European Foundation on Social Quality

European Network on Indicators for Social Quality

WORKING PAPER "FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE"

Second meeting of the Network

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1. *EXPLORING RELEVANT DOMAINS AND ADEQUATE INDICATORS FOR MEASURING SOCIAL QUALITY*

1.1 *Introduction*

1.1.1 *The methodological triangle*

During the first meeting of the 'Network Indicators for Social Quality' in October 2001 the participants decided to prioritise the delineation of domains as starting points for developing indicators. These indicators should pave the way for measuring social quality. The '*General Paper*' was meant as preparation for this meeting.[1] Thanks to the first meeting and the debates afterwards the Network's staff took on board the so-called methodological triangle. It could be applied for starting the above mentioned process of defining domains. In Chapter-111 of this Working Paper, namely the Annex, we present this triangle, using the General Paper as frame of reference.[2] This triangle illustrates the distinction between: (i) objective conditional factors of social quality, (ii) the subjective conditional factors of social quality, and (iii) the constitutional factors of social quality. These factors are explained in the Foundation's second book.[3] In this book the editors connect these factors with specific measurement instruments, namely respectively: (i) indicators, (ii) profiles, and (iii) criteria.

In the last months of 2001 the staff prepared with assistance of some Network's participants the application for DG-X11 with which to plea for the creation of a 'Research Group Indicators, Profiles and Criteria'.[4] This plea is a logical consequence of the acceptance of the methodological triangle. According to the staff, this application is very important for the Network. First it presents a context for the Network. Second, it argues for restricting the Network's task to the development of indicators as measurement instruments for the objective conditional factors, namely the four components: socio-economic security, cohesion, inclusion and empowerment. Indicators are a necessary but insufficient instrument for measuring social quality. Profiles and criteria should complete the measurement. But this is the task of the proposed Research Group. Notwithstanding that, we need very precise information about the nature and changes of the objective conditional factors. Therefore we need indicators. The division of labour between the Network and the proposed Research Group is a consequence of theoretical based arguments. This conclusion may be seen as a new answer to questions, made during the first meeting of the Network. [5]

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[1] '*General Paper 1st Plenary Meeting Network Indicators of Social Quality*', Amsterdam: EFSQ, October 2001. October 2001.

[2] This methodological triangle is presented in the application to DG-X11 concerning the Research Group, see note-4, pp.15-17.

[3] W.A.Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomese, A.C.Walker, '*Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*'. The Hague/Boston/London: Kluwer Law International, 2001, see Chapter-XV11

[4] '*Research Group Indicators, Profiles and Criteria of Social Quality: Proposal to DG-X11*'. Amsterdam: EFSQ, January 2002.

[5] 'M.Keizer, '*European Network Indicators of Social Quality: First Meeting 25-27 October: Notes*'. Amsterdam: EFSQ, January 2002. During this meeting proposals are made to start with the development of profiles because of the suggestions, presented in the General Paper.

1.1.2   The project 'employment and social quality'

The work of the Foundation's project 'employment and social quality' may be very relevant for the Network. Therefore we have to introduce this project shortly. It is paid by DG-V of the European Commission and it will explore data in Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Portugal and Belgium in order to discover indicators to measure social quality, relevant for this policy field of employment. The argument for this project is that this policy field regards one of the key determinants of social quality. As argued, "the EU appears to be confined within a narrow production-dominated paradigm in which social policy is the handmaiden of economic policy. It is necessary for European policy makers to demonstrate that this approach and its goals – economic growth and a dynamic and competitive economy – are superior to that of social quality. Instead of competitiveness and economic growth, social quality emphasises interaction. Rather than market mechanisms it is governed by principles of co-operation, partnership and mutual dependency. It would be possible to construct a European policy for the social quality of employment but, unfortunately, this will be difficult within the current productionist paradigm of EU policies".[6]

The participants of the project 'employment and social quality' focus upon the development of 'adequate' indicators, with which to measure the nature and changes with regard to 'flexicurity'. From the point of view of social quality, flexicurity is seen as a 'relevant' domain of the policy field of employment.[7] It may be appreciated as an important aspect of the component inclusion. On behalf of its first meeting in June 2001 the Foundation published the Working Paper '*Social Quality and Adaptability*'.[8] We will present some outcomes of the work done by the project's participants, because they made proposals how to develop herewith-related indicators and how to use them in order to gather knowledge about flexicurity as a **domain** of inclusion.

The Paper 'Social Quality and Adaptability' demonstrates, that this domain of flexicurity is not immediately to be connected with the **policy field** of employment. Between policy field and domains we distinguish – in line with debates in the context of the European Commission – different **areas**. The Paper explained the four areas of the policy field of employment: employability, adaptability, entrepreneurship and equal opportunities. In order to connect policy field of employment with the social quality approach the area (in terms of the European Commission the pillar) of 'adaptability' was chosen for exploration. According to the EC this area or pillar is oriented to "the humanisation of work. Focused on the working environment (i.e. reaching into the organisation of work and working time and calling for participation, training and information of workers and workers' representatives), aiming at prevention in the framework of a risk-information approach, and based on absolute standards".[9] The four areas (pillars) represent the core of the European employment strategy and are taken into account in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 for the first time. The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 delivered the legitimisation of these pillars, namely that the European Union has "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. Achieving this

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[6] A.C.Walker, 'The Social Quality of Employment: Europe Needs a Social Policy for Work'. *European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 2, Issue 2 (2000), pp.3-12.

[7] In order to conclude about the **relevancy** of domains and the **adequacy** of indicators, we have to apply essential characteristics of the social quality approach. This point is an important challenge for theorizing social quality in the near future.

[8] T.Korver, '*Social,Quality and Adaptability*'. Amsterdam: EFSQ, June 2000.

[9] See note-8, p.15.

goal requires an overall strategy aimed at: preparing the transition to a information society and R&D, as well as by setting up processes of structural reform for competitiveness and innovation and by completing the internal market, as well as modernising the European social model, investing in people and combating social exclusion".[10] The elaboration of this overall strategy was more or less completed in the Council Decision of January 2001 with the guidelines for the Member States.[11]

1.1.3   Purpose of this Chapter

In this Chapter we will present four types of proposals to develop indicators with which to measure objective conditional factors of Social Quality. These proposals refer to debates about social quality; (i) by Ivan Svetlik[12] (1.2), (ii) by Yitzhak Berman and David Philips[13] (1.3), (iii) by participants of the project 'employment and social quality'[14] (1.4), and (iv) by the editors of the second book[15] (1.5). These four proposals delivered the ideas for the recommendation the staff proposes in paragraph 1.6. In this recommendation the four proposals are combined into a new proposal to develop indicators to measure Social Quality. This new proposal is based on a inductive way of reasoning and proposes a clear connection with policies. Before the presentation of these four types we have to make some introductory remarks. The central focus of the Network should be to gather knowledge about relevant domains for contributing to the measurement of social quality in Member States, regions, cities and communities. The relation between domains, components and daily life is highly complicated. This challenge supposes new theoretical work. To fulfil this task, it will be useful to discuss extensively the first outcomes of the work of the participants of the Foundation's project 'employment and social quality'. They applied the so-called iterative method, namely a specific search process. With help of this process, they made decisions about the procedure with which to explore indicators in different national states, which may be relevant for the domain of 'flexicurity' of the component 'inclusion'.

1.2   First proposal: elaboration components

1.2.1   Ivan Svetlik's plea

In his article about operational questions of social quality Ivan Svetlik announces that the first methodological task is, "to find a precise definition of each of the components, which should be as operational as possible. For instance, what do we understand by 'social cohesion'? Is this social integration in terms of consistency of values, the behaviour of individuals according to social norms, interpersonal contacts, mutual interdependency between the members of a community, the absence of

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[10] European Council, 'President Conclusion', Lisbon: pres Release SN 100/100 EN, 20 March (2000), p.2.
[11] 'Council Decision of 19 January 2001on Guidelines for Member States' employment policies for the year 2001'. Brussels: EC (2000/63).
[12] I. Svetlik, 'Some Conceptual and Operational Considerations on the Social Quality of Europe'. European Journal of Social Quality, Vol 1, Isseus 1&2 91999), pp.74-90.
[13] The most extensive presentation of their approaches is given by David Phillips in the fourth chapter of the Network's General Paper, see note-1, 36-52.
[14] T. Korver, L.J.G. van der Maesen, 'The Composition of the Final Report and the National Reports'. Amsterdam: EFSQ, January 2002.
[15] See note-3, Chapter-XV111.

disruptive conflicts, a feeling of belonging, expressions and acts of solidarity, etc? And what do we understand by empowerment? (….) On the basis of operational definitions one can search for appropriate indicators for each of the components. An early attempt in this direction has been made [according to Svetlik] by Berman and Phillips (1998). They link the four components with the OECD list of domains and social indicators. Their critical considerations seem to go in the right direction. The components of Social Quality are too complex to be represented by one indicator alone. It should therefore be split into several domains. Berman and Phillips do this with regard to social inclusion/exclusion. Within social inclusion, they define the domains of social security, employment, housing, health, education and community services (neighbourhood). For each of the domains they propose one or more indicators, such as access to various services, housing, jobs and political positions, discrimination in employment and education, etc."[16]

Svetlik continues by saying, that "another approach, based on the same logic, would be to take one domain and to analyse it in parallel with all four components. For instance, we can take the health domain and present a number of indicators for illustration purposes only. Such an exercise represents a test of the very concept of Social Quality itself. It may be, for instance, that social cohesion will not be applicable in some domains. At the same time it leads us towards the generation of relevant indicators (…) One should go beyond this and deal with the indicators more systematically. The domains of application of the Social Quality concept should be determined, e.g. health, disability, education, employment, housing old age, family, childhood. For each component within a certain domain, a decision should be made about the utilisation of objective, subjective and behavioural indicators, and about desegregated, composite and system indicators. Indicators should be scaled and structured along the input-process-output-impact line, or in some other way. However, this is beyond the scope of this contribution."[17]

1.2.2   Some questions or comments

Important is to notice, Ivan Svetlik's plea is based on the Foundation's first book.[18] The way, the concept of social quality is presented in the book invites to elaborate the four components as the first priority.[19] The book was published in June 1997. Since that year studies, workshops, debates are made in order to prepare a new presentation of the social quality approach. The renewed theory of social quality refers to the subject matter of 'the social', as the outcome of the dialectic between the self-realisation of individuals as social beings in the context of the formation of collective identities. In other words, 'the social' is the outcome of constantly changing processes through which individuals realise themselves as interacting social beings. The herewith-related dialectical processes will create or constitute the social world. The main question is which policies or intervention of citizens do we need in order to contribute to the self-realisation in the context of the formation of acceptable collective identities and vice versa? Thanks to this theoretical point we will be enabled to analyse aspects of the

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[16] I. Svetlik, see note-12, page 86

[17] See note-12, pag. 87

[18] W.A.Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, A.C.Walker, '*Social Quality of Europe'*. The Hague/Boston/London: Kluwer Law Interntional (1997).

