

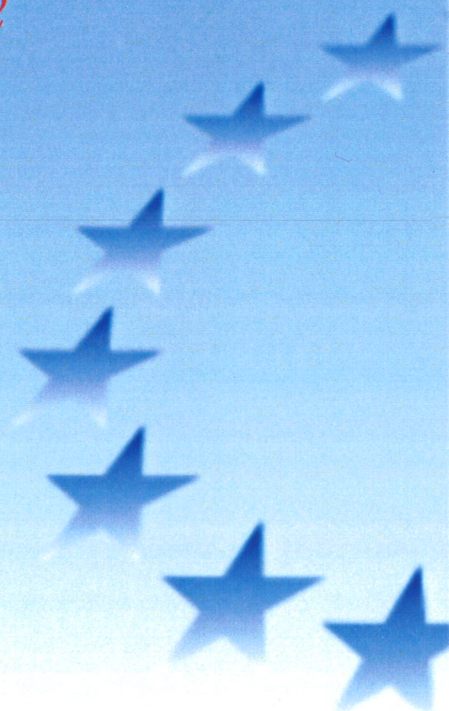
European Foundation on Social Quality

Towards European Cities of Social Quality

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**TOWARDS EUROPEAN CITIES OF
SOCIAL QUALITY**

A PLEA FOR A NEW NETWORK

by

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TOWARDS EUROPEAN CITIES OF SOCIAL QUALITY

A PLEA FOR A NEW NETWORK

1. The commission from VWS

The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS) has played an important role in developing the concept of social quality and institutionalising the Foundation. With the support of the Ministry, we presented the concept in July 1997 in a conference of scholars, officials and politicians related to the European Council held in Amsterdam. This conference stimulated the work of the Foundation. In the period that followed, we worked on the concept's validity and empirical and political applicability. In a second book, *Social Quality - a Vision for Europe* (2001), we reflected the comments and suggestions from the scholars. From the beginning it was clear that in order to enhance the applicability and the operationalisation of this concept of social quality the scientific framework should address three important aspects: the *instrumentalisation* of the concept (methodological aspect); the *implementation* of the concept at European level (political aspect) and the *incorporation* of the concept into concrete policy processes (policy aspect).

The commission the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport gave on 5 June 2000 for writing this report is in line with the third aspect: the incorporation of the concept into policy processes through empirical confrontation with the policy reality. The commission encompasses two tasks.

First it should be examined whether a *European Institute for Developing Social Quality* would stand a chance of getting political support. That the foundation of an Institute springing from the original initiative in 1995 and the European Foundation of Social Quality that came into being as a result (1997) is not just an idea, is evident from the fact that the SQ concept has gradually begun to play an interesting role in the European political and scholarly discussion. For the first time the concept of social quality is included in the Social Policy Agenda and the European Commission has given the Foundation two commissions to make the concept applicable for policy-making. Scholars are now experimenting with the concept. Universities in Helsinki, Milan and Jerusalem offer courses on the subject of social quality and in the public debate in Europe on health-care and social security social quality is a theme. In brief, it pays to find out to what extent it is possible in the Netherlands to raise political and societal commitment for the organisation of a European Institute for Developing Social Quality.

The second task concerns the development of guidelines for the Ministry of VWS in order to find out whether the concept of social quality can offer a perspective for an integral approach to processes and policies concerning the European Union. In this study reference should be made to experiences with the 'Grotestedenbeleid' (Urban Policy) and specifically to the pillar of social infrastructure. Both tasks of the commission should be connected with each other.

This connection was found in the idea, arisen during the fulfilment of the task, to link together the idea of a European Network of Cities of Social Quality and the Institute to be founded. The idea of a network of cities beginning to work with the SQ concept is both fascinating and challenging. To have an idea is one thing, but to implement this idea in the European political arena is of a different order.

For this report it meant a shift in emphasis. The idea of a network is not without problems. Innumerable networks of cities are active in Europe already and they can be found in all aspects of European policy. A new network only makes sense if it adds something. Therefore knowledge of existing networks is very important and at the same time a source of inspiration and orientation. In section 2 we will try to find out if a network of cities of social quality can add any elements of a historical, theoretical or empirical nature which are not, or not sufficiently, present at the moment.

For this purpose we have asked ourselves three questions:

- To what extent can this idea be linked to the historical heritage of European cities?
- Is the concept of social quality really offering a conceptually different and more interesting approach than networks organized, for example, around themes like sustainability, immigration, Quartiers en Crise, governance or human rights?
- Which empirical inspirations of these existing networks could help towards conceptualising a city-oriented framework of social quality?

Where the idea of a city network takes a central place in section 2, we have tried in section 3 to make some finger exercises on the content of such a network. We have identified as the three most important constituting factors for social quality in the cities: the specific qualities of networks as such (form), social infrastructure as part of the social quality of cities (content) and the integrated approach as a method of acting (strategy). The Dutch Grotestedenbeleid is the frame of orientation here.

Quality should be measurable. By what instruments and methods this should be done is a question all networks are confronted with. The social quality concept, too, is facing this problem. The question is whether the four components (socio-economic security, cohesion, inclusion and empowerment) are adequate for a balanced method of measurement.

The conclusion is that the concept of social quality is completely in line with the historical and scholarly debate on European cities, that the existing networks of cities are a valuable point of inspiration and that the concept of social quality is indeed an essentially different concept than the concepts of existing networks.

With a certain optimism we subsequently launch a Ten-point plan of action.

2. Arguments for a concept of European Cities of Social Quality

2.1 Introduction

Europe arose, Leonardo Benevolo admitted ¹, with the break-up of the antique world. In this world, cities played a predominant role where the institutional relationships and the organisation of the territory were concerned. In spite of the break-up, they still have this role in the present-day situation. In a totally different historical constellation cities moreover have an equally important function in terms of the regulation of social relationships and organisation of the physical context of the people. In the *'Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements'* of the United Nations, for instance, these sentiments are expressed:

“We have considered, with a sense of urgency, the continuing deterioration of conditions of shelter and human settlements, At the same time, we recognize cities and towns as centres of civilization, generating economic development and social, cultural, spiritual and scientific advancement.”²

In the pan-European discussion with its extensive stock of analyses, comments, strategic concepts and several reports and initiatives, the strategically important role of cities for the economic, social and political integration of Europe is emphasized again and again.

“Not only the crises and conflicts of a society are intensified in big cities - they are also the arena of its inventive potential, organisational capacity, tolerance and creative power. They are agencies of social change and memory collectors, breeding-grounds of current developments and monuments to achievements accomplished.”³

Two aspects of the situation of cities today become visible here: first the importance and (!) vulnerability of the cities, and second the irreplaceable significance of the cities for social integration. Excessive population concentration, homelessness, increasing poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, family instability, inadequate resources, lack of basic infrastructure and services, lack of adequate planning, growing insecurity and violence, environmental degradation and an increased vulnerability to disasters deteriorate people's living conditions all over the world, but strike cities directly, accumulating with an increasing complexity and creating specific problems which call for specific solutions. At the same time, cities are pre-eminently the places where new forms of social relationships, initiatives and societal arrangements are attempted. It is the cities where other life-styles, other views of labour, health, education, leisure activities etc. crystallize out and provoke conventional thought and patterns. In this sense, Hesse⁴ speaks of a *'second city'*: on the periphery of the system other values and norms concerning living together develop, which cannot a priori be refused as 'deviation' or 'dissident behaviour'. The question is whether it is possible, in the context of the cities, to find new lines of communication, new alliances between the central

¹ L. Benevolo, *De Europese stad*, Agon BV, Amsterdam, 1993, p.17

² United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), 3 to 14 June 1996, Istanbul

³ Vienna City Administration, European Urban Policy, report with reference to the 'European Urban Forum' held in Vienna in November 1998, Vienna 1999, Preface

⁴ J.J.Hesse, *Stadtpolitik*, in: PSV, Sonderheft 13, 1982, p.431

powers of societal changes in the central sectors of economy, culture and politics and this 'culture of the marginality'.⁵

Naturally, the two dominant aspects of the situation of the cities, their importance and vulnerability and their significance for social integration, are changing with time and differ in the character, extent and drama of problems. In a city like New Delhi with 15 million inhabitants the problems are of a different dimension than in a little town like San Gimignano in Tuscany. But notwithstanding these enormous differences, the basic problems are similar: how to organise and to improve the quality of life for the inhabitants, how to manage the resources, how to develop the capacities for human activities and for living together?

In this context, the modernisation of the cities is crucial for a civil and democratic society. Europe is the most urbanised continent in the world, with 80 % of the population living in towns and cities. In the *Charter of European Cities and Towns Towards Sustainability*⁶ the historical importance of the cities is underlined:

"We, European cities & towns, signatories of this Charter, state that in the course of history, our towns have existed within and outlasted empires, nation states, and regimes and have survived as centres of social life, carriers of our economies, and guardians of culture, heritage and tradition. Along with families and neighbourhoods, towns have been the basic elements of our societies and states. Towns have been the centre of industry, craft, trade, education and government."

It is clear that urban policy is not only a task of the national or local governments but also a European task. The Council of Europe and the European Union have accepted this task.⁷ In the field of Urban Policy, we can see many reflections and activities which promote the idea of embedding cities into the multi-level governance of Europe. In a general sense we can note that these efforts of embedding have three central points of attention: first, in the search of a legitimated governance, the European Union 'discovered' the local (and regional) level as a welcome resource for 'output legitimacy' (Kohler-Koch). The question is whether this focus is also shared by the local actors. In the words of the *Council of European Municipalities and Regions* (CEMR) we can feel the hesitation:

"Our key point is to propose an ongoing, organised partnership with the Commission based on clear principle and mutuality of interest. Local and regional government, and our citizens, are strongly affected by the policies and laws of the European Union and Community. So we seek better consultation and participation. But we do not see this as being a one-way flow from

⁵ B.Blanke/A.Evers/H.Wollmann (eds.) Die zweite Stadt-Neue Formen lokaler Arbeits-und Sozialpolitik, Leviathan Sonderheft 7/1986, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen.

⁶ This Charter, signed in Aalborg, Denmark on 27 May 1994, has by now been signed by more than 120 European cities, towns and counties, which have thereby joined the European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (more about this later)

⁷ The Communication from the Commission of 6 May 1997 entitled "Towards an urban agenda in the European Union" (COM(97)197 final, not published in the Official Journal) sets out the key challenges "which affect all cities to a lesser or greater degree, to take stock of existing EU policies which have an impact, directly or indirectly, on cities, and to examine possibilities for improving urban development while proposing a framework for a European-level debate." For the Council of Europe see p.18.

'Europe' to 'local'. On the contrary, we see it as just as important that there is a flow of information and policy inputs from 'local' to 'Europe'."⁸

A second point of attention is the role of the local level with respect to the socio-economic goals of the Union for the next decade. Implementing a new open method of coordination must lead to 'variable forms of partnerships', and 'establishing of effective frameworks for mobilising all available resources for the transition of the knowledge-based economy.'⁹ The linking of macro-economic, employment and social policies is on second thought a concept, which is merely reduced to economic categories. The mobilisation of local government for economic development is – despite all national differences regarding the relationship between local and national states – one of the parallel trends in all European societies.¹⁰ The question is, in a phase of liberalisation and global free-market capitalism, what is in fact the perspective for cities if 'only those cities which are capable of delivering top-quality services and which have good infrastructural endowments can attract activities which have a viable future and great added value'?'¹¹

The third point of attention is the *Sustainable Cities Project*, which is the most explicit collaboration and partnership between the European Union and the organized cities. The basic principle of this project is the integration between social, environmental and economic dimensions in order to stimulate the process towards sustainability. In this project, the top-down initiatives of the United Nations (and other international associations and national states) and the bottom-up initiatives of the local authorities form a hopeful strategic alliance. We will come back to this project in more detail later on in this chapter.

There is wide consensus in politics and science on the relevance of cities for the quality of life of its inhabitants. At the same time there is a wide range of local initiatives that press for a more democratic consultation and participation in the decision-making process. To that extent a plea for a new network of cities of social quality does not speak for itself. Then why make this effort? We have three reasons for this. Firstly, it pays to reflect on the specific characteristics of the *European city* as well as on the city as such. Secondly, despite all current initiatives it is also important to reflect on *social quality* of the cities. Thirdly, there are sufficient empirical points of reference to connect a new initiative with the *existing trends* that presently take place in the discussion on European integration. These are the three points – the historical, theoretical and empirical aspects – which we will discuss in more detail in the following.

2.2 *European cities*: historical considerations

The European dimension of the cities in Europe was discussed time and again by intellectuals in the 20th century. This debate, which arose within different contexts, was part of a broader debate, the modernisation of the European societies.¹² The city, in this debate often the American city, is the symbol of this modernisation. Primarily the debate on the European city

⁸ CEMR: A white Paper on European Governance, Enhancing Democracy in the European Union: A stronger involvement for local and regional government, CEMR Position Paper, Brussels, 2001

⁹ European Council of Lisbon, Presidency Conclusions, 23 and 24 March 2000

¹⁰ M.Mayer, Neue Trends in der Stadtpolitik – eine Herausforderung für die Lokale Politikforschung, in: PVS, Sonderheft 22, 1991, p.52

¹¹ see note 7

¹² The following considerations are mainly based at: H.Häussermann, Die europäische Stadt, LEVIATHAN 2, 2000, p.237-255 and H.Kaelble, Die Besonderheiten der europäischen Stadt im 20 Jahrhundert, ditto, p.256-274

is dominated by the *aesthetical* aspects of the cities and the fear of conformity and the threat to the individual. At the end of the 20th century, Kaelble remarks, this debate became blurred. But this is only one side of the coin. The other side is a very interesting revitalisation of the concept of the European city in the ideas of politicians and sociologists, which refer to the specific tradition and characteristics of the European cities. In fact, the dominant question in the current discussion is whether in the history of the sociological concepts of the city a universal, non-historical approach is still valid.¹³ This approach neglected the big differences between cities in different cultures, with different structures and developments in different types of welfare states. Should we not just reflect strongly on the differences between American and European cities? The question then is, what are the characteristics of the European city?

