



International Association on Social Quality
Bredeweg 20-1
1098 BR Amsterdam
Ph:+ 31.20. 6654923
Email: info@socialquality.org
IBAN NL 47 RABO 0142767107
KvK 41216943
www.socialquality.org

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

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Laurent van der Maesen and Alan Walker

International Association on Social Quality (IASQ)

1. Introduction

1.1 The working-paper's purpose

Originally the following text was prepared as a chapter of the third main book by the European Foundation on Social Quality, with which to elaborate the Foundation's second book.¹ Decided is to publish it as the Foundation's working-paper nr.5. Parts of it will be used in the third book.² This text follows also a previous analysis by both authors³ and refers as well to the first presentation of the development and application of social quality indicators in fourteen European countries.⁴ The paper's purpose is to pave the way for a comparison with current approaches in Western countries and Asian countries as the quality of life, social capital, human security, the capability theory and social harmony. Such a comparison may be of interest for knowing the different value bases and theoretical points of departure with which to make choices what to use for which circumstances. This is the case in the recent study by Phillips, who presents an interesting overview of specific targets, value-orientations, focus, scope and purposes of these approaches.⁵ His study is helpful for our reflection. Notwithstanding this, such a comparison is not our intent. The working-paper's function is to better understand the specific characteristics of the social quality approach and the nature and function of social quality indicators by exploring other approaches. In other words, this exercise may be appreciated as an endeavour to sharpen our own thoughts, not to deliver an exhaustive overview of the manifold of approaches or to make judgements about their relevancy. This exercise is important for deepening the social quality approach and to answer the questions, why it differs (if it does), and for who and why this is important? We know, the quality of life approaches has first taken an increasingly prominent place in policymaking and debates in the European Union. Thanks to the World Bank the social capital became especially important in the USA, Canada, and Scandinavian countries. The human security discourses – connected with the human development policies - are put on the agenda of the United Nations and stimulated by Asian investments as well. The capability theory is presented by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum and it plays an important role in American and Asian debates. Finally, the social harmony ideas are important for addressing current Chinese questions. Our hypothesis is, that the social quality approach will add something new.

¹ W. A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A.C. Walker, *Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*, The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2001.

² L.J.G. van der Maesen, A.C. Walker (eds) , *Social Quality Indicators and Current Global Challenges* (working title), forthcoming by MacMillan 2010. In this working-paper we will refer to contributions by Wolfgang Beck, Peter Herrmann and David Phillips to the third book, as well as contributions by Des Gasper.

³ A.C. Walker, L.J.G. van der Maesen, *Social Quality and Quality of Life*, in: W. Glazer, S. von Below, M. Stoffregen (eds), *Challenges for Quality of Life in the Contemporary World*, The Hague: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004, pp. 13-31.

⁴ D. Gordon, L.J.G. van der Maesen (eds), *Indicators of Social Quality: Application in Fourteen European Countries*, *The European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 5 (2005), Issues 1&2 (300 pages).

⁵ D. Phillips, *Quality of Life: Concept, Policy and Practice*, London/New York: Routledge, 2006. In this study he also incorporates the social quality approach.

In the recent past the Foundation was invited by Asian scholars to present the social quality approach in Asia. This resulted in three Asian conferences on social quality and the start of the development and application of social quality indicators in different Asian countries.⁶ Thanks to this intense collaboration with Asian scholars the adherents of the social quality approach are also explicitly invited to reflect on the meaning of the human security discourses. Recently a working-paper is published to start with answering this invitation which will also function as an important pillar of this chapter.⁷ This attention will be important for the reorientation of the social quality approach to global questions and for paving the way for collaboration with international institutes. With this in mind it makes sense to summarize some common aspects. According to Gasper, they share a human focus, a focus on the well-being of persons, rather than a primary focus on 'the economy', the sphere of monetary values. They also dispose of an explicit normative basis, beyond values as expressed only through wants backed by purchasing power in markets. Both have a strong multidimensionality in their conception of human well-being rather than a reduction to a single denominator of money or utility. They are characterised by a holistic analytical style which leads to concerns about interconnections which can overstep boundaries for contributing to sustainability.⁸ Finally, a preliminary start is made with the introduction of social harmony. For Chinese scholars the question is raised if the social quality approach may contribute to current policies for applying the principles of social harmony to modern circumstances.⁹

For understanding the meaning of different approaches for international, national and regional policies, we cannot suffice with reflecting theoretical questions (the dimension of the ontology). Needed is also to start with a tentative exploration of methodological questions (the dimension of the epistemology). This is important for the European context because the current investments in the quality of life approaches and its indicators in this continent. See for example the extensive work by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. It carried out the first European quality of life survey in 28 countries, the current 27 member states of the EU and Turkey. They led to the creation of a harmonised database of information obtained from some 26.257 respondents. On the basis of this work it has been engaged in more in-depth analysis of key components of quality of life.¹⁰ This work is legitimized by the European Commission. It says, that economic openness drives the innovation and productivity growth that in turn creates the jobs and prosperity on which well-being and a better *quality of life* ultimately depend. Not explained is what they mean with quality of life.¹¹ Methodological questions are even relevant for the human security approach. The question is raised, if they are really adequate for a comprehensive interpretation of current challenges in for example

⁶ L.J.G. van der Maesen, H. Verkleij, *Working-paper nr.4: An Overview of Strategies to Develop the Social Quality Approach in Europe and Asia during 2007 and 2008*, The Hague: EFSQ, October 2009. (www.socialquality.org).

⁷ D. Gasper, L.J.G. van der Maesen, Th. Truong, A.C. Walker, *Human Security and Social Quality: Contrasts and Complementarities*, The Hague: ISS, Working Paper Series no. 462, November 2008 (www.isse.nl).

⁸ D. Gasper, *The Human and the Social: A Comparative Framework and an Initial Systematised Comparison of the Discourses of Human Development, Human Security and Social Quality*, The Hague: ISS, June 2009.

⁹ Ch. K. Wong, *Comparing Social Quality and Social Harmony by a Governance Perspective: A Manuscript on behalf of the Third Asian Conference on Social Quality in Nanjing*, Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, October 2008.

¹⁰ M. Daly, R. Rose, *First European Quality of Life Survey: key findings from a policy perspective*, Dublin: EFILWC, 2007, p-1.