[19] This was the opinion of some young scholars as well. They presented an extensive article about the elaboration of the four components as presented in the Foundation's first book: A.Weather, Borut Ronevi, M. Rydbjerg, M. Valentova, M. Zajc, 'Reconceptualisation of Social Quality'. *European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol 3, Issues 1&2 (2001) (forthcoming).

components from the perspective of the same constitutional processes. This will deliver points of departure comparing aspects of these components with each other. They are related intrinsically by the above mentioned dialectic. This will deliver a basis for analysing the components as objective conditional factors. Therefore, the question is if Svetlik's plea for starting with the elaboration of our knowledge about the four components should have priority. The knowledge about the relationship between components, domains and indicators is highly complicated. It cannot at the moment function as point of departure but should be seen as a challenge for elaboration in the near future.[20] It seems attractive to start with exploring empirically relevant domains of the components to pave the way for the connection between adequate indicators and the components. That means, to explore indicators, which may be adequate for the chosen domains of the four components in order to gather knowledge about these components (you will read more about this method in the third proposal, paragraph 1.4). Svetlik's second proposal, to choose one domain and to analyse it in parallel with all four components has more affinity with the proposed empirical orientation. Nevertheless, the elaboration of knowledge about the precise characteristics of components seems to be high on the agenda of his proposal.

1.3   Second proposal: domains and four types of indicators

1.3.1   Yitzhak Berman and Davis Phillips' plea

We suppose, Yitzhak Berman and David Phillips' plea is presented most clearly in the Network's General Paper.[21] We would still like to refer to their proposal shortly. In our opinion they chose the components as points of departure, but prioritises the delineation of relevant domains for each component.[22] They have affinity with Svetlik's second proposal (see above). Thanks to the contributions of Yitzhak Berman and David Phillips in 1999 and 2000, the Foundation concluded in the application for the Network's project, that the social quality approach especially accentuates the interrelationships between the basic systems, the interactions of human subjects as social beings and the participatory characteristics of policy making. Therefore, indicators of social quality cannot avoid the tension between the rational-technical and a value-based constructivist approach. The challenge is to operationalise social quality in a way, which brings these two approaches together. With this in mind the Foundation proposed in their application, to derive indicators for the four components and combine them to produce an appropriate aggregate indicator of overall social quality. Nevertheless, methodological issues of operationalisation differ from component to component.[23] This conclusion stimulated Yitzhak Berman and David Phillips later to choose domains of the components as a point of departure. In the meantime the connection between components and indicators became less direct.

It is of interest to follow this new proposed procedure of Berman and Phillips with regard to employment. They accept this as a domain of the component 'socio-economic security'. This implies, they explore this domain from the perspective of this specific component. This contrast to the third proposal (see below), in which the domains are explored from the perspective of the chosen policy field. As a second step they make a distinction between four dimensions of indicators: (i) input, (ii)

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[20] See therefore the remarks in note-7.
[21] See note-1, pp.36-54
[22] In this case, the problem referred to in note-7 concerns their approach as well.
[23] 'Indicators of Social Quality: Proposal to DG-X11'. Amsterdam; EFSQ, June 2000, p. 17 (part-B).

process, (iii) outcome, and (iv) impact. The third step concerns the appointment of adequate indicators of these four dimensions:

- Input indicators for this domain are: (i) employment protection and job finding legislation, (ii) job finding and retraining service,
- Process indicators are: (i) eligibility criteria for service provision, (ii) what employment needs are covered, (iii) number of applicants,
- Outcome indicators are: (i) range and amount of job finding , (ii) job protection and retraining services provided,
- Impact indicators are: (i) unemployment, (ii) temporary, part-time employment rates, (iii) industrial injures etc – all by employment sectors. [24]

1.3.2   Some questions and comments

It is important to recognise the essence of this procedure. First of all, what are the arguments for accepting the chosen domains as relevant aspects of the component socio-economic security as an objective conditional factor for social quality? Furthermore, which arguments can be mentioned to chose these four types of indicators – input, process, outcome and impact – as relevant for this domain with which to explain the characteristics of this typical domain of socio-economic security?[25] These questions are a quite logical consequence of the chosen procedure. Nevertheless, they succeed in the appointment of a manifold of domains with which to clarify the nature and changes of the four components. If these components are not precise and operational – and see Svetlik's argument – the domains will function as heuristic means to connect components with indicators in order to explain processes with regard to these components. The attention for four dimensions – input, process, outcome and impact – may be inspired by the conclusion, that changes of social quality in societies, cities or communities have to do with social processes, caused by interacting and organised individual subjects. The herewith-related fourth question is which frame of reference is used or shall be used to analyse the outcomes of the four types of indicators in order to understand the processes regarding (in this case) the domain of employment as a characteristic aspect of the component 'socio economic security'?

1.4.   The third proposal: policy fields as point of departure

1.4.1   The applied procedure of the project 'employment and social quality'

Because this applied procedure (see section-1.1.2) is quite recent, we will present this proposal more extensively. We have to realise that comments and questions concerning the above described proposals may be relevant for this proposal as well. Nevertheless, the procedure is quite different and this may be a source of inspiration to think about the Network's strategy. Thanks to the introduction above we may conclude that the project's participants choose a concrete policy field as point of departure. Furthermore, they derived from this policy field, namely employment, a relevant (sic) domain with which to make a connection with, in this case, the component of inclusion. This differs

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[24] See note-1, page-37.
[25] See note-7 as well.

from the second proposal. They restrict themselves in order to focus – in the context of the policy domain of employment – to one area. This Foundation's project will focus upon 'adaptability' as one of the four areas of the policy field of employment. An *area* is a crucial part of a policy field (in this case employment) as a political desired focus for stimulating collective actors to address accepted actual and urgent needs (wants, preferences). In practice the four areas of this policy field are highly integrated but they may be distinguished analytically. Adaptability is described as: "the opportunities created by the knowledge-based economy and the prospect of an improved level and quality of employment require a consequent adaptation of work organisation and the contribution to the implementation of Life Long learning strategies by all actors including enterprises, in order to meet the needs of workers and employers".[26]
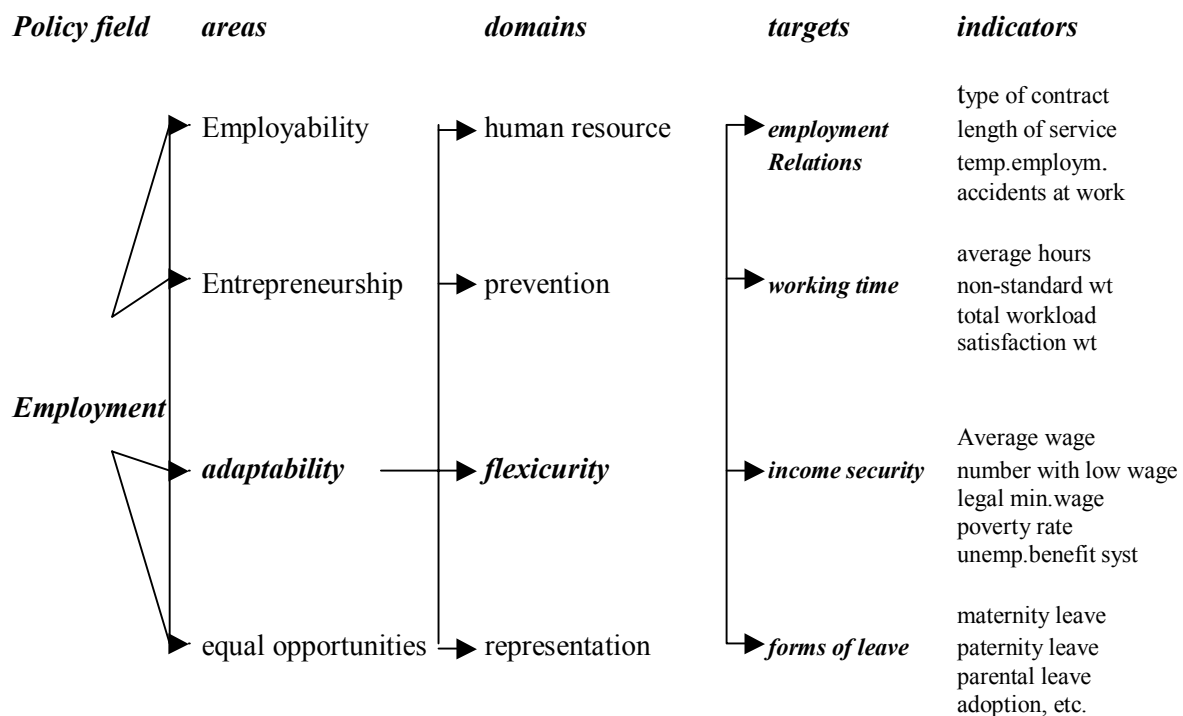
The project's participants accept the hypothesis that the Social Quality approach may be of interest for contributing to this policy field and especially to its area of adaptability. This area concerns provisions with which to realise the operationalisation of the transitional labour markets in order to create flexible labour conditions and maintain security at the same time. Each area may therefore be distinguished in domains. According to the European Commission the domains of adaptability are: (i) the connection (and balance) of flexibility and security (flexicurity), (ii) human resource development, (iii) prevention in order to cope with change, and (iv) involvement in design of jobs (representation). Following the EC's suppositions, we may define *domain* as a coherent complex of specific policy targets. In order to understand this term we have to know what we mean with targets. In our opinion *targets* are specific and historical determined tasks for policy making in order to address delineated problems of the policy field in question (in this case employment).

The intervention from the Social Quality perspective is to make a composition of targets with which to gather knowledge about the herewith-related domain (in our case flexicurity) for analysing its role in one or more components of the objective conditional factors for social quality (in this case inclusion). Therefore we need theoretical arguments, derived from the Social Quality approach, in order to make the best composition of targets for understanding processes with regard to the domain in question.

In other words the procedure is as follows: the project's participants take the distinction of the policy field of employment in four areas as point of departure. Furthermore they agree with the distinction of the area of adaptability in four domains. That means, they accept the outcomes of debates, which were held in the context of the European Commission. During the first meeting in June 2001 and the preparatory work done for this meeting they made a choice concerning the composition of targets with which to explicate the domain of flexicurity. During June 2001 till December 2001 they explored the most adequate indicators with which to measure changes with regard to the outcomes of the four targets. In January 2002, during the second meeting, the outcomes of this exploration were discussed plenary. At that moment the far-reaching differences between national states – with regard to data, with regard to policies, and with regard to the interpretation of the outcomes came into the footlights. In figure-1 we will illustrate this applied procedure;

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[26] See note-8.