The idea to speak of a type of European city originates from Max Weber.¹⁴ He wondered how it was possible that capitalism had developed only in the European cities and not in cities in other continents. He held five characteristics responsible for this phenomenon: the fact that cities were protected by walls, their market function, an independent legislation and jurisdiction, the associative character (*Verbandscharakter*) of the social organisation, and their political autonomy. All these characteristics were not – or only partly or rudimentarily – present in oriental cities. The most significant fact in this context is that European cities are **political subjects**. Not the physical structure of the city but the political association, the social and political institutions with a form of self-government and citizens as core of this type, are the reason that a totally different economic and societal development can take place in the occidental cities than in the oriental cities. With the rise of the territorial states and the end of the autonomy of the cities, the concept of city in the sense of Max Weber has become a thing of the past. Notwithstanding the real existent 'Americanisation of the European cities', in the context of a changed political agenda with retreat of the state, privatisation of public enterprises, commodification of public services etc. it is useful to reflect for a moment what part of the heritage from the 19th and 20th centuries may help us to make cities a more important place for the social and political organisation of the society. In what sense can we speak of a heritage? What qualities are typically European among the enormous diversity and multiformity of the cities?

According to Kaelble, seven particular qualities are significant for the European city: the visibility of European history in the city, the specific urban growth, the European division between urban and rural culture, a different development of urban inequalities, the European use of urban culture especially in the city centres and the specific debate about city planning and the European urban planning politics.¹⁵ These points more or less distinguish European cities from American cities, for example. But the most relevant points of difference at the same time afford the most hopeful perspectives for the idea of the 'European City' as a distinct social organisation: the imagination of the urban population as a collective actor, the idea of local self-government and in line with this the local responsibility for public goods and infrastructure.

¹³ The famous 'Chicago School' in the sociology of cities has in line with Georg Simmel reduced the definition of city to size, heterogeneity and density and neglected historical and cultural specifications and in this manner has introduced a universal conception of the city. In neo-marxism a different form of universalism takes place. In this politico-economic analysis of society, economically determined processes explain the developments in cities. In the present-day concept of the 'global city' city also gets a universal meaning. See for more on this subject H.Häussermann, note 12

¹⁴ M. Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, J.C.B.Mohr Verlag, Tübingen 1977, p.513-600

¹⁵ H. Kaelble, see note 12, p. 264-273

In the context of the debate about 'New Urbanism' and the perspectives of the European city in it, the concept of Citizen (Stadtbürger) has experienced a renaissance. For Max Weber the corporative character (Verbandscharakter) of occidental cities and the existence of citizens was the most significant difference with oriental cities.¹⁶ With 'citizens' a kind of social and (potential) political capital is coming into the discussion. In reminiscence of the historical performance of the citizens, i.e. their political, economic and cultural role in the process of modernisation, the concept of citizens is actually experiencing a revival. The discussion about 'civil society' and 'citizenship' in the context of 'creating a new moral, social and public order based on a restoration of communities'¹⁷ is representative of the revitalisation of the idea of citizen as a collective actor, which is also oriented to the interest of the city as a whole. It is the Communitarian movement, which pleads for creating more responsibility and laws, based on connectedness, reduction of contentiousness and enhancement of social cooperation. Behind this lies the question: *"Is it imaginable that the city communities, as being the places which have had a historical function in the development of individuals, can now develop a collective identity again?"*¹⁸

For an answer to the question about collective identity it will not suffice to come up with general formulations of moral appeals so omnipresent in the multitude of communitarian documents. We must analyse within the context of the real conditions of political power, economic interests and last but not least the changed forms of social relationships whether this collective identity is possible. Two things are important in this context. Firstly, without institutionalised rights to liberty, political participation and fundamental social rules a civic society is not conceivable. And secondly, a basic sense of community is only possible when the most important, personal life goals and interests are at least compatible with the goals of the community. And this is only attainable through democratic processes, which are accessible to the citizens.¹⁹ Therefore, the idea of **local self-government** is a *conditio sine qua non*.

When the United Nation Commission on Human Settlements in September 2001 in a General Assembly Special Session (Istanbul 5 +) – as one of several specific instruments designed to facilitate and codify the implementation of the Habitat Agenda – sign a World Charter of Local Self-Government²⁰, then not only a very long process of consultation will have come to an end, but also some of the heritage of the history of European cities will have been translated into a world-wide convention. The text follows the structure and content of the European Charter of Local Self-Government²¹, which was accepted in the form of a European convention by the Council of Europe in 1985. With this, the principles of local self-government were codified:

¹⁶ see note 14, p.522

¹⁷ A. Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community*, Crown Publishers, New York, 1993, p.2

¹⁸ H. Häussermann, see note 12, p.247

¹⁹ P. Lohaus, *Gemeinschaft und Autonomie, Entwurf einer kommunitarischen Position in der Bundesrepublik*, Deutschsprachiges Kommunitariernetz, Berlin, 2000

²⁰ UNITED Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat/ World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination, Initial Draft text of the World Charter of Local Self-government, in: Feature Article: Towards a World Charter of Local Self Government, Joint Consultation Document, Nairobi, 1998/ see also: HABITAT, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, Istanbul, 1996

²¹ Council of Europe, *European Charter of Local Self Government*, Strasbourg, 1985/ see also: Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CMER), *The European Urban Charter*, Strasbourg, 1992

“ Article 3: Concept of local self-government

1. Local self-government denotes the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.
2. This right shall be exercised by councils or assemblies composed of members freely elected by secret ballot on the basis of direct, equal, universal suffrage, and which may possess executive organs responsible to them. This provision shall in no way affect recourse to assemblies of citizens, referendums or any other form of direct citizen participation where it is permitted by statute.”

This is in line with the first initiative of the General Assembly of the Council of European Municipalities, which in 1953 adopted the European Charter of Municipal Liberties. In this Charter strong local institutions ensure a high degree of local democratic autonomy, based on the classical democratic ingredients: political parties, elections and local parliaments. In the HABITAT/WACLAC draft text, the participation of citizens is accentuated: local authorities shall be entitled to define appropriate forms of popular participation and civic engagement, shall be empowered to establish and develop partnerships with all actors of civil society, to form associations for the defence and promotion of their common interests . (Articles 10 and 11) The member states of the Council of Europe consider that the local authorities are ‘one of the main foundations of any democratic regime’, that the right of citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs is one of the most important democratic principles and this right can be most directly exercised at a local level.

Where the content is concerned, this is in fact not new²² and has a high declamatory quality. But through the concentric and interweaving character of the various initiatives²³, the codification is a very important reinforcement of the idea of local self-government.²⁴ Self-government is a complex challenge, however.

Cities are confronted with a whole range of complicated problems: transport and mobility, environment and nature, the physical form, the urban architectural heritage, housing, security and crime prevention, disadvantaged and disabled persons in towns, sport and leisure in urban areas, culture, multicultural integration, health, education, citizen participation, economic development. This vast array of problems is more or less the ‘normal’ confrontation on the ground floor of local government. Historically, the development of local responsibility of the political and administrative systems for all these problems is a third aspect of the corporative character of the European city. In this strong local authority dimension, concentrating upon the specific responsibilities of this level of government, the question of ‘infrastructure’, social as well as physical, plays a prominent role. In the Netherlands, for example, urban policy rests

²² The Greek word ‘polis’ (French: cité, Spanish: ciudad, Latin: civitas etc.) suggests two concepts: city in the territorial sense, for the people who wish to live and work there, and city in the legal sense as a community, an autonomous area body, where people wish to live and work as a community with certain interests. (CLRAE paper)

²³ Very important are also the *Local Agenda 21* initiative of the United Nations, which was started in 1992, the *European Sustainable Cities Project*, launched in 1993 through the European Commission, the *activities* of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, Eurocities, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), United Towns Organisation (UTO) and the WHO Healthy Cities Project.

²⁴ In this context it is absolutely necessary in a next step to reflect on what we mean by the notion ‘self’. It is more than a correct institutional framework of local autonomy and a general reference to notions like community will not do. This is also relevant for the concept of social quality, where this point has not sufficiently been reflected.

on three pillars: first of all, work and economy with the goal of enhancing the economic vitality in the cities; secondly, the physical infrastructure with the goal of improving the quality of the housing, work and living conditions and thirdly the social pillar, aiming at more social cohesion and better services regarding assistance, care, security, social activation and participation. In other words, self-government in the sense of local responsibilities is in fact about everything. The basic principles of Dutch urban policy are an *integrated approach*, *local responsibilities and measurable goals*. The decisive question is: what are the structural, material and social *conditions* under which responsibilities at local level are exercised; and secondly, what are the *resources*, including the social capital particularly relevant for the daily life of the people, and thirdly, how to acquire the necessary and adequate *capabilities*?

This short historical reflection about the characteristics of *European* cities shows that a new network of Cities of Social Quality can refer to three worthy traditions of cities in European history: the ideas of citizenship, self-government and local responsibility for public goods. The actual debate about the '*European city*' in the context of town-planning, urban policy or sociophilosophical and political reflections also shows that the notion of *European city* lacks substantial interpretation for a theoretical conceptualisation. Perhaps this leaves a chance for the social-quality approach.

2.3 Cities of Social Quality – theoretical reflections

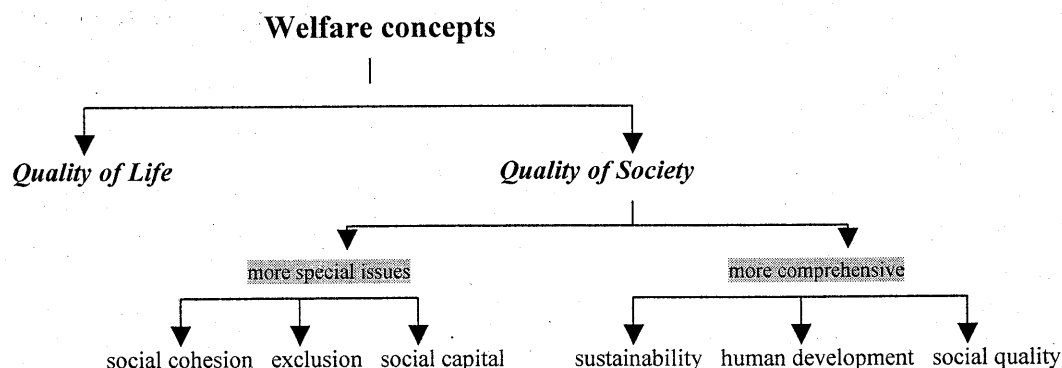
With the revitalisation of concepts like citizenship, self-government and (local) welfare not only significant European intellectual and practical traditions are at stake; it also marks the historical context within which this revitalisation takes place. We are living at a time which sees the paradoxical situation that in accordance with the processes of globalisation, fragmentation and disintegration tendencies of transnational democratisation and forming of new states take place, whereas in the states we see democratisation, ethnic and cultural conflicts, global networking and loss of social integration, opening and forming of new boundaries. Benhabib's conclusion in the light of this dialectic is the plea for more clarity regarding the question how identity and difference in the concrete political context, that of the current European democracies, must be newly reflected.²⁵ Identity and difference and, in line with this, the questions of inclusion/exclusion, belonging/isolation, participation/non-involvement, recognition/rejection and legitimacy/illegitimacy²⁶ are central points of a critical, contemporary theory of society. In the debate about a *European city* we can see an emphasis on the aesthetic aspects, the spatial structure of cities, the economic and welfare aspects, the political importance of the cities. In other words: it is the question of conditions and resources rather than the question of capabilities of the actors that dominates this debate.

At the moment, the concept of *Quality of Life* is the most embraced, the broadest constructed and the best operationalised framework in this context. According to Heinz-Herbert Noll, the concept of 'quality of life' 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

²⁵ S. Benhabib: *Kulturelle Vielfalt und demokratische Gleichheit – Politische Partizipation im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*, Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt, 1999/ Silvia Stoller, *Vielfalt im Zeitalter von Globalisierung und Fragmentierung*, recension, Vienna, 2000

²⁶ These are the five dimensions introduced by Jane Jenson in her article: *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*, Canadian Policy Research Networks, Inc.No.F/03. Practically all five dimensions of social cohesion constitute the building of collective identities, which at the same time are also characteristics of difference.

multidimensional goal of societal development.”²⁷ The political climate of the late 1960s and the early 1970s, in a period of prosperity, doubts arose regarding the economic growth as the goal and motor of societal progress. In the words of Noll: “The ‘social costs’ of economic growth and ‘public poverty’ as the other side of the coin of ‘private affluence’ got public attention and received prominence in political discussion.” The construction of ‘Quality of life’ appears as a new interdisciplinary approach: historians, economists, sociologists, philosophers, psychologists, scientist of medicine, they all reflect the question in their own manner: 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 concepts of *Quality of Life* and *Quality of societies*. Characteristic of the Quality of Life concept is a more or less individual approach. Dimensions of welfare related to societal qualities are rather neglected. In contrast to this, the concept of the Quality of societies focuses on the distribution of welfare and social relations within societies. Within the framework of the latter concept, some of these theoretical approaches are quite comprehensive (Human Development, Social Quality), other propositions focus on special welfare issues (social exclusion, social capital).²⁸ In diagram:



According to Noll, there is a substantial overlap between these concepts. This overlap, particularly the relationship between the ‘new’ concepts and the quality of life approach, has not been clarified.

