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## ***Working Paper 19***

***Elaboration of the request of the National Academy of Sciences of  
Ukraine (NASU) to the Ukrainian Ambassador in The Hague:***

***Application of the ‘social quality perspective’  
on behalf of the post-war recovery of Ukraine in also  
a regional and global perspective***

***A coproduction of NASU and the IASQ  
Kyiv and Amsterdam,  
21 July, 2023***

## ***Prologue, cq summary***

This Working Paper 19 is a co-production the Institute for Economics and Forecasting of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) and the International Association on Social Quality (IASQ). It concerns the strengthening of the academic capacity in Ukraine, in order to be able to scientifically substantiate the appropriate appreciation and policy making concerning processes of post-war recovery, as well as concerning the expected accession to the European Union. The core assumption underlying the Paper is that in order to develop a thorough understanding of what needs to be done requires scientifically solid comprehensive approaches. Comprehensiveness concerns both the 'effectivity and efficiency' of initiatives, and the aim to pursue 'overall sustainability'. It is hypothesized that the frameworks of the Social Quality Theory (SQT), the methodologies (SQM) and approaches (SQA) render unique possibilities to achieve these goals.

Since the end of 2015, NASU and the IASQ have elaborated scientific approaches and policy applications, based on the 'social quality' perspective, to underpin contemporary transitions of Ukraine. This endeavour was explicitly supported by the Ukrainian Government. The tragedies of the military aggression of the Russian Federation against our country since February 2022, has made the further development and application of our 'scientific policy building work' highly desirable. In this time of war, one of the most important priorities of Ukraine is to sustain its human and intellectual potential, to preserve the quality of domestic science, its research teams and their achievements. It is significant and hopeful that even under the present harsh military conditions, most scientists of this institute continue to work remotely, and indeed continue to conduct scientific research. Their topics of research presently seriously do address the impact of Russia's military aggression on Ukrainian society and economy, as well as what comes after the war.

Central to this conducted scientific work is the 'social quality comprehensive perspective', which is considered by NASU indispensable for a thorough understanding of what is happening to this country right now and how we can effectively recover from the inflicted damage in all societal spheres. This concerns the integrated research of processes in and between four societal dimensions: the sociopolitical and legal, the socioeconomic and financial, the sociocultural and welfare and the socioenvironmental and ecological. In particular the effects of the interactions between these dimensions are most important. This four-dimensional approach is

also most relevant for the enhancement of Ukraine's movement along the path of European integration. The Institute of Economics and Forecasting of the NASU has already started to develop the necessary methodological and forecasting tools. To do so the available scientific and human potential is being deployed.

The NASU and the IASQ in this Paper present an overview of the role of the 'social quality work' for the underpinning of these needed methodological and forecasting tools. Thanks to the collaboration between scholars in Ukraine and scholars from Eastern and Western Europe, all of them concluded that the 'social quality tools' are unique compared to those of other approaches in the Western hemisphere as 'quality of life', 'social capital', or 'social development'. These tools will be used to better comprehend the extremely complex situations that have been inflicted in our Ukrainian society. They are also most appropriate to develop communication systems between population groups, business, political associations and academics. These are essentials to in a democratic way guide the post-war recovery in the right direction. This specially regards the social quality of the daily circumstances of people that needs to be restored. In the same vein, through the referral to the social quality perspective, it will be able to incorporate moral principles as a guidance to the developments that lie ahead of us.

This is recently explicitly explained in a NASU study about social quality and the post-war socioeconomic recovery, published in the International Journal of Social Quality, 2022. It explains the contemporary social quality frameworks, which has already been applied in the double themed issue of this journal of 2021 about the societal impacts of COVID-19 in countries of all continents. This NASU study functions as an important frame of reference of this Paper.

It is argued to further strengthen the comprehensive social quality perspective in the Ukrainian academic work. This of course includes the strengthening of the needed academic NASU-network to make this possible. This important strategic aspect implicitly was endorsed by the head of the Ukraine State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development. He stated that organizing Ukraine's effective and efficient recovery, in deploying the incalculable amount of separate international support initiatives, requires more than allocating of 'money and bricks'. Comprehensive scientifically based approaches and capacities to work with these equally regards Ukraine's future concerning major issues of 'overall sustainability'. This requires a landslide of current political and economic paradigms. For this universal challenge the similar comprehensive scientific approaches and capacities are needed.

The 'construction work' in Ukraine itself by the networks of academics from NASU in Ukraine and those from the networks of the IASQ in Europe, Asia, Australia and beyond. also will provide a wider regional and international perspective of integrated political, economic, cultural and ecological development. Amongst others for the European Union this achievement may become a welcome source of inspiration. In particular, substantial contributions to achieving 'overall sustainability' plays a landslide in thinking and acting with regard to contemporary politics and economics. And it is precisely this major global challenge that touches the core of 'social quality' work.

Seizing the opportunity to connect the efforts of recovery also to Ukraine's dramas of climate change creates a significant added value (1) on national (Ukraine), (2) regional (Central Eastern European countries) and (3) international level (European Union and beyond). Herewith related ideas and approaches are based, first, on many studies carried out in recent years in circles of NASU and the IASQ about Ukraine. As demonstrated in this Paper, the International Journal of Social Quality functioned as a main medium. This resulted in the beginning of 2021 into the proposal to develop intrinsically linked tripartite system of instruments. First of all on behalf of Ukraine self. Secondly, on behalf of its Central Eastern European context. Therefore much attention is dedicated in this Paper to topical societal processes in these CEE-countries, resulting into the plea for a 'Social Quality Observatory' for this region. Thirdly, both issues – the national and the regional – are highly significant for Ukrainian 'authentic' road to the European Union.

It is proposed to create three distinct (though connected) academic instruments:

- on national level: a Ukrainian Academic Communication Centre,
- on regional level: an Academic CEE Social Quality Observatory,
- on behalf of international level: an appropriate Academic IASQ Instrument to support both with help of also its International Journal of Social Quality, which has been designated in 2021 as a 'Diamond Open Access Journal', a not inconsiderable achievement .

NASU and the IASQ provide the very first arguments for this in present Working Paper and hope to develop this further with support of many academic institutes, The European Commission, the Dutch and other national governments and private funds. These arguments will be based on suppositions of the 'added-value' of the referral to the 'social quality perspective', see the final chord of the Working Paper.

## **1. An overarching perspective for Ukraine's post-war recovery in also the context of regional, European and global transitions**

### *1.1 The letter of the National Academy of Ukraine (NASU): academic support for the recovery of Ukraine in a broader perspective*

May 17<sup>th</sup> of this year the director of the Institute for Economics and Forecasting of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU), prof. dr. Valeriy Heyets, by letter addressed the Ambassador of Ukraine in the Netherlands, mr. Oleksandr Karasevych, conveying an important issue regarding the post-war recovery of Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> This initiative was undertaken in consultation with the board of the International Association on Social Quality (IASQ). The letter aimed at initiating and supporting steps to develop the cooperation in the scientific and educational field between Ukrainian and The Netherlands in order to also strengthen the Ukrainian recovery efforts in also a regional and global context.

During the Lugano (June 2022) and London (June 2023) conferences on the post-war recovery of Ukraine, Western leaders agreed that billions of euros will be needed to recover from the destructions inflicted on the Ukrainian people by the large-scale Russian aggression. The World Bank, in conjunction with the government of Ukraine, the European Commission and the United Nations estimated the costs of reconstruction at 400 billion dollars. One of statements of the London conference is most significant: the bill of recovery along the road will be growing much higher, because much more is going to be needed than bricks and mortar.<sup>2</sup>

The head of the Ukraine State Agency for Restoration and Infrastructure Development, referring to this crucial aspect, stated that effective and efficient recovery resulting in the overall sustainability of Ukraine, regards a currently one not yet developed strategic capacity and approaches to process and invest such huge sums: "It is not that Ukrainians are bad, or corrupt. Show me the country that can do it".<sup>3</sup> Obviously he refers also to the intellectual capacity to invest in the restoration of all aspects of the daily lives in Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> Heyets, V. 2023. "Letter to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ukraine to the Kingdom of the Netherlands, mr. Oleksandr Karasevych." Kyiv: Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 17 May.

<sup>2</sup> O'Carroll, L. 2023. "How much has been pledged to help rebuild Ukraine – and is it enough?" *The Guardian*, 21 June. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/21/how-much-has-been-pledged-to-help-rebuild-ukraine-and-is-it-enough>.

<sup>3</sup> Wintour, P. 2023. "Ukraine lacks capacity to process huge sums in aid, official admits." *The Guardian*, June 20. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/20/Ukraine-lacks-capacity-to-process-huge-sums-in-aid-official-admits>. The head of the State Agency also urges Western donors "not to be deterred by continuing corruption in the country nor to impose impossible conditions. We cannot punish the whole country just because some people are corrupt. My generation did not start the Maidan in 2013-14 to be punished again because some oligarch was corrupt. Added can be to this remark, if the still current incalculable Western and neoliberal tolerated tax evasion should not be defined as 'serious form of corruption'?"