EFSQ, Network
Working Paper
15 February 2002

Figure-1: ***The applied analytical based procedure by the project's participants***

Policy field	*areas*	*domains*	*targets*	*indicators*
	Employability	human resource	*employment Relations*	type of contract length of service temp.employm. accidents at work
	Entrepreneurship	prevention	*working time*	average hours non-standard wt total workload satisfaction wt
Employment	*adaptability*	*flexicurity*	*income security*	Average wage number with low wage legal min.wage poverty rate unemp.benefit syst
	equal opportunities	representation	*forms of leave*	maternity leave paternity leave parental leave adoption, etc.

During the second meeting the outcomes of the different explorations – in Portugal, Finland, Denmark etc – were compared. At the first meeting, there weren't made decisions about the choice of the indicators for the respective targets. Therefore, the outcomes were quite different. During the second meeting a lot of time was spent to debate the outcomes. This paved the way for a consensus about which indicators to chose collectively in order to gather common 'adequate' data for understanding the outcomes of the four chosen targets in the different Member States.[27] In this figure we present some examples of the chosen indicators. In other words, two decisions are made collectively:

- which types of indicators are adequate for measuring the outcomes of the targets in order to analyse the nature of the domain flexicurity as an aspect of the component 'inclusion',
- which European oriented data concerning the different national states should be chosen in order to pave the way for the comparison of the exploration in the different member States.

After their second meeting the participants will retake the exploration of indicators according to the decisions made during this meeting. Then they will publish their final national reports. In the project's report their outcomes will be interpreted from a European perspective. With help of this interpretation

[27] See note-14.

existing theoretical questions may be addressed. The main question is which conclusions can be made on basis of the indicators about the nature of flexicurity and the consequences for the processes regarding inclusion.

1.4.2   Three basic questions

The description of policy fields, areas, domains and targets as well as indicators follows historical based conceptions and practices (see figure 2: from left to right). But the choice of the composition of targets is related with rather implicit and intuitive based knowledge about the nature of the components, as objective conditional factors. There are other targets, which are related with the domain of flexicurity. But according to the project's participants, the four chosen targets will deliver the most adequate points of departure for analysing the nature and changes with regard to flexicurity in order to understand it as a relevant aspect for the component inclusion. There are at least three questions. First, we have to argue why the chosen composition will articulate the essence of the domain in question. Second, we have to argue why this domain in contrast to the three other domains will explicate the most crucial changes of the component inclusion. If this rather theoretical step is made, we can find indicators, which will clarify the developments of the targets. This regards the common search process. With this in mind, the third question may be how to explore changes? The chosen indicators concern data to measure outcomes of policy targets. In other words, the project's participants do not make a distinction between input, process, outcome and impact. Nevertheless, in the above-presented figure 1 the process is not only from left to right.

With help of figure-2 we will also illustrate, that the process form left to right is not an unambiguous one. Interpretations of social quality (its subject matter, referring to the main dialectic) are applied in order to describe and to interpret flexicurity as a domain of one of the components (in this case inclusion). The choice of the targets is influenced explicit or implicit by the Social Quality approach as well. The delineation of the herewith-related indicators is also related to this approach. Therefore, knowledge about flexicurity may clarify processes with regard to inclusion as an objective conditional factor of Social Quality. In other words, the final choice of the domain, its targets and their indicators is not based upon a rigour deductive way of reasoning. In this phase of development of the Social Quality approach an inductive reasoning and experiencing belong to the actual process. One of the reasons is, that we do not dispose about sufficient knowledge concerning the specific nature of the components. It is the challenge to develop that knowledge on inductive way as well.

Figure-2:   ***The process from left to right and vice versa***

Four components
[conditional factors]
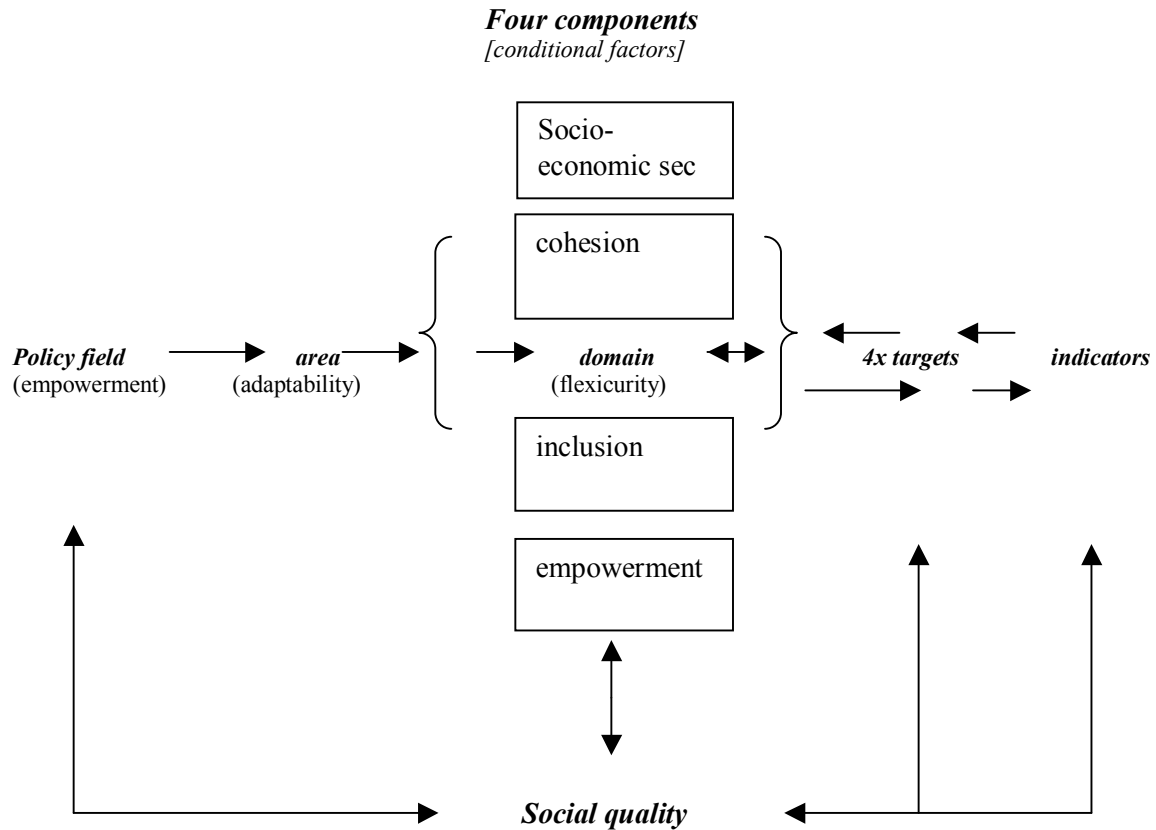
## 1.5   *Fourth proposal: the indicator's points of reference*

1.5.1   *Chapter –XV111 of the second book*

In the Foundation's second book we find a theoretical oriented proposal to develop indicators which are adequate for understanding social quality in societies, cities and communities.[28] The editors of its Chapter-XV111 suppose that we can operationalize Social Quality thanks to a lot of theoretical groundwork. We will quote the page in question: "Notwithstanding [this groundwork] we must reflect on the consequences of the assumptions presented in Chaper-XV11. In this context we will repeat two of them. In Kosik's terms, the same structural processes are existent in each component. They are the dialectic between self-realisation of the individual subject and the formation of collective identities [this main dialectic concerns the heart of the constitutional factors]. In each component this dialectic will be articulated. This opens the way for the intrinsically determined relationship between the components. If this is true then the nature of these relationships should come to the fore in the

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[28] See note-3, Chapter-XV111

indicators of each component. In other words, a lot of basic indicators will be necessarily connected with processes between self-realisation and the formation of collective identities in each component. With this in mind the question is, how can we measure the consequences of this dialectic in each component? Secondly, we have to make two assertions regarding the mutual relationships between the components. Not all aspects of one component are relevant for aspects of other components. The nature of their mutual relevance is dependent on the issue in question. This means that the component-oriented part of the indicators should be flexible and issue sensitive. Therefore, the component indicators have three points of reference: (i) the dialectic of the social, (ii) the mutual relationships of the components, (iii) the nature of the component itself, see the following figure."

Figure-3: **The components and their indicator's points of reference**

Nature of the component

Mutual relationship

Common dialectic
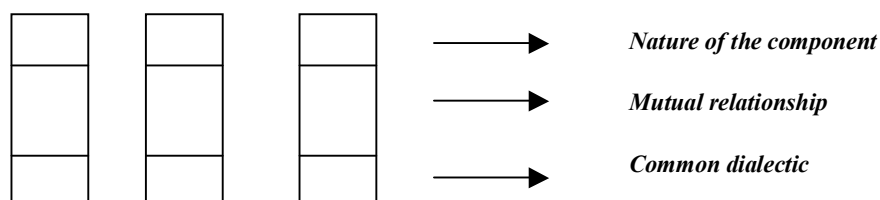
1.5.2 Some questions or comments

This proposal concerns especially theoretical aspects and not the question of operationalisation. It paves the way for a specific procedure but we do not find real empirical oriented points of departure necessary for this procedure. Furthermore, during this phase of theorising the editors referred to a direct relation between components and indicators. With the three other proposals in mind we are enabled to formulate some questions or comments. The first point is that in this case the components are chosen as point of departure. In contrast to the first proposal explicit referral is made to the essence of the social quality approach, namely the dialectic as the essence of the constitutional factors. This dialectic determines the structure of each component and paves the way for their comparisons. For the operationalsation of the components we have to start with the consequences of this main proposition. This point cause a fundamental difference with the social quality approach as presented in the Foundation's first book. In the first book the interrelationship between the components was not addressed at all. This conclusion concerns Svetlik's proposal seriously.[29]

A second point is directly related with the first one. The fourth proposal invites to chose the three aspects of the components as point of departure. By looking for relevant domains the issue specific aspects function as points of departure and not the components as such. Third, this proposal is the most deductive oriented one and therefore, possibly, the most problematic. Indicators to measure qualitative and quantitative aspects of daily existence belong to the world of far-reaching complexities. This may deliver a strong argument to apply inductive based methods in order to find our way in the complexities of daily reality. If this may be true, the proposal's implicit suggestion of the procedure for operationalisation of social quality is questionable.[30]

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[29] This conslusion is quite logical, because Svetlik refers to the first book, see note-12.
[30] This may be appreciated as a consequence of the ongoing theorising of the social quality approach.