However right these remarks may be, the question is permitted whether the concept of social quality might perhaps have more to offer than an “effort to integrate the ideas of social cohesion, social exclusion and human development under a common policy perspective.”²⁹ In the following we will take a bird’s-eye view of the particulars of the concept of social quality.

At the core of the SQ concept lies the definition of ‘the social’ as a dialectical tension between self-realisation and forming of collective identities. This anthropological assumption implies

²⁷ 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

²⁸ H.H.Noll, *The European System of Social Indicators: An Instrument for Social Monitoring and Reporting*, ZUMA, Mannheim, 2000, p.2-12

²⁹ R.Berger-Schmitt/H.H.Noll, *Towards a European System of Social Reporting and Welfare Measurement*, Mannheim 2000, p.28. But they are right where they say: “In total, this (i.e. the comments of Sventlik (1999), Phillips/Bermann (1999), W.B.) underlines the rather unclear conceptualisation of social quality and the need for further refinement of the concept.” Ditto. In the second book we have accurately registered this and other comments and tried to improve the concept’s validity. See: W. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A. Walker, *Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*, Kluwer Law International, The Hague/London/Boston, 2001

– summarized briefly – two things: social practices are decisive for the building or for the deformation of the Self. In the tradition of Taylor, Honneth and Benjamin we have chosen for the position that the human subject for the self-realisation constituent depends on recognition through 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 by the degree of recognition he was able to obtain for his freely chosen goals in his societal environment.”³⁰

With the 'reconstruction' of *the social* as a starting-point of the SQ concept, we have a different theoretical framework as our point of orientation than concepts of sustainability or Quality of life, for example. Our orientation is rather on political concepts of identity/difference (Benhabib), system integration/social integration (Lockwood) and psychological concepts of self (Dittman-Kohli).

Secondly, with the *social* as the conceptual epicentre we connect the individual and the collective levels in a particular manner: the authenticity and autonomy of the individual is confronted with the formation of collective identities as a process of inclusion/exclusion. Both elements, the core assumptions of the concept and their relations, are highly problematic.³¹ In a normative sense the interdependent nature of this connection is first of all neutral. In order to develop the normative dimension of the social as well as its conceptualisation, we introduce the category of public affairs, the public space, and the world of public concern as a point of orientation.³²

In the context of this third element the concepts of 'deliberative democracy' and Discourse Ethics theories are important. In the model of deliberative democracy the boundaries between the public and private spheres, the different interpretations of human needs, preferences, interests and wants must be defined. And in this debate the values, norms, principles, rights and conventions not only play a prominent role, they constantly receive new perspectives and standardisations and regauge the societal base for acting. This happens not only publicly but also discursively. In the second book about social quality we referred to Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative acting.³³ Sylvia Benhabib has, in a reformulation of Habermas' communicative ethics, laid more emphasis on the satisfaction of individual, material and emotional needs in terms of an ongoing conversation "that is less concerned with rational agreement or consensus than with sustaining those normative practices and moral relationships within which reasoned agreement as a way of life can flourish and continue."³⁴

³⁰ A. Honneth, *Desintegration – Bruchstücke einer soziologischen Zeitdiagnose*, Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt 1994, p.18/ See also: A. Honneth, *Kampf um Anerkennung - Zur moralischen Grammatik sozialer Konflikte*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1992

³¹ For example, should we understand 'forming of collective identity' in the functionalistic sense as a 'qualifying condition' or as a process relatively separated from the individual which has hardly any influence on the self-realisation, or as a reflex from the complexity of the interdependency between the acting individual and the forming of a collective identity?

³² The big issue here is the division between the spheres of the private and the public. Is the circumcision of women in a western democratic country a private or a public affair?

³³ W. Beck, L. van der Maesen, A. Walker, *Theorizing Social Quality: the concept's validity*, p.316-319, in: W. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A. Walker, *Social Quality: A vision for Europe*, Kluwer Law, The Hague/London/Boston

³⁴ S.Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*, Routledge, New York, 1992, p.38, quoted from a Review by Marsha Hewitt, Trinity College, Toronto.

The central premise in the discourse ethics approach is that only those norms are valid which have been consented without constraint by all the individuals concerned in a specific situation of argumentation (discourse). This is, Benhabib declares, the mega-norm of the moral autonomy. And she argues further: between this norm of the moral autonomy, the universal respect for the opinions of individuals, and the human and citizens' rights of the liberal democratic states, a deductive relationship is not possible. All these universalistic theories of moral and right are reconstructions of moral intuitions and principles. And this must be determined in a public discourse.

A concept which is based on self-realisation, forming of collective identity and public affairs has a different point of departure than, for example, the Quality of life concept. At the core of the SQ concept we see the citizen as **subject of acting** and not material and non-material aspects of life. This implicates a second fundamental difference with other concepts. The SQ approach is addressed to **processes**, especially to processes of participation in the field of interactions with a high degree of correlation between interests, actors and policies. It illustrates the 'genetic code' of social quality and demonstrates its cross-sectional character as the basic level of performance.³⁵

In this context, the emphasis on the component of **empowerment** is the most explicit difference with other concepts. According to Denis Bouget, the dimension of empowerment needs a specific reference to democratic requirements for decision-making, particularly a reference to ethical values (social and local justice).³⁶ The possibilities of actors and the conditions for an interest-oriented policy are not only dependent on the two elements resources and context, but also on the sensitivity towards values of the individuals, the acceptance of ethical maxims (= consensus) and the collectivisation of norms in the processes of societal development. This means a transformation of values from case to norm and vice versa, from specific to universal, from local to cosmopolitan. The logic of quality where social quality is concerned implicates the idea of **cooperation**. Instead of accentuating competitiveness and economic growth as guidelines for new perspectives, strategies and actions, the social quality concept emphasizes interactions. It is governed by principles of cooperation rather than market mechanisms. These principles, based on partnerships with a *mutual* dependency, refer also to discursive practices: dialogue, consultation and bargaining.

Why is it that the social quality concept may be a fruitful approach to a new Urbanism? In their article about urban transformations, Jan Berting and Christiane Villain-Gandossi remark³⁷ that the problem of container concepts like social exclusion (in spite of their merits) is that the social actors in our society are not represented in a model of society that consists of 'included' and 'excluded'. The only relevant actor seems to be the state, as an organized political system which is responsible for the care of excluded people. The authors ascertain that the SQ quadrant makes a more integrated and a more realistic approach possible regarding the urban field of interactions with its relevant actors.

³⁵ For further information concerning the nature, content, range and morphological structure of the social, the conditional factors, the components (SQ-Quadrant) with their theoretical impact and first steps in the direction of empirical and political applicability, we must refer to the second book of the Foundation of Social Quality. see note 33

³⁶ D. Bouget, The empirical and policy relevance of social quality, in see note 33, p.119

³⁷ J. Berting, C. Villain-Gandossi, Urban Transformations, the French debate and social quality, in: see note 33, p.173-198

[The SQ-quadrant is built on two axes: 1. a macro/societal - micro /biographical axis and 2. an institutions (organisations, systems) - communities (groups/ configurations) axis. This scheme forms the basis for four components of social quality: socio-economic security, cohesion, inclusion and empowerment. These components are the conditions (resources and context) for social quality.]

In other words, the SQ concept is complex enough and open to a more holistic and integrated approach of the urban problems. In a remarkable recommendation to the Dutch government about the social infrastructure in urban policies, the Dutch Council for social developments (*Raad voor maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen*)³⁸ has designed a similar analytical framework of four overlapping dimensions: the socio-economic position (= socio-economic security), the participation in institutionalised networks (= inclusion), the possession of personal relations and networks (= cohesion), self-reliance and self-support (= empowerment.)³⁹ In these recommendations, we find reflections of all the recent debates on networks, social capital, self-organisation, interactive policy-making, respect for the experience and knowledge of citizens, etc.

This example shows also that there is a growing need of concepts of local government where the social and political dimension, more than in the past, is integrated in a holistic and comprehensive approach. In this context, it is gratifying that we have a range of different concepts at our disposal. This has the advantage that for the analysis of the major problems policy-makers and scientists meet in the broad field of urban policy. It is true, concepts with a wide range of themes and theoretical orientations run risks of being vague, missing contextual and conceptual coherence. But on the other hand the attempted welfare concepts with a high degree of overlap and thematic proximity are a valuable intellectual capital. We can see how by the construction of conceptual frameworks different elements of the concepts are combined. In the human development concept as well as in the SQ concept, empowerment of people is an essential component. The social exclusion concepts, for example, refer to concepts of social capital, etc. The mixture of different elements by the construction of frameworks is a normal phenomenon.⁴⁰

A concept which is linked to the best European traditions (citizens, self-government, local responsibility) and refers to citizens as subject of acting, empowerment, processes of participation and principles of cooperation and partnerships, has at least the chance to address the most relevant urban problems and to provide a link to local practices. For a European network of Cities of Social Quality, therefore, at least two steps are necessary: firstly, a more detailed conceptual framework specifically oriented on cities must be devised; for this we can learn from the experience of the other international projects and the urban policy considerations of the various participants in the European debate (see 2.4). Secondly, we must design indicators for measurement, monitoring and comparison of local urban practices.⁴¹

³⁸ Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling, Ongekende aanknopingspunten – Strategieën voor de aanpassing van de sociale infrastructuur, RMO-advies 11, The Hague, 2000, p.8

³⁹ With thanks to Kees Zijlmans (VWS), who drew our attention to these corresponding schemes.

⁴⁰ The Centre for Survey Research and Methodology (ZUMA) in Mannheim has, for example, combined elements of the Quality of Life concept with sustainability and social cohesion elements, corresponding with the goals and objectives of European Policies. See: H.H. Noll, The European System of Social Indicators: An instrument for Social Monitoring and Reporting, Paper prepared for the 26th General Conference of The International Association for Research on Income and Wealth, Cracow, 27 August to 2 September 2000

⁴¹ In the *European Thematic Network on Indicators of Social Quality* the European Foundation financed through the European Commission is working on a system of basic indicators with 16 scientific institutes and networks.

2.4 European city networks: empirical inspirations

Existing Europe is especially a Europe of nation states. But the reality is more complex. There are countless initiatives, projects and networks that are true enough part of the national state, but act more or less independently from it. In the area of multi-level government, there is a rich and varied palette of semi-governmental, non-governmental, institutionalised, informal, top-down or bottom-up regional or local initiatives, where *networks of cities* play a prominent role.

Three aspects are interesting here. Firstly, however fundamental, complex or difficult the problems perceived might be, the cities play a decisive role in the implementation of global, European or national policies. Secondly, experiences have shown that local governments, seeking to implement policies, turn to other cities and municipalities rather than regions or nation states for support and partnerships.⁴² Thirdly, in the vision of the European Union, networks could make a more effective contribution to EU policies.⁴³ Networks link businesses, communities, research centres and regional and local authorities and “they provide new foundations for integration within the Union and for building bridges to the applicant countries and to the world.”

In other words, networks of cities are a favoured and in many ways supported category of politics. In the following, we will give a brief impression of various networks which arose within different contexts. The Local Agenda 21, the Sustainable Cities Project, the Council of Europe Networks, Eurocities and the Cities of Tomorrow Project.

2.4.1 The Local Agenda 21

In 1992, more than 178 governments at the United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro adopted the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* and the *Agenda 21*, a comprehensive plan of action for achieving sustainable development. This achievement of sustainable development requires the integration of its economic, environmental and social components. Chapter 28 of the Agenda 21 specifically calls for each community to formulate its own Local Agenda 21:

“Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations, and private enterprises and adopt ‘a local Agenda 21’. Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies.”
(Agenda 21, chapter 28, see 1,3)

The *Local Agenda 21* is the local community element of a national and international initiative of the *United Nations* and the start of an important and ambitious partnership between the United States and the local levels of government. The Agenda 21 is an internationally agreed framework for the practice of local democracy. This practice is characterized as:

⁴² Eurocities Governance Working Group, European Governance White Paper: Towards a new role for cities in a network Europe?, Draft report Birmingham City Council, 2000, p.11. Also: “Cities for example, have a key role to play in the successful enlargement and integration of the Union. This is a natural process for those at the ‘sharp end’ of policy ...”

⁴³ European Commission, European Governance – A White Paper, COM (2001) 428 final, Brussels 2001, p.18

“a participatory, multi-sectoral process to achieve the goals of the Agenda 21 at the local level through the preparation and implementation of a long-term action plan that addresses priority local sustainable development concerns.”⁴⁴

This initiative is relatively successful. In 1996 more than 1800 local governments in 64 countries were involved in Local Agenda 21 activities. Furthermore ICLEI confirmed that Local Agenda 21 planning was under way in 933 municipalities in 43 countries and was just getting started in an additional 879 municipalities.⁴⁵ Central to this initiative is the ‘sustainable development’ as a process, which will bring the economic, environmental and social development into balance. The quality of communication between the actors is at least as important as the material result of this process. Corina Angrick c.s. show that this is obviously a problem. They conclude that in almost all the projects the dialogue with the local enterprises scarcely gets off the ground and in projects where this dialogue does take place excellent results are possible (e.g. in Heidelberg, Germany).⁴⁶ In the Bremen Declaration (March 1997) signed by businesses and municipalities a plea is made for a new approach supporting a partnership between business and municipalities.⁴⁷ The essential difference with a SQ approach is the central position taken up by the ‘plan’. In the aforesaid Local Agenda 21 Survey⁴⁸ the questions of the inquiry refer exclusively to the plan: the criteria and the thematic focus of planning, the participation of different actors in the process of planning, progress in producing action plans, the time horizon of planning and the implementation and measures of the action plans.⁴⁹ It is not unthinkable that the institutional aspects dominate the social aspects.