¹¹ R. Liddle, F. Lerais, *A Consultation Paper from the Bureau of European Policy Advisers: Europe's Social Reality*, Brussels: EC's Bureau of European Policy Advisers, 2007.

in for example South East Asia and to present an alternative for the lack of sustainability in this part of the world and the present global system.¹²

1.2 The content

In the second section we will present relevant aspects of the history of quality of life approaches for trying to understand the current state of affairs of this school. We will refer to the work done by ZUMA from the University of Mannheim which will be a help for this exploration. In the third section we will introduce the theory of social capital. This approach has a number of different strands as clearly explained by Phillips.¹³ Compared to the quality of life school the operationalisation and application of monitoring the change of social capital in societies by indicators will not add new insights. Especially its political philosophical aspects are important for a comparison with the social quality approach. As will be hypothesised, the current operationalisation is entangled in power relations, thus subordinated to strategies of governance for disciplining people instead of stimulating democratic based relations, thus the empowerment of citizens. In the fourth section we will reflect on the theoretical complementarity of the human security discourses and the social quality approach. In a friendly critic of human security discourses, the absent of theorising the social as well as the absence of a global consensus of its definition may be seen as a stimulus for the debate what human security discourse and social quality approach has to offer each other. In the fifth section follows a first exploration of the capability theory by Sen and Nussbaum which may be appreciated as an important point of reference for the human development and human security themes. This section will be completed with preliminary ideas about the complementarity of social harmony and the social quality approach for understanding the current Chinese political ambitions. As Wong argues, the concept of harmony in general and social harmony in specific are rich and should offer new understanding to tackle actual issues, also environmental ones. Notwithstanding this they distinctly lacks a modern institutional perspective at the moment.¹⁴

1.3 Preliminary remark

As explained in the working-paper on human security and social quality (note-7) the recent theorising of social quality resulted into the construction of its 'architecture', see Figure-1. A distinction is made between the three factors of social quality and their methods for respectively the valuation (profiles), measuring (indicators), and judging (criteria). This is based on the outcomes of theorizing the concept of 'the social'. All the twelve concepts are based on the outcomes of this theorizing and therefore intrinsically related to each other. This theme concerns the heart of the matter of the Foundation's third book. We will present this architecture in order to deepening the proposed comparisons.

Figure-1 The social quality architecture

¹² Y. Mine, *Globalization, Difference, and Human Security: A major International Conference*, Osaka: Osaka University, 2008.

¹³ D. Phillips, note-5

¹⁴ Ch.K.Wong, note-9.

Constitutional factors (processes)	conditional factors (opportunities + contingencies)	normative factors (orientation)
personal (human) security social recognition social responsiveness personal (human) capacity [profiles for the valuation of the nature of these factors]	socio-economic security social cohesion social inclusion social empowerment [indicators for measuring the nature of these factors]	social justice (equity) solidarity equal valuation human dignity [criteria for judging the outcomes of the linking of the constitutional and conditional factors]

This concerns a new theoretical endeavour in social and economic sciences of to-day in West and East. In for example the European discourse most of the concepts are used but without a clear definition and without explaining their interrelationships in a theoretical sense. In our case, social cohesion or social empowerment are theoretically related with socio-economic security or social inclusion as well with the different constitutional and normative factors. Therefore social cohesion as well as social empowerment may be understood as aspects of a theoretically well-grounded context. All conditional factors are divided in domains and sub-domains. They are also theoretical connected with the conceptualisation of 'the social'. The social quality indicators concern the sub-domains.

2 The quality of life approaches

2.1 Its origin

In contrast to the very recently arrived concept of social quality, the study of quality of life has a long tradition in the social and related sciences.¹⁵ Pigou was the first scientist to mention the term 'quality of life' in the context of discussion of economics and welfare, a decade before the Second World War. He was writing about government welfare provision for the lower classes and the way it is affected by work: '*First, non-economic welfare is liable to be modified by the manner in which income is earned. For the surroundings of work react upon the quality of life*'.¹⁶ The intention was to develop an alternative to the more and more questionable concept of the affluent society.¹⁷ The term then disappeared for nearly two decades. It resurfaced in the USA at the latter part of the Second World

¹⁵ A.C. Walker, L.J.G. van der Maesen, note-3.

¹⁶ A.C. Pigou, *The Economics of Welfare*, London: Macmillan and co, 1929, p-14.

¹⁷ R. Berger-Schmitt, B. Jankowitsch, *Systems of Social Indicators and Social Reporting: The State of the Art*, Mannheim: ZUMA, Working Paper no. 1, 1999.

War when it was used to imply the good life or material wealth as indicated by ownership of houses, consumer goods and cars.¹⁸ In the 1950s the Eisenhower Commission on National Goals began the task of trying to measure life quality and the results revealed different environmental and social influences.¹⁹ The term 'quality of life' was used in the report by the President's Commission, published in the mid-1960s.²⁰ This was the beginning of the social indicators movement in the US which was intended to provide regular reports on social progress in order to inform the planning and evaluation of welfare policy. An important international impetus to quality of life research was the expansion by the WHO of its definition of health to include physical, emotional and social well-being, which also broadened the discussion about the measurement of this new approach to health.

Most of the early social research into quality of life was done in the US and focused on satisfaction, happiness and well-being. A theoretical model of quality of life as 'the good life' was first proposed by Lawton who defined it as behavioral competence, the objective environment and perceived quality of life.²¹ In the UK research was dominated, until recently, by health and health-related issues and, within that field, economic assessments of quality of life have been particularly influential.²² The best known example is the Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALY) measure, which uses health professional definitions of the constituents of quality of life in order to assess the value of clinical interventions. In this context we may also refer to the World Health Organization's 'QOL'. In this context Skevington especially addresses the question of objective and subjective indicators. According to her, the QOL-approach with regard to health and health care interventions concerns perceptions of patients. Therefore their quality of life cannot be measured with objective indicators because it is a subjective experience.²³ It is only in the last decade that the perspectives of the people - especially patients and service users - have been brought more fully into research on quality of life by the development of so-called subjective indicators which put individuals at the centre of judgments about the quality of their own lives. As remarked in the previous chapter indicators are neither objective nor subjective but they register measurable items.

A very well-known example is the Schedule for the Evaluation of Individual Quality of Life (SEIQoL) which operates by eliciting from respondents those aspects of life which are considered to be crucial to the overall quality of life.²⁴ Thus, in contrast to normative measures of health-related quality of life, which reflect the judgments of researchers and a disease-oriented model of quality of life, it is the

¹⁸ L. Fallofield, *The Quality of Life: The Missing Measurement in Health Care*, London: Souvenir Press, 1990.

