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ROUTINE & PROJECT ACTIVITY: WHAT WILL DISAPPEAR AND WHAT WILL REMAIN

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Abstract. The object of research is routine & project activity. In the course of the research, activity and labor are considered as identical concepts, and mean a process of interaction of one material subject (subject) with another material subject (object). The researched types of activity – routine and project ones – match in this context. However, any human activity includes both material (presence of certain material tools, and material subjects) and ideal (plan, goal, meaning) moments. In the author's view, it is ideal moments and the character of project & routine activity that provide substantial grounds for comparing them.

Keywords: activity; labor; project activity; routine activity; organization.

In the author's view, what the modern stage of development & wide dissemination of project activity as a subject of scientific reflection needs first and foremost is being correlated with routine activity.

The «activity» is undoubtedly one of the fundamental concepts of modern science in general; the one that has made a significant influence on the development of social sciences. According to E. G. Yudin, the concept of activity plays the key role, the methodologically lead role, since it gives a universal characteristic of the human world, and its fundamental dimension [6].

Since this concept enables one to consider the social reality in a way that, despite all diversity of the latter, singles out only what's united into "certain whole as the world of Activity"; its products, conditions, and organization forms.

Such representatives of classical German philosophy as Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, and Kant considered activity as a "primary substance" of the human world, and the very world as the universe of activity [4].

The sociological theory of activity has been created due to the contribution of such

sociologists as E. Durkheim, M. Weber, V. Pareto, and T. Parsons [7]. "The Structure of Social Action" by T. Parsons is a full-fledged systemized concept of activity. During the latter half of XX century the theory of activity has been enriched with works by J. Habermas, A. Giddens, and A. Touraine. A major representative of French school's sociology of labor A. Touraine focuses an attention on social and axiological meaning of labor activity. According to his point of view, a labor is not only collective activity & human's attitude to produced subjects; it's also an instrument of changing the society's idea on itself [5].

Russian researchers who dedicated their works to the problem of "activity" & "activity approach" are M. S. Kagan, V. Z. Kelle, M. Y. Kovalzon, G. P. Shchedrovitsky, E. G. Yudin, and many more; as well as L. S. Vygotsky, S. L. Rubinstein, and A. N. Leontiev who have developed the psychological theory of activity [6; 1].

The universality of the concept of activity requires a clarification of the frameworks within which the research objective of this article – consideration of routine and project



activity – is going to be solved. In relation to the above, the following logic of the concept “narrowing” looks relevant.

First of all, the concept of activity, which must be distinguished from biophysical (physical-chemical and biotic) activity, enables one to single out, and define substantial specificity of human life, which consists in targeted change, and transformation of natural, and social reality. These changes and transformations are carried out as a result of different types of activity. However, the primary form is a production of material tools by which the goods that satisfy living needs of people are created. The vast majority of existing definitions of material activity as a process of creating material values, and goods that are necessary for satisfying human needs, also cover material-production activity connected with transformation of nature, and socio-transforming activity connected with transformation of society. However, it’s material production (labor) that is universal, and capable of creating any tools and objects, and is exercised by people in certain relationships, the combination of which forms production & social human relationship. The gradual development of material production and social relations leads to the emergence, and obtaining of relative autonomy of spiritual production. The latter, which is one of the forms of labor, continues to keep the basic characteristics of material production, such as universal-transformational and social character.

The vast majority of authors single out the following characteristic features of a human’s activity: its consciousness, productivity, and transformational & social character. They also agree that a fundamental characteristic of activity is its objectness. As a consequence, scientific literature contains different criteria of activity’s classification, for instance, activity’s character based (reproductive or creative); social life spheres based

(economic, social, political, religious); main types based (play, labor, communication, creativity, study); activity’s objects & results based (creating material goods / cultural values); activity’s subject based (individual & collective); etc. Thus, a labor can be classified as either one of the types of activity, or the concept that’s identical to activity based on the presence of a subject and an object (that’s certain material object to which a subject’s action is directed) in any activity. Activity and labor are considered as identical concepts in this research. In the frameworks of modern sociology, a labor is defined as “conscious, universal, and organized human activity, a content and a character of which are defined by the extent of labor means development and specificities of social relations, in the frameworks of which it is exercised; and a human asserts himself within it as a genetic creature by creating material and spiritual values that serve to satisfy his essential needs” [2].