2.4.2 The Sustainable Cities Project

The sources of orientation of this project are twofold. First, it is a specifically European policy tradition which has fixed this project. The publication by the European Commission of the *Green Paper on the Urban Environment* (1990) marked the start of this project. In 1991, the Commission established the *Expert Group on the Urban Environment*, which consisted of national representatives and independent experts. In 1993 this Group, in cooperation with DG XI, launched the European Sustainable Cities Project. A second source of inspiration are the UN World Earth Summit at Rio and a series of UN conferences concluding with HABITAT II. Their common themes and recommendations have invited the Commission to take urgently action regarding sustainability, the future of cities and their contribution both locally and globally. The European Commission committed itself to the promotion of a Local Agenda 21 as an integral part of the Rio engagements. Both lines, European and United Nations, come together in the *Fifth Environmental Action Program* (1992), where the policy of sustainable development through an integrated approach with all actors involved was introduced.

⁴⁴ International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, A study of Response by Local Authorities and their National and International Association to Agenda 21, New York, 1997, p.4

⁴⁵ Ditto, p.5

⁴⁶ C. Angrick, P. Fernau, J. Loewe, P. Spiegel, N. Wimmer, Chancen – Projekt zur nachhaltigen Gestaltung der Globalisierung, Horizonte-Verlag, Stuttgart, 1999, p.100

⁴⁷ <http://www.bremen-initiative.de>

⁴⁸ See note 44

⁴⁹ To avoid any misunderstanding, there is nothing wrong with planning. All policies are more or less ‘planned’. But the Dutch experiences with welfare planning in the 70s show that there is a risk that the planning /plan itself may become the goal.

In 1993, as observed, the Commission together with the Expert Group launched the *Sustainable Cities Project*, with the aim to

- promote new ideas on sustainability in European urban settings,
- foster a wide exchange of experience,
- disseminate good practices on sustainability at the urban level,
- formulate recommendations for the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities to assist the implementation of the European Community's Fifth Environmental Action program.

With an impressive Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns in 1994 in Aalborg (Denmark) the Commission started the ***European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign***. A network of cities was born, based upon the signature of the 'Aalborg Charter':

“We, European cities & towns, signatories of this Charter [...] are convinced that the city or town is both the largest unit capable of initially addressing the many urban architectural, social economic, political, natural resource and environmental imbalances damaging our modern world and the smallest scale at which problems can be meaningfully resolved in an integrated, holistic and sustainable fashion.”⁵⁰

The Campaign network shows how different initiatives – global, national, local – with a problem-oriented concept (sustainability) can ‘create synergy through cooperation’. In spite of the impressive scope of the network, however, there are a number of unfavourable barriers. In some European countries local government is weak and has insufficient power. Adequate resources or revenues for the responsibility given are often lacking. Wicked subsidies for accomplishing the internal market still provide the wrong incentives. Progress and success are still measured in terms of economic growth rather than in sustainability of social conditions. Financial markets are not democratically controlled.⁵¹

What are the key messages of this project? In the view of the Commission, sustainable development, policy integration, resource management, governance and capacity-building are the anchors of this policy.⁵² Integration between social, environmental and economic dimensions in order to stimulate the process towards sustainability is the core principle. The Expert Group speaks of a set of principles ‘to use in setting goals and in evaluating and monitoring

⁵⁰ Concerning this campaign the response is high. The Aalborg Charter was initially signed by 120 European cities. In 2000, 650 local and regional authorities from 32 countries across Europe committed themselves to the local sustainability and the Campaign. In 1996 the Campaign network adopted the *Lisbon Action Plan: from Charter to Action*. With this adoption a link was with the Local Agenda 21 process. The *Hannover Call of European Municipal Leaders at the Turn of the 21st Century*, a conference in 2000 with more than 1300 participants from 52 countries, shows the growing scope for the network. Co-organisers of the Conference and co-operating and co-ordinating partners from this Conference have been: Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), Eurocities, the Healthy Cities network of the World Health Organisation, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the United Towns Organisation (UTO), the Medicities Network, the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC), the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), the International Institute for the Urban Environment (IIUE), the Sustainable World Foundation (SWF), the European Climate Alliance, ICLEI's European Cities for Climate Protection Campaign and Eco-Procurement Programme.

⁵¹ Third European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns, Hannover, 9-12 February 2000, Annex, point 2, p.9

⁵² European Commission, Response of the EC Expert Group on the Urban Environment on the Communication ‘Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union’, Brussels, 1998, p.4

progress towards sustainability in urban areas⁵³: the principle of urban management, the principle of policy integration, the principle of ecosystem thinking and the principle of co-operation and partnership. Remarkable is the emphasis on *policy integration*. Integration has various connotations. First, the achievement of sustainable development depends on the integration of various dimensions (economic, environmental, social). Secondly, sustainable development should become the central objective of all sectors and policies (intrinsic norm of policy coherence).⁵⁴ A third aspect of integration requires the different spheres of governance to co-operate and pool their competences and resources, both vertically (between levels of government) and horizontally (between local partners, public or private.)⁵⁵ Fourthly, it is important in the social field "to strengthen the well-being of the population and promote equality and social integration by ensuring that basic services and amenities, education and training, health care, housing and employment are available to all."⁵⁶ This exceptional devotion to the issue of 'integration' primarily represents the need that political systems have of institutional re-organisation, coherence and continuity of policies and instruments of management. Maybe these aspects of integration explain the interest in a Europe-wide sustainability monitoring operation. This initiative was developed through a bottom-up approach by a Working Group of the Expert Group on the Urban Environment.⁵⁷ In this monitoring initiative, questions like the following play a role: what do local sustainable indicators mean, how can a better monitoring practice be achieved and how can comparability be attained?⁵⁸

The interest largely lies in the underlying principles and assumptions of this initiative and the methodology of the approach. A sustainable City is more than simply a city with a clean environment.

"Indicators for local sustainability must therefore go beyond traditional environmental indicators. They must also go beyond the sectoral approach, where 'sustainability' indicators are taken to mean indicators that are organised under the individual themes of environment, economy and social aspects, without reflecting the linkages between the themes."⁵⁹

The assumption is that each and every local community can work towards sustainability, regardless of the starting point and the length of the road. Comparison is primarily based on measuring. Therefore, the new monitoring initiative intends to measure movement towards sustainability. The Working Group has started with the identification of general criteria and criteria of sustainability for the selection of integrated criteria. The Working Group undertook

⁵³ Expert Group on the Urban Environment: European Sustainable Cities – report, Brussels, March 1996, Abstract

⁵⁴ European Commission, A sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development – The Commission Proposal to the Gothenburg European Council, Communication, Com(2001) 264 final, p.6

⁵⁵ See: CEMR Position Paper: A white paper on European Governance: Enhancing Democracy in the European Union: A stronger Involvement for Local and Regional Government, 2001, p.16

⁵⁶ Expert Group, see note 53, p.7

⁵⁷ The European Commissioner for the Environment launched this monitoring initiative '*Towards a local sustainability profile: European Common Indicators*' at the third European Conference on Sustainable Cities (February 2000, Hanover, Germany). Over 80 local authorities are now testing the indicators and working to refine the monitoring initiative on the basis of practical experiences.

⁵⁸ Working Group on Measuring, Monitoring and Evaluation in Local Sustainability, Towards a local sustainability profile: European common indicators, Luxembourg, 2000

⁵⁹ ditto, p. 6. In practice, this task is identical with the task of the European Thematic Network on Indicators of Social Quality.

further preparatory work, such as analysing existing indicator initiatives and projects on the agreed methodology. The idea was “to take account of and build on previous experiences at local level, searching for integrated indicators already in use, and complementing these with modified versions of existing indicators or completely new ones where necessary.” (p.7) In other words, this project started with the stocktaking and evaluation of experiences of local practices. Based on this analysis, the Working Group identified a first proposal for a common set of indicators. A list of 18 indicators was the subject of consultation among a group of local authorities.⁶⁰ Following this first consultation, the Working Group revised the list of indicators and presented a second proposal, which also was discussed in a consultation round by local authorities of ten members. This ‘first generation’ of European common indicators will be developed further on the basis of a more advanced common methodology including a testing period. Characteristic for this initiative is the consistently local base-oriented, interactive and iterative approach, where the mechanism of feedback with the local authorities plays a constitutive role. For a comparable project such as Cities of social quality this initiative potentially is a very interesting source of inspiration.

2.4.3 The Council of Europe networks

The political elites (especially from Western Europe) have always considered Europe as a ‘community of values’ (Wertegemeinschaft). In spite of all the historical experiences and traditions, in spite of all the cultural diversities, Europe is founded on a general and generic codex of values. The origin of the Council of Europe is based on such a codex: “the promotion of human rights, the defence of human dignity and hence, naturally, the development of social progress.”⁶¹ The overall vocation of the Council of Europe – the protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights – is also the background for the purpose, philosophy and structure of the urban development and quality of life considerations. In this sense, the urban work of the Council of Europe is “distinguishable from that of other international governmental organisations which have also a valid urban component within their programmes.”⁶²

Three elements are typical of the Council’s urban policy: first the normative and ethical base of this policy⁶³ as already mentioned; secondly, a firm local-oriented dimension concentrating upon the specific responsibilities of this level of government⁶⁴ and thirdly, a distinct accentuation of co-operation between towns and cities.⁶⁵ The pivot on which most of the activities hinge is the *Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe* (CLRAE)

⁶⁰ This list includes core indicators and additional indicators. Sustainability concerns forming the basis for selection of indicators and refers to equality and social inclusion, participation by all sectors of the local community, local/global relationships, local economy, environmental protection, cultural heritage/quality of the built environment.

⁶¹ Council of Europe social cohesion website: <http://www.social.coe.int/en/index.htm>.

⁶² Council of Europe, The European Urban Charter, Background Paper, Strasbourg, 1992, p.3

⁶³ “The respect, promotion and extension of human rights, for all individuals in towns – irrespective of sex, origin, race, age, belief, social, economic or political position, physical or psychological handicap – is essential.” Ditto, p.6

⁶⁴ The Council took its first step towards local authority representation in 1957, and since this time the work has extended from Iceland to Turkey, from Portugal to Azerbaijan. Website of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, update 26 May 2001

⁶⁵ “Reflecting the reality that towns have a fundamental role in regional, national, European and world-wide development, it is essential for them to be involved in networks of co-operation and exchange on the regional, national and international levels, through twinnings, contracts, memberships of international associations and governmental organisations.”, see note 63, p.6

established in 1994.⁶⁶ The Congress helps member states with practical aspects of their progress towards establishing an effective local and regional self-government. The most typical function is that of *facilitator*. From 'promoting partnerships with cities and regions of South-East Europe' to 'Meetings of the Mayors of Capital Cities', from 'Conferences to promote local democracy and transborder co-operation' to 'European Networks of Training Organisations for Local and Regional Authorities (ENTO)', the Congress gives assistance and provides a practical guide to good urban management, covering all the basic problems of the daily life of the citizens (housing, health, street security, pollution, energy and so on.) With the emergence of new states, especially with the rise of the new democracies of Eastern Europe, the Congress has re-evaluated and reformulated its objectives: special support programmes for local and regional democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Promoting effective local and regional government structures in the member and applicant states, developing initiatives to enable citizens to participate effectively in local and regional democracy, representing the interests of local and regional government in the shaping of European policy are key issues of this programme.

The Congress organises its work around four statutory committees: the Institutional Committee, the Culture and Education Committee, the Committee of Sustainable Development and the Committee on Social Cohesion. Especially the policy of this last Committee illustrates a relevant aspect of the SQ-concept.

In 1994 the Council of Europe launched the '*Human Dignity and Social Exclusion Project*'. In this concept, 'poverty' and 'social exclusion' are held to be the cause of an unacceptable division of society. Since human rights and social rights are inextricably bound up with each other, the struggle against poverty and exclusion is a struggle for human rights. Social development begins with human rights and not – exaggerating things a bit – with economic development such as the European Union professes.⁶⁷ During this project, an important conceptual change took place: from providing social security through the state to a culture of individual possibilities and responsibility. The fight against social exclusion is therefore part of a broader approach, part of social cohesion. With the institutionalisation of the *Committee for Social Cohesion* in 1997, the debate about social cohesion has been brought to a higher level. Social cohesion, meanwhile a core mission of the Council of Europe, connects social development with human rights. In other words: the field of interaction (social development) is connected with the field of contingencies (human rights). In the SQ-concept, this connection plays a central role.

In the *field of interaction* we are confronted with a diversification of interests, needs, power relations and related conflicts. In this field the code for analysing takes the form of interactive communication about this diversification. This implies the necessity to bargain, to form coalitions in order to cope with divergences. Participation and forms of social recognition are a condition sine qua non here. In the *field of contingencies*, values, norms, principles, codes, rights and conventions provide the essential ingredients. The individuals' sensitivity to values and collectivisation of norms in the context of societal development are essential for social development, or rather: for the realisation of social cohesion based on human rights. In the SQ concept we have conceptualised this intrinsic relationship between the field of interaction (horizontal axis) and the field of contingencies (vertical axis) and have introduced a code for

⁶⁶ CLRAE is a consultative body which replaced the former Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities.

⁶⁷ More detailed: K. Duffy, *The Human Dignity and Social Exclusion Project-Research Opportunity and risk: trends of social exclusion in Europe*, Strasbourg, 1998

analysing the main points: social recognition, participation, sensitivity to values and collectivisation of norms.⁶⁸ In this sense, the Council's cohesion policy offers important and interesting points of contact for the further conceptualisation of a Cities of Social Quality concept.

2.4.4 Eurocities

An initiative of a different signature is the Eurocity network. Founded in 1986, Eurocities have at present more than 90 members covering the larger cities in Europe. Membership of Eurocities is open to democratically elected city governments and to their economic and scientific partners (Chambers of Commerce and Universities), cities which have more than 250 thousand inhabitants and have an international dimension and an important regional function. The organisation has seven working-groups called committees, which deal with the following subjects: economic development and urban regeneration, social welfare, transport, culture, environment, east-west relations and technology. Two separate networks under the auspices of Eurocities are the *Car free Cities* and *Telecities*.