## 1.2 Working on one overarching perspective and herewith related tripartite set of instruments

The fore-mentioned letter of the director of the NASU/IEF precisely addresses the aspect of how to develop the capacity to manage the deployment of the huge disposed (financial) facilities to restore the *social quality of the daily circumstances* of Ukraine. As recognized below, this should also be constitutive for strengthening the overall sustainability. He expresses the need to develop and establish hereupon oriented instruments to assist the constructions of effective management approaches of the forthcoming recovery initiatives in this country. From a scientific point of view, these instruments may also play a role in the contemporary transitions in the whole region (of Central Eastern European countries) and the European Union. It is argued that an *overarching scientific perspective*, a so-called '*point of Archimedes*' - stressing comprehensive approaches as condition for addressing the overall sustainability - is needed to intellectually connect the wide range of forthcoming, separate plans. In the following it is precisely this subject that is central, as well as frameworks and approaches derived from it as point of departure for a *tripartite set of instruments*.

Since 2015 the NASU and scholars from other Ukrainian academic institutes and the IASQ networks - deploying the social quality theory (SQT), the methodologies (SQM), and approaches (SQA) - have been working on such interdisciplinary and comprehensive approaches. This was done in response to an unexpected request from NASU.<sup>4</sup> An argument for the collaboration was the most informative study about the state of affairs of the theory, methodologies and approaches at that time, namely Working Paper 15b.<sup>5</sup> The plans for collaboration resulted into the start of the 'International Joint Research Project Ukraine' (INRU project), under the lead of the IASQ and NASU. The outcomes of this Project have been published in Working Paper 17.<sup>6</sup> In this Paper, the contours of the renewal of an overarching perspective - as articulated in previous Working Paper 15b - have been applied to Ukrainian circumstances. As far as Ukraine and its surrounding countries are concerned, the preliminary contours of the tripartite set of instruments came into the footlights. Firstly, these instruments are needed to address the multitude of necessary transition processes (and nowadays the post-war

<sup>4</sup> Heyets V.M. et al. 2015. "Letter to the International Association on Social Quality (IASQ) about the start of a collaboration between the Institute for Economics and Forecasting, Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences (IEF/NASU) and the IASQ." Kyiv: IEF/NAS, November 11. Nr. 135-10/693.

<sup>5</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and H. Verkleij, H.G.J. Nijhuis, J.. Westbroek, R. Duiveman, R. Müller, K. Wang, and P. Herrmann. 2015. *Working Paper 15b: Analytical Elaboration of the last Annual Report of the European Foundation on Social Quality (EFSQ): The EFSQ's 'Demonstration Project' of the urban quarter Laak of the Dutch city of the Hague. Paving the way for its communication centre as a new public context.* EFSQ/IASQ: Amsterdam. <https://socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/AR20111214.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., V.M. Heyets, Z. Novakova, D. Gasper, M. Ricceri, K. Lin, S. Corbett, A. C. Walker et al. 2019. *Working Paper 17: Ideas and Reflections About the Application and Elaboration of the Social Quality Approach (SQA) in Central and Eastern European Countries: The Case of Ukraine.* Amsterdam: IASQ. <https://socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/IASQ-Working-Paper-17-4.pdf>

challenges in various societal spheres) in Ukraine. Secondly, they are expected to have the potential to constructively contribute to topical Eastern European regional and European wide transitions. By applying such strategic integrating instruments – see the preliminary proposals in section-6 – it comes within reach to effectively (and efficiently) address the huge challenges that lie ahead, also on global level:

- a. The past Ukrainian transitions and the current unexpected destructions since 2022,
- b. The herewith related challenges and opportunities in its Eastern European context,
- c. The all-encompassing climate questions on the European level and beyond.

This problematique has great affinity with the theme, to which the head of Ukraine State Agency for Restoration refers (note-3). The start of such a strategic set of instruments may be achieved with support from the Ukrainian Government (ad-a), the European Commission (ad-b) and the Dutch Government (ad-c).

### *1.3 Content of the present paper*

The present paper aims to elaborate the above articulated assumptions in the light of fore-mentioned letter. The following sections are based on studies and publications from the NASU and other academic institutes of Ukraine and from Western and Eastern European scholars, deploying the social quality frameworks in collaboration with the IASQ. The International Journal of Social Quality (IJSQ) plays an indispensable role in the communication about this scientific work.<sup>7</sup> Based on these studies, the present paper discusses in:

- ☐ section-2: exploration of the overarching perspective concerning Ukraine (± ad-a);
- ☐ section-3: exploration of the overarching perspective for surrounding countries (± ad-b);
- ☐ section-4: exploration of the overarching perspective for the European Union (± ad-c);
- ☐ section-5: the European Union seen from a Ukrainian view;
- ☐ section-6: preliminary proposals of the establishment (or further elaboration) of the tripartite set of instruments and considerations about the ‘added-value’ of referring to the ‘social quality perspective’ and to apply its theory, methodology, approaches and policy-applications.
- ☐ section-7: an Annex, dedicated to lessons from this history of the accession of Central Eastern European countries (the EU-8) in the European Union.

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<sup>7</sup> For the academic world of Ukraine this ‘Diamond Open Access’ IJSQ offers huge opportunities for scientific communication within Ukraine, with a view on societal processes in Eastern European countries, Western Europe, Asia, Australia, etc. It may function as the main communication tool for the proposed tripartite set of instruments. It is the successor of the previous European Journal of Social Quality.

## **2. Exploring an overarching perspective concerning Ukraine**

### *2.1 A recent study of NASU addressing the post-war socioeconomic recovery*

From the side of NASU, a study in 2022 has been published presenting proposals how to approach the challenges of the post-war socioeconomic recovery strategies from the perspective of the contemporary social quality theory (SQT), methodologies (SQM), and approaches (SQA).<sup>8</sup> This study – which functions as a main frame of reference for the present paper – may be appreciated as a new step based on previous studies. The article opens with: “As a result of Russian military aggression against Ukraine, this sovereign country will face enormous humanitarian challenges. Post-war Ukraine will have to cope with the huge task of restoring its socioeconomic and financial conditions, its socioenvironmental and ecological conditions, and numerous aspects of its human potential. The latter concerns almost all aspects of sociocultural and welfare situations. Overall, Ukraine is facing a recovery from a tremendous multidimensional crisis that has emerged during the current war. It involves an enormous complexity, hard to comprehend and master, of interwoven social sphere and dynamics. Dealing with this complexity will certainly also have to include foreign assistance (e.g. from the EU) and the specific requirements that will come with this assistance regarding sociopolitical and socioeconomic directions. The central question addressed in this article concerns in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the challenges that Ukraine will face when the war is over.”<sup>9</sup> This study can be seen as an extension of the first application of the four-dimensional approach in Ukraine as discussed already in Working Paper 17<sup>10</sup>, which therefore means a special elaboration of Working Paper 15b.<sup>11</sup> Based on this preliminary work, Zuzana Novakova made a highly informative study about contemporary processes between these four dimensions in Ukraine as result also of the past transitions in this country.<sup>12</sup>

### *2.2 Exploring the consequences of the Russian invasion*

The statements expressed in recent NASU study concern a reinforcement of the arguments for the proposed tripartite instrument (see section-6) to contribute from an overarching

<sup>8</sup> Heyets, V.M. , V. Blyzniuk and O. Nykyforuk. 2022. “The Recovery of Ukraine: Social Quality in the Postwar Societal Space.” *International Journal of Social Quality*, 12 (1), pp. 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3167/IJSQ.2022.120102>.

<sup>9</sup> See note-8: pag-2.

<sup>10</sup> See note-6.

<sup>11</sup> See note-5.

