THEORETICAL REFLECTION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY OF PRODUCTIVE SERVICES AND SOCIAL PRAXIS

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Abstract

It can be very often found in the field of social sciences an opinion that theory should only solve the question "how it would be" or "what optimal situation or solution is" and it should not take into account why praxis or reality is different than theory expect. Sometimes, when theory suggest some solution or approach and it is not realized, representatives of theory think that theory succeed its task but praxis (reality) does not consider theoretical conclusion. If a science (theory) ignores the topic of relationships between theory and praxis it offers results that science has small chance to help to solve practical problems. Our article shows that theory researching society should not stop its research by telling how results should like but the theory can and should analyze all links that connect theory with praxis. If a theory uses this approach it is more able to influence reality. We concentrate especially on the sector of productive services, it means services oriented on the development and preservation of human capital. We describe how theory can contribute to the development of the sector to be decisive part of the economy, we further define obstacles preventing to achieve this aim. The concentration of the sector of productive services help us analyze which condition must a science researching society fulfill to be real science and to be able not only describe reality but also influence it and to enforce its conclusion into praxis. Such science must include to its methodology knowledge about its history, successes and failures, about possibilities and problems connected with realization of its theoretical approaches.

Keywords: *theory, practice, human capital, industry 4.0, productive services*

1. INTRODUCTION

"Theory says how it should be, but practice is completely different." – This opinion, in various forms, is predominant not only among the lay public, but also for a part of the expert community in the field of social sciences. It is one of the most frequently occurring mistakes, which limit the possibilities of social sciences.

This mistake has fatal consequences especially in most of more complex researches focused on practical application. Science very often ignores the issue of relationship between theory and practice as a part of its research. As a result, it provides outputs which have only a minimum prospect of contributing to the solution of practical problems.

We will show that theory having the society as its subject-matter does not have to, and should not, end by stating "how it should be", but that it may and should include, as one of its dimensions, also an analysis of all important intermediary stages connecting theory with its application in practice. The more this dimension is developed within the theoretical approach, the more theory ceases to be just an appeal to "how it should be" and the more efficiently it can affect reality.

Every field of socio-scientific research work has its specifics in this regard. Similarly, every level of theoretical research in various fields of social sciences faces the challenge of self-reflection from the perspective of how the results of its understanding translate into practice in various manners. Research focused on the society as its subject-matter becomes a real science only once the conscious use of the pieces of knowledge, relying on the history of this dimension of social sciences, concerning the possibilities as well as the difficulties, connecting the developing cognizance with the implementation of the necessary changes in reality (as envisaged by theory) becomes a part of its essential methodological gear.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Materials

The subject-matter of our contribution is the identification, systemization and analysis of essential intermediary stages connecting theory with practice in social sciences, in particular in cases concerning the implementation of reforms requiring a comprehensive approach and overcoming of certain interest barriers; see the following figure:

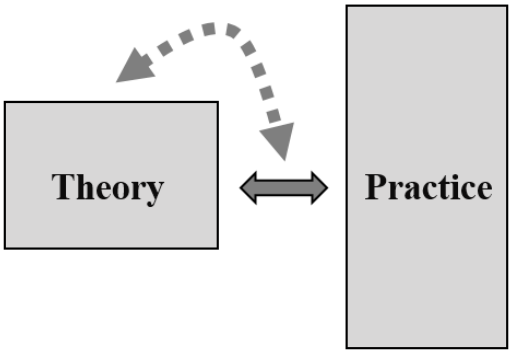

Figure 1. Schematic illustration of the issue of relationship between theory and practice

Source: Own creation

The dash line indicates the perspective, which is the subject-matter of our contribution – the theoretical reflection on the issue of relationship between theory and practice in social sciences. Commonly, only the interaction between theory and practice indicated with solid arrows is considered. This interaction alone, however, can and should also be subject to socio-scientific exploration or the subject-matter of theory, as appropriate. Both from the point of view of methods allowing to explore the issue of relationship between theory and practice as a specific area of the social reality, as a specific matter of understanding, as well as with regard to a certain dimension represented in every socio-scientific research, the result of which are applied in practice.