1.6   The recommendation of the Network's staff

1.6.1   Choices as point of departure

We suppose to be enabled to present the Network and its National Groups a recommendation for starting the discovery of adequate indicators with which to analyse aspects of the four components as objective conditional factors of social quality of societies, cities and communities. Our point of departure is that their exists no immediate relation between components and indicators. With this in mind we will present the five points of this recommendation.

- We have to look for domains with which to analyse issue specific aspects of the components (this regards a combination of aspects of the second, the third and the fourth proposal),
- Notwithstanding the first point, we should start with 'policy domains' and not domains of the components, derived deductively. In other words we have to link up with policies as starting point for the Network's activities in the coming months (see third proposal),
- The Network could accept the following procedure: (i) choosing policy fields for exploration, (ii) choosing the most characteristic area of these fields, (iii) determining the relevant domain(s) of the chosen area (as an issue specific aspect of one or two components; nevertheless, point of departure are the policy fields), (iv) exploring policy targets related with this domain and determining the most logic composition of targets, (v) determining the targets' most characteristic indicators (this regards a combination of aspects of the third and fourth proposals). All the choices should be made with the essentials of the Social Quality approach in mind (see the arrows in figure 2 from Social Quality upwards).

With regard to the choice of indicators, we have to keep in mind that:
- The indicators have to concern the input, process, outcomes and impact aspects in order to pave the way for the understanding of the interactions of human subjects as social beings and the participatory characteristics of policy making (see second proposal),
- We should take on board the final outcomes of the project 'employment and social quality' as a recent frame of reference.

This recommendation is pragmatic in a theoretical sense. In this phase of exploration we propose to be as empirical as possible. We are confronted with a far-reaching complexity. Therefore, it makes sense to restrict ourselves to relevant and adequate aspects of this reality seen from the perspective of the social quality approach [arguments for this relevancy and adequacy should be developed in the coming months]. With help of the outcomes we may start the analysis of the components and to formulate our first conclusions regarding the domains of the chosen policy fields. This will also pave the way for addressing the first proposal and to elaborate the fourth proposal.

1.6.2   connection with policies

The connection with European policies as presented in our recommendation will enable the Network in this phase to contribute to debates about these policies. It concerns their rationality (seen from the perspective of Social Quality), the consequences of their impact and output and the effects of the herewith caused processes in societies, cities and communities. The most evident start concerns the

discussion about the new 'policy triangle', presented by the European Commission in order to address the decisions of the Lisbon European Council in March 2000.[31] This triangle should be an illustration how to co-ordinate in an open way three types of policies, namely social policies, economic policies and employment policies.[32] We may present this triangle in the following figure:

Figure-4: **Policy triangle**

Social policy
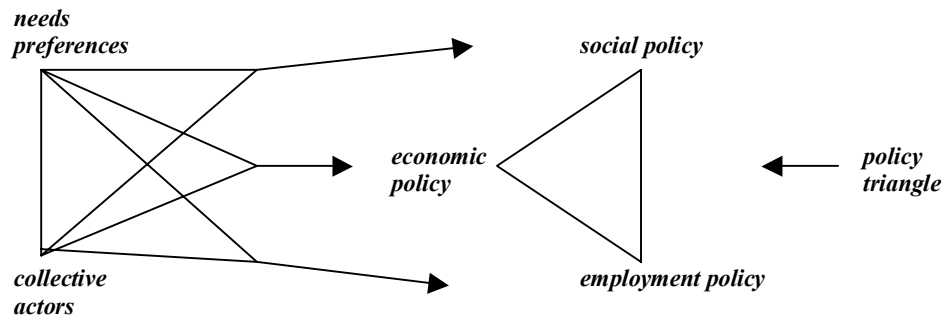
Economic policy *Employment policy*
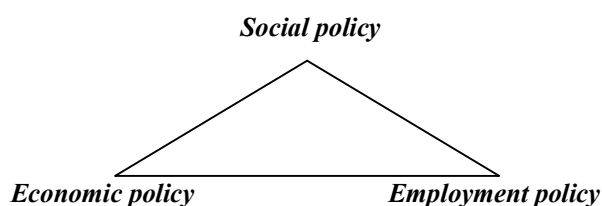
This EC's triangle is not clear about the connection between the three types of policies. It seems to lack a rationale and particularly one, which will appeal and bring on board European citizens. By placing 'social quality' at the top of the triangle in connection with 'social cohesion' – as is proposed by the European Commission - reflects another understanding of Social Quality as presented in the Foundation's books. According to its second book, the rationale to connect these three policies could be Social Quality itself. In other words to improve the quality of life of citizens, social quality could be the driving force behind each of the policies and their relationships or reciprocities. For this argument we may articulate the following hypothesis. The abstract and the practical connection between these three policies will be provided by their interrelationships with collective actors and needs.[33] Both, namely collective actors and needs, cause the intrinsic existing reciprocity of the three sides of the EC's policy triangle. We may illustrate this as follows:

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[31] See note-10.

[32] Commission of the European Communities, *'Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Commiyee and the Committee of the Regions: Social policy Agenda'*. Brussels: COM (2000), 379 final, 2000.
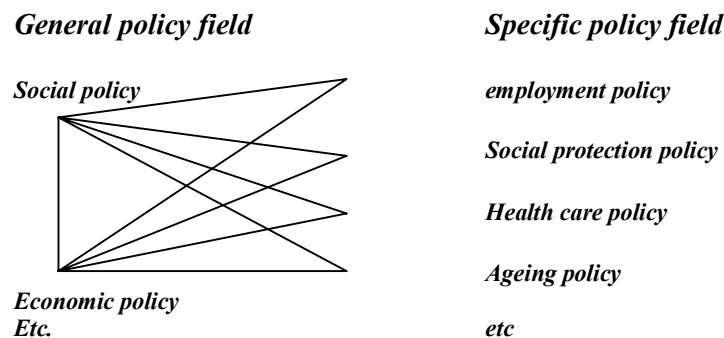
[33] This point refers to the genetic code of social quality, presented in the application to DG-X11 in January 2002, see note- 4.

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Figure-5:   ***Interrelationship of the side of the policy triangle[34]***

*needs
preferences*

social policy

*economic
policy*

*policy
triangle*

*collective
actors*

employment policy

This figure illustrates that economic policy, as well as social policy, as well as employment policy will be realised by collective actors and are confronted with needs, preferences and wants. The reciprocity between needs and collective actors concerns the heart of the matter of the Social Quality approach. In other words Social Quality forms the rational of these three policies. Furthermore, we may make a second remark which is of interest for the proposed task of the Network (see section below). The policy triangle connects different quantities. Social policy and economic policy concern general policy fields. Employment policy concerns a specific policy field. The general policy fields will influence or determine many other specific fields at the same time. We may illustrate this in the following way.

Figure-6:   ***General and specific policy fields***

General policy field   ***Specific policy field***

Social policy   *employment policy*

                       Social protection policy

                       Health care policy

                       Ageing policy

Economic policy
Etc.   *etc*

Of interest is to notice, that the above mentioned hypothesis concerning both general policy fields and the policy field of employment also regards the connection of both general policy fields with respectively social protection policy field, health care policy field etc. With regard to Social Quality we can now make two theoretical connections. First, we can now connect specific policy fields with

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[34] In fact the left triangle refers to the genetic code of social quality, explained extensively in the January 2002 application (see note-4). I regards the triangle between (i) needs, (ii) collective actors, and (iii) policy. The angle 'policy' could be different ones like economic, social or employment policy, see the right triangle.

each other because of the underlying connection between actors, needs and policies. If that may be true, the exploration of relevant domains of areas from different specific policy fields will discover this abstract underlying relationship. The second theoretical connection with regard to Social Quality, is the connection between domains and the social quality components. This could be argued for the domain of flexicurity, situated in the component inclusion. The domains are issue specific aspects of these components. That means, they are embedded also in the context of the four components, which are intrinsically connected with each other as well. If we are enabled to appoint 'relevant' domains we may explore the double outcomes of the rationale 'social quality': (i) with regard to the specific policy fields and (ii) with regard to the components. Therefore, the orientation to policy fields is not only pragmatic. It may be defended because of theoretical arguments as well.

1.6.3   A fare-well to the General Paper?

It makes sense to articulate the differences between the above mentioned recommendation and the General Paper with which we prepared the first meeting of the Network.[35] We may summarise the differences as follows:

- in that Paper we proposed to address the exploration and development of three measurement instruments, namely indicators, profiles and criteria. With reference to the January 2002 Application[36] we propose in the recommendation to restrict the Network's task to indicators,
- In that Paper we did speak about social quality indicators, or sq-indicators. That suggests, there will be a difference between, for example, social indicators or economic indicators and sq-indicators. In the recommendation we speak about indicators which are functional related with the chosen policy targets. They play a role in deepening our knowledge about the domains in question, which is an issue specific aspect of one or more components. That means, that especially these domains and not the indicators are related with the social quality approach,
- By restricting the Network's task we are not enabled to conclude about the nature and changes of social quality. Therefore we need knowledge about profiles and criteria as well.[37] Due to this restriction the Network should at theoretical and practical level convince that the search for and application of indicators for deepening our knowledge about domains and thus components might be seen as a first and decisive step for the application of the social quality approach.
- Contrary to the Paper the recommendation accentuates the connection with policies in order to pave the way for preliminary conclusions about the input, process, outcome and impact of these policies from the perspective of social quality. If the procedure is rather successful, we can apply it to analyse interventions (input, process, outcome and impact) of organised citizens.
- By accepting the five points of the recommendation the Network has to develop their scheme of: (i) areas, (ii) domains, (iii) policy targets, and (iv) indicators. This scheme will be essentially different from the scheme published in the Paper.

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[35] See note-1, concerning the General Paper.

[36] See note-4.

[37] For this knowledge we need to apply the methodological triangle, presented in the General Paper (note-1) and explained in the January 2002 Application (note-4).