¹⁹ J. P. Oliver, P. Huxley, K. Bridges, H. Mohamed, *Quality of Life and Mental Health Services*, London: Routledge, 1996.

²⁰ S. Wood-Dauphine, *Assessing Quality of Life in Clinical Research. From Where Have we Come and Where Are we Going?*, *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 52 (1999), pages-355-63.

²¹ M. P. Lawton, Environment and Other Determinants of Well-being in Older People, *The Gerontologist*, 23 (1983), pp 349-57.

²² A. Bowling, *Measuring Disease*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995.

²³ S.M. Skevington, Measuring Quality of Life in Britain: Introducing the WHOQOL-100, *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, Vol. 47, No. 5 (1999), pages 449-459, see p-450. She especially addresses the question of objective and subjective indicators. Because the QOL-approach concerning health and health care interventions concern perceptions of the patient, she argues that the quality of life cannot be measured with objective indicators because it is a subjective experience, p-450.

²⁴ C. O'Boyle, H. McGee, H. Hicky, C. Joyce, K. O'Malley, *The Schedule for the Evaluation of Individual Quality of Life*, Dublin: Department of Psychology, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, 1993.

individual concerned that rates the importance of different elements. Nonetheless there is plenty of room for distortion in the operation of scales such as SEIQoL, caused for example by the location of the interview, the expectations generated by the study and the cumulative effects of the previous questions (Bond, 1999). The simple direct method of asking members of the public themselves what is most important in their lives has been used surprisingly little in this field. Bowling was one of the first in the UK and she asked a random sample of 2000 adults what they regarded as important in their lives.²⁵ People taking part in the research were asked open ended questions about the most important things in their lives. They could mention as many as they wanted but only five responses were coded. Respondents then chose show cards to represent the five most important things and these items were recorded. Free responses and coded selections were found to be quite consistent. People were then asked to organise the mentioned items 'in rank order of importance'.²⁶ The results were, in priority order, relationships with family and relatives, the person's health, the health of another (close) person and finances/standard of living/housing. When all the various priority areas were combined the most frequently mentioned aspect was the material one (finances etc.) followed by relationships with family and friends. This research demonstrated that several of those items regarded by the general public as important to their quality of life do not feature in the most commonly used assessments of health status.

Due to the huge attention in the health care sector as well, the main stream of the behavioural sciences has turned its empirical interest to individual perspectives on 'quality of life'. This can be seen as a way to address the question what 'the' quality of life might be from a scientific perspective, trying to avoid political and normative issues. This research has been conducted world-wide and produced numerous descriptions of 'quality of life', as can for instance be gathered from the many thousand titles of publications.²⁷ Impressive in quantitative output as this research paradigm appears to be, it shows, overwhelmingly, the many different individual responses to many different questions. These responses do not point in a common direction. More importantly, they presuppose different social and cultural contexts, which cannot be methodically explored in this research program. While it does show the enormous diversity of individual perspectives, this paradigm reproduces, moreover, a basic obstacle to arrive at a perspective of the quality of the social, as it takes the perspectives of isolated individuals as the ultimate reality.

2.2 The multiplicity of the quality of life school

As noticed above, there is a wide variety of attempts to operationalise the assessment of quality of life. At one end of the spectrum is the Scandinavian approach which has focused on objective living

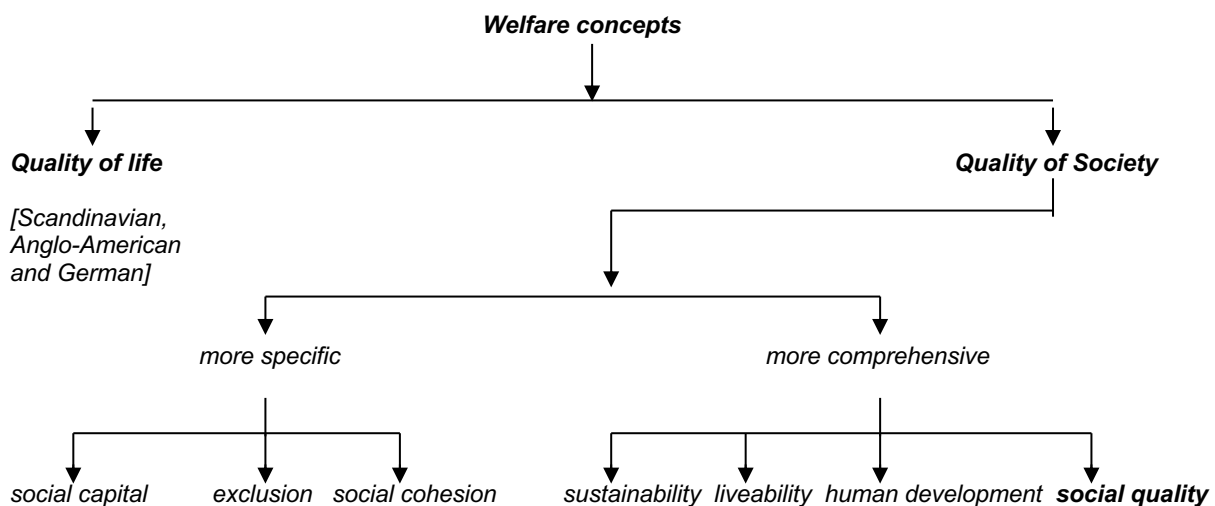
²⁵ A. Bowling, What Things are Important in People's Lives? A Survey of the Public's Judgements to Inform Scales of Health Related Quality of Life, *Social Science and Medicine*, 412, 10 (1995), pages 1447-62.

²⁶ A. Bowling, note-25, p-1451.