2.2. Methods

When dealing with that issue, we will use the following methods:

- Theoretical reflection on the relationship between theory and practice. This method builds on the characteristic of theory to make any issue subject to theoretical analysis, i.e. also the issue of relationship between theory and practice (Fajkus 2005);
- Critical analysis of history of the issue. This entails identification of those cases in the historical development of social sciences where certain theoretical approaches started to realize that they need to cope with, in theoretical terms (and that theoretical aspect is what is the important), how they can make sure that their results are applied in practice;
- Method of full and well-structured list when identifying and presenting essential moments (intermediary stages, influences, barriers) linking theory with practice;
- Identification of the essence of the change which the current global society is going through, as an initial prerequisite for non-inertial vision of reality. From our point of view especially economic and sociologic theory has the sector of productive services becomes the most important part of the society (Valenčík et al. 2014, 2015, 2017).

3. FROM THE HISTORY OF THEORETICAL REFLECTION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The first systematic attempt at theoretical reflection originated on the ground of critical rationalism, the classical German philosophy, specifically in Hegel's systematic work. In a somewhat mystically hazy self-development concept of the so-called Absolute Idea, he captures a number of important aspects related to the issue of using knowledge to transform reality, including (and in particular) the social reality. In his work, he reveals, among other, the importance of a generally intermediating nature of practical activities, which was one of the corner stones of the concept of social development as a natural and historical process, i.e. a process in which the society-shaping process is derived from the process of nature transformation by the society (Hegel 1979, § 1-83).

Hegel's work was used as a starting point by K. Marx, who based the theoretical reflection on the connection between theory and practice on his concept of the historical role of the role proletariat. In one of his early pieces already, he writes: "*The same way philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat, the proletariat finds its spiritual weapon in philosophy"* (Marx 1843-1844, cited pursuant to Marx 1976, p. 391).

In his entire work, K. Marx emphasizes that it is the proletariat that is, based on its position in the society, predestined to have an objective interest in a thorough rational understanding of the social circumstances and, based on that understanding, fulfil its historical role (Marx, Engels 2008), Marx (1973). See also Zelený (1962).

V. Lenin followed-up on his doctrine with the theory of the communistic party as the "vanguard of the working class", which "brings" rational understanding of social circumstances in the awareness of the working class and, on that basis, can take power as well as to ensure the country's governance in the new social circumstances (Lenin 1972).

If we can understand the work of the socialistic revolution classics as certain optimistic or romantic dreaming about the omnipotence of the human reason (rational understanding of the social reality), then the real practice of fulfilling these ideas was accompanied by an explosion of irrationality and a shock from the dominance of irrationality, which penetrated deep in the field of intellectual reflection on the social events.

In the part of the world where the Soviet model of socialism won, the rational legacy of the first systematic attempt at theoretical reflection on the relationship between theory and practice was distorted by the misuse of this legacy for internal political struggle related to the emergence of the so-called "new class", exactly in the logics which was revealed and used as a basis to predict further development by M. Djilas in his work called *The New Class* (Djilas 1958).

It took until the 1960s to make a new attempt at theoretical reflection on the issue of connecting theory with practice, in connection with a group of philosophers concentrated around the Frankfurt School: M. Horkheimer (1972, 2002, 2012), T. Adorno (2002, 2004, 2005), J. Habermas 1981, E. Fromm 1961) and H. Marcuse (1960). However, this attempt was already very different from the original attempt by Marx (although it referred to the first attempt, but never fully accepted it) because it subordinated the role of theory to finding a "revolutionary entity" and admitted sacrificing scientism in favour of revolutionary nature. Except for J. Habermas (who tries to find a way to restore connection between theory and practice in the field of communicative theory and has become one of the lonely vehicles of consistent rationalism), most advocates of the Frankfurt School leave the field of rigorously rational approach and strive for various forms of combination of rational and irrational elements. This gradually leads to predominance of the post-modern approach, in which rationality and scientism are already fully sacrificed in favour of the illusion of possibly winning power by means of sufficiently radical entities. For more on this topic, see Kalivoda (1968), Kellner, (1975), Lukács (2000) or, more recently, Maialeh (2015), Žižek (2000).