1.6.4.   A plea for the policy orientation: experiences in Central Europe

One of the greatest challenges in Europe today is to establish some kind of social settlement in Eastern and Central European countries. The collapse of the command economy and the demise of the Stalinist regimes were followed by the emergence of a particularly vigorous version of the market economy promoted by cohorts of advisors from international organisations and financial institutions from Western Europe and North America. According to Francois Nectoux, there was in many ways a failure to properly set up a sustainable welfare protection system that at the same time would open the way for the development of citizenship opportunities in a totally new socio-political framework. The recent study by Szusza Ferge illustrates this issue particularly well, focussing on the process of accession to the European Union in which these countries are now engaged. Ferge conducts a thorough analysis of annual accession reports prepared by the EU administration that assess how far these countries have moved in reforming and rebuilding their social, economic and legal framework towards acceptable standards for accession to the EU. These reports show that the way in which the EU authorities appear to steer the 'development' of social security and welfare support in accession countries is contrary to the 'European model' of social security and welfare, we know. Ferge first seeks especially the principles to establish before looking at the accession reports themselves.[38]

This question may be quite relevant for the Network. It regards one of the greatest challenge today. Developing a frame of reference – or fundamental and theoretical based benchmarks – with which to make conclusions about the accession process from a social quality point of view may be seen as a great challenge of the Network as well. Ferge's conclusions are important. According to her: "the Union represents a genuine safeguard for the rule of law, democratic institutions and human rights. Its social policy program is less encouraging. The implicit model for Central Eastern Europe, which in many cases is dutifully applied, is different from the 'European model' as we knew it, and in many respects close to the original World Bank agenda. As a matter of fact high officials of the Bank do present the developments in Central-Eastern Europe as a social policy model to be followed by the current members of the Union. The weakening of the European model in the member countries may antagonise their citizens who may then use the accession countries a scapegoats. If the EU members do not follow the monetarist recipe the gap will grow between East and West. The accession countries may decrease the level of their public commitments, and they may create new institutions, such as two-tier, disintegrative systems of health or education, or destroy institutions which might ultimately become conditions of admittance. The dilemma of the development path in social matter 'here' and 'there' merits more attention."[39] Her study may function as a plea to start with a policy oriented point of departure as suggested in the recommendation.

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[38] F. Nectoux, 'Editorial: citizenship and Welfare Protection'. *European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol.3, Issues 1 & 2 (2001), pp. 1-9.
[39] Z.Ferge, 'European Integration and the Reform of Social Security in the Accession countries'. *European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol.3, Issues 1 & 2 (2001), 9-26, p.21.

II THE NETWORK, THE NATIONAL GROUPS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THE COMING MONTHS

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents our ideas about the activities of the Network Indicators of Social Quality, the assistants of the Network's participants and their National Groups. In December 2001 the Network's staff sent a draft with which to start the discussion about this topic.[40] This document concerns a short introduction of the social quality approach, as well as the organisation of the Network and National Groups. In that document we published a scheme as an illustration of the relationships between the actors of this enterprise. It appears as this Paper's figure-7 and it will function in this Chapter as frame of reference. The introduction of the Social Quality approach will be published separately in a document, with which to inform colleagues all over Europe about the essentials of this approach. Thanks to the outcomes of the first Chapter we might present renewed ideas about the Network's organisation. Therefore, the December 2001 document has played its role. This Working Paper and the coming separate document about the recent phase of the Social Quality approach should function as new instruments for the Network and the National Groups. This Chapter concerns first the organisation of the Network; the role of the participants, the assistants, the members of the National Groups and the Network's staff. With help of this presentation we will explain the coming activities, thanks to the content of the first Chapter. We will continue with proposals concerning the co-operation with the European Foundation on Working and Living Conditions in Dublin with regard to gathering relevant data for the coming months, as well as the next phase of the Network's activities. We will finish this chapter with some concluding remarks.

### 2.2 Organisation of the Network, National Groups and the staff

The Network has both scientific and policy-related objectives. Its starting point is the pioneering work of the European Foundation on Social Quality in developing and theorising the concept of social quality.[41] The scientific objective of the Network is to build on this scientific work and other related projects in the EU in order to explore relevant domains as issue specific aspects of the components with which to analyse the objective conditional factors of social quality. Therefore, the Network will gather and interpret herewith-related indicators according to the procedure as proposed in the first Chapter of this Working Paper. This concerns the scientific objectives. As explained in the first Chapter, many questions should be answered in order to apply the proposed procedure. Especially figure-2 illustrates the moments of further theorising. The outcomes of the domain exploration will be confronted with the nature of the domain related policy fields. This concerns the policy-related objectives. These objectives are very important for developing the Social Quality approach as well. They confront the deductive outcomes of this approach with the inductive based conclusions about

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[40] L.J.G. van der Maesen, M. Keizer, A.C.Walker, *'European Network on Indicators of social quality: project summary'*. EFSQ; Amsterdam, December 2001.

[41] The Foundation will prepare, as promised, a document with which to inform colleagues all over Europe about the recent phase of the Social Quality approach.

these policy fields. In order to explain the roles of the Network, its staff, the assistants and the national Groups we will present the scheme of actors.

Figure-7: ***The actors of the project 'Indicators of Social Quality'***
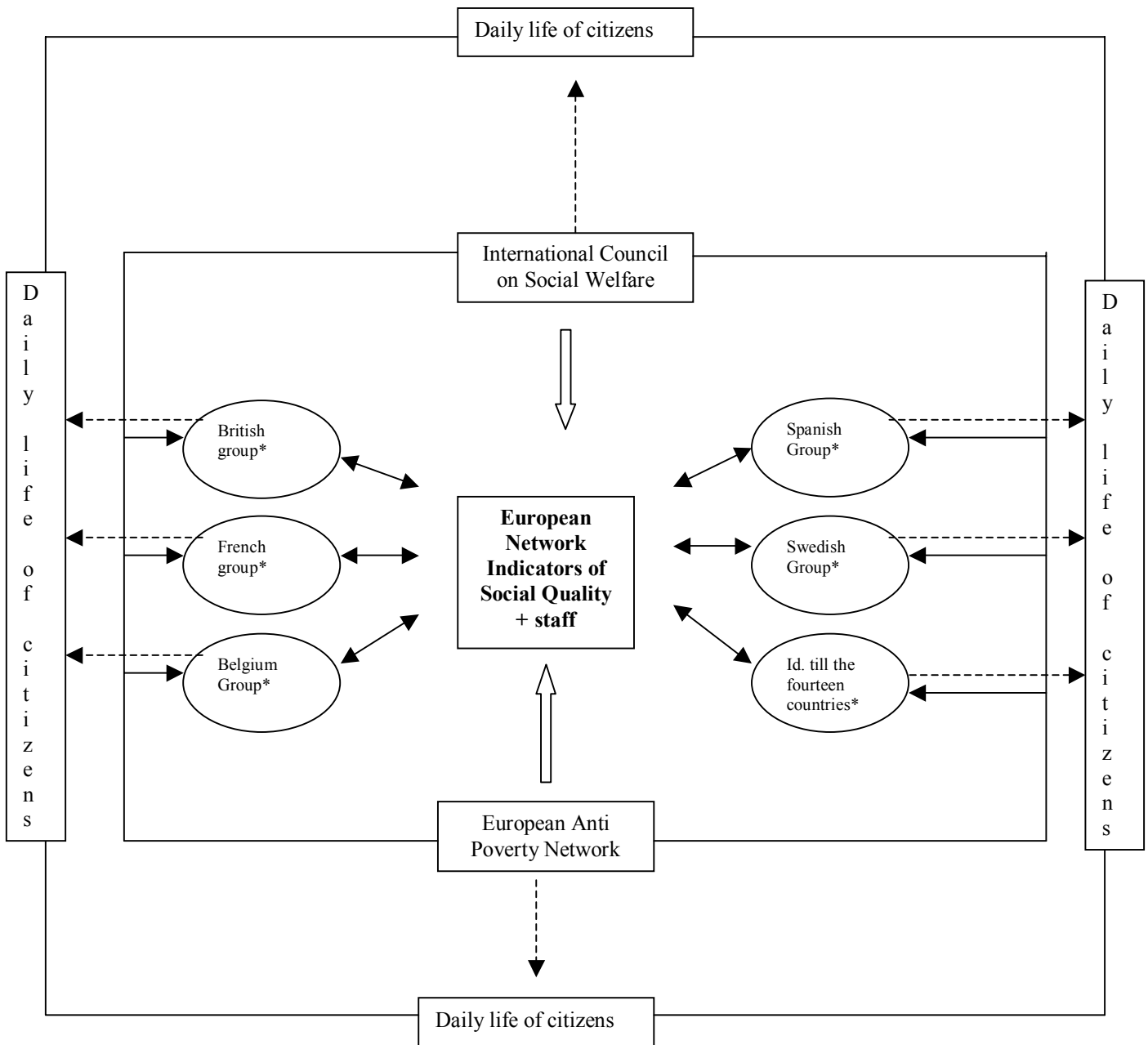
* We call them national groups although they are not expected to be representative groups of the country. They are groups formed around and by the participants of the European Network in their own country.

2.2.1   The Network and its staff

The Network will link (or compare) the work conducted on indicators with parallel research by other scientists studying social indicators. For example: (i) scientists oriented to the Human Development Index, the GVP per Capita Approach, and income comparisons; (ii) the quality logic analyses, for example Total Quality Management; (iii) the essence of recent European social policy referring, for example, to the paradigm of social policy as a productive factor, monitoring of codes of conduct social labels, and poverty indicators. In this Paper's Chapter 111 (the Annex) the staff published its preliminary ideas with regard to the comparison between the Social Quality approach and other approaches. It is especially the tasks of the Network's staff to develop this comparison, because the outcomes will deliver the Network's indispensable frame of reference.[42]

The **staff** consists of; Margo Keizer as scientific manager (80%), and Joyce Hamilton as scientific assistant (80%). A senior advisor will assist the staff. Till January 2002 Wolfgang Beck functioned as such. Laurent van der Maesen functions as co-ordinator and Alan Walker as chair of the Network and its staff. Except the research concerning the similarities and differences of other approaches, the staff's main task is to assist the Network, to develop forms of co-operation with the assistants of the participants of the Network and to co-ordinate the work of the National Groups.[43]

The **Network**'s participants, and see figure-7, will manage the process of developing and applying the indicators according to the proposed procedure. In the following section we will explain their task during the second meeting and in the coming months. They will meet each other once a year and they will discuss the documents of the staff.[44] Furthermore, they will be responsible for the production of national reports. In September 2002 they will present a draft of the national report in accordance with the decisions, made during the second meeting. In September 2003 they will present the final national report, in accordance with the decisions to be made during the third meeting. For preparing the national reports (the draft and the final one) these participants will be assisted by an assistant (40%). These assistants will be engaged for three years. Especially the staff of the Network is responsible for co-ordinating these assistants and to present them the necessary background information in order to contribute to this production. In other words, between the staff and the assistants an intelligent form of electronic communication should be developed as a condition for the operations of the Network.