<sup>12</sup> Novakova, Z. 2017. “Four dimensions of Societal Transformation: An Introduction of the problematique of Ukraine.” *International Journal of Social Quality* 7 (2) 1-30, p. 6. <https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/ijsq/7/2/ijsq070202.xml>. This study explains implicitly many aspects of the current complexity of circumstances in Ukraine. The study is produced in the context of the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague.



perspective to the post-war recovery of Ukraine. This needs to be combined with new perspectives regarding the interrelations of Ukraine with its surrounding countries and also the European Union as a whole. With regard to Ukraine, it concerns the restoration of fundamental aspects of the daily lives of people that have been distorted in many different respects. As demonstrated in this study, Ukraine will have to cope with the incalculable and diverse atrocities caused by the invasion by the Russian army and the illegal and relentless Wagner Group since in February 2022. The violations have caused irreparable grief and traumas, kidnapping of children to live as adopted children in Russia, the flight of about 8.2 million citizens to surrounding countries and the in-country displacement of 6 million people.<sup>13</sup> Denys Shmyhal summarized the magnitude of the problems as follows: "Russia has already killed or injured 22.000 Ukrainian civilians, destroyed and damaged 1.500 hospitals, hit 10% of the education infrastructure and 50% of our energy infrastructure; 2.4 million people have had their homes damaged or completely destroyed. About 30% of Ukraine's territory may be contaminated with Russian mines and shells. That is an area roughly the size of Great Britain. The scale of destruction is unlike anything Europe has seen since the second world war."<sup>14</sup>

### 2.3 The application of a new research approach

The Russian invasion caused and still causes multiple damage in the daily lives of people: (a) sociocultural and welfare tragedies, (b) socioeconomic and financial disruptions, (c) socioenvironmental dangerous hazards and (d) almost unlimited sociopolitical and legal efforts to keep everyday life possible. These aspects of the *social quality of daily circumstances* are determined by these *four dimensions of societal life*. The outcomes depend on numerous processes/activities within and between these four dimensions.<sup>15</sup> Restoring the lives of Ukrainians thus requires a primary orientation on the integrated whole of their daily lives. The forthcoming tsunamic of eclectic and fragmented international support initiatives will each address a separate element of the daily life of people, for instance education, livelihood, safety, health care etc. Contributions to parts of the various dimensions need to be connected to restore and sustain not just these parts, but the whole of the '*social quality of people's daily circumstances*'. In particular the exploration of the interdependency between the dimensions should be elaborated with help of a comprehensive framework as explored Working Paper 17.<sup>16</sup> This theme

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/hoe-verloopt-de-strijd-in-oekraïne-een-actueel-overzicht-met-kaarten-en-grafieken~b1aa4eef/>

<sup>14</sup> Shmyhal, D. 2023. "Who will pay to rebuild Ukraine after all this death and destruction? It has to be Putin and Russia." *The Guardian*, June 21. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentsfree/2023/who-will-pay-to-rebuild-Ukraine>

<sup>15</sup> See note-12.

<sup>16</sup> See note-6.

has become one of the core subjects in the scientific cooperation between the NASU and the IASQ. In the recent NASU-study, this orientation has been brought to the fore as part of a new analytical methodology to explore the highly complex, multi-dimensional challenges of the post-war recovery.<sup>17</sup> This unifying aspect constitutes one of the main features of the overarching perspective, that will deliver the points of departure for the tripartite instruments to be developed. With the multiplicity of investments to restore the damage done to Ukraine in mind, and the management of all herewith connected facilities, needed is new forms of synergy, which should also result in effectivity and efficiency.

#### *2.4 Paving the way for an SQT/SQA-oriented instrument*

These arguments imply the necessity of the further elaboration of the 'pre-war plan'. According to NASU, this may start with the interdisciplinary collaboration of 16 universities in Ukraine, with which to create an overarching comprehensive instrument to analyse, to comment, to elaborate the forthcoming post-war plans. Core-business is to analyse processes in and between the four-dimensional perspective of the SQT & SQA. The Ministry of Defence as well as the Ministry of Social Affairs invited the NASU at the end of 2021 to pave the way for the development such an instrument.<sup>18</sup> This academic instrument to comprehensively analyse and interconnect processes in the four dimensions is referred to as Academic Communication Centre. From the view of the SQT & SQM & SQA, the phenomenon of such centre is first posited in Working Paper 15b, based on experiences in the Laak district of the city of The Hague.<sup>19</sup>

### ***3.Exploring the overarching perspective concerning interrelations with surrounding countries: the challenge of the overall sustainability***

#### *3.1 The concept of sustainability and the criticism of its unsubstantiated tripartite dimensions*

Ukraine's recovery will need to line up with national and regional challenges to elaborate and defend *overall sustainability*. The latter requires interconnected combinations of new politics, new economics, cultural infrastructures and adequate environmental policies. The new politics and economics in particular have to re-consider the nature and adverse ecological impacts of today's dominant paradigm of neoliberalism, as modern expression of capitalism. To be able

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<sup>17</sup> See note-8.

<sup>18</sup> Heyets, V.M. 2022. "Letter to the IASQ about the letter from the National Security council Ukraine and letter from the Ministry of Social Policy." Kyiv: IEF/NAS of Ukraine.

<sup>19</sup> See note-5.

to address and maintain overall sustainability both for Ukraine and its Central Eastern European context, it is equally important to have at their disposal an overarching perspective to comprehend and work on this challenge. The concept of sustainability usually refers to environmental issues. Environmental sustainability though cannot be achieved by only addressing topics in the technical-ecological sphere. It is thoroughly connected with socio-political, socio-economic (see the impacts of the neoliberal paradigm) as well as sociocultural processes.

This complex issue is explored in at the end of the first decade of the 2000s by a Dutch 'social quality think-tank', resulting – with regard to the SQT & SQM & SQA – into a groundbreaking Working Paper 11. This paper is based on the theory of SQT from that time the unsubstantiated distinction by the United Nations, other international institutes and governments between three pillars of sustainability.<sup>20</sup> They concern: (1) the economic, (2) the social and the (3) environmental/ecological 'pillars'. It has become an international unsubstantiated mantra. Especially the adjective 'social' concerning 'the social pillar or dimension' is meaningless. As alternative the four-dimensional distinction as already discussed above. This alternative is further elaborated in the IASQ's book on deepening the SQT and its social quality indicators, published in 2012.<sup>21</sup> In Working Paper 15b, the critic on the unsubstantiated use of the concept sustainability and its three dimensions is further elaborated. Argued is, that this tripartite distinction causes a serious confusion about societal processes in relation with the question of the overall sustainability.<sup>22</sup> This issue is taken on board in the context of the current problematique of Ukraine in Working Paper 17.<sup>23</sup> NASU's recent study underpinned this critic from the current theoretical and empirical perspective of the SQT & SQM & SQA.<sup>24</sup>

In the Working Paper 11, a preliminary definition is presented of sustainability: "A state of dynamic equilibrium between the entire interactive ensemble of non-living and living entities, functioning within the boundaries of a resilient system'. The living entities include the complexities of human actions. These complexities may cause either sustainable or unsustainable societal relationships as well as sustainable or unsustainable conditions concerning the resilience of its boundaries."<sup>25</sup> At this stage of social quality thinking we should speak of: relationships or

<sup>20</sup> Van Renswoude, J, L.J.G. van der Maesen, P. Herrmann, J. Westbroek, K. Lin, D. Gasper. et al. 2012. *Working Paper 11: Development toward Sustainability: the need for a Comprehensive conceptual and methodological Framework for new politics and policies; A social quality perspective*. Amsterdam: IASQ (in collaboration with the IISS). <https://www.socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/import/2014/10/WorkingPaper-11-2012.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G. and A.C. Walker. 2012. Conclusion: Social Quality and Sustainability. In: Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and A.C. Walker. (eds). *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.250-275

<sup>22</sup> See note-5.

<sup>23</sup> See note-6.

<sup>24</sup> See note-8.

<sup>25</sup> See note-20: pag-4.

conditions which support or break down overall sustainability. According to this conceptualization 'sustainable economics' should be changed in to 'economics which supports or breaks down' overall sustainability; in imitation of Friedrich Hayek we can remark 'sustainable economics is no economics'. The study follows therefore, that humanity is: '....severely challenging the resilience of the entire natural system of the planet. Unsustainability turns into sustainability once that resilience is no longer challenged. Resilience is the long-term capacity of a system to deal with change and continue to develop. Thus, we need to transition from a state of unsustainability to one of sustainability (or: resilience). The trajectory for this transition should be called 'development toward sustainability'. Reasoned it has been claimed, that the overall sustainability is dependent of the nature of existing interdependencies of processes inside and between all the four societal dimensions, causing outcomes in each of them which will lead to an increase or decrease of the overall sustainability. Because of its overarching nature this concept has a much wider scope, and includes interconnected processes causing disbalances in or the increase of sustainability.<sup>26</sup> It was ground-breaking, because the meaning of the SQT & SQM & SQA depends in Working Paper 11, on the extent to which they contribute to the overall sustainability; there is no 'social quality an sich'.