²⁷ See for example the website of the Australian Center on Quality of Life of the Deakin University.

conditions²⁸, whilst at the other end, the American Quality of Life approach has emphasised the subjective evaluation of psychological well-being and individual need satisfaction.²⁹ The approach developed by Fahey, Nolan and Whelan for the Dublin Foundation encompasses both objective and subjective dimensions³⁰, as do those of Zapf and colleagues³¹ and the ZUMA model developed by Berger-Schmitt and Noll.³² The diversity of approaches within the quality of life school is therefore primarily limited to discussions about measurement in objective or subjective terms. Moreover, these discussions often relate to relatively minor methodological issues as opposed to different political and theoretical standpoints found in approaches to concepts such as social capital. Especially the ZUMA quality of life model is a sophisticated attempt to both conceptualise and measure quality of life. Its conceptual framework moves beyond the empirical and is based on three concepts: quality of life, social cohesion, and sustainability. The purpose is according Berger-Schmitt and Noll 'to measure and analyse changes in the welfare of European citizens using theoretically and methodologically well-grounded indicators derived from an overarching conceptual framework'.³³ Based on these arguments they present the following overview and relationships of approaches

Figure-2: ZUMA's presentation of the relations between welfare concepts



ZUMA's orientation has a lot of affinity with the social quality approach and therefore it is closer to the social quality approach than most of the others within the quality of life school. Although, the theoretical framework which has been developed by them is not really addressing the questions raised

²⁸ R. Erikson, Descriptions of Inequality: The Swedish Approach to Welfare Research, in: M. Nussbaum, A. Sen (eds): *The Quality of Life*: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pages 67-83.

²⁹ M. Argyle, Subjective Well-Being, in: A. Offer (ed), *In Pursuit of the Quality of Life*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, pages 18-45.

³⁰ T. Fahey, B. Nolan, C.T. Whelan, *A Proposal for the Future Activities on Living Conditions and Quality of Life*, Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2002, p-2.

³¹ W. Zapf, Individuelle Wohlfart: Lebensbedingungen und wahrgenommene Lebensqualität, in: W. Glatzer, W. Zapf (HRSG), *Lebensqualität in dr Bundesrepublik: Objektive Lebensbedingungen und subjektives Wohlbefinden*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1994.

³² R. Berger-Schmitt, H.H. Noll, *Conceptual Framework and Structure of a European System of Social Indicators*, Mannheim: ZUMA, EuReporting Working Paper, No.9, 2000.

³³ R. Berger-Schmitt, H.H. Noll, note-32, p-64.

by, for example Denis Raphael about the different ontological based propositions, determining the essence of the used theoretical orientation. He says, that an eclectic combination of aspects of different conceptual frameworks prevents an understanding of our daily reality. And this is the case with the application of the concept of 'quality of life' as happens in the health promotion approach, stimulated by the WHO. He notices a fundamental lack of agreement about the concept itself. According to Raphael, the quality of life has an intuitive importance that makes it vulnerable to influence and manipulation by political trends and policies, and it is used in extremely diverse context. He distinguishes between:

'first, positivist approaches predominate among all approaches to quality of life. Not surprisingly, then, evaluation activity in the field usually emphasises traditional approaches to scientific inquiring (...) Second, idealist or interpretative approaches see the individual as an active creation of the social world, and society as resulting from the actions of individuals within social structure (...) Third, realist approaches are less frequently considered, and differ in many ways from positivist and idealist approaches. Like positivists, realists believe that objects and events exist in the world independent of the meanings created by individuals, but, like idealists, they believe that human beings can create and modify the realities within which they live (...) Fourth, participatory approaches oppose traditional ones.³⁴

Of interest is to notice, that Raphael made this unusual and, according to us, very heuristic distinction between different conceptual frameworks and its consequences for research and policies. He underpins the ambition as expressed in the Foundation's third main book about a serious exploration of the ontological and epistemological aspects of approaches for determining adequate indicators.

As said, ZUMA combines objective living conditions and the enhancement of subjective well-being, with quality of life as the overarching perspective of observation and measurement. This approach is embedded in the EuReporting project, initiated by Habich, Zapf and Noll, which is at the forefront of the endeavour to create robust social indicators for the systematic monitoring of living conditions and quality of life. This European Framework Five research project also led to the creation of Euromodule, a core set of survey questions to provide comparative data on living standards and quality of life in European countries.³⁵ In constructing the European System of Social Indicators the EuReporting project followed the ZUMA approach, which in turn reflects the tradition of the quality of life school, and focused on life domains. Thus a comprehensive system of indicators was constructed covering 13 life domains - such as housing, transport, health, environment and public safety and crime – with an additional one for total life situations.³⁶ Zuma's figure (see above) distinguishes between concepts which focus on individual quality of life (the quality of life) and those that emphasise the distribution of welfare and social relations or the quality of communities (quality of society). According to ZUMA, there is a substantial overlap between these concepts. But this overlap, particularly the relationship between the 'new' concepts and the quality of life approach, has not been clarified. This is also appropriate to his interpretation of the concept of social quality. As a consequence their diagrammatic

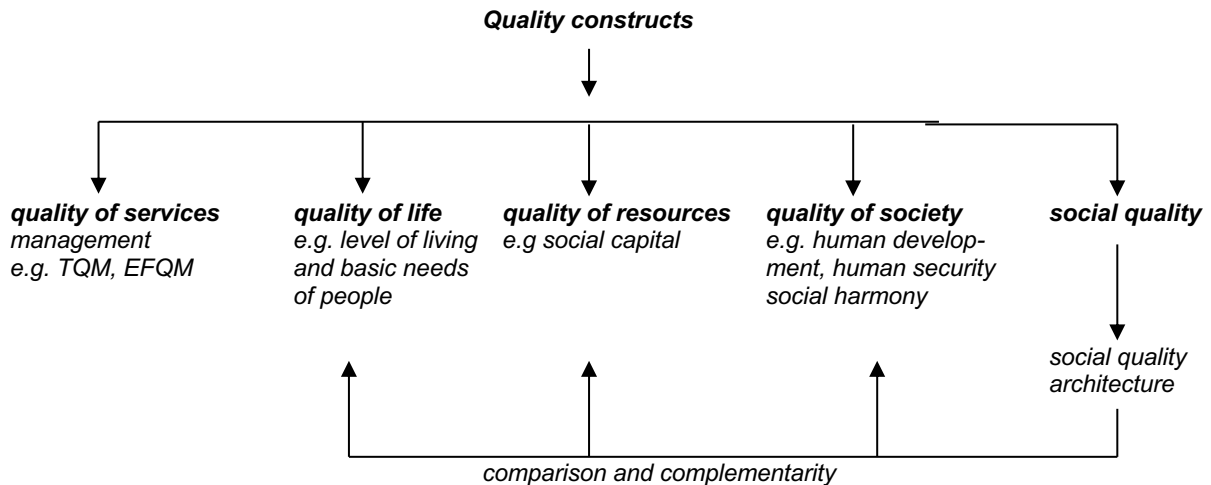
³⁴ D. Raphael, Evaluation of Quality-of-Life Initiatives in Health Promotion, in: I. Rootman et al (eds), *Evaluation on Health Promotion: Principles and Perspectives*, Copenhagen: WGO, Regional Publications, European Series, No. 92, 2001, p-126.