Svein Andersen and Kjell Eliassen note that we can see not only a Europeanisation of policy-making but also a *lobbyfication*. All important business firms, representatives of public or non-governmental⁶⁹ organizations have established offices in Brussels with the purpose of influencing the EU's policies. The overall aim of Eurocities' work is to improve the situation of cities, politically and economically. It is especially aimed at the European Union, the Commission as well as the Parliament. Eurocities is a typical lobby-organization. Its goal is to influence the European agenda and to ensure that the views of the major cities are taken into account in policy development. The lobby for the involvement of local authorities in European Union programmes is, in other words, the key message of this network.

To achieve this goal, it is necessary to collect the cities' knowledge, experience and best practices and to develop practical co-operation projects between the cities. The Transport Committee, for example, is an important lobbying and negotiating partner in the field of European urban transport policy. One of the key advantages of the Committee's members is the fact that they are part of a European network, based on the potential for cooperation and sharing of know-how and experiences.

The Eurocity Committees formulate opinions, proposals, amendments and other contributions about fundamental issues and communicate them to the European institutions. This is achieved through a constant dialogue with the institutions and participation in European events. For the position of Eurocities in the field of political activities it is also necessary, however, to increase the local authorities' awareness of social issues and to develop the understanding of European policies and their impact on the local level among the members of the network. In this sense, lobby-activities are meant to have a double task: first to organise the commitment of the members and second to represent the common interests.

In a contribution to the White Paper of the Commission, the Eurocities Governance Working Group has recently articulated its vision on a European framework of governance, including Urban Associations and networks. In this Executive Statement the governmental contours of a future Europe become visible. This involves not only the institutional and structural aspects of the European Union, but also the general philosophy and the backgrounds of governance.

⁶⁸ See note 33, p.323-332

⁶⁹ S. Andersen/K. Eliassen, Democratic Modernity and Social Quality, in: see note 33, p.273

The principles of subsidiarity or proximity, local self-government, partnerships, models of governance strategies (network Europe) or building capabilities, all these aspects play a prominent role in the Eurocity network by the reflections about the future of Europe. We shall come back to these points in particular later on.

As far as function, working-methods and instruments are concerned, the Eurocity network is comparable with the *Committee of the Regions (COR)*. This Committee gives also opinions about all the European Union issues that have consequences at local and regional levels. But there is a very important difference. The Committee of Regions, introduced with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, is the first formal platform for representing regional and local interests. The Commission is obliged to consult the COR on these matters. A similar position has been created for the *Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)*. This organization works for the rights of local authorities at the European level and internationally. The members of the organisation are national associations of regional and local authorities. For more than fifty years, local and regional governments of the European Union, under the umbrella of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, have co-operated with the Union's institutions. Both COR and CEMR represent the local and regional interests and have "regularly taken up positions, not only concerning the major Community dossiers which affect local and regional authorities, but also on the Union's modes of governance."⁷⁰ The *Union of Capitals in Europe (UCUE)* is a union of the capital cities in the EU. This Union aims to establish close ties of friendship and co-operation between the cities and contribute to the furtherance of the European idea. The UCUE performs studies, organises meetings and promotes the economic, social and cultural progress of the citizens living in the capital cities. An idealistic motivation dominates the work of this network.

2.4.5 Cities of Tomorrow network

How do cities assure the quality of life of their citizens today? How do they encourage the establishment of new companies? Do the cities address social problems with long-term concepts? What is the cultural landscape of cities? To these and other questions, the local authorities must find an answer. Profound changes are taking place in the local governments (financial crises, increasing demands on public services, the wish for more self-realisation instead of work etc.). According to Kerstin Schmidt, the municipalities must set out to "actively plan the future development of their cities and must define their political goals regardless of party affiliations."⁷¹ More and more cities are experimenting with new forms of management and organisation concepts. Against this background, the Bertelsmann Foundation decided in 1993 to start an international search for successful solutions in local government.

The international Network for better local government, *Cities of Tomorrow*, established in 1995, has as its ambitious objectives:

- to pool worldwide knowledge about local government reforms,
- to set into motion an exchange of experiences between the internationally most advanced local governments
- to research successful practical solutions to the most pressing problems of local government
- to promote the implementation of advanced reform concepts..."⁷²

⁷⁰ CEMR, see note 8, p.3

⁷¹ K. Schmidt: Die Segel sind gesetzt, in: Kompassnews, June 2000, p.3

⁷² See website: cities-of-tomorrow.net./ Project Overview

The goal is to promote the reform process in the local governments as an answer to current social problems.⁷³

What are the methods of the network? The Cities of Tomorrow network⁷⁴ works in three-year working cycles. Together with the Bertelsmann Foundation, the cities decide what topics will be dealt with. For these topics working groups are formed with members from each city. These groups discuss their research within the entire network. A Facilitating Team supervises the implementation of the themes in the local context, the Bertelsmann Foundation acts as central steering unit. As a general topic, the network cities examined the success factors for strategic management and new strategic control concepts in local government. Strategic control of a local government was recognized as a key factor for successful city management. The Foundation is also responsible for publishing the result, initiating working discussions, conferences and advising the network. The network's activities are practice-oriented. Experience shows that theoretical analyses and empirical research alone do not send out lasting evolutionary impulses. Effective innovations require not only a precise definition of problems and objectives, but also a combination of theory and practice, analyses and creative designs of thinking. An evaluation of the third cycle of work, for example, shows that the participants of the municipalities are very positive about the effects of their participation in the network.⁷⁵

Topics in the various working cycles are the transition of local governments to 'learning organizations', the implementation of information and communication technologies, local economic development, the integration of immigrants and refugees, the reception of newcomers through education and language training etc. Two questions are actually under discussion. First, the members of the network agreed to concentrate on a sustainable development approach in the cities, based on hard facts and aspects of interest to the citizens (low-cost services, public safety, support economic vitality, health etc.). Secondly, they agreed to develop an index that gauges the liveability of a community and the progress being made to address critical issues. A *quality of life index*, which includes a wide range of indicators such as reflecting services, community issues, conditions, trends and progress towards goals, can in this context serve as a 'snapshot of current factors, support for community decisions and as stakes for public discussions.

Independent of this Cities of Tomorrow project but closely related intellectually, a second Foundation project especially works on a controlling system to support the work of local politicians on the basis of strategic goals and outcome indicators, the *COMPASS* project, a *Municipal Project for Building a Strategic Controlling System*.⁷⁶ The motto for this project is: "Aiming towards Quality of Life." The five cities and one district are undertaking an ambitious goal: together with local government politicians, citizens, social interest groups and the local governmental administration, the cities will develop long-term strategies with new forms of cooperation and based on a quality of life index. This index will be composed of

⁷³ The Bertelsmann Foundation was established as an independent foundation in 1977 and had a total budget for 1988/99 of 80.2 million DM. At present it has 210 employees who are managing 150 projects. Sixteen cities and districts participate in the Cities of Tomorrow project.

⁷⁴ For the Netherlands the municipalities Delft and Tilburg participate in this network.

⁷⁵ Price Waterhouse Coopers, Evaluation of third cycle of work Bertelsmann Network Cities of Tomorrow, Hamburg/Utrecht, May 2000, p.6. The most important benefits of the network are indicated: source of inspiration, learning and adapting best practice examples from other cities, applying and experimenting with the principles of strategic management, international exposure and image. To similar conclusions comes: World Bank Group, External Evaluation by Angela Griffin, Senior Urban Adviser, World Bank, 13 May 2000

⁷⁶ Five German cities and one district participate in this project.

objective data (about the structure of the municipality, the social and economic structure, social security etc.) and subjective information (in the form of a questionnaire with more than 30 factors that influence the quality of life). The local actors define the strategic goals and the results of research in public discussions.⁷⁷ In respect of the methodical and pragmatic aspects concerning the organisation and the running of a systematic development of a city network, this project has by experience discovered many valuable points of orientation.

2.4.6 Summary

This brief and incomplete overview shows that there is a wide variety of city networks in Europe with different positions and different ways of being embedded in the field of politics. In spite of the different backgrounds of the city networks as regards origin, nature, range or morphological structure, there is also a common purpose: to strengthen the role and the position of the cities in Europe in the policy-making process. For the idea of a new network of cities based on the concept of social quality, it is very important to undertake more systematic preparations, analysing existing networks and methods of identifying fruitful indexes of indicators. In this sense we can learn from the Sustainable Cities project and also from the Cities of Tomorrow.⁷⁸ In the projects of the Council of Europe the important conceptual assumption concerning the interrelationship between values and norms and the policies is noteworthy. For a new network of Cities of Social Quality, Therborn remarks, "a precondition is that the goal has to be participatory and practical." And he goes on to say: "As for participatory practicality, I think it is important that the Social Quality Initiative can relate to local, as well as to national and union-wide, politics and policies. The very positive experiences of Agenda 21 in mobilising municipalities to an environmentalist agenda seem to provide a valuable lead here, i.e. a social quality agenda for every municipality in Europe."⁷⁹ A short schematic summary:

	Local Agenda 21	Sustainable Cities project	Council of Europe networks	Eurocities	Cities of Tomorrow
Inspirator	United Nations	European Union	Council of Europe	independent	Foundation
Core mission	sustainability	sustainability	Human Rights	interests	efficiency
Project goal	long term development	long term development	partnership	lobbying	governmental innovation
Point of reference	plan forming	policy integration	capacity-building	improving cities' situation	new public management
Function of inspirator	initiator	coordinator	facilitator	translator	regulator

⁷⁷ S. Meinhold-Henschel, C. Walther, K. Schmitt, Erste Thesen zur Datenauswertung aus interkommunaler Sicht, Gütersloh, 2000

⁷⁸ The work of the Foundation of Social Quality regarding indicators has a broader scope, but is the basis for a further development of network indicators.

⁷⁹ G. Therborn, On the Politics and Policy of Social Quality, see note 3, p.24

2.5 Conclusions

A new initiative, regardless in what field of policy, must consider three aspects. First it must take in to account what there is. Secondly, it must emphasize the difference and not the common. And thirdly, it must design a cohesive concept. In the above we have given an impression of these aspects. Social quality is composed as "a concept of interaction and cooperation [which] embodies a bottom-up approach to coping with the question of daily life."⁸⁰ In this context, the SQ concept is completely in line with the historical heritage where the history of and the scientific debate on the *European* city are concerned. With the concepts of citizenship, self-government and local welfare responsibilities, we have rudimentarily introduced an important connection between history and the SQ concept. (2.2) The variety of European city networks shows the contemporary and specific manifestation of current networks of cities. (2.4) In addition, it demonstrates that a lot of important experience is accumulated in the activities of the network: implementing contents, organizing networks, monitoring processes and measuring the results. These experiences are valuable points of inspiration.

Emphasizing the difference, the second aspect, is a more difficult point. An exact definition of the difference between the SQ concept and other welfare concepts requires a more systematic confrontation of the concepts than is possible here. The most essential difference is the choice and the definition of '*the social*' as a dialectical tension between self-realisation and forming of collective identities. With the reconstruction of 'the social' as an answer to the 'decline of the social', our subject matter is totally different from, for example, the Quality of Life concept with its dominant orientation on conditions and satisfaction of the daily life, or from the sustainability concepts with their accent on the environmental dimensions. With the dimension of the 'social', citizens as subject of acting, processes and the element of empowerment are also exceptional points of difference. (2.3)

For an adequate construction of a coherent conceptual framework for city networks, we must know a few basic assumptions of (European) urban policy. In the following we will outline these and make suggestions.

3. City networks and Urban Policy

3.1 Introduction

The idea of developing a network of European Cities of Social Quality starts from the assumption that the collaboration of cities has a positive effect on their social quality. In this supposition, 'networks' have different qualities: 1) they have a synergetic function. They create win-win situations, all the participants have a chance to profit from these relationships. 2) They have confidence in the immense potentials of human power. Citizens are the most important resource of the future. 3) They create spillovers. They form a transitional step towards a wider process of democratisation of Europe. 4) Last but not least, networks introduce innovations in various respects, political, social and cultural.⁸¹ This is not the place to enter into an in-depth discussion of the empirical tenability of these assumptions. Ours is a different question.

⁸⁰ See note 33, p.360

⁸¹ These characteristics are also incorporated in the 'Initiative Chance' of the young non-governmental organisation *Terra One World Network*, see note 46, p.12

According to Rob Atkinson⁸², Europe is currently in a 'learning' phase of policy development. In this phase it is important "that member states learn from one other and engage in a dialogue in order to share experiences about what works and what does not." Evaluation of networks shows that there have been significant improvements and positive influences on the cities' policies.⁸³ When developing a network, cities of social quality in this case, we must analyse the characteristics and implications of the network approach. This is the starting point for this section. The initiative for a new network is based on the concept of social quality. With its four components, we have presented a comprehensive model of the social determinants of citizen well-being. According to David Phillips and Ytzak Berman, *social-economic security* refers to an acceptable minimum of protection against poverty, unemployment, ill health and other forms of material deprivation. *Social inclusion* is connected with principles of equality and equity. The goal is through participation in public affairs to influence supportive infrastructures and collective goods. *Social cohesion* concerns the processes that create, defend or demolish social networks and the social infrastructures underpinning these networks. *Empowerment* is the realization of human competences and capabilities in order to fully participate in social, economic, political and cultural processes.⁸⁴ A short reflection on these components regarding the social infrastructure forms the second section. A key mission of all the city networks is to come to an 'integrated approach' or, in the terms of the Commission, to an 'open method of co-ordination.' This implies that not only the *result* of a process of informing, consultation, concertation or co-decision⁸⁵ can be relevant for the quality of the social, but also the manner in which this result is achieved. The process aspect plays an equally important role.⁸⁶

With this focus, the network approach (form), the SQ components in relationship to the social infrastructure (content) and the integrated approach (method of strategy), we have driven the first piles of conceptualisation for a city-based Urban Policy initiative: the Cities of Social Quality.