### *3.2 Endorsing overall sustainability implies a rejection of the neoliberal paradigm.*

The current global discourse regarding the origins of the climate crisis in the context of overall sustainability is most relevant in the context of Central Eastern European countries, including Ukraine. It is evident that the world faces unprecedented high climatological pressure. It also increasingly gains both evidence and recognition that prevailing neoliberal politics and economics (and its interconnected interests) lie at the roots of the ecological disasters that mankind is facing. This paradigm has become a threat to the sustainability of human existence on this earth.<sup>27</sup> The neoliberal thematic also influences in a decisive the adequacy of the ways how to approach, from a comprehensive perspective, the post-war recovery. The neo-liberal economist, Josphe Stiglitz, concluded finally (sic) in 2019, that these politics and economics undermined the ecological balance and was therefore smashed on the rocks.<sup>28</sup> The reason is evident. In this political and economic context, the externalities of related modern production and distribution patterns are never priced for the benefit of shareholders. The adverse

<sup>26</sup> See note-8: pag-8

<sup>27</sup> See note-6: pag-56.. Also available: [https://www.socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/import/2015/12/sustainability\\_manifesto\\_support\\_list\\_13-12-2015](https://www.socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/import/2015/12/sustainability_manifesto_support_list_13-12-2015)

<sup>28</sup> Stiglitz, J. 2019. "The end of neoliberalism and the rebirth of history". *Social Europe*. <https://www.socialeurope.eu/the-end-of-neoliberalism-and-the-rebirth-of-history>. Unknown remains what he means with 'rebirth of history'. That is quite logical, because this pronunciation makes no sense at all.

consequences (pollution, poisoning, destruction of biodiversity) are placed on the plate of ordinary people and societies. Neoliberal politics, supported by the World Bank, also paves the way for increasing tensions between nations. From one-sided orientations on 'nation-centred interests' it also gives rise to erosion of ethical principles. According the SQT these principles are: (a) social justice, (b) solidarity, (c) equal value, (d) human dignity, (e) eco-equilibrium.<sup>29</sup> The critique of neoliberal policies and economics recently also has been endorsed by scholars of the NASU.<sup>30</sup>

The issue of neoliberal economics as a more or less imposed perspective for the Eastern European accession states (to the European Union) has been highly criticized in the past by Eastern European scholars. Extra attention is dedicated to this issue in section-7. The challenge of developing overall sustainability has given the Eastern European critic of neoliberalism even more meaning. The relevance was discussed in the recent study by NASU about the post-war recovery of Ukraine.<sup>31</sup> For the sake of the defense and further development of overall sustainability of the entire world population, theories and related practices (the 'praxis') need to be judged regarding its fundamental significance for overall sustainability. This awareness has shown to be very present in Ukraine. It could be one of the guiding leads, determining the direction of the post-war recovery. This also has implications in shaping the collaboration with surrounding countries.

### *3.3 Paving the way for a SQT/SQA Central Eastern European instrument*

Partly with support of NASU, the Editorial Board of the IJSQ has published in 2020 seven studies on contemporary societal processes in Ukraine, 2x Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. This will be discussed below. But the outcomes are a plea for starting a 'Social Quality Observatory CEE-Countries' as instrument for reaching consensus about acceptable pathways for the transmission processes in the context of the European Union. Contradictions and undermining of democratic principles prevent this consensus about a common future.<sup>32</sup>

## **4 Exploring an overarching perspective for the European Union (and beyond)**

<sup>29</sup> See note-6: pag-84, and see the IASQ's Declaration: Walker, A.C., 2022. "The War in Ukraine and the Social Quality perspective". <https://socialquality.org/about-iasq/ukraine-declaration/>

<sup>30</sup> See note-8: pag-3.

<sup>31</sup> See note-8. From the side of NASU explained is, that in human sciences, such a comprehensive approach (of the SQT & SQM & SQA) "is quite unique. Through its comprehensiveness it facilitates a thorough....understanding of complexities in human life and in societies. It prevents one-dimensional, fragmented, and narrow minded views and approaches", pag-4.

<sup>32</sup> Novakova, Z. , and L.J.G. van der Maesen. 2020 (eds). "Thematic Issue about Central and Eastern European Societies." *International Journal of Social Quality* 10 (2): vii-xxi., vii. <https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/ijsq/10/2/ijsq100202.xml>.

#### *4.1 The further development of an indispensable overarching perspective*

The connection of the substance of the two previous sections means that the post-war recovery of Ukraine can no longer take shape within traditional bands. An eclectic and fragmented tsunami of international support to Ukraine should be prevented. Besides, the challenge of overall sustainability requires an adequate paradigm shift. In the dominant paradigm underlying today's politics and economics, environmental and ecological issues function as an aside, not as a main point of view. It will cause in practical sense unforeseen disasters. This means, that for example the recovery of Ukrainian cities, little towns and villages, or the production and distribution of 'economic goods' must be done from a new approach derived from the overall sustainability argument. Existing international and national legislation about property and possession become obsolete in the light of the need for overall sustainability. The academic world of 'human scientists' has to play a stronger role. On behalf of the sustainability argument the rusted barren lack of interdisciplinary cooperation should be replaced by a spirit of willing to work together. This implies the willingness to accept and work on ontological and epistemological transcends.

This already was expressed in the IASQ's and IISS's (International Institute for Social Studies in The Hague) Manifesto for Paris Climate Conference 2015. About four hundred scholars all over the world signed this Manifesto, which pleas for a new orientation as well as a comprehensive approach with support of 'academic change-agent centers'. Also, from the side of NASU and related Ukrainian academic institutes this Manifesto was endorsed.<sup>33</sup> Herewith the NASU underlined already at the end of 2015 the essence of the sustainability argument and the role of the SQT & SQM & SQA for contributing to the overall sustainability.<sup>34</sup> As a logical next step, five years later the IASQ conducted a study about how to connect natural sciences and human sciences for comprehensively addressing also the challenge of sustainability in a new way.<sup>35</sup> This is a critical issue, which directly concerns sustainability questions on the global, regional and national level.<sup>36</sup>

#### *4.2 An example viewed from a Ukrainian position: the need of a global social quality instrument*

<sup>33</sup> IASQ and IISS. 2015. *Manifesto for Paris Climate Conference 2015*. Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ/IISS. <https://socialquality.org/about-iasq/manifesto-for-paris-climate-conference-2015/>

<sup>34</sup> See note-4 and which implies also the affinity of NASU with Working Paper 15b, see note-5..

<sup>35</sup> Westbroek, J., H.G.J. Nijhuis, and L.J.G. van der Maesen. 2020. "Evolutionary Thermodynamics and Theory of Social Quality as Links between Natural Sciences (Physics, Biology), and Human Sciences." *International Journal of Social Quality*, 10 (1): 57-87. In theoretical sense this study is also a tool for understanding 'which point of Archimedes' is meaningful for also Ukraine.

<sup>36</sup> This theoretical oriented study should be incorporated in the strategies how to cope with the Ukrainian postwar recovery as well.

Already in July 2022, the National Recovery Council of Ukraine published a detailed context and objectives for Ukraine's national recovery. The extensive diagrams and texts refer to the substance of existing leading policy plans, especially those from the side of the European Union. And this is quite logical, because the road to EU membership is of paramount importance to Ukraine. As 'objectives' we read: (a) resilience: providing economic, social and environmental resilience in the marathon to victory, (b) recovery: finding efficient solutions for the soonest recovery of the crucial economic and social processes, and natural ecosystem, (c) modernization and growth: developing a modernization plan to ensure expedited sustainable economic growth and wellbeing of the people.<sup>37</sup>

Characteristic of this Plan is the above mentioned repetition of the general applied distinction by the United Nations, other international institutes and governments between three pillars of sustainability: (1) the economic, (2) the social and the (3) environmental/ecological 'pillars'. It has become an international unsubstantiated mantra. This tripartite distinction is criticized in the IASQ's Working Paper 11<sup>38</sup>, and afterwards more extensively in Working Paper 15b.<sup>39</sup> From the side of NASU, concluded is, that in this distinction the sociopolitical and legal dimension – the most important one for addressing the overall sustainability - is also absent in a conspicuous way.<sup>40</sup> The statement of the head of the Ukrainian State Agency for Restoration (note-3) refers in our interpretation at least implicitly to the need to manage the coming investments in Ukraine's restoration from an overarching perspective, which enhancement requires international interdisciplinary support. The challenge for Ukraine is not only the reproduction of previous circumstances. With the post-war recovery it may also work on societal transformation that is adequate for the contemporary challenges with the help of international academic support. Hypothesized is, that de SQT & SQM & SQA deliver the building blocks for the desired perspective, as referred to in the letter from NASU, sent to the ambassador of Ukraine in the Netherlands.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4.3 *Paving the way for strengthening the global IASQ-instrument for comparative work*

This IASQ-instrument means a limited staff of co-workers. This staff is responsible for the

<sup>37</sup> National Recovery Council. 2022. *Ukraine's National Recovery Plan*. 62c1666751fc41105380a73\_NRC Ukraine's Recovery Plan blueprint\_ENG (1).pdf. Also in this case the three dimensional approach of sustainability is presented as obvious. The supposition about economic resilience etc is inadequate.

<sup>38</sup> See note-14.

<sup>39</sup> See note-5.

<sup>40</sup> Heyets, V.M. 2019. "Social Quality in a Transitive Society: The Role of the State." *International Journal of Social Quality* 9 (1) : 32-52. <https://doi.org/10.3167/IJSQ.2019.090103>.