³⁵ P. Böhnke, R. Habich, W. Zapf, *The Euromodule*, Berlin: Social Science Research Center, 2001.

³⁶ R. Berger-Schmitt, H.H. Noll, note-32.

classification of social quality as a 'quality of society' concept - see Figure 2 - which attempts to integrate social cohesion, social exclusion and human development under a common perspective, is misleading. In social quality it is the dynamic interaction or dialectic of people's self-realization with the formation of collective identities creates the nature of the social, as presented in the Foundation's second book³⁷ and as will be elaborated in the Foundation's third book.³⁸ In our opinion a more appropriate representation is shown in the following figure:

Figure-3: Quality constructs for research and policy making



We may summarise the difference with the previous figure as follows. First, themes as exclusion, social cohesion, sustainability, or liveability are discussed as topics in most approaches. Therefore they do not function as point of departure for the distinction between main approaches. Second, all five approaches include comprehensive as well as specific aspects. In our opinion also this distinction – and see Figure 2 - has not a heuristic meaning for the discrimination of different approaches. Third - and see Figure-1 illustrating the social quality architecture – the social quality does not regard the quality of society, but the quality of human relationships, as demonstrated in the nature of the constitutional factors and the conditional factors, the way they are linked and the outcomes of the judgement of this linking by the normative factors. This regards the continuum of people's individual position and actions till societal structures and conventions. In this working-paper we are interested in the second, third and fourth quality constructs.

2.3 Theoretical questions

Before Raphael, many experts in the field of quality of life studies have themselves already noted the lack of theoretical foundations underlying the concept of for example: Hörquist³⁹, Gill and Feinstein⁴⁰,

³⁷ See note-1.

³⁸ See note-2.

³⁹ J.O. Hörquist, The concept of Quality of Life, *Scandinavian Journal of Social Medicine*, 10 (1982), pages-57-61.

⁴⁰ T.M. Gill, A.R. Feinstein, *A Critical Appraisal of Quality of Life Measurement*, New York: Human Sciences Press, 1994.

Bowling⁴¹, Farquar⁴², and Hunt⁴³. As a result, in practice there are many definitions and formulations of quality of life (as in the case of social capital) which contrast with the single unified social quality approach. In the absence of the vital source of coherence provided by a theoretical framework quality of life can easily become a reflection of the researcher's preferences. This means assembling the required number of life domains and, although there are usually common dimensions, such as health, financial resources and social network, the list may vary considerably from project to project. Of course this fit for purpose aspect of quality of life can be an advantageous source of flexibility but it results in a lack of consistency and comparability in quality of life studies. There is a danger too, in contrast to the social quality approach, that existing social relations and structures are taken-for-granted aspects of the assessment of quality of life rather than being analysed critically. There is also a tendency in research to treat quality of life as a fixed concept that is made up different domains. The theoretical framework which underpins quality of life approach is individualistic and in most cases not discussed at all. Indeed, some of the quality of life adherents seem to be actively avoiding any in-depth theoretical discussion. For example, in their justification of utilizing an analytical as well as descriptive approach in the European wide surveys by the European Foundation on Working and Living Conditions, Fahey et al argue, that: '*an analytical approach to social and economic processes can generate knowledge that contribute to the policy making process without the need to become bogged down in philosophical discussions of causality*'⁴⁴. Because the overall orientation on individualistic based phenomenon and herewith related opinions of people the quality of life school is in definition not oriented to (i) processes for increasing the competence to act, (ii) the societal conditions for applying this competence for continuing or changing these conditions and (iii) processes for judging the outcomes according to ethical standards. With this in mind we may summarise the essential difference with the social quality approach as follows.

Thanks to its theorising of the transformation of social relations, the social quality is concerned with relational issues. The focus lies – in contrast to the mainstream of 'quality of life' approaches – on the relationship of human beings to each other and the way they are – as individuals – depending on and contributing to a wider set of relations. In other words it is in difference to the 'quality of life' approaches process-oriented. This will deliver a real point of departure for contributing to public policies for establishing and defending sustainable welfare societies and a clear role for responsible citizens. For understanding social relationships the social quality approach develops deductively the concept of 'the social', the three mechanisms or factors influencing the quality of the social, the related twelve concepts of its architecture (see Figure 1) which are intrinsically connected with each other. Finally it is attempting to link this theory of the social to empirical realities through the use of domains

⁴¹ A. Bowling, *Measuring Health: A Review of Quality of Life Measurement Scales*, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1997.

⁴² M. Farquar, Elderly People's of Quality of Life, *Social Science and Medicine*, 41 (1995), pages 1439-1446.

⁴³ S.M. Hunt, *The Problem of Quality of Life, Quality of Life Research*, 6 (1997), pages 205-212.

⁴⁴ T. Fahey et al, note-30, p-1.

sub/domains and indicators that are specifically constructed to reflect the quality of the social of empirical realities.⁴⁵ One of the obvious criticism of the results of the many-headed quality of life school is the lack of a close fit between the theoretical and the empirical. Also lacking is a comprehensive interpretation with which to connect the theoretically applied concepts in a logical way. For example they not really address the question raised by Raphael about the different ontological based propositions and the consequences for analysing the so-called quality of life of people.⁴⁶

In Phillips' study about quality of life, an extensive presentation is given about the state of the art of the this topic. And in this context he also discussed the social quality approach. More or less in the same way as Noll cs – see Figure 2 - he classified this approach as a 'societal quality of life construct' or an 'overarching quality of life approach' with a:

*'strong commitment to high levels of social cohesion based on egalitarianism and social justice. This basis is of course, ideologically controversial: from some ideological perspective egalitarianism is not necessarily a suitable goal (...) in the next chapter these attributes are explored further in the context of a radical and controversial thesis that not only are these attributes ideologically worthwhile and incremental to quality of life in general but they are also causal factors in societies achieving high quantity of life too – in other words that is not in the richest but in the most socially cohesive and egalitarian societies that people live longer and healthier lives.'*⁴⁷