3.2 Characteristics and implications of networks

In his cross-cultural analysis of major social, economic and political transformations – the information age and the network paradigm – Manuel Castells argues that networks constitute the new social morphology of society. The networking logic substantially modifies actions and results in processes of production, experience, power and culture.⁸⁷ In spite of possible criticism regarding the implicit technological determinism of his considerations, the network

⁸² R. Atkinson, *An Urban Policy for Europe*, North no.4 1999, p.1

⁸³ PriceWaterhouseCoopers, see note 75, p.4 / Also the Sustainable Cities Campaign, which has encouraged 'the exchange of information and experience'. Expert Group, *European Sustainable cities – Report*, Brussels, March 1996, Preface

⁸⁴ D. Phillips, Y. Berman, *Social quality and community citizenship*, in: *European Journal of Social Work*, VI.4, No.1, p.18

⁸⁵ These are the four main forms of participation identified in the French literature. Reference by: R. Atkinson, St. Lejeune, *Area based Policy Initiatives – The role of Resident Participation in England and France*, Paper presented at the European Urban Research Association Conference, Copenhagen 17th-19th May 2001, p.8

⁸⁶ See note 33, p.366. We have constructed a matrix for developing criteria, in which the 'responsible way' towards solution of a problem is relevant.

⁸⁷ M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society. The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, Volume I, Cornwall, Blackwall Publishers, 1998, p.469/ see note 33, p.350

philosophy has come to its 'pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure', also in the political sphere.

In the White Paper on European Governance, for example, the Commission pleads for a more systematic and more pro-active approach to working with key networks and enabling them to contribute to decision shaping and policy execution.⁸⁸ In spite of all the rhetoric about the need of a stronger interaction with regional and local governments and civil society, the Commission's position in this is restrictive rather than open.. The Commission's connection with networks refers to 'decision shaping' and 'policy execution'. In fact, what is needed in the eyes of the Commission are 'a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue' based on 'a code of conduct that sets minimum standards'.⁸⁹ This formalised consultation between the Commission and the European NGO associations and networks – "still framed in terms of concepts from the mid-20th century and dominated by the hierarchical or market models" (Eurocities) – is significant for the concept of 'network-governance'. According to Beate Kohler-Koch:

"It does not claim to have democratic quality but legitimacy spawn by processes of deliberation, institutionalised norm orientation, and functional representation."⁹⁰

The democratic quality of European governance demands more drastic reforms.

According to Eurocities, the fluidity of the modern world cannot be regulated and codified in this rigid manner. At a time where the world is too interconnected and interrelated, where too many issues overlap, a network model of governance in another sense is preferable by far. Governance must be more flexible, the approach implies expansion of horizontal linkages. The structure of governance should be one of 'spheres' of influence and expertise, not a rigid hierarchy of tiers of competence. The process of governance needs to be seen more holistically. And in all this, the cities - 'knowledge centres for the European Union' - play a crucial role.

"City governance therefore presents most clearly the complexities and tensions which the 'network' model seeks to address: the ever-changing and complex nature of urban development, the diversity of social groups and communities and the fragmented nature of the agencies charged with addressing these problems."⁹¹

Eurocities plead for a new *centre for urban networks*, to provide a record and exchange for the knowledge and experiences of networks.

The CEMR position paper also stresses the role of cities, but in this vision 'networks' are not introduced explicitly. It does mention consultation platforms, information sessions, hearings

⁸⁸ European Commission see note 43, p.18

⁸⁹ The Commission runs nearly 700 ad hoc consultation bodies on a wide range of policies. The Commission will rationalise this unwieldy system and will make it more effective and accountable. Other political standards regarding NGO's and networks are the transparency and representativeness of the membership of these organisations or networks. Commission discussion paper, presented by President Prodi and Vice-President Kinnoek, The Commission and Non-Governmental Organisations building a stronger Partnership, Brussels, 2000, p.9

⁹⁰ B. Kohler-Koch, Europe in Search of Legitimate Governance, ARENA Working papers, WP99| p.7

⁹¹ Eurocities, see note 42

and forums, vertical and horizontal partnerships and CMER does accept forums and platforms in many instances, but it calls for a democratically legitimised consultation process, minimum criteria of representativeness and horizontal partnerships that 'fall under the scope of local and regional government'. This government-oriented position paper largely follows the opinions of the institutionalised Committees, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: more influence for local and regional government by promoting the role of the cities and regions, new consultation mechanisms and greater flexibility in implementation.

It is evident from all these discussions that there is an inherent tension between the world of the governmental and/or semi-governmental institutions (authorities) and the world of citizens, groups and communities (networks).⁹² In fact, the old discussion about representative and participatory democracy is alive again.

"The 'European democratic model' will contain many, but not only, elements of participatory democracy; it is designed as a model for cooperation and allows room to formulate new types of participation, while retaining many elements of representative democracy... In this context, European governance must above all ensure effective representation of people's interests by giving their representatives a real say in matters."⁹³

The Economic and Social Committee pleads for a '*Forum for civil society*', a platform that provides ongoing support for open dialogue and exchanges of opinion and experience between civil society organisations, whether or not they are represented on the Committee. (p.15)

These precursive remarks on networks show that in the present debate this notion is very diffuse. A network is sometimes a formation of citizens, sometimes an approach, sometimes a kind of living together (network society), sometimes an utopian vision on governance (Network Europe). In the context of cities, networks have also several meanings. First, Eurocities paraphrase, cities are already an example of this network approach. It is necessary that cities become 'aware of themselves' as a network form of governance. In essence, the network approach suggests that governance should be based on looser patterns of relationships between autonomous agencies, associations and citizens. Networks are created through mutual advantage and shared purpose and retain the ability to adapt as problems change and new responses are learnt.

Second, cities are part of a network and operate in a field of interactions as an independent body. 'Network City' and city network, each in its own way, are relevant units for the development of a European network of cities of social quality. However, networks are not only an important negotiating partner for the European Union, they also have an important function for the socialisation of the residents. To focus on neighbourhood activities is a key target.

⁹² In 'Social Quality – A Vision for Europe', we have represented in a horizontal axis a field of interaction with two poles: systems, institutions, organisations and communities, configurations and groups. See note 33, p.325-327

⁹³ Economic and Social Committee, opinion on: Organised civil society and European governance: the Committee's contribution to the drafting of the White Paper, Brussels, 25 April 2001

Through the network example, we will explain our suggestions for a possible operational approach of the different points of focus – networks, social infrastructure and integrated approach – in a more exploratory exercise. An excursion:

A systematic monitoring of social quality in the cities is a difficult task. In the social sphere, there is no widely accepted set of indicators such as in the economic sphere, for example. For a more specific and fine-tuned analysis of the network character of cities, we must develop indicators which are significant for this purpose.

In the context of cities, for example, the question of information and communication technology plays a very important role. According to the Dutch Internetmonitor research, 45% (5,7 million) of all people above 15 years of age in the Netherlands are active on the Internet. It is suggested that in five years' time 80% will be active. In the Scandinavian countries, participation in ICT circuits is even higher.⁹⁴ In other words, communication technologies are not socially neutral. Printing press, telephone, the Internet, they are the symbolic instruments in a development of forms of communication which has fundamentally changed the social standards. More than 100 million individuals already have access to the Internet. The number of subscribers, John L. Locke remarks⁹⁵, is projected to increase dramatically in the years ahead. The implication of ICT for children, families, consumers, workers, communities etc. is vital. The contacts between citizens, the social arrangements for help, the production of social capital through interaction, all these elements are changing. The major challenge, Minister van Boxtel says, is to link the Urban Policy to this separate and relatively new element, the 'breakneck developments' in information and telecommunications (multimedia) policy. In this arena too, the exclusion from participation needs to be prevented.⁹⁶ For the social quality in cities, in other words, having access to ICT is an important dimension of the Network City focus.⁹⁷

We would like to make two methodological distinctions. First we distinguish between *core* (compulsory) and *additional* indicators (voluntary). Secondly we distinguish between *focus* (network, social infrastructure, integrated approach), *policy* domain, *goal* dimensions, *measurement* dimension and *indicators*. For instance: for the network focus, we have identified the ICT sector as an important policy domain for the social quality in cities and access to this sector as a goal dimension. Accessibility has various connotations: to learn the technique of electronic instruments, to be able to subscribe to the internet, to work with computers at home, the city has a proactive e-governmental policy etc. These are the measurement dimensions. How can we measure the degree of accessibility there is in a city? To measure this, we must develop indicators. For instance, where the measurement dimension of 'learning the technique' is concerned, we can measure how many programs, classes and hours in school are spent on acquiring ICT skills, etc.

With these methodological steps we can construct a set of indicators which are relevant for social quality with respect to a genuine network philosophy and network practice. This operation must be exercised for all the points of focus. Indicators provide a possibility for making a comparison between cities in a network. A second extremely important possibility is the exchange of 'good practices' (case studies). These exercises, in diagram:

⁹⁴ Speech of the Dutch Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities, Van Boxtel, at the presentation of the ICT-report of the commission 'ICT and the City', the Commission Cerfontaine, 11 December 2000

⁹⁵ J.L. Locke, Kuala Lumpur Syndrome – Personal, Social and Political Effects of Communication Technologies, Remarks prepared for a keynote address to the Symposium on Social Cohesion, Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, Amsterdam, June 14, 2000

⁹⁶ Speech delivered by the Dutch Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic minorities, Roger H.L.M. van Boxtel, Club du Jeudi at the Embassy of Ireland, February 24th, 2000/ see also: Commissie ICT

⁹⁷ The following is inspired by the Centre for Survey Research and Methodology (ZUMA) in Mannheim, Germany, an institute which works systemically on a system of social indicators. See notes 28 and 29

FOCUS: Network/ network city/**Policy domain: ICT policy**

<i>Goal Dimension</i>	<i>Measurement Dimension</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
Accessibility	- ICT education	- how many programs, classes in schools? etc.
	- Use of ICT	- number of subscribers - work at home with ICT - use of Internet services, etc.
	- Local government –ICT	- website information - interactive possibilities, etc.

3.3 Social infrastructure as a Social Quality Quadrant

It is true, a local government which ignores the development of ICT drops out of sight and runs the risk of missing important chances. But it is also true that ICT is not the solution to all the problems in the cities.⁹⁸ Locke is right in observing: 'We cannot ask our 'friend' in Kuala Lumpur to water the plants when we go on holiday, or join in the celebration of our daughter's wedding.' In the confrontations of daily life, the social infrastructure in the broadest sense of the word, the primary social relationships still consist of individuals, groups, associations or networks. In other words, the social pillar of Urban Policy is extremely complex and multiform and often depends on the physical and economic developments.⁹⁹ In the light of the **Dutch Urban Policy programme**, we will demonstrate the possibilities of a city-oriented framework of social infrastructure, based on the components of the SQ quadrant. The Dutch Council for Social Developments [Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkelingen] defines the term 'social infrastructure' as follows:

Social infrastructure is a complex of organisations, services, provisions and relationships, which makes it possible that citizens can live reasonably well in social contexts [neighbourhoods, groups, networks, households] and can participate in public affairs. (Engbersen/ Sprinkhuizen)

In this definition we find, in a rudimentary form, elements of the four SQ components. Looking at the goal dimensions for social quality in cities, we can distinguish between area and theme-oriented aspects.

In the SQ concept, **socio-economic security** includes all the welfare provisions which guarantee the *primary existential security* of citizens (income, social protection, health etc.) and *basic security of daily life* (food, safety, environmental issues etc.) and the *area of internal freedom, security and justice*. It is not realistic to operationalise all the issues of socio-economic security. We must select. But the selection must have a relationship with

⁹⁸ This was suggested in the above mentioned report 'ICT and the City' and in 'Contract with the future' of the Dutch government.

⁹⁹ Also the Dutch government: Tweede Kamer der Staten -Generaal, Brief van de Minister voor Grote Steden- en Integratiebeleid, 7 juni 1999, p.14, Kamerstukken 21 062, nr.77 (Letter from the Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities, 7 June 1999, p. 14, Parliamentary Documents 21 062, no. 77)

goals and objectives of the European, national and local policies. For the realisation of this broadly defined concept of socio-economic security, national and local governments have a particularly important role. In the programmes of the Dutch government, two aspects of the social pillar of urban development are notable: first the fight against deprivation of urban areas, or in other words the importance of restoring and maintaining an acceptable level of social infrastructure (area-oriented aspect). Secondly, the particular attention for security and crime, preventive as well as repressive¹⁰⁰ (theme-oriented). These two aspects might, for instance, function as goal dimensions for social quality regarding the socio-economic security in cities.¹⁰¹ In diagram:

Focus: Social infrastructure

Policy domain: socio-economic security

Goal Dimensions	Measurement Dimension	Indicators
restoration of urban areas	xxx	xxx
public security/crime	xxx	xxx

The debate about **social cohesion** has a long scientific and political history. In this debate, Jane Jenson remarks, the focus is often on 'deterioration'.