<sup>41</sup> See note-1.

theoretical development of the SQT and to make it suitable for policy application (SQA). Again we can refer to the current problematique of Ukraine to emphasize its importance. As can be seen from the IASQ's actual website, its staff has a long track record since the late 1990s. Outcomes are the manifold of books, reports about the application of **social quality indicators** in Europe - see for example the double themed issue of the European Journal of Social Quality<sup>42</sup> - Asia (China, Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan) and Australia. This indicator's research till 2012 is analyzed in the IASQ's third book (see note-21). Some years ago, plans are articulated from the side of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to analyze all indicator's research after 2012 in order to strengthen international comparative research from the social quality perspective. The outcomes require to rethink the nature of the IASQ-staff to cope with all herewith new chances. This concerns also the following two points. According the recent study by NASU, these indicators became an unique instrument.<sup>43</sup> Recognized is, that compared to approaches as 'quality of life', 'social capital', human security, capability, social harmony and social development approaches, the social quality SQT & SQM & SQA offers a new point of view precisely also seen from the point of striving for overall sustainability.<sup>44</sup>

A current start with the development of the social quality methods (SQM) and approaches (SQA) is made during the production the double themed issue on 'The Societal Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic Explained via Three Frameworks'.<sup>45</sup> It concerns the development of the social quality's **configuration of three frameworks**: (1) the conceptual framework (theory of 'the social'), (2) the analytical (or methodological) framework (three sets of factors), (3) the procedural framework (the four dimensional distinction). This configuration is applied in fifteen studies from all continents for exploring this societal impact of COVID-19. This configuration is also applied in the recent NASU-study, oriented on the socioeconomic post-war recovery of Ukraine.<sup>46</sup>

The challenge to recover the Ukrainian urban conditions in relation with the rural environment may be mentioned as a third example. From the side of the IASQ preliminary research has been done into related transformation processes in the Dutch city of The Hague<sup>47</sup> and the

<sup>42</sup> Gordon, D. and L.J.G. van der Maesen (eds).2005. "Indicators of Social Quality Applications in fourteen European Countries". *The European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol 15 (1&2), pp. 1-301. The fourteen reports are available on the website: <https://socialquality.org/projects/social-quality-indicators/>

<sup>43</sup> See note-8.

<sup>44</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and A. Walker. 2009. *Working Paper 3b: Explorative comparison of quality of life, social capital, human security, capability theory and social harmony with some principles of the social quality approach*. Amsterdam: IASQ. <https://socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/Working-Paper-3b-Van-der-Maesen-and-Walker.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Nijhuis, H.G.J., L.J.G. van der Maesen, eds. 2022. "The Societal Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic Explained via Three Frameworks." *International Journal of Social Quality* 11 (1&2):1-334. <https://www.berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/ijsq/11/1-2/ijsq11010201.xml>

<sup>46</sup> See note-8.

<sup>47</sup> See note-5.



Chinese city of Jiaxing.<sup>48</sup> Currently – supported by the Italian institute for Politics, Economics and Sociocultural issues (Eurispes) - a start is made with a global platform of institutes for analyzing contemporary **urban/rural transformations** from the overarching perspective of the SQT & SQM & SQA. Recently, two studies are published in the journal for delivering the first background-information for this platform in statu nascendi.<sup>49</sup> To assist the Ukrainian challenges concerning the urban-rural circumstances, such a global platform may present important background insights. Conversely, for Ukraine this platform can function as an instrument to view the dialogue about plans in Ukraine – and in particular to view it with the challenge of the overall sustainability in mind. Urban-rural circumstances concern the heart of the matter of this challenge.<sup>50</sup>

Finally, on behalf of the dialogue on the SQT & SQM & SQA, following (a) the work on Ukraine and the post-war recovery plans, (b) the work on the thematic issue on processes in Central Eastern European countries, (c) the double themed issue on COVID-19 and (d) the theoretical treatise on the connection of natural sciences and human sciences, the year 2022 has also been used to prepare a study with which an attempt has been making to taking the '**overarching perspective**' with regard to the SQT & SQM & SQA to a new level. Especially main characteristics of the configuration of social quality frameworks plays an important role.<sup>51</sup> Changes in the current draft will take place in the coming months based on current new insights, especially with the post-war recovery plans. This for the benefit of academic institutes of Ukraine, for the benefit of Central Eastern en Western European countries, and of the other continents to which the IASQ is connected. A creative IASQ-staff as catalyst of change and crystallization point is a *conditio sine qua non* for this. The past history of the IASQ (more than 100 research projects all over the world) since the late 1990s demonstrates its functionality.

## 5. The European Union seen from a Ukrainian view

### 5.1 Ukrainian experiences with cooperative efforts from the European Union and the Joint-Research Project

<sup>48</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and K. Wang. 2015. *Working Paper 14: The Position of citizens with Regard to Environmental Protection: A contribution to a Chinese and European Comparison based on Reflections on the Applied Model by the Chinese City Jiaxing*. IASQ: Amsterdam <https://www.socialquality.org/wp-content/uploads/import/2015/02/Working-Paper-14-Environmental-Protection-Position-Citizens.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> (1) Motta, P. 2020. "Urbanization and sustainability after the Covid-19 Pandemic." *International Journal of Social Quality*, 10 (1):1-19. Doi: 10.3167/ijsq.2020.100102. (2) Motta, P., C. Jaime, and F. Salmeron Escobar. 2022. "Transformation of Urban-rural relationships in the context of Global challenges." *International Journal of Social Quality*, 12 (2). <https://doi.org/10.3167/IJSQ.2022.120203>

<sup>50</sup> See note-48.

<sup>51</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., H.G.J. Nijhuis, J. Westbroek. Forthcoming. *Sustainability and Global and Regional Challenges. The Necessity of a Substantiated Concept of the 'Social' as overarching perspective*. Amsterdam: IASQ.

After the Maidan in 2013-2014, Ukrainian politics became more and more oriented on the improvement of relevant societal conditions to comply with EU requirements. According to the NASU, greater stability was achieved in many institutions constituting its democratic quality. Ample attention was given to the rule of law, human rights, the fight against corruption, the reduction of the power of oligarchs<sup>52</sup>, as well as the strengthening of private property rights for middle- and low-income groups.<sup>53</sup> Thanks to the collaboration with the IASQ, concluded was by NASU, that these measures obtained strong affinity with ideas, principles, and objectives of the SQT & SQM & SQA.<sup>54</sup> In particular this regards the sociopolitical and socioeconomic dimension. This collaboration took shape in the 'Social Quality International Joint-Research Project Ukraine'.<sup>55</sup>

At that time, the EC has installed a 'European Support Group' to assist Ukraine to continue on its membership. From the side of the NASU at least two comments are articulated on the role of the Support Group. First, its implicit affinity with the prevailing neoliberal paradigm, which blocks new ideas regarding the future of the country's four societal dimensions. Second, the incorporation of isolated and entrenched 'good examples' from the member states to Ukraine, offered or imposed without any comprehensive vision.<sup>56</sup> That is why from on the advice of NASU - the prime minister of Ukraine, Stephan Kubiv addressed Frans Timmermans of the European Commission by letter.<sup>57</sup> The question was to support the launch of the Joint-Research-Project formally as well. The European Commission's commissioner, Joseph Hahn, answered the request.<sup>58</sup> He welcomed the idea and requested the prime minister to invite the Academy of Sciences to contact the director of the EC's Support Group. This happened, but the director of this Support-Group in Ukraine did not respond and blocked further the contact between the EC and the International Joint-Research Project.<sup>59</sup>

## 5.2 An overarching view or chaos?

This event later gave rise to the government's initiative to invite the Academy of Sciences at

<sup>52</sup> Heyets, V.M. 2022. "Socialization and its Success in the Model of Understanding the Development of the Social World." [in Ukrainian]. *Economic Theory* 4: 5-40. <https://doi.org/1015407/etet2021.04005>.

<sup>53</sup> Mlachila, M., R. Tapsoba, and S. Tapsoba. 2022. "A Quest for Quality". *Finance & Development* 52 (2): 14-17. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fabdd/2015/06/mlachila> (accessed 3 November 2022).

<sup>54</sup> See note-8: pag-6.

<sup>55</sup> See note-8: pag-3. This project started in 2016 as outcome of discussions about the 2015 NASU-letter, see note-4.

<sup>56</sup> See note-8: pag-3.

<sup>57</sup> Kubiv, S. Letter to the European Commission, mr. Frans Timmermans, January 16. Ukraine: Government of Ukraine.

<sup>58</sup> Hahn, J. 2017. Letter to Deputy Prime Minister Stephan Kubiv of Ukraine, March 10.. Brussels: European Commission

<sup>59</sup> See note-8: pag-3.

the end of 2021 to continue with the development and application of the SQT & SQM & SQA.

