine Doktrin, sondern eine Methode. Sie gibt keine fertigen Dogmen, sondern Anhaltspunkte zu weiterer Untersuchung und die Methode für diese Untersuchung" (Marx & Engels, 1969, p. 428)). Richard Rorty shows that after the "demise of epistemology" it is replaced by hermeneutics. He contrasts hermeneutics with epistemology (by saying: "For epistemology, the conversation is implicit inquiry. For hermeneutics inquiry is a routine conversation" (Rorty, 1980, p. 318)) and, although he somewhat vaguely explains the difference between hermeneutics and epistemology ("For hermeneutics, to

be rational is to be willing to refrain from epistemology – from thinking that there is a special set of terms in which all contributions to the conversation should be put – and to be willing to pick up the jargon of the interlocutor rather than translating it into one’s own” (Rorty, 1980, p. 318)), it is obvious that hermeneutics is a method of study (it is precisely as a method that Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960) also considers it). In a word, the methodology has acquired special significance in modern philosophical discourse.

Piama Gaidenko (1969) suggests considering the historical change of the prevailing types of intra-scientific reflection in the following sequence: ontologism, epistemologism (in her terminology – gnoseologism), methodologism. For ontologism, it is important to focus on the object of inquiry, the search for objective knowledge, regardless of the cognitive abilities of the subject of human activity. Epistemologism is characterised, first of all, by the awareness by an explorer of the role of the internal organisation of the knowing process, as well as the identification of the plurality of foundations and forms of knowing. Methodologism is a type of scientific reflection that pays the closest attention to the means of knowing. The predominance in a given historical period of any of the types of intra-scientific reflection does not mean at all that other types are not used or disregarded, but they are, as it were, in secondary roles.

For Russia, the period of methodologism was marked by the development in the 1950s-1980s of the philosophical movement of methodologists (Tabatchnikova, 2007; Moscow Methodological and Pedagogical Circle, 2008; Rozin, 2017) who not only conducted research but also tried to put their theoretical achievements into practice. We are talking about the orientation of science to the study of existing and the creation of new means of knowing of the surrounding world, which are methods, categories, research procedures, etc. Methodologists raise the question that “intellectual actions are formed into special productions of new knowledge, norms,

ideas” (Anisimov, 1991, p. 25).

And yet, for the production of new knowledge, a transition to a new level is needed - to the level of technologism. Traditionally, technology is attributed to the production of things, but there was a development in this area: once the technology was attributed only to mechanical processing, then it began to be attributed to chemical production, to electronics. It is time to move to the application of a technological approach to social processes, including the organisation of research. Since technology is understood as a complex of methodically described and practically implemented (or planned for implementation) actions combined in a certain sequence, based on certain techniques, which ultimately brings a measurable result, it is obvious that technologism is a natural development of methodologism. It is worth paying attention to the fact that technology in the domain of knowing is a consistently and consecutively formed set of methods of knowledge production, which involves the ordering and systematisation of categories for the purpose of theoretical and practical mastering of reality.

Conclusion

Effective organisation of human activity creates conditions for adequate self-realisation of the person (individual or collective). One of the ways of such an organisation is the project approach, and the conditions are ripe for the introduction of technological approaches to the organisation of social life. Meanwhile, it is the technological nature that allows maximising the possibilities of social project design to solve problems that arise in public life. Technologically, the basis of any project must inevitably be knowledge, some fairly clear idea of the subject of the upcoming project design. This requires a gradual transition to the introduction of technologicability in manufacturing new knowledge to address epistemic issues.

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