Phillips does not really reflect upon the consequences of theorising the social and the herewith related suppositions about people as social beings, for understanding the relevant differences with quality of life approaches. According to Denis Bouget, because the dialectic between processes of people's self-realisation and the formation of collective identities as source of 'the social', not social cohesion but especially social empowerment plays a crucial role in the social quality approach.⁴⁸ In terms of Herrmann:

*'empowerment is understood as the extent to which the personal capabilities of individual people and their ability to act are enhanced by social relations. On the one hand, empowerment is very much one of the objective factors, dealing with the conditions of individual acts and actions (...) on the other hand, however, empowerment has the most pronounced function as far as it centres on action by individuals, at the same time clearly relating the individuals' action to others.'*⁴⁹

In the manifold of 'quality of life approaches' we recognise a subjectivation of empowerment. Rather than understanding empowerment as a matter of the dynamic interaction or dialectic of structures and action, it is interpreted as a matter of self-esteem and abilities. Herrmann argues that empowerment is individualised; neither societal structures nor even the power of the individual with regard to the own social situation are seen as a matter of interest.

2.4 Methodological questions

⁴⁵ A.C. Walker et al, note-3, p-26.

⁴⁶ D. Raphael, note-34.

⁴⁷ D. Phillips, note-5, p-190.

⁴⁸ D. Bouget, The Empirical and Policy Relevance of Social Quality, in: W.A.Beck , L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A.C. Walker, *Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*, The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2001, pages-105-124.

⁴⁹ P. Herrmann, Empowerment: The Core of Social Quality, The European Journal of Social Quality, Vol. 5 (2005), Issues 1&2, pages 289-300, p. 289.

For a better understanding the specificity of epistemological position of the social quality approach it is also of interest to compare this with the methodological aspects of the quality of life approaches. Both being concerned with quality, the one to the quality of the social and the other to the quality of specific aspects of daily life of individuals. With regard to the methodological differences four questions can be made. First, how do both approaches develop their scientific position in social-philosophical sense. Second, how do they cope with the concept of the social as point of departure. Third, how do they understand quality. Fourth, how do they determine quality. This theme also refers to Herrmann's recent work.⁵⁰

Turning to the first question we already referred to the conclusion by Raphael. According to him, the adherents of quality of life school prefer a pragmatic way of working. Not bothering the underlying assumptions they refer explicitly and mostly implicitly to different conceptual frameworks without explaining the consequences. The social quality approach insists on the articulation of its ontological position and the herewith related epistemological orientation. Also many other experts in the field of quality of life studies have themselves noted the lack of theoretical foundations underlying the concept. Indeed, as we noticed above and as well in the third chapter, some of the quality of life adherents seem to be actively avoiding any in-depth theoretical discussion. They restrict themselves to exclusive inductive based explorations.

With regard to the second question we may notice, that in general sense the adherents of the quality of life school propose to understand the social as a matter of a supply, and at most as the responsibility of society and communities to support the other. Furthermore they suppose the social as the availability of material and other resources for people to participate in relationships with others. For the social quality approach, however, the understanding of the social is genuinely about people's relationships in every day's situations and their own capacity to act within these relationships. Here the reference should be made to the different modes of appropriation, as will be done in addressing the fourth question. It is not really about seeing the difference between the two approaches as a matter of the one being individualist and the other not. Rather it is about the interpretation of the social.

Third, the quality of life school, though not explicitly presented, starts from a definition of quality as (i) a matter of available resources and (ii) the emphasis of the qualitative leap, suggesting that the availability of a certain amount of resources 'makes quality'. Such an understanding is not only based on the primary reference made to resources but as well by the reference to some abstract understanding of well-being. Again the point in question is not so much if this is an individualist approach or an approach with a social dimension. What is at the heart of the difference is the way of deriving this reference. It is based on some kind of natural law, seeing it as given by God, nature and/or defining it in the form of a social contract. In this context quality then is a 'social fact' in the Durkheimian understanding. Compared to this for the social quality theory the question of quality

⁵⁰ P. Herrmann, *Social Professional Activities and the State*, New York: Nova Science Publisher, 2007, pages 116-122 and 177-191.

concerns a categorical matter, starting neither from the reference to resources nor from the reference to well-being. Rather, at stake is the human being acting in every day's life situations. In other words, primary reference is made (i) to action and (ii) to a thus established relationship between acting people rather the relationship between resources and people. Resources play a role, of course; however they play a role only in terms of conditional factors, not constituting by themselves any kind of quality.

The fourth question concerns the determination of quality. The matter in question is that the theory of social quality is considering any qualitative leap as the possible impact of resources not *on* the individual, as the adherents of the quality of life would suggest. Instead here we are dealing with the impact of resources for the individual on his/her capacity to act. This is as well the reason for understanding empowerment as a conditional factor. The determinants of quality are not concerned with the supply of goods, services etc as such. Rather, they are concerned with the constitution of an 'environment', of relations between goods and services that allow the individual to define him/herself in relation to others. According to Herrmann, this reflects in some regard the Weberian and as well Husserlian emphasis of meaning. However, both Weber and Husserl go astray as they follow constructivist considerations, thus largely neglecting the objective dimension. Quality of life-studies follow largely such phenomenological slant. Therefore they pay much attention to the so-called subjective indicators. In the social quality theory subjective indicators refer to a *contradictio in terminis*. What is suggested by the theory of social quality is the view on: (i) the individual as acting being, (ii) under conditions which are found and which are defined as relationships of things and doings, and (iii) appropriating the situation in the sense of making the best out of it, not least by changing them and delving into the given field, getting engaged and being part of it. Thus, the constructivist dimension is only a matter as far as it is concerned with ascending the ladder of appropriation, namely: (i) appropriation as taking in possession, (ii) as division and distribution, (iii) as comprehension and arrangement, (iv) and finally as utilisation.⁵¹

For understanding the question of the used methodologies (and related methods), the scope of quality of life is potentially vast, comprising a potentially endless list of domains and indicators of all possible objective, subjective and normative 'domains', whereas social quality distinguishes sharply between the (i) conditional, (ii) constitutional and (iii) normative dimensions and relate its indicators to a restricted set of sub-domains of the conditional factors, see Figure 1. The tri-partite uniqueness of this selection process is based on the boundary set by each factor. Its essential focus or essence and the nature of 'the social' embedded in each domain, sub-domain of the conditional factors will be recognised by the indicators of the sub-domains of these conditional factors. Furthermore it will apply profiles for the qualification of the constitutional factors, namely the emotional, cognitive and rational aspects. Finally, it will use the criteria in order to judge – from a normative aspect – the outcomes of linking conditional and constitutional factors. According to the advocates of the social quality approach, this will deliver real points of departure for comparative research for determining the