<sup>60</sup> The outcomes of Working Paper 17, presenting the four dimensional framework (see note-6), were the main argument to do so. Continuing with the elaboration of the orientation on four dimensions, Zuzana Novakova analysed also the work of the Support Group, that pushed in a completely eclectic way a fragmented imaginary of Ukraine as a battlefield for reform implementations and 'good practices' from member states, which differences are not analysed at all. A new overarching perspective is required and this is demonstrated with Working Paper 17, and the Thematic Issue on Central and Eastern European countries. Novakova added: "the differences between these donor-countries [of good examples] – expressed in the context of their own societal development and transition (vis-à-vis the four dimensions) – are not discussed or analysed. An interesting example from France concerning the socioeconomic/financial dimension and an interesting example from Italy concerning the sociopolitical/legal dimension are put forward in a piece of advice offered to Ukraine. But both examples can be referring to contrasting principles.<sup>61</sup> This can be multiplied by a factor of one thousand, which will undoubtedly guarantee chaos'.<sup>62</sup>

The consequences of the approach by the European Support-Group and its policies to prevent the work of the Joint Research Project are not discussed further. The Russian invasion destroyed all normality. Given the perceived need in Ukraine for integration with the European Union, it is relevant to review some aspects of the history of the accession (and the outcomes thereafter) of earlier Eastern European countries to the EU. These are depicted in section-7, based on studies by Eastern European scholars, who worked from the social quality perspective. Since it clarifies much of the successes and failures regarding the recent accession-process, it may be helpful to apply this perspective to the process of integration of Ukraine into the EU. It also provides some insights into the nature and the workings of this applied overarching perspective.

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<sup>60</sup> Heyets, V.M. 2022. "Letter to the IASQ about the letter from the National Security Council Ukraine and letter from the Ministry of Social Policy." Kyiv: IEF/NAS of Ukraine.

<sup>61</sup> In his way, René Descartes (1596-1650) devoted his attention to herewith related 'problematique'. He argued, that for the foundation of (1) a more adequate 'praxis of daily life' needed is, (2) a philosophy for science to connect (in our terms) natural sciences and to connect humans sciences and to align both types of sciences, which requires (3) in his terms a common 'point of Archimedes'. In his terms 'praxis' means the unity of knowing and acting. This 'point of Archimedes' concerns an apriori shared ontological perspective for preventing insignificant assertions and paving the way for an acceptable praxis: see: Röd, W. 1982. *Descartes: Die Genese des Cartesianischen Rationalismus* [Descartes: The Genesis of Cartesian Rationalism]. München; Verlag C.H. Beck, pag-32-33. According to Röd, aspects of these issues appeared in Descartes' different studies, but not in a systematic way. It was not his 'core-thematic'. Notwithstanding this, these issues are remarkable for his time. Because the need of overall sustainability as current ground motive (see section 3.1) delivers the point of departure for ad-2, which in his turn is a condition for ad-1, which implies ad-3. This implies a interdisciplinary collaboration between aspects of human sciences and of natural sciences. This is elaborated in the recent IASQ study, see note-28.

<sup>62</sup> See note-32: pag-xix.

## **6. Paving the way for extra (academic) tools for the postwar recovery of Ukraine**

### *6.1 The actual plans revisited*

According the European Committee of the Regions, Russia's large-scale war of aggression against Ukraine has led to unimaginable loss of life and wide-spread damage throughout the country. It has triggered a humanitarian crisis, as well as profound economic and financial distress.<sup>63</sup> At the last Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano on 4-5 July 2022, representatives of 41 countries and 18 international organisations endorse the so-called Lugano principles as guiding principles for Ukraine's recovery process.<sup>64</sup> Crucial is the principle, that the recovery process is led and driven by Ukraine and conducted in partnership with its international partners. The partnership should be deepening, broadening and achieving Ukraine's reform efforts and resilience in line with a European path appropriate for Ukraine's. Is this European path obvious, irrefutable and really consistent? From the side of the OECD it has been inserted that for Ukraine the recovery strategy, its implementation and funding mechanisms should reflect both national priorities and specific regional and local needs and assets.<sup>65</sup>

According to the head of the Ukraine State Agency for Restoration, this issue constitute a major challenge. How to process this enormous endeavour remains unanswered.<sup>66</sup> He amongst others stated, that if the reconstruction would be strongly directed locally, "less damage and better staffed cities had already submitted more claims to rebuild schools than more badly damaged regions."<sup>67</sup> The OECD's plea that peer-to-peer exchanges can foster the sharing of good practices for reconstruction and recovery of Ukraine (referring to the applied methodology of the European Support Group) is critically commented in section-5.1 and Working Paper 17.<sup>68</sup> For assisting 'the process', strong academic support is necessary to unravel the current complexity..

### *6.2 Pre-war plans and their post-war urgency: a sketch of three assignments*

<sup>63</sup> European Committee of the Regions, 2023. *Putting the Lugano Principles into Action: Strengthening the Role of Local and Regional Governments in Ukraine's Recovery and Reconstruction Process, and the road to EU Membership*. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/documents/2023-05-14/agenda>.

<sup>64</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/outcome-document-ukraine-recovery-conference-urc2022-lugano-declaration-4-5-july-2022>.

<sup>65</sup> OECD. 2022. *Rebuilding Ukraine by Reinforcing Regional and Municipal Governance*. Paris: OECD, December.

<sup>66</sup> See note-3.

<sup>67</sup> See note-3.

<sup>68</sup> See note-6.

As an outcome of the work done on behalf of Working Paper 17 (see note-6) , conversation of members of the NASU and the Board of the IASQ since 2016, and the studies, published in the International Journal of Social Quality, the provisional contours of three strategies are discussed, namely:

- with regard to Ukraine as a part of also the Central and Eastern European countries,
- with regard to these CEE-countries self (see the thematic issue of the journal, note-32) ,
- with regard to the position and the role of the IASQ on global, national and local level.

#### *6.2.1 First assignment: a Ukrainian academic communicationcentre as instrument*

With regard to **Ukraine**, referred is already that the Ukrainian government invited the NASU in the second part of 2021 to apply the overarching social quality perspective for assisting the ongoing transformation of this country. It should happen according considerations, that stimulate the strengthening of the five ethical principles of social quality (see section-3.2), as well as which will take on board the challenge of the overall sustainability as ground-motive. NASU designed a preliminary idea for the start of a collaboration with 16 universities in Ukraine for its operationalization. As attempted in recent paper, the arguments for this have become - due to the Russian invasion and the necessity of the post-war recovery - much stronger. This collaboration implies among other an academic instrument with which:

- to deliver for all engaged university-institutes a common orientation;
- to design a division of tasks, taking into account the distinction between the four dimensions of societal life,
- to analyze (see division of tasks) relevant processes in the light of relevant needs,
- to articulate the outcomes for the world of communities, of companies/businesses, of political institutions and local, regional and national level,

Point of departure may be the overarching perspective as indicated above and the development and application of the configuration of three frameworks as indicated in NASU's recent study.<sup>69</sup> It should contribute to national, provincial and urban communicationcentres - as discussed in the urban 'Demonstration Project' of The Hague as presented in Working Paper 15b<sup>70</sup>- to discuss the outcomes of research about processes and results. These communication instruments are pre-eminently the places to steer the multiplicity of also international support

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<sup>69</sup> See note-8.

<sup>70</sup> See note-5.

in the right direction, connected with Ukraine's history. This form of academic work assumes a solid infrastructure to gain insight into all most relevant processes in and between the for dimensions of societal life and the translation of this insight on behalf of the world of the Politeia, Oikos and Civitas as explained in Working Paper 15b

### *6.2.2 Second assignment: a Central Eastern European countries' Social Quality Observatory*

Not only because the invasion in Ukraine but also due to historical reasons since the accession of most of the Central Eastern European countries (CEE-countries) into the European Union, a 'Social Quality Observatory for CEE-countries' makes sense for many reasons. The background information to this is discussed in section-7. As argued in the Editorial of the thematic issue on Central Eastern European countries, published in 2020 - over thirty years after the revolutions, a sense of a political crisis has penetrated this region with an ever-increasing salience and touches upon its political, cultural and economic dimensions. It could also be indicated as a 'crisis of liberal democracy'. An erosion of the rule of law on the one hand and the rise of antisystemic 'radicalization' on the other appear to be the common denominator, although they have taken various local forms. Antiliberal radicalization found strong support among those who feel left behind by the advancement of (neo)liberal globalization, a process global in its nature but particular in how it is embedded in its regional expression, which in our cases comes in the contest of the European Union. These people have been joined by those who feel that their traditional values are threatened by cultural liberalism. As a result, now, three decades after the rupture with its totalitarian past, the region is showing signs – all over – of increasingly support with for authoritarian populism. It would be an easily tempting strategy to simply blame the development divide or the fact that the socioeconomic gap between the former East and West did not close as quickly as many had hoped.<sup>71</sup>

Nevertheless, as highlighted during the EU budget crisis last year, the repercussions of this divide clearly transcend the level of simple socioeconomic questions. The disagreement over what rule of law means – and the fierce opposition by CEE member states to the rule-of-law conditionality – reflect a rift of a different kind. On institutional level, a radicalization of political leadership in various states has led to strong disagreements about values which EU states were previously more or less all in agreement about. At the societal level, there is a divide in cultural mores, one that has given rise to such an open radicalization of the political leadership

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<sup>71</sup> See note-32: pag-ix.

in various CEE-states”.<sup>72</sup> It is with this in mind, that in the Concluding remarks of this thematic issue a plea has been held for the start of ‘Social Quality Observatory’ to follow the ongoing transition in these states from the proposed ‘point of Archimedes’, deploying the fore-mentioned overarching perspective: “This new entity [read the Social Quality Observatory] should contribute to a transition which addresses, enhances, and strengthens the five normative factors (or ethical principles) of social quality, (which underlie societal appearances which cause in increasing divide) ....These factors may be a decisive point of departure for adjusting the assumptions about and operationalization of the rule of law for contemporary interhuman relationships – something we need to do to help develop overall sustainability.”<sup>73</sup> With this in mind the international oriented study by Pamela Abbott, Claire Wallace and Roger Sapsford about ‘The Decent Society: Planning for social quality’ may deliver highly interesting points of departure for the proposed Observatory.<sup>74</sup> Such an Observatory implies, like all observatories supported by the European Commission, an adequate infrastructure, to connect experts from a manifold of CEE-universities to take on such a challenge in mutual cooperation. The outcomes may be highly supportive for also the pots-war recovery process of Ukraine.