"In a general way, the concept of social cohesion assumes there are certain societal-level conditions and processes that characterise a well-functioning society and that at this time these conditions may no longer be satisfied."¹⁰²

In the European debate, the European cohesion policy is introduced, already in the preamble to the Treaty of Rome: "Anxious to strengthen the unity of their economies and to ensure their harmonious development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions".¹⁰³ In line with Community law, economic and social *convergence* takes a central place. In the context of the top issues 'employment' and 'economic reforms', the social as *counterpart* of the free market-policy is one of the most important strategic goals of the European Union. A transition to a knowledge-based economy and society and a modernisation of the European social model are the key missions of the EU adopted during the Lisbon Council (March 2000). In the Social Policy Agenda 2000, social cohesion and social quality are part of the Social Policy and with economic and employment policies create a virtuous circle of economic and social progress, aiming to maximise their mutual positive reinforcement.¹⁰⁴ In spite of the resolution adopted in parliament which declared liveability and social cohesion in cities to be the most important spearhead, social cohesion does not play an explicit role in the Dutch debate about Urban

¹⁰⁰ R. van Kempen, Onderzoek en het grotestedenbeleid, The Hague, June 1999, p.65

¹⁰¹ The next step should be the development of measurement dimensions and indicators as described above.

¹⁰² J. Jenson, Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research, Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc., No.F/03, 1998, p.3

¹⁰³ Consolidated version of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, in: Official Journal C 340, 1997, p.173-308

¹⁰⁴ For a more detailed analysis see: W. Beck, Sociale Cohesie: De Europese Unie op zoek naar een (nieuw) referentie-kader?, paper written for NWO, Naarden, January 2001, unpublished

Policy.¹⁰⁵ Social cohesion is an unexplained and implicit part of the social and societal integration, the neighbourhood-oriented approach and the reinforcement of mutual cooperation.¹⁰⁶

According to Regina Berger-Schmitt, we can distinguish two social goals when analysing the various concepts of social cohesion:

- “(1) The first dimension concerns the reduction of disparities, inequalities, and social exclusion,
- (2) The second dimension concerns the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties. This dimension embraces all aspects which are generally also considered as the social capital of the society.”¹⁰⁷

The first dimension – reducing disparities – refers to area disparities, inequalities between women and men, generations, social strata, able and disabled people, citizenship groups. The second dimension – strengthening of social capital – includes availability of social relations, social and political activities and engagement, quality of social relations, quality of social institutions and social cohesion between European countries. With these two goal dimensions of social cohesion we can select a set of criteria which are relevant for the core mission of the Cities of Social Quality: to stimulate processes of self-realisation and processes of creating collective identities. In diagram:

Focus : Social infrastructure

Policy domain: social cohesion

Goal Dimensions	Measurement Dimensions	Indicators
Reducing disparities	[area-oriented: quarters] [theme-oriented : inequalities etc.]	xxx
Strengthening social capital	[availability of social relations] [social and political activities, etc.]	xxx

The third component of the SQ concept, **inclusion**, has been connected with the promotion of participatory societies and social dialogue.¹⁰⁸ In fact, the subject matter of this component is ‘citizenship’. Aiming to reach the citizens, the Dutch RMO Council for social developments advocates two strategies: on the one hand an *interactive policy-process*, with consultation or social dialogue between the local governmental institutions and the citizens and their societal organisations, and on the other hand an *area-based approach* (neighbourhood, quarter, dis-

¹⁰⁵ The same conclusion is reached in the report of van Kempen. See note 100, p.67

¹⁰⁶ For example in: Brief van de Minister voor Grote Steden-en Integratiebeleid (Letter from the Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities) 17 March 2000, Parliamentary year 1999-2000, 21 062, no.87/ Social cohesion appears in the governmental documents (more implicitly than detailed) in relationship with social security, social benefit, integration of technologies, cultural notions, social and economic goals, education activities.

¹⁰⁷ R. Berger-Schmitt, Social Cohesion as an aspect of the Quality of Societies: Concept and Measurement, EUReporting Working Paper No. 4, Mannheim, 2000, p.4

¹⁰⁸ More detailed, see note 33, p.346-348. Important in this context is that we have connected inclusion with processes of societal differentiation (diversity) and system integration, and not with, for example, welfare state, poverty or exclusion.

trict).¹⁰⁹ Analysis of the development programmes of 25 cities brings out a surprisingly large conformity of the urban policies presented. In all these programmes we see the same projects crop up.¹¹⁰ The Dutch Central Planning Bureau remarks in this context that decentralisation of politics and policies should aim to increase custom-made policy, to pay more attention to local preferences and specific local circumstances. Indirectly, we can also suppose that the influence of citizens is limited and governmental interests dominate.¹¹¹ Exchange of good practices, a key intention of the European Commission in all fields of policy, might explain this conformity. But other research shows that cities have but little knowledge of each other's know-how and experience.¹¹² In other words, participation in the sense of citizenship is obviously a difficult thing.

According to Atkinson, the citizenship concept in the academic debate has focused on the social element and become associated with the welfare state.¹¹³ T.H. Marshall distinguishes between three types of citizenship: civic (or legal), political and social. The social element covers the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to live the life of a civilized being. Important for our reflection, as Berghman points out, is that citizenship rights and societal institutions are inextricably bound up. These rights are embedded and actualised in

- “1. the democratic and legal system, which promotes civic integration;
2. the labour market which promotes economic integration;
3. the welfare system promoting what may be called social integration;
4. the family and community system which promotes interpersonal integration.”¹¹⁴

It is a fact that the quality of the institutional arrangements (of national, regional or local government) is also a condition for citizenship, as are the individual and collective capabilities. In the Dutch Urban Policy debate, particularly in the RMO recommendation quoted before, both aspects are highlighted: the flexibility of the government and the strengthening of the citizens' self-organizing capabilities. Both suggestions have been taken up by the state.¹¹⁵

Following the line of these considerations, the improvement of the *accessibility of (local) government* and the strengthening of *participation* in informal, associational or support

¹⁰⁹ RMO, see note 38, p.15

¹¹⁰ Centraal Planbureau, *Op weg naar een effectiever grotestedenbeleid*, werkdocument No.117, The Hague, January 2000, p.10 ff.

¹¹¹ “One can see that the various departmental wishes returned in the programmes.”, see note 110, p.11

¹¹² See note 100, p.9

¹¹³ R. Atkinson, *Citizenship and the struggle against Social Exclusion in the context of Welfare State Transition*, paper presented at the ECPR Workshop 18: *Citizenship and transition in European (Welfare) States*, Bern, February 27-March 4, 1997. In this article, Atkinson describes the contemporary debate on citizenship and the links made with concepts of welfare states, exclusion, cohesion and integration.

¹¹⁴ J. Berghman, *Conceptualising Social exclusion*, paper presented at the European Science Foundation Conference on *Social Exclusion and Social Integration in Europe*, Blarney, March 1996, quoted by: see note 113, p.15

¹¹⁵ Letter from the Dutch Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities, *Grotestedenbeleid: Volop in beweging*, 16 May 2001, Parliamentary year 2000-2001, 21 062, no.101, p.9. Also: Letter from the Dutch State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport, *Vaststelling van de begroting van de uitgaven en de ontvangsten van het Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (XVI) voor het jaar 2001*, 19 March 2001, Parliamentary year 2000-2001, 27 400 XVI, no. 76, p.6-14. The role of the citizens is also emphasised in: *Werken aan Kwaliteit, Welzinsnota 1999-2002*, Kamerstukken (Parliamentary Documents) II, 1998-1999, 26 477, no.1

networks – the cross-sectoral partnerships, the voluntary sector, citizens' initiatives, self-organisations etc. – are prominent goal dimensions for this component.¹¹⁶ In diagram:

Focus: social infrastructure

Policy domain: inclusion

Goal Dimensions	Measurement Dimensions	Indicators
accessibility of government (sensitive government)	xxx	xxx
strengthening participation of citizens	xxx	xxx

Last but not least, the **empowerment** component of the SQ concept is one of the most challenging where social infrastructure is concerned. Less scientific work has been done on the operationalisation of this component than for any of the other social quality elements. Phillips/Berman show that this component has various connotations: negative as well as positive¹¹⁷, active and passive¹¹⁸, in terms of process or in terms of outcome.¹¹⁹

“Operationalizing of empowerment can also get complicated, depending upon whether it is seen as realization of competencies in order to participate fully (outcome) or as enabling people to develop their full potential (process).”¹²⁰

The social quality concept is essentially an actor-oriented concept. Citizens as key actors, such as proclaimed in the Aalborg Charter for example, require equipment, facilities and information. The subject matter is how to maximize the opportunities for participation in public affairs. The aim is to create an increasing range of human chances.¹²¹ Two elements play a prominent role here: the positive attitude towards people's capabilities and the special role of their networks. Friedman has distinguished between three types of empowerment, *personal* (knowledge, skills, experiences), *social* (interpersonal, intermediary, formalized

¹¹⁶ These are not exhaustive examples of goal dimensions. Providing services, mediating structures, stimulation programs are also possible goal dimensions.

¹¹⁷ “For example a socially cohesive society can be highly controlling, which can lead to disempowerment of some sections of society. But taken together they are intended to provide a comprehensive model of social and economical determinants of citizens well-being.” In: Y. Berman, D. Phillips, Information and social quality, Aslib Proceedings Vo+ 53, No.5, May 2001, p.181

¹¹⁸ “Empowerment is a concept with both active and passive connotations, with active predominating in the sense of self-empowerment, or taking control. Its passive connotation lies in being empowered, thus enabling or facilitating empowerment to take place.” In: D. Phillips, Y. Berman, Indicators of Community Social Quality, draft paper, Sheffield/Vienna, 2000, p.6

¹¹⁹ “It is interesting to note that when conceptualized in terms of process, empowerment is highly consonant with social inclusion whereas it is more consonant with social cohesion when conceptualised in terms of outcomes.” In: D. Phillips, Y. Berman, Social Quality and community citizenship, Oxford University Press, 2001, p.19

¹²⁰ Ditto, p.19

¹²¹ European Commission, Human & Social Development (HSD), Working Paper from the Commission, Part III: EU Policy Priorities for HSD, vol.2, 09/95-11/97, Brussels, DG V, 1996

relationships) and *political* (information, access to decision-making and resources).¹²² Empowerment and social capital are closely related concepts. Although concepts of social capital refer to these types of empowerment, the interdependency between these types in building up social capital is scarcely worked out. There is a big difference between concepts of self-empowerment and aggregated forms of empowerment, between active and passive enforcement, between third-party and self-enforcement.¹²³

According to Berman/Phillips, the information aspect of empowerment concerns the extent to which information contributes to enabling people to develop their full potential as citizens. They distinguish two aspects: the extent to which empowerment is facilitated and enabled (input-related) and the extent to which it is achieved (outcome-related). Informational empowerment can take place when information and resources are available and where individuals are both empowered by social factors and empower themselves by utilising information resources concerning their quality of life.¹²⁴ For informational empowerment, the creation of a *Centre of knowledge* in the context of the Dutch Urban Policy could contribute towards this end. This Centre will be a bridge between knowledge, policy and practice. With an interdisciplinary approach, the goal of this Centre is networking so as to collect information and develop knowledge. Modern information technology plays an extraordinary role here.¹²⁵ The question is how accessible this Centre is going to be for the citizens and how this creation of information will enlarge the competences and capabilities of the citizens in their situations of daily life.¹²⁶

The instrumentalisation of citizens and their organisations and networks is a second important condition. For the stimulation of the participation of citizens, such instruments as quarter or neighbourhood budgets, new forms of residents' co-decisions, support of self-organisation or social activation programmes for excluded citizens are essential for the quality of the social infrastructure. 'Community-building', i.e. enhancement of social integration, participation and social cohesion between the different groups in a quarter, is the core issue of empowerment in this context.¹²⁷ The support of professionals is also a form of empowerment, but not a substitute for the actualisation or forming of social capital.¹²⁸

These general and concise remarks are meant to explain two goal dimensions of empowerment for empowering citizens in the context of social infrastructure: the significant role of information and the instrumentalisation of individuals and their networks.

[Important in this context is the capability of communication. Communicative competence is a primary condition for participating in public affairs. In a more systematic approach, we must reflect on more aspects than attempted here.]

In diagram:

¹²² J. Friedman, *Empowerment. The politics of Alternative Development*, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1992, p.33

¹²³ M. Paldam, G. Tinggaard Svendsen, *Is social capital an effective smoke condenser? – An essay on a concept linking the social sciences*, The World Bank, Social Capital Initiative, Working Paper 11

¹²⁴ See note 117, p 183-184

¹²⁵ Letter from the Dutch Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities, Grotestedenbeleid, Parliamentary year 1999-2000, 21062, no.90, p.2/ See also: Parliamentary year 2000-2001, 27447, no.1, 8 October 2000: Oprichting Stichting Kenniscentrum Grotestedenbeleid

¹²⁶ The member of Parliament Rijpstra (VVD) asks: "But how can the local governments profit from this Centre?", Report on general consultations, 14 July 2000, Parliamentary year 1999-2000, 21062, no.96, p6

¹²⁷ Letter from the Dutch Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities, 7 June 2001, Parliamentary year 2000-2001, 21 062, no.102, p.2

¹²⁸ Report: Deuren openen – investeren in sociale integratie en participatie – Rapportage van de Commissie 'Onderzoek lokale sociale infrastructuur' (Commissie Etty), 11 May 1998

Focus: social infrastructure

Policy domain: empowerment

Goal Dimensions	Measurement Dimensions	Indicators
informational empowerment	xxx	xxx
community building	xxx	xxx

A short recapitulation of this section. We have identified 'social infrastructure' as one of the basic conditions for a network of cities of social quality. The aim is to create a framework of social infrastructure, which makes it possible to compare cities of social quality. The conceptual point of reference is the SQ concept with its four components. If we want to compare, we need indicators. To construct indicators, we have to know the goals and objectives of policies. They form the real background for the selection of goal and measurement dimensions. The Dutch social infrastructure policy is the point of reference in this respect. On the basis of the documented priorities of this policy, we have examined how to arrive at more or less reliable goal dimensions, which in a next step are to be translated into measurement dimensions and indicators. This operation has shown that the social quality approach is capable of fruitfully operationalising the policy focus on social infrastructure. With the goal dimensions 'restoration of urban areas', 'public security', 'reducing disparities', 'strengthening social capital', 'informational empowerment' and 'community building' we have covered the main intentions of an Urban Policy in which the social infrastructure plays a central role, in line with the long tradition of Dutch urban policy.¹²⁹

3.4 Integrality as a method

Many different approaches have been used to address urban problems in general and social infrastructure in particular. In the traditional approach, according to the GPA Clearing-House¹³⁰, planners assess the needs and decide what type of service will be provided. This *supply-driven* approach is based on the assumption that there is a universal demand for services and planners have the appropriate solutions to meet this demand, which often results in costly investments, ineffectiveness and waste of powers. The defects of this approach have led to the development of a *demand-driven* approach. The fact that this approach requires an understanding of what potential users want and a manipulation of the political and administrative context makes its success doubtful. *Opportunity-driven* approaches, where the problem is defined in terms of opportunities, are not without problems either. There is no guarantee that the costs of planning, investment and operation are earned back.