2.2.2   The National Groups

The **National Groups** will preferably consist of a combination of scientists, policy makers and other research users, like for instance members of NGO's interested in Social Quality. Especially a representative of national circles connected with the European Anti Poverty Network, as well as a representative of national circles connected with the International Council on Social Welfare should be invited to co-operate with the National Groups. Both the European Anti Poverty Network and the International Council function as participants of the Network as well. They can assist these representatives. In figure-7 this is illustrated as well. The Poverty Network and the Council play a special role in the Network. They will comment on the nature of the national reports and the Network

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[42] In Chapter 111 we refer, for example, to the interesting report on indicators social inclusion, see note-56

[43] this is explained in the June 2000 Application, see note-23.

[44] Because special reasons the meet each other twice in the first twelve months.

reports from their specific point of views and experiences. This can be done on European level, namely in the Network, as well as on national level, namely in the National Groups. The assistants will underpin this process.

We have to make two remarks about the nature of the National Groups. First, we do not mean groups, representing something national. We mean a group, composed and working in one of the Member States. The adjective "national" is related with the European dimension of the Network. In other words, for example a group connected with the participants of Nantes is called the French National Group of the Network. Second, the members of these National Groups do not have to function as concrete 'group members'. They will be invited to reflect upon the work done by the Network and to advice the assistants of the Network's participants by the preparation of the national reports (the drafts and the final version accordant to the decisions of the Network). A condition is, these group 'members' has to take on board the Social Quality approach and to reflect upon differences with other approaches as presented in Chapter 111. They can give advice by looking for relevant existing data useful for the procedure that has to be followed. Furthermore, they can assist the reflection on the outcomes of the Network (with regard to the European level) from the perspective of national circumstances. This will be important for the final national reports. They are a part of the comparative research.

Another role of the National Groups is to assist by the preparation of a multi-disciplinary dialogue on Social Quality and the indicators, with which to explore and understand the domains of the components. This will facilitate a common understanding of changes taking place in the welfare systems of these levels and an assessment of their consequences for Social Quality. These National Groups may be enabled to stimulate a coherent and consistent discourse on the applicability of the proposed indicators to different regions and communities with which to reflect geographical, political, economic, social and cultural diversity. As the European Commission says, Europe's scientific fabric lacks cohesion. Although they are being narrowed down, the development gaps between European regions in terms of the production of scientific knowledge are still appreciable.

In figure-7 one can see, that the National Groups are located around the European Network. The Network's participants will co-ordinate their National Groups (in the sense as explained above). But the National Groups will provide the Network with country specific information about indicators and national social indicators' research and their results. So the National Groups are standing between the Network at the one side and the 'daily life of citizens' on the other side.

2.3   The task of the Network in the near future

2.3.1   The choices to be made during the second meeting

If the staff's recommendation is acceptable (see first Chapter, section-1.6.1) it may be clear what the participants of the Network should do during the second meeting. Therefore, they have to prepare themselves. We can summarise this as follows:
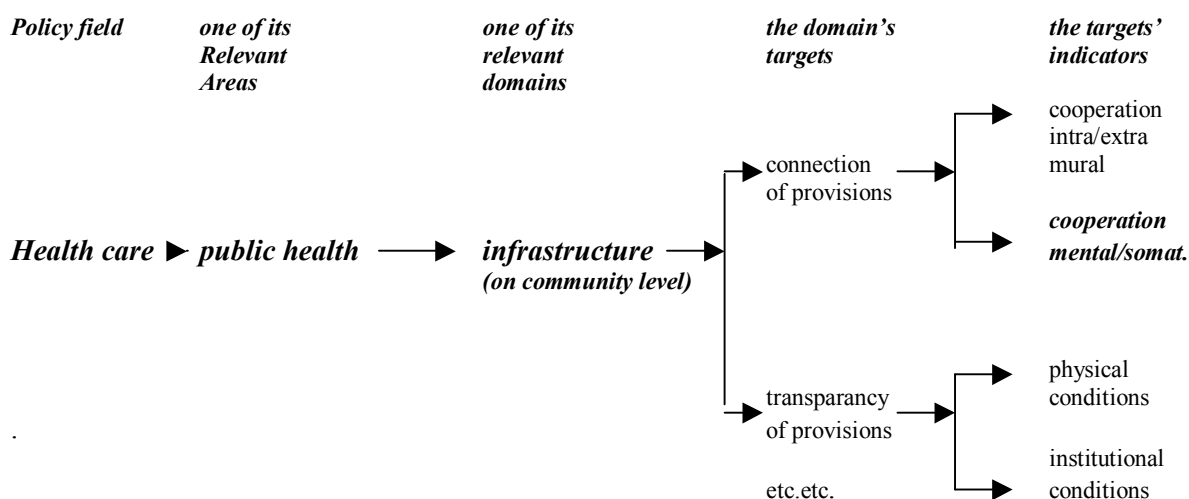
The *first step* is to make a choice which specific policy fields they will choose. There are many possibilities. We mention only five fields. What to choose and why?

- employment policy (c.q. accepting the outcomes of the Foundation's project),
- social protection policy,
- health care policy,
- ageing policy and,
- education policy.

- The *second step* is to make a choice of one of the leading areas of these policy fields. Therefore we need arguments, referring to the Social Quality approach, corresponding to the applied method with regard to the field of employment (see figure-1),

- The *third step* is to appoint one or two relevant domains of the chosen area. The theoretical problem is to find arguments for these choices. They cannot be derived from politics, responsible for existing policies, because these politics are not connected or based on the social quality perspective. At this place the distinction between politics and policies makes sense. Probably, Svetlik's plea for making the components more operational has to do with the need for theoretical arguments. In other words, these components should deliver points of departure. But developing knowledge about the four components as objective conditional factors of social quality is important but not an absolute condition to formulate arguments of the choices made. Just existing and intuitive based knowledge about the components and accepted interpretations of the nature and outcomes of these policies will deliver provisional points of departure for these arguments.

- The *fourth step* is to delineate effective policy targets related with the chosen domain and to make a rational composition (from the Social Quality perspective, see figure-2) of these targets for analysing the nature of this domain.

- The *fifth step* is to appoint the most rational indicators, related with the chosen policy targets in accordance with the procedure, followed by the participants of the Foundation's project on 'employment and social quality'. In contrast to the recent decisions of these participants, the Network should distinguish between input, process, outcome and impact indicators.

- The *sixth step* is to reach consensus about the preparation of the drafts of the national reports in accordance with the decisions made during the above mentioned steps. Especially, this regards the orders for the project's assistants. What ideas do the participants develop with regard to the drafts of the national reports in the context of the proposed procedure? The consensus should be as precise as possible in order to pave the way for the comparability of the drafts of the national reports.

- The *seventh step* is to formulate tasks for the staff of the Nnetwork in the coming nine months. Which work has to be done in order to assist the Network as fundamental as possible to do the work in the coming nine months: one European level (thus as Network) and on national level (for preparing the drafts of the national reports).

- The *eighth step* is to pave the way for analysing and interpreting the indicators on national level in order to conclude about these targets with which to deepen our knowledge of the domains as issue specific aspects of the components in the different Member States. This should be done during the third meeting of the Network, based on the drafts of the national reports as well. With help of the outcomes, the Network should make three decisions:
  - how to pave the way for interpreting the consequences of the chosen policy fields with help of the national inputs (prepared in the coming months).
  - how to prepare the interpretation of the national inputs from a European perspective in order to develop the theoretical and analytical dimension of the Social Quality approach,
  - how to assist the participants and their assistants to renew their national input based on the outcomes of the Network's third meeting.

2.3.2   An example for making different steps: the policy field of health care

In the context of the first step we may choose the policy field of health care as important for the Network's explorations. There are a lot of arguments why to chose this field. Many associates of the Foundation may be appreciated as experts in this field. The second step – with regard to this choice - is to focus upon public health as an important area. In the study, published in the European Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, the authors explained, that the Social Quality approach might deliver public health a new orientation. It will change 'traditional public health' (oriented to medical practices) and 'new public health' (oriented to individual life styles) in 'modern public health' (based on the Social Quality approach). It is the first study with which to connect a policy field and the Social Quality approach with conceptual consequences as well.[45] The third step is to choose the domain of the public health area, which may function as a issue specific aspect of a component. It makes sense to choose the infrastructure of health care provisions on community level in the broadest sense of the word. The question is, in which way this infrastructure might influence the nature of socio-economic security as well as the cohesion of communities. In other word, this domain might be appreciated as an issue specific aspect of two components. This point is the most crucial in the procedure. We argued above, that domains in fact function on the crossroad of the world of policy fields and the world of the components. Arguments for choosing a domain have to be connected with theoretical and practical arguments with respect to both topics. The fourth step, the choice of policy targets might be assisted by the precise outcomes and herewith related arguments of the third step. The choice of indicators with which to measure the input, process, outcome and impact of these targets might be rather a logical question and based on common sense interpretations. In the following figure we will illustrate the proposed steps with regard to the policy field of health care (without being precise with regard to the indicators).

Figure-8:   *The applied procedure for the policy field of health care*

| **Policy field** | *one of its Relevant Areas* | *one of its relevant domains* | *the domain's targets* | *the targets' indicators* |

Health care ▶ public health ⟶ infrastructure (on community level) → connection of provisions → cooperation intra/extra mural / *cooperation mental/somat.*

transparency of provisions → physical conditions / institutional conditions

etc.etc.

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[45] L.J.G. van der Maesen, H.G.J. Nijhuis, 'Continuing the debate on the philosophy of modern public health: social quality as a point of reference'. *European Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, Vol.54, nr.2 (2000), pp. 134-142. One of the arguments for changing public health thinking and practices is, that the authors argued (since 1994) "that mainstream epidemiology increasingly serves as a tool of molecular biology, and that consequently, social epidemiology tends to become a contradiction in terms."

2.4   Co-operation with the Dublin Foundation

The text of this section will be prepared during the meeting of the staff and a representative of the Dublin Foundation, at the morning before the second meeting of the Network. The outcomes will deliver the text for this section. This section will address two questions. First, in which way the Dublin Foundation can assist by gathering existing data from a European perspective in order to assist the National Groups. Second, in which way the Dublin Foundation can assist the Network and the National Groups by gathering new data which might be relevant for the proposed procedure.

111   ANNEX: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIAL QUALITY AND OTHER CONCEPTS

In this Annex we will articulate differences between points of departure for developing indicators as measurement instruments by European research institutes and the European Foundation on Social Quality. Important preparatory work for this comparison has been done by researchers of the ZUMA Institute in Mannheim. They analysed all existing welfare concepts as points of departure for this comparison. They classified the existing welfare concepts in two umbrella constructs, namely 'Quality of Life' and 'Quality of Society.' The researchers of the ZUMA Institute also located the Social Quality approach and placed it under the 'Quality of Society' construct. In this Annex we will, first of all, present a summary of this analysis with which to explain both constructs. With this in mind we shall comment on the interpretation of the Social Quality approach by the researchers of ZUMA. After this general introduction we will go on with our interpretation of differences between existing welfare approaches and the Social Quality approach with regard to (i) the theoretical dimension, (ii) the analytical dimension, and (iii) the policy dimension of this development.