### 6.2.3 *Third assignment: strengthening the instrument of the IASQ*

As explained and thanks to historical reasons, the deepening of the perspective (or ‘point of Archimedes’) of the social quality perspective in the recent past years is also stimulated by the academic world in Ukraine. The deepening happened with help of the IASQ-instrument. And in the history of this instrument, it is for the first time that a national academic institute (read NASU) and its national government stimulated the deepening and application of this perspective. The outcomes are, that thinking about politics and policies - oriented on processes in the four dimensions of societal life and between these dimensions - became strongly connected with the nature and possibilities of the operationalization of this perspective. The recent study about ‘social quality and the postwar recovery of Ukraine’ by NASU may be seen as a clear example. This study functioned as frame of reference of this paper.<sup>75</sup> Conversely, this shows that further development of this IASQ-instrument is of elementary importance of Ukraine (6.2.1) and the CEE-countries (6.2.2).

<sup>72</sup> See note-32: pag-x.

<sup>73</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2020. “Concluding Remarks. A ‘Social Quality Observatory’ for Central and Eastern European Countries?” *International Journal of Social Quality*, 10 (2) 113-138; pag-114. Doi:10.316/IJSQ.2020.100209.

<sup>74</sup> Abbott, P., C. Wallace, and R. Sapsford. 2016. *The Decent Society: Planning for social quality*. Abingdon: Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/The-Decent-Society-Planning-for-Social-Quality/Abbott-Wallace-Sapsford/p/book/9780367873080#>

<sup>75</sup> See note-8.

This capacity of the existing SQT/SQA instrument - located in The Netherlands - would be able to provide the necessary assistance to above two instruments. It would offer the following kind of assistance:

- to provide theoretical assistance to, in this case, the academic Communication Center of Ukraine and the CEE-Observatory;
- to offer an ongoing review of studies, associated with the SQT & SQM & SQA perspective;
- to assist the development of academic relations through internet communication about articles, working papers, reports, books, and the IASQ-newsletter;
- deliver editorial support to the International Journal of Social Quality.

To be able to conduct these assignments - related to the recovery of Ukraine, in an Eastern European and European context - the organization of this third instrument would need to be strengthened and tailored to the new tasks.

#### 6.2.4. *Some considerations and about the 'added value'*

An example of the necessity of the elaboration of the tripartite set of instruments is given in the recent study by NASU.<sup>76</sup> The authors presented in this study the connection of three social quality frameworks, which will be highly functional for all three assignments. This is called the configuration of sq-frameworks. It is for the first time presented in the Editorial of the double themed issue on the societal impacts of COVID-19,<sup>77</sup> and taking on board on behalf of the post-war recovery of Ukraine in also the recent NASU study. Added can be the 'framework of policy application', in rudimentary form first treated in Working Paper 15b.<sup>78</sup> This configuration of in effect four frameworks enables researches to make distinctions between the dimensions, to analyse processes in and between each dimensions, to explore the practical outcomes on also urban and rural daily circumstances, and to compare the outcomes with research from other countries. This will enable a more comprehensive understanding of societal complexities, as well of urban daily circumstances in also for Ukraine. This addition – referring to Working Paper 15b – should be further elaborated in the proposed Academic Communication Centre of Ukraine, taking in mind, that the phenomenon of such centres is discussed in this Working Paper as well.

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<sup>76</sup> See note-8.

<sup>77</sup> See note-45.

<sup>78</sup> See note-5; section-3.4.



The ‘added value’ of the proposals with regard to the tripartite set of academic instruments may be explained with reference to the ‘Joint statement following the 24<sup>th</sup> EU-Ukraine Summit’. In the second section explained is that “We reiterated our commitment to further deepening our relationship, based on common values and close and privileged links. The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement has been and continues to be of essential importance in facilitating and promoting Ukraine’s further integration with the EU”.<sup>79</sup> The Joint Statement logically continues with an enumeration of an almost incalculable number of issues, themes, problems, ideas and plans. An important part is devoted to the Russian invasion and the almost unthinkable horrors that resulted from it and new ones can be expected. There is nothing to read about how to approach this from Ukraine itself, from Ukraine with surrounding countries, from Ukraine with the current member states of the European Union. What consequences do the destructions have for Ukraine’s accession to the EU and for the EU itself because of the desired accession of Ukraine.

In summary, how to deal with profound dialectics of ongoing processes and how to process the consequences of this in the light also of the pervasive climate changes, which require a fundamental change of existing dominant paradigms towards the political and the economic? What kind of EU is needed for the EU – with this actual history of Ukraine in mind – to deal with the contemporary in such a way that the ethical principles for just living conditions can come into their own?

From the side of NASU and the IASQ, supposed is that the ‘social quality perspective’ - with its different layers (see the configuration of four frameworks) - may be a chance to cope with all issues of the ‘Joint Statement’ in a comprehensive way on behalf of all societal complexities in modern urban circumstances, thus those of Ukraine as well. In this respect, the attention to ‘social quality’ differs in essential way from all other well-known approaches.

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<sup>79</sup> European Council (2023). *Press release: Joint Statement following the 24<sup>th</sup> EU-Ukraine summit. February, 3.* <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/02/03/joint-statement-following-the-24th-eu-ukraine-summit/>, page-1.

## **7. Annex: some lessons from the EU and Eastern European history**

### *7.1 The leitmotiv of the accession politics of the European Union since the late 1990s*

It is evident, that for Ukraine, the entrance to the European Union is for many reasons a ‘top-priority’. In this Annex, reference is made to experiences with the accession of the Eastern European countries (the EU-8) to the European Union in the late 1990s (the EU-15). What are the lessons for Ukraine, also with the above referred ‘Joint Statement of the last EU-Ukraine Summit’ in mind?

In the late 1990s, Ivan Svetlik from Slovenia asked how to put the change of the socioeconomic and financial dimension during the process of accession to the EU at the service of human values that the EU claims to pursue? Will it pave the way for people “to be more competent and self-reliant as workers, citizens and community members”. His answer was negative.<sup>80</sup> Two years later, Zsuzsa Ferge from Hungary added, that the process leading to the accession of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the European Union, should become connected with the so-called ‘European Social Model’.<sup>81</sup> In an empiricist and eclectic way the European Commission claimed at that time that “this model is based on common values.”<sup>82</sup> But this is not an explanation of the concept of ‘social model’, nor we can find any theoretically sound explanation up till now either.<sup>83</sup>

Ferge argued that, unhindered by any political-theoretical thought, the EU-15 of that time gave wide scope for the introduction of the World Bank Agenda to direct the accession of the aforementioned countries in the 1990s. This refers implicitly to the dominant neoliberal market principles as also expressed straight forward in the Lisbon Treaty of the EU from 2000.<sup>84</sup> According to Ferge, in the first period the EU-15 chose a completely different paths for the accession states compared to the first pathways that had been taken by the EU-15 itself. It was according Ferge a recipe for the future of a strong divide between EU-15 and the new EU-8.<sup>85</sup> At that time – with support of the Dutch Government and the European Commission – an introduction of ‘social quality’ was made, but it was too premature to play a role in this accession process.

<sup>80</sup> Svetlik, I. 1999. “Some Conceptual and Operational Considerations on the Social Quality of Europe.” *European Journal of Social Quality*, 1 (1&2): 90-109. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23971693>.

<sup>81</sup> Ferge, Z. 2001. “European Integration and the Reform of Social Security in the Accession Countries.” *European Journal of Social Quality* 3 (1&2): 9-26. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23973657>.

<sup>82</sup> European Commission. 1997. *Modernizing and Improving Social Protection in the European Union*. Brussels: the Commission.

<sup>83</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and A. Walker. 2012. European and Global Challenges. In: Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and A.C. Walker. (eds). *Social Quality. From theory to Indicators*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 19-44.