It is not surprising, therefore, that more *integrated* approaches are being called for. The increasing attention for this type of approach also has another reason, though. The multiform,

¹²⁹ The Etty commission mentions: urban regeneration, education priority, disadvantaged areas and problem accumulation areas policy, social regeneration and urban policy.

¹³⁰ The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment (GPA) is a programme of the United Nations promoting a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to strengthen the collaboration and coordination of agencies and activities on the marine environment.

complex and tenacious character of problems regarding social infrastructure requires an approach which at the same time attacks the problems at face value and in mutual connection. Integrality – in the words of the Dutch government: the most important keyword¹³¹ – is a measure of simultaneity.

What are the acting principles of an integrative policy? The European Urban Forum held in Vienna in November 1998 formulated seven basic assumptions:

- **achieving consensus:** the most important objective of every type of urban policy is to develop “a broad basis of common understanding with respect to the problems and potentials of cities, the role of various actors and the competences of the variously affected institutions.”
- **aggregating competences:** from the Viennese viewpoint, particularly effective instruments are present “if the various competences assigned to different local and European institutions are optimally used for the benefit of the joint concerns of the cities and employed in combination.”
- **establishing partnerships:** “What is required is not a shift of competences from the Urban to the European level, but rather a constructive partnership between EU, member states, regions and cities. At the same time, this concerns the horizontal integration of political areas of a primarily issue-oriented, practical nature and the development of new forms of co-operation between representatives of public and private interests.”
- **consolidating co-determination processes:** “A binding basis of work agreed between cities, member states and the EU would facilitate the implementation of urban policy and serve the needs of holistic development.”
- **increasing efficiency:** simplification and unification of subsidy programs.
- **encouraging network formation:** “The linking of the discussion conducted by various European institutions on similar topics must become a special concern.”
- **creating public awareness:** “The current political and technical discussion should be intensively used to create corresponding public awareness regarding the European policy dimension of cities.”¹³²

In the vision of the Vienna Urban Forum, consensus, competence, partnerships, holistic development, efficiency, networking and public awareness are the ingredients for an integrative policy. All these elements refer to specific conditions, which are not always reflected. The claim of integrated approaches or more coordination in the sense of better management often blurs the fact that *conflicts of interests* lie at the heart of the coordination of integration.

Consensus about goals is not self-evident. There are various reasons why policy goals are not automatically common goals:

- the actors do not know the goals;
- the actors know the goals, but do not know for which part they are responsible;
- the actors know what they should do but opt for another possibility;
- the actors prosecute their own goals.¹³³

To promote integrated approaches to urban regeneration and the participation of residents in that process, one has to take into account the different interests which play a role between the agencies at different levels of government, between different government sectors, between government and local groups, between the local groups themselves. In the debate on social infrastructure, the claim of an integrated approach refers to two aspects. The first is a *functionalistic-pragmatical* aspect: to create at all levels, sectors, groups and networks a

¹³¹ See note 126, p.2

¹³² See note 3, p. 5/6

¹³³ K. Baestlein, M. Konukiewitz, Implementation der Raumpolitik: Die Schwierigkeiten der Koordination, in: R. Mayntz, Implementation politischer Programme, Anton Hein-Verlag, Meisenheim 1980, p.37-39

common process of bargaining, planning and decision-making. This means also creating coordination mechanisms, platforms, information campaigns, exchanges of experiences etc. These are opportunities which should help to manage a highly contradictory process, characterised by a world of different cultures, interests, developed potentials and lifestyles. It is necessary to establish synergies between different partners and different policies initiated by different levels of political and administrative organisations. This creates, on the one hand, the basis for a new approach. On the other hand, these factors also entail imbalances, social and political tensions.¹³⁴

A second aspect is of an *ideological* and *ethical* character. The development of synergy in these initiatives presupposes, according to the MOST Clearing House¹³⁵, that actors have the capacity and competence to work together:

“One of the objectives of integrated approaches is to get people, who up until now have ignored each other, working together, to modify their ways of thinking and acting, even to promote a renewal of management systems which are more adapted to the complexity of the problems encountered. This partnership must be constructed with the residents...”¹³⁶

Inherent to this position is the *territorialisation* of the approach, which is also visible in the Dutch debate. Two assumptions underlie this reasoning: first the identity-trap, and second the multi-level illusion.

Partnerships as a construct suppose a minimum *identification with the area* where people live. In the Communications of the European Commission the point is highlighted¹³⁷ that “too many citizens in Europe’s urban areas have a weak identification with their cities, a fact reflected in the low levels of local participation in democratic processes, particularly in the more deprived areas of cities.”¹³⁸

In the SQ concept, forming collective identities is a crucial point. New forms of partnerships, which emphasize community participation, depend on this. Collective identification takes place in a field of tensions between individuals and the society and is primarily ‘searching of ties’. This is done at all levels of society, from identification with face to face groups to identification with Europe or the Third world. Different identifications are possible at the same time, in a permanently changing mix. Identification has also different qualities, which

¹³⁴ For example, the interdepartmental consultation regarding ‘Grotestedenbeleid’ (urban policy) has a very complicated structure with all the ICGSB, RGSB, RROM, RSCP, REA, ICIM commissions and working-groups. In this context, it is perhaps interesting to remember the activities of the Regeringscommissaris Reorganisatie Rijksdienst, Mr H.D. Tjeenk Willink, who in the 80s analysed the practices of these integrative policy initiatives, the “big operations”. See also: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, *De Mythe van het samenhangend Overheidsbeleid, rede bij de aanvaarding van het ambt van buitengewoon hoogleraar*, Tilburg, 1 November 1984, Zwolle, 1984

¹³⁵ This organisation covers a network of 27 towns in ten Member States of the European Union (‘Quartiers en Crise’, Brussels) and pleads on the European level for promoting and attracting resources for integrated approaches for urban regeneration.

¹³⁶ Most Clearing Houses Best Practices, paper, Quartiers en Crise, Brussels, 2000

¹³⁷ European Commission, Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union, Communication from the Commission, (COM(97),197, final, 06.05.97 Brussels, and: Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for action, Communication from the Commission COM (98),605 final, 28.10.98, Brussels

¹³⁸ R. Atkinson, *An Urban Policy for Europe*, Portsmouth, North no.4 1999, p.4. Atkinson notes in another article: “Research by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions found that as few as 5 % of the local population are regularly active in community groups and only a minority of this group will actively participate in partnerships or other representative activities. (see Chanan, 1997)”

are determined by the intensity of relationships, the density of networks and the unruliness of the social network. And last but not least, each identity-forming process needs points of reference: human beings, culture, religion, areas, ideas, issues, situations, etc.

All this shows that identification with an area (quarter, district, neighbourhood) depends on very complicated processes, factors and attitudes of residents. But not only of residents. According to Atkinson, "development of resident participation, understood as aiming to empower people, demands a fundamental rethink of attitudes by politicians and officials including professionals in central, regional and local government."¹³⁹ In spite of the reality of participation of the local population, identification with area-based policy initiatives is seen as a fact rather than as a project in itself. Castells advocates a '*process of social production of identity*' and for the creation of the material possibilities for the emergence of identity from society – in other words, the forming of collective identities as a method.¹⁴⁰

The experiment initiated by a former social worker in the 1990s is a very good example for this. The idea of the 'Université du Citoyen' in Marseilles is "to train local people to genuinely embrace and to take part in the decision-making process by building local people's capacity. In group sessions, volunteers learn how to speak in front of other people, are informed about institutions and are briefed on specific themes" (Atkinson). The idea of the 'Workshop for the future' (Zukunftswerkstätten)¹⁴¹ is also a call for forming a collective identity through shared responsibilities. These bottom-up approaches apart from any State regulation are concrete projects on how to learn 'partnership'.

The second assumption of integrality is a kind of *multi-level illusion*. In all the documents about urban policy and networks, the establishment of a constructive partnership between EU, member states, regions and cities (vertical integration) is a condition for integrated approaches. The hierarchical model of subsidiarity regulates the responsibilities of the various levels of government, hoping that the results have a complementary effect. Too easily it is assumed that a system of governance as a whole is given, with balanced responsibilities in equivalent positions. In reality, however, there is no such thing as a well-balanced relation between competency and co-operation. The Dutch Minister for Urban Policy notes in this context:

"Brussels too, will need to devote attention in the future to the co-ordination of policies. Precisely the many-sided nature of urban policy calls for an integrated approach and close co-ordinating among all the directorates-general concerned. The Commission and member states must have a common goal, namely the effective implementation of policy at local level."¹⁴²

In diagram:

¹³⁹ see note 113, p.15

¹⁴⁰ M. Castells, The construction of European Identity, Statement prepared for the European Presidency of the European Union, January 2000, p.5

¹⁴¹ R. Jungk, N.R. Müllert, Zukunftswerkstätten – Mit Phantasie gegen Routine und Resignation, Wilhelm Heine Verlag, München 1989

¹⁴² see note 94

Focus: integrality

Policy domain: integrated approach

Goal Dimension	Measurement Dimension	Indicators
forming collective identities	xxx	xxx
integration (vertical/ horizontal)	xxx	xxx

The wishes of the member states to make rules, today and in the future, more local-friendly, with more reference to the possibilities of implementation of policies and to more specific situations of the cities, are also significant for the somehow problematic relationship between different levels of government. In a field of many actors, with interactions in permanently changing constellations, an integrated approach is determined by linkages created through mutual advantages (partnership approach) rather than by ties in a hierarchy of powers. The quality of an integrated approach, referring to complicated networks of interests, different rationales and positions, depends on the capability of the actors to articulate and communicate their own interests, wishes and ideas.

3.5 Conclusions

In section 2 we wanted to see whether the *idea* of a Cities of Social Quality network could be confirmed from historical, theoretical and empirical points of view. The SQ concept proved to be a potentially useful framework. In section 3 we explored, in provisional and precursive comments on city networks (form), social infrastructure (content) and integrated approach (method), that the *construction* of a framework also holds prospects. The topicality of the network approach is evident. Governments and NGOs cherish great, though different, hopes of this approach. The governments want it to legitimate their outcomes of the policy-making process, whereas the NGOs aim to get more influence in the policy-process. In the social quality concept both expectations are linked together. The exercise with the SQ quadrant regarding the social infrastructure in cities indicates that the key issues of social infrastructure are not only to be tackled with the components of the concept but can also serve for the construction of indicators. Integrality as a method of acting has shown that the forming of collective identities through individuals and the establishing of constructive partnerships through the authorities are two sides of the same coin. This implies that improving the transparency and accessibility of local governments and administrations and stimulating the self-realisation and self-organisation of the residents is a condition sine qua non for Cities of Social Quality.

4. Practical recommendations

Developing a network of *Cities of Social Quality* in our opinion is a viable and challenging idea. The realisation of this idea is a matter of political will and the capacity to act. We will therefore make a few suggestions. The following *Ten-point plan of action* might be a point of departure for the next step.

1. The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (the Ministry) adopts the idea of a network of Cities of Social Quality and organises interdepartmental commitment to this idea.
2. The European Foundation of Social Quality (the Foundation) incorporates this idea in their Business Plan regarding a European Institute for Developing Social Quality (the Institute) as a key mission of the Institute.
3. To develop a network, we have two strategical options: we can either link up with existing networks and implement this idea through the various participants, or we can introduce a new network based on our own plans and founded according to our own selections. This plan of action follows the second option.
4. The Foundation sets up a Working Group with experts on Urban Policy and the Social Quality concept with the task to
 - develop typical criteria for the selection of cities,
 - write a kind of Charter explaining the philosophy of the network (principles, values etc.),
 - design a concept which refers to the potentially selected type of cities (background-paper),
 - give advice concerning the selection of cities.
5. The Foundation (together with the Ministry) prepares commitment among the selected cities.
6. The Institute, founded in 2003 or 2004, organises a meeting of responsible representatives of the selected cities, the Ministry, the Institute and network sympathizers.
7. In this meeting, the network is constituted by
 - signing the Charter as a symbolic expression of responsibility for the network,
 - adopting the concept as framework for its activities,
 - setting up a Steering Group with representatives of the cities, the Foundation and experts,
 - appointing a project-manager.
8. The Steering Group develops the first three-year work cycle and suggests topics, working methods etc.
9. At the beginning of the first cycle of work representatives of the network cities, together with the Ministry and the Institute, decide what topics will be dealt with.
10. The Steering Group also organises the monitoring and evaluation of the work cycles and the exchange of experiences. The Institute has a supervisory function in this.

With this plan of action, there is a chance of encouraging the process of modernisation of cities based on a more balanced development of the economic, physical, social and cultural aspects of the cities.

Naarden, 31 August 2001