The so-called critical philosophy which builds on the Frankfurt School or, more specifically, emerged from its womb (sometimes misleadingly called "Neo-Marxism"), focuses on various forms of

discrimination of minorities and tries to identify them as the vehicles of positive changes. In doing so, it makes several fatal mistakes:

– It fails to reflect fundamental discrimination in the society based on the deepening of economic and, subsequently, social segregation of the society, as it rather disguises and conceals this type of segregation by focusing on relatively partial issues concerning the various minorities;

– It abandons the functional model of equal opportunities for acquiring and implementing skills, which is of crucial importance both in the integration of the society and as a counterbalance against economic segregation, and it replaces the model with exaggerated accentuation of partial discrimination of various types;

– It usurps the position of "bringing" ideas to the heads of potential consumers from the point of intellectual superiority rather than honest, critical and rigorous rational thinking; as a result, it becomes a victim of easy manipulation by the real power, which also affects its role.

The above-presented brief topical description of the quest for connection between theory and practice in the recent and very recent history implies that any attempt aiming at a rigorously rational approach (approach that does not leave the theoretical ground in that quest and the general communicability of theory while fully complying with its fundamental attributes) poses several pitfalls. For that reason, we are going to point out certain aspects of that problem, which should be respected in this approach whenever appropriate:

– Emphasis on theory, and in particular the historical continuity of science development (no theory is perfect or complete, but the knowledge of the development of every science enables us to get sufficient overview in dealing with the question of where we can rely on it).

– Connection between the development of theory with the communicative aspect, as regards both horizontal communication (between scientific sectors) and vertical communication (towards those who do not deal with theory in relevant field on a professional basis), i.e. emphasis on comprehensibility and popularization of theoretical knowledge without simplifying them in an inadmissible way.

– On one hand, a pluralistic and realistic interpretation of the incentives motivating a person to acquire competencies by mastering theory and, on the other hand, integration of this issue in a comprehensive concept of transition to a society, in which developing and retaining competencies becomes the core matter, i.e. refusing relativism in the historical direction of development of the society. In other words – understand the emphasis placed on the rational aspect in the context of focusing on full development and application of human competencies.

– Respecting various differences and discriminations, various causes why people form groups and create social networks under the influence of discrimination, as a result of social segregation, under the effect of powerful factors influencing the development of human awareness. The research should be made from the point of view of how theory focusing on developing, retaining and applying human competencies can operate in this process.

4. INTERMEDIARY STAGES, ENTITIES AND CONDITIONS FOR CONNECTING THEORY WITH PRACTICE

The relationship between theory and practice is structured in a complicated way. In the first approximation, we can distinguish:

– Intermediary stages, which connect a developing theory with its practical application;

– Subjects involved in the elaboration of theory, which act as its vehicle and ensure translation into practical use;

– Conditions for connecting theory with practice.

4.1. Intermediary stages at the level of science

The intermediary stages a theory must pass through on its way to practice include primarily the following:

– Sharing of theory with the team working on its elaboration. Team work is one of the most important prerequisites for applying theory in practice. An exception may consist in a publication (book) brought by an individual who has understood the era, which will meet with great acceptance among the expert community as well as the interested lay public. In today's world, a comparable work may be perceived as a partial awareness-raising factor at the most;

– Effective methodology, which makes it possible to share theory within the team and which is a supporting pillar to apply an interdisciplinary approach. The social reality is only able to absorb comprehensive solutions to problems. Consequently, theory must use the results of a greater number of scientific disciplines and operate at several levels of abstraction or concretization considering the assumptions for its practical application;

– Expansion of fundamental inspiring ideas (new pieces of knowledge brought by the theory) within the scientific community. An era, which requires a new theory to be applied, is always associated with a certain "break point". A turning point in the inertial historical tendencies, which brought the society to an impasse characterized by increased and escalating unresolved problems, as well as a turning point in the theory itself.

It is very important to achieve what could be called prestigious results, i.e. such results that are recognized by, and raise the interest of, the scientific community. That is not so simple. At present, science is oriented at demonstrating results based on criteria, which are not always functional, namely from the point of view of practical application of the results, team spirit and focus of science on overcoming the inertial approaches. For those reasons, truly new things are very difficult to push through, and it usually takes several years before partial results can be achieved.