3.1   Quality of Life and Quality of Society approach

The literature on measurement and monitoring of the level of well-being and changes in the well-being of European citizens is strongly connected with concepts of welfare. In this context, the construction of *Quality of Life* is the most embraced, the broadest constructed and the best operationalised framework at the moment. According to Heinz-Herbert Noll, it was born as an "alternative to the more and more questionable concept of the affluent society and became the new, but also much more complex and multi-dimensional goal of social development."[46] The construction of Quality of Life is based upon an interdisciplinary approach: historians, economists, sociologists, philosophers, psychologists, scientist of medicine. They address in their own way the question: what constitutes a good life or a good society? Different notions, corresponding with different concepts of welfare are meanwhile in discussion. Noll makes a general distinction between the *Quality of Life*[47] and *Quality of Societies*. A characteristic of the *Quality of Life* construction is its focus on individual subjects. Dimensions of welfare related to society are rather neglected. In contrast to this, *Quality of Societies* focuses on the distribution of welfare and social relations within societies. Within the framework of the latter construct, some of these theoretical approaches are quite comprehensive. According to Noll, some examples are Human Development, Liveability, Sustainability or Social Quality[48]. Other

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[46] H.H. Noll, *"Social Indicators and Social Reporting: The International Experience"*. Canadian Council on Social Development (ed.): Symposium on Measuring Well-Being and Social Indicators. Final Report, Ottawa, 1996.
See also: H.H. Noll, *"Konzepte der Wohlfahrtsentwicklung: Lebensqualität und ´neue´Wohlfahrtskonzepte"*, EuReporting Working Paper No.3, ZUMA, Mannheim 1999/ R.Berger-Schmitt, B. Jankowitsch, *"Systems of Social Indicators and Social Reporting: The State of the Art"*, EuReporting Working Paper No.1, ZUMA, Mannheim, 1999.
[47] For example: Scandinavian Level of Living Approach, American Quality of Life Approach, the Euromodule approach.
[48] According to Noll, Social Quality should be placed under the more comprehensive concepts of Quality of Society.

propositions focus on more special welfare issues as for example social exclusion, social capital or social cohesion.[49] In figure 9 we show the way Noll has ordered the welfare concepts. According to Noll, there is a substantial overlap between the concepts, presented in this figure. This overlap, and particularly the relationship between the new concepts under the umbrella 'Quality of Society' and 'Quality of Life', has not been clarified. According to Noll, this is also true for the concept of Social Quality.

Figure 9   *The welfare concepts ordered according to ZUMA*
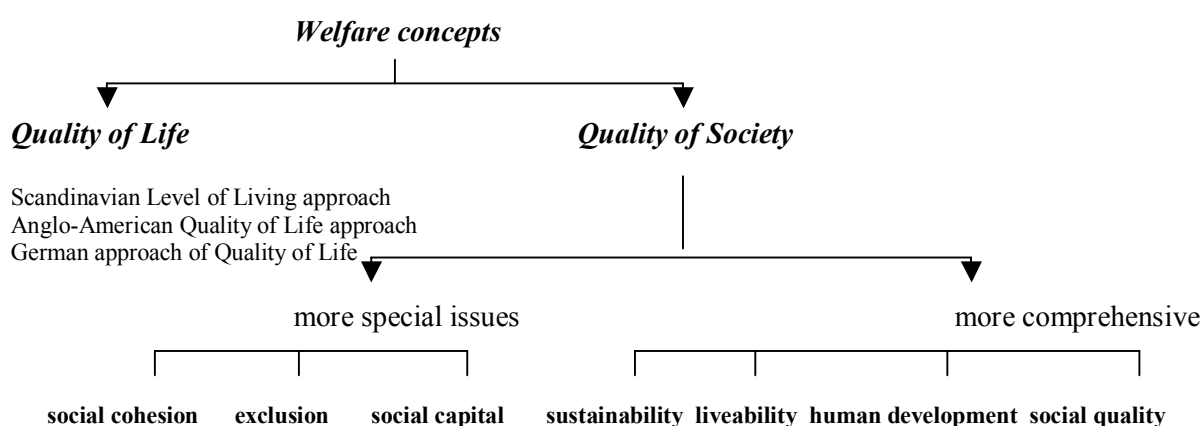
Noll based his conclusion on the Foundation's first book, published in 1997.[50] At that time the concept of Social Quality was underdeveloped. Thanks to studies, workshops, debates since 1997, the Foundation published its second book in the beginning van 2001 in order to further develop the theoretical dimension of the Social Quality approach.[51] With reference to the second book we may conclude, that 'Social Quality' may be appreciated as an umbrella construct as well. It is comparable with the 'Quality of Life' and the 'Quality of Society' constructs. All of them regard interdisciplinary approaches. Each approach refers to other scientific highlights, stresses different components and reflects on other relationships between the various dimensions of welfare in order to address the question: "what constitutes a good life or a good society?" Practically, each concept is a ´amalgam´ of different theoretical components; a construction based on different scientific traditions. Concepts of social cohesion, social capital, exclusion, human development etc. are closely related to each other.

We have already noticed the necessity[52] to investigate the nature and implicit or explicit relationships of different welfare concepts or elements in order to require a systematic ´exercise in incrementalism´

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[49] H.H. Noll, *"The European System of Social indicators: An Instrument for Social Monitoring and Reporting"*, ZUMA, Mannheim, 2000, p.2-12.
[50] See note-18
[51] See note-3
[52] See note-3. In this book, we have tackled this problem for example regarding to the four components of Social Quality and have reflected on their subject matter and theoretical impact. (p.341-352)

(David Phillips).[53] For the above mentioned reasons we argue that Social Quality should not be seen as an example of a comprehensive concept of Quality of Society, but that it should be placed at the same level of the Quality of Life and Quality of Society approaches. In other words, 'Social Quality' should be seen as a construct as well. The different welfare concepts as cohesion, inclusion and also human development (in the Social Quality approach this is called empowerment) are part of the 'Social Quality' construct. Another concept of Social Quality is socio-economic security. These four concepts (in the Social Quality theory they are called components) are logically connected to each other, thanks to the dialectic between self-realisation of individual subjects as social beings and the formation of collective identities. This theoretical assumption determines the essence of these four components. Therefore, in the 'Social Quality' construct these concepts are related intrinsically in a theoretical way. This makes this construct attractive, because it tries to formulate a comprehensive understanding of different concepts.

3.2 Differences between Social Quality and other welfare concepts

In this section we will compare the social quality approach and other approaches with regard to three dimensions: the theoretical, the analytical or methodological and the political dimension. For this comparison the Foundation's second book functions as point of departure.

3.2.1 The scientific dimension

In contrast to the construct of 'Social Quality', the 'Quality of Life' and 'Quality of Society' refer to the quality of a given society. Measuring both material and immaterial, objective and subjective, individual and collective aspects of welfare, means measuring the existing living conditions and the subjective perceived well-being of citizens. Continuous observation of society and monitoring of social change is the aim of the different concepts, based on accurate analyses of the objective situation of individuals and their subjective interpretation. The complementary nature of both analyses forms the methodological starting point for comprehensive frameworks as for example the Euromodule. This is more than analysing political opinions or a covering of indicators of selected life domains as done by Eurobarometer, World Value Survey, the European Community Household Panel. The ultimate function of the systems of social reporting and welfare measurement concerns, in the words of Terry Ward: "Good indicators direct policy makers towards areas where policy is needed".[54] In fact, these concepts are concerned with *intervention,* more precisely with intervention of the states themselves. They are oriented on the output of these interventions. Tools of intervention are for example legislation, administrative regulation, judicial review, public expenditures and removal of political power.[55] The EU strategy of the open method of co-ordination concerns a mix of these tools.

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[53] David Phillips has showed in a draft version an exercise regarding social capital, social cohesion and social quality. D. Phillips, *"Social Capital, Social Cohesion and Social Quality"*, ESA-paper, draft, 2000.

[54] Cited by Frank Vandenbroucke (Minister for Social Affairs and pensions, Belgium) in his closing speech at the Conference: 'Indicators for social inclusion-making common EU objectives work', Antwerp, 14 September 2001.

[55] R.R. Mayer, Social Planning and Social Change, Englewood Cliffs, New York, 1972, cit. in by F.X. Kaufmann/ B. Rosewitz: Typisierung und Klassifikation politischer Massnahmen. In: R. Mayntz (Hrsg.): *"Implementaiton politischer Programme II"*, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen, 1993, p30.

A recent example of an important report on indicators for social inclusion is "Indicators for Social Inclusion in the European Union" by Tony Atkinson, Bea Cantillon cs.[56] This report addresses the outcomes of decisions made by the Lisbon European Council in 2000. It focuses on the incorporation of social inclusion within the overall strategy of the European Union. Furthermore, it will pave the way for an agreement to advance social policy on the basis of an open method of co-ordination at Union level. The authors make a plea for a pragmatic approach to measure output of policies. Therefore, they present a number of principles to develop an indicator construction; "this we have taken to mean that the social performance indicators, for the present purpose, should in principle be concerned with output not with input. The aim is to measure social outcomes, not the means by which they are achieved". The absence of a conceptual framework as the basis for the measurement of welfare and social change is important to notice. The Atkinson group makes a plea for a technical and objectivist approach in order to formulate conclusions about existing circumstances. Its indicators do not refer to an explicit theoretical based conceptual scheme. Therefore, also the concept of social inclusion does not have a theoretical basis in their report. Furthermore, the report does not address the lack of coherence between terms as inclusion, poverty, cohesion, exclusion etc. This is a logical consequence of its pragmatic approach.

The Social Quality approach emphasis *social intervention*. Social intervention means in the policy literature normally, the removal of social problems with public finance under control of the state.[57] In the context of the Social Quality approach, quality does not refer to a given society but to *societal processes*. According to Ota de Leonardis, Social Quality does not only refer to products or outcomes, but especially to social processes: "relationships, discourses and practices, instead of goods, services and consumption (. …) It concerns the inter-subjective level of social life – neither just objective nor only subjective."[58] In this sense, the quality of relations among members of society, the binding effects of these relations, the rupture of the relationship between individual and society with new forms of poverty, the feelings of mutual commitment and trust created by common values and norms, are very important. These points are also points of attention in the Quality of Life concepts.[59] But there is a big difference. In the Social Quality approach not only outcomes but especially the nature of the interventions are important. It refers to processes and acting individuals. The concept concerns processes of self-realisation, the formation of collective identities, interaction, interactive communication, transformation of values, collectivisation of norms, social recognition and participation. In these processes actors play an important role.