⁵¹ P. Herrmann, EC-Integration and the Paradox of Modernity, in: P. Herrmann, *European Integration between Institution building and Social Process. Contribution to a Theory of Modernisation and NGOs in the Context of the Development of the EU*, New York: Nova Science, 1998, pages 33-61, p-38.

similarities and differences between, for example, the Member States of the European Union or Asian countries and between European and Asian countries.⁵² This goes beyond the description and comparison of a set of indicators across time and countries. In terms of measurement the quality of life approaches attempt cannot move beyond a description and comparison of a set of indicators across time and countries because its theoretical state of affairs.

Also, in contrast to quality of life, social quality has an openly political or ideological dimension – being linked to a vision of social relations where social action will be enabled to unfold. However this does not mean that quality of life is an apolitical concept: it entails value judgements regardless of the attempts to portray it as neutral. For the quality of life school indicators are used to measure changes over time and to compare the quality of life between different countries and between individuals within each of the countries. There is an attempt to utilize indicators which can help in the evaluation of policy interventions through both descriptive and analytical monitoring, and through the use of objective and subjective data sources. While some attempt is made to make judgments on what the resulting data sources mean for the quality of life of citizens, the subjective nature of many of the variables mean that there is room for political debate and negotiation. Some may believe for example, that an increase in the proportion of children under the age of five being care for in a nursery setting is beneficial, while others will see it as detrimental. The same variable, in a social quality setting will have a normative judgement attached to it, although at the present time some of these normative judgment are to be elaborated further.

2.5 An example of the quality of life approach

In this section a comparison is made between the applied methodologies and methods of the social quality approach and quality of life approaches (and implicitly with the social capital approaches). Recently the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (EFILWC) published a report with which we may underpin our suppositions about the differences. This report concerns the first European quality of life survey, oriented on the theme of participation in civil society. By discussing shortly the document's conclusions and the steps made for reaching these conclusions we may underpin the rational of this working-paper, thus the specificity of the social quality approach. The concept civil society refers, if we make an adequate interpretation of the document, to formal and informal civil society organisations which play a role in the world of political systems. According to Rose, they empower individuals by amplifying their voice and their interests. Democratic governments

⁵² Since the second Asian conference on Social Quality, held in Taiwan 2007, an Asian research-group is constituted with support by the National Taiwan University. Its purpose is to analyse the outcomes of the social quality indicators by the European Network of Social Quality Indicators (see note-4) and to elaborate these indicators for making them suitable for Asian circumstances. A first reflection about the work done by this research-group is published by David Phillips: D. Phillips, *Social Quality: Indicators from Europe and their Implications form Asia*, Sheffield: University of /Sheffield, March 2008. He presents some outcomes of: (i) the conceptual development of social quality indicators and the development of a relevant instrument, (ii) discussion of the work which has already been undertaken by the European Foundation on Social Quality, (iii) discussion of competing concepts such as human security, human development, quality of life, social capital and related indicators, (iv) the empirical application of the social quality indicators and the production of country reports, with respective policy recommendations.

require inputs from organisations that represent diverse interests in society, and therefore, civil society is important.⁵³ This theme is relevant for – in terms of the social quality approach - addressing the question of social empowerment as one of the fourth conditional factors. The report presents multiple indicators of participation used in surveys oriented on whether individual people participate in various types of activities and to explore social and attitudinal characteristics that influence their participation. The question remains what the researchers mean with participation in informal and formal civil society organisations, why these organisations constitute civil society, and how to determine if these organisations strengthen or weaken social empowerment. Finally, the question is if the outcomes contribute to social empowerment of people. The researchers do not theorise these main themes and their interconnectedness. They are oriented to the description of many important phenomena in Europe and the differences between member states of the EU. One of their conclusions is that:

*'the bottom-up explanation of participation focuses on individuals' resources: people with more education higher incomes or better health are more likely to participate in all forms of civil society because they have the skills, money and energy to become involved in public affairs.'*⁵⁴

In their conclusions we read that governments are restricted to promote participation in civil society organisations, because they are intended to be voluntary and independent of government. But government can contribute to a better context for increasing participation by: (i) increasing transparency and reducing corruption in government, (ii) promoting more education, (iii) increasing the country's GDP, (iv) promoting internet usage among older people, (v) to eliminate destitution among those in extreme poverty, (vi) to develop policies to encourage less educated manual workers to participate, (vii) making all neighbourhoods safe.⁵⁵ There are several questions to be made about these conclusions. Reduction of corruption in government is a general demand for being a modern civilisation. Promoting education is necessary to cope with new information systems, herewith related production and distribution systems. And, if excepting the assumption of human people as social beings, we have to prevent extreme poverty at all costs. Do we need extensive surveys for making these general and somewhere normative oriented conclusions, referring to the description of phenomena, empirically related with participation in civil society organisations?

The interpretation of the concept of 'participation of citizens' within an utilitarian perspective is total different from the interpretation in an expressivist perspective. In the last case, citizens are social beings and not atoms operating in an aggregate of these atoms. In line with the expressivist perspective, the concept of participation has to be elaborated in connection with the concepts of socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment. In fact this is also suggested in the EFILWC's report. Except the first one, all these concepts are in one or the other way connected with participation. But we can not find any elaboration of these connections. A distinction between both perspectives is not made. To really understand the concept of participation we have to

⁵³ R. Rose, *First European Quality of Life Survey: Participation in Civil Society*, Dublin: EFILWC, 2006, p-3.

⁵⁴ R. Rose, note-53, p-27.

⁵⁵ R. Rose, note-53, p-62.

get more theoretical based information about the way political and economic systems intervene in families and communities as well as what that means for the biographical development of citizens in the context of the never stopping processes of societal transformations. How to relate all the concepts used in these extensive surveys and how to derive in a logical way indicators from these concepts in order to recognise and to understand these processes on European and global level? The document does not present this derivation. In our opinion, the outcomes of the survey legitimise to invest in epistemological points of departure – referring to an explicit ontological based framework – in order to formulate adequate methodologies and methods for analysing societal trends, their contradictions and challenges. In that case the chosen indicators of participation will be related with a conceptual scheme which is explained in order to be discussed on international level. The document's conclusions are not related with such a scheme and cause, therefore, confusion.