The probability of achieving results in that area can be increased by:

– Team spirit, as already referred to above, which makes it possible to increase the frequency of outputs in a certain direction, bring them to awareness of the scientific community, gradually "refine" them through consultations within the team so that their comprehensible presentation, with focus on the most important aspects, is sufficiently convincing and understandable;

– Using strong methodological means related to the application of the mathematical instrument (model) itself;

– Integrating the work into comprehensive research focused on identifying the essence of the changes, which the society must go through to escape the inertial development trap.

4.2. Intermediary stages at the level of contacts between science and potential implementers of the results brought by the theory

There can be several potential implementers of the theory, who have different positions and play different roles in the implementation of the results of scientific knowledge. We can distinguish three types of potential implementers of the results achieved by a theory focused on solving practical problems:

– state-based,

– political,

– civil.

In the first case, they include state institutions active in the relevant fields. As a rule, in situation where there is enough space for inertial development of the society, this manner of applying the results in practice is sufficient. If a problem occurs, it is identified by the relevant specialized state institutions, the specific expert field is addressed through standard channels to deal with the problem, and the problem is dealt with within the intentions of inertial vision of reality, which is sufficient in such times.

Nevertheless, such approach has its shortages. In both the practice and the theory, the position of experts with inertial vision of reality becomes strongly predominant. Once a society starts facing cumulative problems, these problems are not only left unresolved, but additional problems emerge very quickly. The failure of institutions and the elements of instability are conducive to the formation of spontaneously, but dynamically organized interest groups within the institutional system that benefit from the problems the society is facing.

This marks the beginning of a period when the society achieves the very problematic stage which it can deviate only if a theory breaks through, which is able to synoptically describe the essence of the turning point concerned in the relevant historical circumstances. As a rule, such theory is not demanded by the state institutions or, more specifically, active barriers are created by them to significantly limit the possibilities of developing and applying theories focused on dealing with the existing problems.

The second case concerns political entities. In standard situations where there is free space for inertial development of the society, political entities play a “balancing” role in the society from the point of view of degree of solidarity towards less successful, less wealthy, variously disabled individuals or individuals discriminated against, etc. In such conditions, political parties can compete against each other through programmes based on defining priorities (commitments to their voters, which the political parties intend to pursue in case of their success). Once the inertial development reaches its natural barriers, once the unresolved problems start to cause additional unresolved problems and once such situation results in a failure of the state institutions and the control mechanism based on the political competition of parties, the priority-based political programmes are no longer functional. The society starts demanding, on an objective basis, the existence of such a political subject, whose social role is based on a different type of programme. On a programme which points out the root causes of the accumulating problems and a path to their solution, including the specification of entities that can participate in the resolution of the problems in accordance with their interests.

It is certainly not simple to meet the social demand for a subject that, instead of making promises without earnest (in a form to which the formulation of priorities gradually degenerates), would show the real issues at stake, and the steps that should be taken and how they should be taken. This is caused by the fact that the political sphere is usually “crowded” and it is very difficult for new entities to break through in such environment. It is a situation like a young tree having to grow in a mature beech forest. The tree might be given a chance upon a forest calamity, but it is not sufficiently responsible to see the reflection of this analogy into the understanding of the options as the solution to the social problems from the theory perspective. A large majority of those who are active in the political sphere is burdened by political routinism of long-lasting and deep-rooted evaluation of the political position by negotiating benefits based on the results achieved in elections. Therefore, it is much more difficult for most politically active persons to overcome the barriers of inertial vision of reality than for normal people.

The third case concerns the civil society, i.e. those who can be classified as “normal people” or the majority society. Unlike the groups operating in the state institutional system, persons who are professionally active in the political life and certain professional groups, the civil society feels the most all the impacts of the unresolved problems, without having an opportunity to benefit itself from the failing institutional system and from the political sphere. It must be emphasized that the border between those who can gain something from the problems for their own benefit and those who do not have this possibility is usually “fuzzy” in any social system and in any era. In the period when problems are accumulating, and the institutional system is failing, various attempts are made to corrupt the majority society by the failing elites. In such eras, and we are currently living in one of such eras (Valenčík et al. 2014, 2015, 2017), the awakening, ripening and maturation in the overall development of public awareness become increasingly important. We intentionally refer to “self-awareness” (Selbstbewusstsein). This means that the public awareness gradually starts understanding what the matters are about and that nobody will resolve the problems for the normal people (the majority society); they also start realizing their own power, their ability to influence social events, their predominance over the failing elites generated by the inertial development. In such time, the public awareness and self-awareness start to turn to a theory which meets its demand and subsequently, stimulated and guided by that demand, begins to deliver on its social role.