Thus, if we consider activity as a process of interaction between one material object (a subject) and another material object (an object), routine activity matches project activity. However, almost any human activity contains both material (presence of certain material tools, and material objects) and ideal (plan, goal, meaning) moments. In the author’s view, it’s ideal moments of activity and the very activity’s character that give the most fertile ground for comparing project and routine activity.

It goes without saying that every next stage of social development, changing socio-economic order, basic type of personality, and achievements of scientific-technical progress contribute to the emergence of new forms of labor activity, and the dieback of old ones. It is manifested in characteristics of labor’s subject, human resources in general (population, qualitative composition, education level, level of professionalism, aware-



ness, motivation etc.), as well as in the change in specific components of activity, tasks essence, type of workload, working conditions and tools, specificities of working process organization, and specificities of management models.

In the authors view, the question on which type of activity (routine / project) could be called an earlier one is debatable. An activity in all its various forms and shapes arises and exists only within the system of objective and necessary social-production material relationships, which arise independently from people's will and consciousness. However, taking into account the fact that routine accompanies an individual in his daily life throughout his entire history, it could be argued that it's routine activity that should get the palm of seniority.

The most detailed description of a routine as a type of activity belongs to M. Weber, since it was him who believed that it's the only type of management activity. The main characteristics of routine activity are the following:

- it is exercised consciously;
- it is defined by clear and unambiguously clarified working responsibilities;
- the content of activity is regulated by instructions;
- it is a set of separate actions that are normed based on time, or based on some other quantitative characteristics;
- it is a subject to formalized control.

The word "routine" has originated from French word "route", which means "way". On the level of ordinary consciousness it means a procedure that has been settled a while ago, that's something that is done regularly, in usual way, and often has a distinct negative shade. "Conservatism, slave-like following accepted templates or known skills that have turned into mechanical habit" – that's how the meaning of this word is defined in Ushakov's dictionary. The term "routine" was brought into academic circulation in 80-s of XX century by economic evo-

lution theory supporters R. R. Nelson and S. G. Winter who defined routine as a characteristic of regular and predictable behavior of a company, or any other organization in a wider economic environment. The authors highlighted that routine following can be both unconscious and conscious action, and besides routine activity, any organization also has other types of activity [3].

The circle of problems that can be solved due to routine is endless, which as predefined its universal dissemination in labor activity, and business practice. According to certain data, less than 3 % of actions exercised by organizations can be identified as non-routine ones [8]. Permanent reproduction, and formation of routine is primarily related to the need of reacting to external environment, both natural and social ones, for the purposes of the most effective use of limited resources (time, management, HR, financial, etc.).

Conclusion

The routine's hierarchical nature contributes to its effectiveness: all simple questions are easily & cheaply solved on "lower levels" having engaged comparatively underqualified employees.

The effectiveness of project activity is manifested in solving weakly structured tasks, responding quickly to fast-changing environmental requirements, and having a powerful creative potential. However, it is the dissemination of project activity, and its relevance in modern business environment that contributes to the growth of such trends as routinization and algorithmizing of creative activity from the one hand, and "creativization" of activity from the other hand.

It goes without saying that both types of activity that have been considered above are exercised in modern organizations independently from their scope and specialization. Routine activity is regular; it is related to carrying out typical activities that numerously repeat without any changes (hiring em-



ployees, tax and financial reports, processing orders etc.). Project activity is oriented at solving unique tasks within a specific time period with limited resources. In the author's view, it is this sphere that needs an identification of differences between types of activity described above.

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