<sup>84</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G., and A. Walker. 2012. European and Global Challenges..... pp. 19-43

<sup>85</sup> See note-67, pag-28.

## 7.2 Considerations from the side of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Thanks to the development of the SQT and SQM in the first decade of the current century, its social quality indicators – developed with support of the European commission and fourteen universities - could be applied to fourteen European countries. With this application concluded is for Hungary, that the divide as prognosticated by Ferge (see section-7.1) became very expressive.<sup>86</sup> Slovenian researchers concluded on base of the application of the same indicators, that collective gatherings and meetings were quietly disappearing and the kinship networks became overburdened by the family support they must provide.<sup>87</sup>

This is also confirmed by Gábor Juhász. He analysed in the first decade of current century the first outcomes of the integration of the eight new accession states into the European Union. The EU's aim was to realize the central EU's values in these most Central European countries. These values should deliver an orientation for the transformation of the 'post-communist countries'. But the EU hardly contributed to the reception of its core values in the new member states. He presented indeed alarming differences regarding the quality of societal circumstances between the EU-15 and the EU-8.<sup>88</sup> The study concluded with: "The focus on the introduction of market economy contributed to a massive growth of inequalities in the region. Social security reforms limited solidarity in pension and health care systems. Economic decline concomitant to the transformation process prevented governments from increasing social spending. Social and civil dialogue started right after the regime changes in all the countries but it still is not as sophisticated as it was before the eastern enlargement in the EU. Consequently, most of the east-central European member states entered the EU with considerable deficits concerning their adjustment to the ESM and they imported a big welfare gap into the Community. This led to a fear of westward welfare migration to the EU-15 member states."<sup>89</sup>

Ferenc Bodi et al started in 2016 a study to compare the current 'welfare' consequences for Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia with the 'welfare circumstances' in four Scandinavian countries. This happened from also the perspective of the SQT. They concluded that notwithstanding the significant economic growth in these first four countries, "the associated low employment still adversely affects the state of the local community.....it is confirmed that

<sup>86</sup> Altorjai, S. and E. Bukodi. 2005. "Social Quality in Hungary: In the Framework of ENIQ.." *European Journal of Social Quality* 5 (1&2): 138-151. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23971894>.

<sup>87</sup> Filipovic, M., S. Mandic, and R. Boski. 2005. "Social Quality in Slovenia: Emergent Individual Risks and Disappearing Fora for Discuss Them." *European Journal of Social Quality* 5 (1&2): 216-231, p-82.. <https://www.jstor.org/Stable/23971899>.

<sup>88</sup> Juhász G. 2006. "Exporting or Pulling Down. The European Social Model and Eastern enlargement of the EU." *European Journal of Social Quality* 6 (1): 82-109. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23971872>

<sup>89</sup> See note-74: pag-105.

employment possibilities and fair income are needed first of all, in a given region for preserving the social capacity and social quality for those living there. In addition to these basic conditions, adequate institutional systems that are able to serve the demands of society in health care and educational services is needed".<sup>90</sup> This also empirical oriented study may deliver a functional reference for Ukrainian scientists and policy-makers.

### *7.3 A thematic issue about CEE-countries: a main contemporary problematic*

Stimulated by NASU, the staff of the IASQ and the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Social Quality have assisted Eastern European scholars to produce a thematic issue about contemporary processes in their countries. It may be regarded as an important elaboration, thus addition to Working Paper 17 (see note-5), and as a strong legitimation for recent paper. This thematic issue builds on the previous work of scholars from these countries, done in the context of the SQT and SQA over the past decades. It opened with a quote from the Financial Times, which referred to the dispute over the rule of law mechanism between the EU and Poland with Hungary. According to this newspaper, the clash between the two sides is widening: "evocations of traditional values also create a narrative that obscures the true nature of the showdowns with Brussels and western EU members. This is over democracy and rule of law; juridical reforms, restrictions on media and erosions of checks and balances that help PIS and Fidesz to entrench themselves in power."<sup>91</sup>

Also with this problematique in mind, the opening of the thematic issue is articulated as follows: "three decades have passed since the fall of the Iron curtain and the series of revolutions that launched a Westward move of the former Eastern Bloc in ideational, institutional, and politico-economic terms. Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), with the post-communist but mostly not soviet states, was at the frontier of change in terms of spatiality and temporality alike. Many of the CEE countries labelled as 'post-communist' (e.g. Hungary, the former Czechoslovakia, the former Yugoslavia, Romania, and Poland) shared the same ideological history but differed from the soviet states because of their statehood and the consequent presence of their state apparatuses. In contrast, some of the states who formed the administrative of the former Soviet Union are also located around Eastern Europe (such as Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the Baltic states). The implications of this difference in institutional heritages remain traceable even as decades have passed, and they

<sup>90</sup> Bodi, F., J.Z. Farkas, and P. Robert. 2017. A Multilevel Approach to Measuring Social Capacity and Quality in a European Context." *International Journal of Social Quality* 7 (2): 30-59, page-55.. <https://doi.org/10.3167/IJSQ.2017.070203>

<sup>91</sup> See note-32: pag- vii-xxi..

remain most notably in the form of various path-dependencies.”<sup>92</sup>

Later in the text a summarize is given to a manifold of traditions, values and norms in this part of Europe. In the Editorial argued is, that “Looking at these past four decades, we can point out major weaknesses in all of these interpretations [of illiberal democracy, Christian-oriented conservatism, nationalism, etc]. Namely:

- The lack of a communicative consensus about these concepts and their ontological and epistemological meaning in the European Union as a whole,
- The lack of a consensus about the similarities of and differences between the older member states and between the states of the CEE region and the overall similarities of and differences between both regions (with many hoping for the gaps to just close and to close quicker), and,
- The lack of an accepted overall analytical framework for understanding the first, for understanding the second, and for understanding their connection.”<sup>93</sup>

#### *7.4 A plea for a Social Quality Observatory for the Central Eastern European region*

In this thematic issue studies are presented about Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Ukraine and the impact of the changing world-order on the situation of the CEE countries (just before the Russian invasion in Ukraine). Most accent is given to the nature of social cohesion as one of the conditional factors of social quality. In the Concluding Remarks of this thematic issue a summarize is made of the SQT and SQA, also in the light of the foregoing articles of this issue. Attention is also given to the further elaboration of the methodological aspects of the SQT for empirical research in the CEE-countries in such a way a more adequate comparison of these countries will be possible. Added to the past social quality studies, in these Concluding Remarks not only the conceptual framework (oriented on the meaning of ‘the social’) and the analytical framework (on the meaning and application of the three sets of social quality factors) came into the spotlights. Also the new procedural framework - namely the attention for processes in and between the four societal dimension as discussed in this recent paper – is introduced. Two years later, the NASU study as the frame of reference for this recent paper made new steps with the development of this procedural framework.”<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See note-32, pag-vii-viii

<sup>93</sup> See note-32, pag-ix.

<sup>94</sup> See note-8.

It is argued, that the final aim of the Concluding Remarks is: “to pave the way for a ‘Social Quality Observatory for the CEE-countries’ so that scholars can follow the ongoing transition in these states from the perspective of SQT and the SQA, as common ‘point of Archimedes’.. This new entity should contributed to a transition which addresses, enhances, and strengthens the five normative factors [ethical principles as mentioned in section 1.2].....these may be a decisive starting point for adjusting the assumptions about and operationalisation of the rule of law for contemporary interhuman relationships – something we need to do to help develop overall sustainability.”<sup>95</sup> This final remark about sustainability refers to the study by Giovanni Polcini.<sup>96</sup> All contributions to this thematic issue endorse this necessity, to go beyond the lack of the three forms of consensus (mentioned above). In the Editorial explicit attention is dedicated to Eastern European scientific considerations about the discourse on political liberalism, economic liberalism, and cultural liberalism. It concerns often “heterodox perspectives which deem such arbitrary distinction as detrimental to the study of a phenomenon. ....From a societal perspective, social quality scholars make instead a distinction between the four dimensions of societal circumstances – in the context of several conceptual and analytical frameworks – offering a possibly more appropriate alternative.”<sup>97</sup> With this invasion, the ethical principles have been rudely trampled. Under these circumstances, a lasting lack of above-mentioned consensus is crippling in the long term for the cohesion of European countries. And importantly, to play a solidly orchestrated global role in promoting the overall sustainability.

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<sup>95</sup> Van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2020. “Concluding Remarks. A ‘Social Quality Observatory’ for 7 (2)Central and Eastern European Countries?” *International Journal of Social Quality*, 10 (2) 113-138; pag-114. Doi:10.316/IJSQ.2020.100209.

<sup>96</sup> Polcini, G. T. 2017. “The Rule of Law as a Condition for Development toward Sustainability: Toward a New Legally Oriented Environment at a Global Level.” *International Journal of Social Quality*, 7 (2), 113-137. Doi:10.3167/ijsq.2017.070206.

<sup>97</sup> See note-32: pag-xi.