5. SUBJECTS INVOLVED IN THE ELABORATION OF THEORY, WHICH ACT AS ITS VEHICLE AND ENSURE TRANSLATION INTO PRACTICAL USE

Subjects, which are or can be involved in acquiring the results of the theory and its translation into practice, can have various forms:

- State institutions which have at their disposal the mechanisms linked to institutionalized research and established procedures to apply the results in practice;
- Political parties or movements and interested stakeholders associated with them;
- Certain professional organizations (e.g. trade unions);
- Independent associations and confederations linked to awareness-raising activities of various types;
- Educational institutions;
- Media.

All the subjects referred to above can support each other, thus creating synergies. In the period when the time has come to turn the inertial tendencies based on generating and disseminating an innovated paradigm of social events, associations and confederations linked to awareness-raising activities and alternative media become increasingly important. The space occupied by this type of subjects is the easiest to penetrate in the existing society, despite various restrictions by the current holders of power. If theory is to relate to the awareness-raising activities through associations and alternative media, the theory must be able to explain its results in a comprehensible and popular form, without turning to misleading simplifications. The path from a piece of knowledge obtained from research to its comprehensible explication both the lay public and stakeholders is not simple. This is part of scientific work.

To understand the dynamics of the implementation process (paths that it can take as well as barriers that it will hit and must overcome), it is important to adequately reflect the interest aspect within the comprehensive theoretical system. A positive change requires the implementation of a package of interconnected reforms which follow their logic. Each of the reforms, which can be implemented in certain circumstances, has its background of interest. It affects the interests of certain groups. More or less directly, more or less positively. If the awareness-raising activities, which form an integral part of applying theory in practice in a breaking period, are sufficiently and in a targeted manner connected with the logic of the reforms, all the efforts might fail.

Conditions for connecting theory with practice

The conditions connecting theory with practice include in particular:

- Level of public awareness and self-awareness;
- Degree of polarization in the society and its root causes;
- Functionality of the institutional systems.

6. NEED FOR A PERSPECTIVE AND COMPREHENSIBLE VISION FOR SOLVING PROBLEMS

What are the specificities of the present era; which historical transformation is our global society going through? It is indeed no coincidence that problems grow faster than they are resolved, escalate and raise the question of survival. In the history, this was always a signal of something revolutionary taking place, a turning point in the inertial development coming closer.

What is currently the greatest challenge from the point of view of relationship between theory (social sciences) and practice (implementation of the required reforms)?

At first sight, it is not quite clear what the answer should be. Therefore, it is appropriate to first ask another question: What should be the approach to answer the question of the greatest current challenge in the relationship between theory and practice?

Then the question can be asked in more concrete terms as follows: What poses an important barrier from the point of view of the relationship between theory and practice which could be, however, relatively easily changed? I.e. the most important element here is exactly the one where something can be changed. Answer: Inertial thinking.

Inertial thinking is blind about seeing the root causes for the current problems. It is exactly this point where the approach to understanding the current problems can be changed. We live in a breaking period (Valenčík a kol. 2014, 2015, 2017), which requires a corresponding basic methodological position of the approach to identifying the key issues at stake. This means rejecting, on programme level, the inertial vision of reality, which does not allow the root causes for the current problems to be revealed.

To this end, we add the following two figures, which make it possible for everyone to get an appropriate idea of the essence of the change we are going through.