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[56] T. Atkinson, B. Cantillon, E. Marlier, B. Nolan, *'Indicators for Social Inclusion in the European Union: Version SOCIND 23'*. Brussels: Ministry of Social Affairs, 2001. This report is extensively discussed during a conference in Antwerp, 14-15 September 2001.

[57] The state is not the only unit of the intervention, also NGO´s, third sector organisations etc. are forms of social interventions more of less independent of the state.

[58] O. de Leonardis, 'Social market, social quality and the quality of social institutions', in: W.Beck, L.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomesé, A. Walker, *"Social Quality: A Vision for Europe"*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague/ London/ Boston, 2001, p.202.

[59] J. Delhey, P. Böhnke, R. Habich, W. Zapf, *"The Euromodule. A new Instrument for Comparative Welfare Research"*, WZB, Berlin, March 2001, p.9.

The subject matter of social quality is *'the social'* as the outcome of the dialectic between the self-realisation of individual subjects as social beings and the formation of collective identities.[60] This assumption implies two things: social practices are decisive for the building or for the deformation of the Self, and the human subject depends for its self-realisation on recognition by the ´other´. In the words of Honneth: "The freedom of self-realisation, in this opinion, cannot be measured by the extent to which the individual in the relationship with his cultural context of life has succeeded, but the degree of recognition he was able to obtain for his freely chosen goals in his societal environment."[61] In other words, we have to develop a system of measurement instruments focussed on the dialectic between self-realisation of individual subjects and the formation of collective identities. When we will improve the quality of the social – the main goal of the social quality-approach – we have to improve: (i) possibilities and chances for self-realisation in relationship with the formation of collective identities, and (ii) possibilities and chances for collective identities, which stimulate the self-realisation of the individuals. This should be based on democratic norms and values as ethical legitimisation. In conclusion, the social quality approach is based upon a new theory on the subject matter of 'the social' and its measurement instruments should be determined by this theory. This is an important difference with other approaches.

3.2.2 The analytical or methodological dimension

With regard to the analytical dimension or applied methodology we may discuss interesting differences between the three main approaches related with respectively the 'Quality of Life', the 'Quality of Society' and the 'Social Quality' construct. In order to address current policies of the European Union we have to ask ourselves how to synthesise information and how to combine several indicators in a conceptual framework for understanding these policies. In the more classical concepts as for example the Quality of Life concepts there is made a distinction between two levels of analyses. First, they make a distinction between indicators at the individual and the societal level. And second there is a distinction between objective indicators, which represent social facts such as living conditions, and subjective indicators, which emphasise the individual perception and satisfaction of the social conditions (see figure 10).[62] The operationalisation of these two levels of analysis depends on the goals of the indicator construction and the main points of evaluation.[63]

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[60] Both terms, self-realisation and collective identity are highly problematic. What – for example – is the impact of the notion of self-realisation? And what is the intrinsic aspects of the individual self? Do we understand ´forming of collective identity´ in a functionalistic sense as a ´qualifying condition´ or as process relatively separated from the individual which has hardly any influence on the self-realisation? For this moment, we have noted this question as a theoretical problem, which is standing highly at the agenda of the Foundation.

[61] A. Honneth , *"Desintegration – Bruchstücke einer soziologischen Zeitdiagnose"*, Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt 1994, p.18.

[62] About the history of this conceptualisation, see note 2. Pioneering for the German approach is the work of W. Zapf, Individuelle Wohlfahrt: Lebensbedingungen und wahrgenommene Lebensqualität. In: W. Glatzer, W. Zapf (Hrsgb.) *"Lebensqualität in der Bundesrepublik. Objektive Lebensbedingungen und subjektives Wohlbefinden"*, Frankfurt/ New York, Campus, 1994.

[63] The range of frameworks reaches from the non-monetary indicators of poverty and social exclusion to a strategic reporting system of the Compass-project of the Bertelsmann-foundation, or from the European System of social indicators (ZUMA) to local sustainability profiles of the European Sustainable Cities project. The basic pattern of these two levels of analysis is present in different variations.

Figure 10   *Levels of indicator constructions*

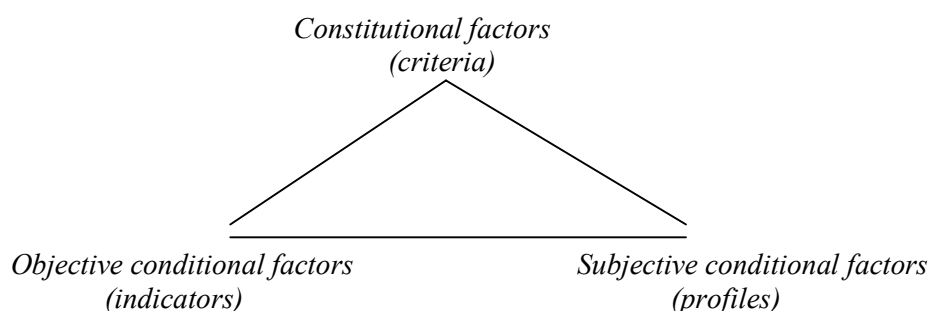|	**Objective**	**Subjective**
Individual level	objective living conditions (e.g.income)	subjective well-being (e.g. income satisfaction)
Societal level	Quality of Society (e.g. income distribution)	perceived quality of society (e.g. strength of conflicts between rich and poor)

Source: J. Delhey e.o. note 12, p.10

An approach that focuses on the individual and societal level of welfare, objective living conditions and subjective well being, requires a multidimensional frame of measurement. Such a frame of measurement should combine quantitative and qualitative, material and immaterial indicators, facts and satisfactions, general and specific designed indicators (issue-, situation-, life domain-, area based- or policy-specific). These aspects may be discovered in various mixtures in the different frameworks, which are oriented to the concept of Quality of Life or to the more specific new welfare concepts.

In the Social Quality approach, these aspects are present as well. But, the conceptual embedding is really different. The Social Quality approach distinguishes between *three levels*: the level of constitutional factors, the level of objective conditional factors and the level of subjective conditional factors. Together they form the so-called methodological triangle (see figure below). The method of measuring social quality is based on this triangle. It indicates that to measure the level of social quality we do not only need indicators but also profiles and criteria. The indicators are connected with the objective conditional factors, which means that indicators indicate the objective conditions in society which are necessary for social quality. These objective conditions are defined in a social quality quadrant that consists of socio-economic security, cohesion, inclusion and empowerment. These conditions determine the opportunities of the social: people should have the capabilities to interact (*empowerment*), the institutional and infrastructural context should be accessible for all people *(inclusion)*, the necessary material and other resources should be available for the existence of the interacting people (*socio-economic securtity*) and the necessary collectively accepted values and norms have to enable community building (*cohesion*.)

The profiles are connected with the subjective conditional factors. They refer to the subjective interpretation by individuals of their own potential to realise themselves in society. These subjective conditions are defined in a second social quality quadrant that consists of collectivisation of norms, social recognition, participation and sensitivity towards values. The subjective aspect in the social quality approach is more than an evaluation of individual preferences or subjective well being as is measured by Quality of Life concepts. The idea of profiles is to have a closer look at how individuals see their own potential to realise and develop themselves in society.

The combination of these objective conditions in society and the subjective self-interpretation of individuals present the points of departure for applying criteria for determining the final level of social quality in society, cities, communities. These criteria refer to the basic assumption of the social as the dialectical relationship between self-realisation and forming of collective identities.

Figure 11   *Methodological triangle*

Constitutional factors
(criteria)

Objective conditional factors   *Subjective conditional factors*
(indicators)   *(profiles)*

These three levels are related to each other. They form a totality and are indispensable for the quality of the social. The essential difference in the context of social monitoring and measurement between the Social Quality approach and the other ones concerns this *connection of the levels*. For the realisation of the social through acting individuals two forms of conditions are decisive: the objective conditions in the form of the four social quality-components, and the subjective conditions in the form of the cognitive self-interpretation. The relevant question is: to what extent do these conditions match the substantial and relational aspects of self-realisation in the context of forming collective identities. The methodological triangle will illustrate, that it is not enough to produce a classical construction of indicators of social quality. Nevertheless, the four components create the basis for constructing objective indicators as important point of departure for determining the nature of social quality and its changes.

3.2.3   The political dimension

In contrast to representatives of both approaches, the 'Quality of Life' and the 'Quality of Society', the representatives of the 'Social Quality' approach were eager to start an academic movement to discuss the political, economic and social dimension of the European Union in the near future. Their thesis was, that traditional approaches of policy making in Europe subordinates social policy to economic policy. It reflects on a top-down form of governance, and cannot provide a secure basis on which to build either a socially just Europe or one that reflects the needs and preferences of citizens.[64] Especially the conference of the European Parliament on 'the social quality of Europe', March 2000, demonstrated the lack of coherence between applied concepts as economic progress, social protection,

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[64] See the Amsterdam Declaration on Social Quality.

economic security, exclusion, or cohesion. These and other concepts are applied in connection with different national oriented frames of reference and, therefore, cause essential confusion during European oriented debates. The lack of conceptual coherence blocks rational analyses of processes and recent consequences of societal changes at European and national level. A second main point regards the far-reaching fragmentation between the spheres of economic, politics, welfare and cultural policies. Due to this fragmentation, the reciprocity between the different policy fields is lost in thinking as well as in policy-making. This lack of conceptual coherence also stimulates the dominance of economics. Because of this, welfare policy (as social policy in the smaller sense) of the European Union and the Member States is a handmaiden of economic policies since the last decades.

In 1997, the preliminary concept of Social Quality was presented as a new perspective for developing a new theoretical paradigm to analyse and address current political issues. The motive was to develop a conceptual scheme for developing a coherent system of concepts as point of departure for measurement instruments to underpin new policies and interventions of organised citizens. This Social Quality concept is not only meant as a new conceptual scheme, but also as a political project. Because of this double agenda, the Social Quality project will be confronted with two problems: the validity and scientific coherence of the conceptual scheme and the applicability of the concept. In the second book, the editors have carefully reflected the critics, suggestions and ideas concerning the first design of the concept. The task of the applicability of the concept is now being addressed by the European Thematic Network on Indicators to measure Social Quality and probably in the future by the Research Group on Indicators, Profiles and Criteria. We have to work on a science based system of measuring the Social Quality approach. "Theoretical and methodological well grounded considerations still remain a major challenge."[65]

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[65] R. Berger-Schmitt, B. Jankowitsch, see note-46, p.4.