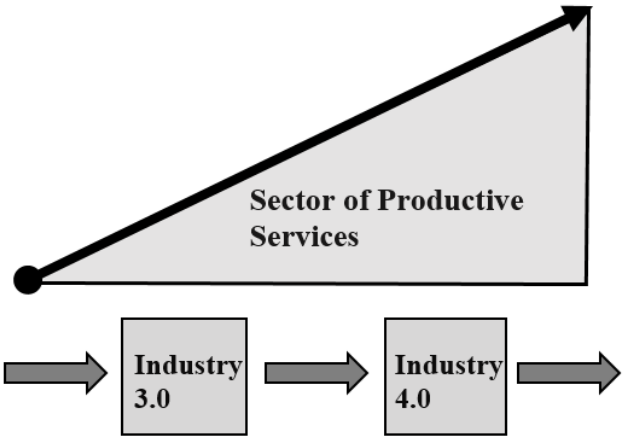

Figure 2. Birth of a new sector

Source: Own creation

Inertial thinking sees only the changes marked with horizontal arrow. Non-inertial thinking sees the opportunity for exponential upturn, which is the essence.

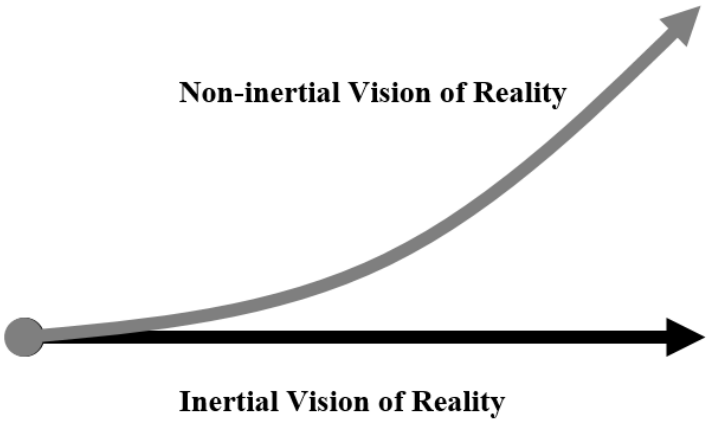

Figure 3. Shifting center of gravity of economic development

Source: Own creation

Here, the key is to understand that the entire complex of the productive services sector, which contributes to acquiring, retaining and deploying human capital, inexhaustible sources consisting in free development of human competencies that are changing (in the conditions of equal opportunities and team work) into an increasingly intensive generator and implementer of innovation, can be financed more than sufficiently from its economic effects in technology.

Once the non-inertial vision of reality allows us to reveal and lucidly imagine this perspective as a clear vision of how the current problems should be resolved, we are not far from understanding which steps must be taken to set out on the path towards a better future. For more information on this point, see Valenčík et al. (2014, 2015, 2017).

We will not be able to understand the issues of transition to a society (technologically) based on Industry 4.0, unless we understand that this is only a partial technological change which is conditional upon and determined by a much deeper societal transformation comparable to industrial revolution, i.e. the revolution which gave birth to industry as such and which now takes the form of genesis (and break through) of productive services as the dominant sector of the economy.

The most important aspect is not that there is a package of reforms needed, which will allow for the "self-supporting autonomy" of the productive services sector, i.e. that the economic effects generated from the operation of these services are returned to specific providers of these services as their source. The most important aspect is that the production of these sectors can be delivered in practice in such parts where there has been no market yet.

If nowadays we only speak about the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0, this is a misleading reduction which is dangerous, among other. It invokes an idea that the future development is a matter for experts only and that people will soon become redundant. It is essential to build on the assumption that automation, electronization and industrial informatics (which is the content of the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution) are only one of the many revolutionary technological changes that manufacturing will go through. It will also be accompanied, for example, by production localization and the related radical decrease of costs of the production of virtually anything. However, if our civilization wants to escape the inertial development trap, the center of gravity of economic development will be shifting, in particular, to the field of production of human competencies, more specifically to productive services enabling the acquisition, retention and deployment of human competencies. This change is equally important as the industrial revolution.

An economy based on productive services (such as education, health care, family upraising, spa sector, etc.) will be not only "permanently sustainable" (which is a misleading term), but also offer inexhaustible possibilities for development based on inexhaustible amplitude of development of human competencies and inexhaustible wealth of the environment which we live in and form part of.

There are no borders that could not be crossed with the use of human knowledge. If we manage to pass one of the critical pitfalls in the history of the civilization, the path will be open to free the economic development and our entire civilization from the dependence on the quanta of natural resources and for the control of internal structures of the nature allowing to exceed the space and time limitations of the part of the Universe, in which it was born. The changes ahead of us can be very dramatic and we only have very approximate idea about their shape. On the other hand, it has only been a little more than 50 years since a major work by R. Richta *Civilization at a Crossroad* was published (1966). That work includes many anticipations for the economy towards which we are headed, that are still relevant even today.

These include comprehensive transformations not only in the economic, but also in the entire societal system. Their common denominator is the emphasis on the fact that the fulfilment of the real richness of a human life in the form of full utilization of development and deployment of human competencies should also be the most important factor determining the dynamic and quality of economic growth.

An economy based on these foundations will be characterized by high intensity and revolutionary nature of innovation, result in significant savings of all types of sources (raw materials, energy, time, labour), but will, at the same time, generate demand for human competencies and their diversity so that no-one

who will be interested in participating in that type of economy, will be redundant and forced to live in a tolerated enclave saturated from public funds.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1. Results

We have shown certain essential aspects of the issue of relationship between theory and practice in social sciences from the point of view of implementation of reforms related to the current changes in the society. We addressed the historical development in the understanding of this complex issue and, as a follow-up, pointed out several important moments in the relationship between theory and practice in the field of social sciences. There are also several other relatively independent areas related to the issue in question. First, it is the issue of government failures and especially the role of interest groups, which we referred to in the margin only and which need to be addressed separately with great attention.

The relationship between a developing social science and the problems of social practice (the matters at stake) must become a legitimate part of the socio-scientific exploration and a subject-matter of research. This could be seen as a specialized area of socio-scientific research. From this point of view this is only a partial problem and, as such, it should be addressed by specialists who will focus on that topic. From our point of view, the topic is so important that it is a pre-condition for the output of a great majority of other socio-scientific exploration to practice. This means that the scientific community should be literate in the understanding of the issues in question based on the results of specialized research and should know what matters are at stake and how they are related to the applicability of the results of one or another field of exploration.

7.2. Discussion

In our opinion, the requirement to incorporate the estimated expectations concerning the applicability of the results in the presentation of the results should be seen as one of the options for closer links between theory and practice in social sciences. The requirements for scientific presentation (the prescribed structure of articles or other outputs) have nearly reached perfection. However, they explicitly lack the “expected application of results in practice”, i.e. an estimate or expectation of what the author has in mind as to how his/her results could be applied in practice – directly (affect the operation of an institution) or indirectly (through use in further research). Therefore, we consider it desirable to:

– As regards the horizontal aspect of development in science (i.e. “exploration for exploration”), at least to indicate final results of the research, or the researcher’s idea about the practical output, or honestly say that the researcher can only foresee the relevance, but does not see any specific application;

– As regards practice-oriented research, it should be not only subordinate to the institutions, but also suggest changes in the institutions’ behaviour, if their existing inertial behaviour leads to accumulation of problems.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The approach to dealing with the issue of the relationship between theory and practice has several important aspects, of which some are a matter of practice in theoretical work:

– The interdisciplinary nature (horizontal dimension), i.e. the closer the research is to practice, the more it requires cooperation between the different disciplines. Here it is appropriate to build on the experience of technical science, which result in a functioning and applicable technical product that is usually expected to be purchased by customers;

– Theoretical reflection on the actual issue of the relationship between theory and practice within teams (vertical aspect). As part of internal division of scientific work, every good team must address (in a qualified, scientific manner) the issue of applicability of results;

– Intergenerational (exogenous aspect), i.e. cooperation of several (two to four) generations in research. The key to a stable development of social science lies in the experience with the development of social science, how new discoveries were made, how the concept of science has changed, which problems it had to cope with. The invention capability and ability of overlapping of the existing knowledge finds an extraordinarily important support in past experiences with active participation in the development of science, which an expert gradually gains throughout his/her professional career;
– International cooperation because every country has specific conditions for connecting theory with practice, which correspond to the state of institutions, political situation, forms of scientific evaluation and their financing. International cooperation provides for an overarching view of what the position inside a country tends to overlook. Also, international cooperation reinforces the autonomy of science in a significant manner.

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