2.6 Policy application

Both quality of life and social quality are promoted as positive concepts that have the potential to benefit society. While social quality provides a vision for the future, a normative statement about how the social quality of the people of Europe and recently also in all other continents can and should be improved, the quality of life approach aims to measure changes in objective living standards and subjective wellbeing through a series of social indicators. However the absence of a theoretical rationale for quality of life tends to undermine its usefulness in the policy world. Thus the inclusion or exclusion of particular domains may be a matter of common sense or up to the individual researcher or policy maker. In other words the content of any index constructed on the basis of quality of life is always likely to be open to question and, therefore, its role in the policy process may be, at best, contested and, at worst, manipulated to suit particular interests.

The architects of social quality were motivated by a perceived imbalance in policy priorities at EU and national levels, and, notwithstanding the necessity of scientific legitimation, it is to the policy making process and, by implication, the everyday circumstances of people, that the concept is directed. Thus the Network of Social Quality Indicators (see note-4) is intended to deliver practical yardsticks to both policy makers and citizens., But the proponents are not content to stop there: the bold claim being made for social quality is that it provides a guideline for policy makers in the development and implementation of policies. It claims the ability to do so because it provides the essential connection between needs, actors and policies. Thus it can transform the abstract relationship between economic policy, welfare policy, employment policy, urban policy, environmental policy and so on into a concrete and practical one by providing the connections between them. From the perspective of the social quality approach we may recognise a similar problem with the European strategy for sustainable development by monitoring the implementation of related policies as supposed with the quality of life school.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ European Commission, *A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Strategy for Sustainable Development*, Brussels: Commission Communication COM (2001), 264 final of 15.05.2001.

Prepared are a set of indicators for monitoring this implementation, namely 'sustainable development indicators' (SID). We suppose the purpose is to apply indicators for measuring the nature of sustainability instead of developing 'sustainable indicators'. One of the challenges is to connect economic, socio-political and environmental sustainability. Therefore, a framework has been produced by experts within the SDI Task Force. A choice has been made for ten themes to explore the threefold sustainability: economic development, poverty and social exclusion, ageing society, public health, climate change and energy, production and consumption patterns management of natural resources, transport, good governance, global partnership.⁵⁷ These themes as such are relevant, but what are the deductive and inductive based arguments for this choice? Furthermore, how to understand the nature of these empirical expressions as consequences of mechanisms and policies which transform societies in a comprehensive way? Thus what are the ontological and epistemological characteristics of the framework used to recognise these mechanisms and to interrelate these (and other) themes?⁵⁸ In other words we may recognise an analogy with the mainstream of the quality of life approaches.

3. The social capital approaches

3.1 Three strands of social capital

Especially in the Nordic countries of Europe and the United States of America the theme of social capital is very popular for delivering new approaches of, for examples health and social care policies, employment policies or ageing policies. In discussing this concept many comments applied in the foregoing text will appear again. Although social capital is a relatively recent concept its roots can be tracked back through the work of Ferdinand Tönnies, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Talcot Parsons.⁵⁹ Unlike social quality - which offers a single normative interpretation - social capital has a number of different strands with different authors providing varying definitions of the concept. We may distinguish between at least three different strands. For many adherents, first, it is exactly what it says it is: a form of capital, along with all the other forms of capital. For example Bourdieu claims, that there are three forms of capital – economic, cultural and social – and supposes that they are fungible. They can be converted into each other. He defines social capital as:

'the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (....) the volume of the social capital possessed by a

⁵⁷ European Commission, *Sustainable Development Indicators to Monitor the Implementation of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy*, Brussels: Commission communication SEC (2005) 161 final of 9.02.2005.

⁵⁸ This question is elaborated in the Foundation's working-paper about indicators: L.J.G. van der Maesen, *Working-paper nr.3: Reflections on the first set of social quality Indicators by the European Network of Social Quality Indicators*, The Hague: EFSQ, Mach 2009.

⁵⁹ M. Woolcock, *Social Capital and Economic Development: Towards a Theoretical Synthesis and Policy Framework*, *Theory and Society*, 27 (1998), pages 151-208. He provides a synthesis and review of social capital literature from an economic and sociologist's point of view.

*given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilise.'*⁶⁰

As Phillips argues, the notion of the individual possessing social capital is quite explicit in this formulation.⁶¹ The economic origins of the term are obvious from the use of 'capital' and this perhaps helps to explain why a new and relatively untested concept has quickly become so popular among policy makers. Of course the sponsorship of powerful international economic agencies is a key element in the rise of social capital within policy circles. To conceive it as capital may be the reason the World Bank is so keen on fostering social capital in developing countries. According to co-workers of the World Bank, observations pave the way for suggestions:

*'that social capital does accumulate and decumulate as a capital, and also it can be destroyed. One can also argue that it is a factor of production. The weak link is the way it 'produce'. Physical capital is produced by the investment industry. In most cases it is easy to see what is going on here, though there are cases where it is difficult to draw the line between consumption and investment. In the same way human capital is produced by the education sector. However, it appears that social capital is rarely produced in a deliberate way. At present, we hardly know how it is produced.'*⁶²

More or less in this intellectual context, Amartya Sen notices, that identity with others in the same social community can make the lives of all go much better in that community. A sense of belonging to a community may be seen, according to Sen, as a resource, like capital.⁶³ Phillips refers, second, to another strand which look on social capital not in an economic sense at all. It is conceived as 'social glue' which sticks communities and societies together. He notices, that:

*'here it does not make sense to talk about an individual 'cashing' in their social capital because in this formulation it just cannot be disaggregated to an individual level or even be utilised in any specific way by an individual (...) the glue analogy is a good one in that it is seen to make society – or, more, properly, communities – stick together. It is a collective entity, inhering in social structure rather than in individuals.'*⁶⁴

This aspect is also presented in the World Bank's later definition of social capital: it concerns the institutions, relationships and norms that shape the quality and quantity of society's social interactions.⁶⁵ Phillips says, that in this strand social capital belongs to a collectivity. In other words, 'social' is conceived as an external entity, not part of the process of individual decision making and not needing a clear definition in the debate about social capital. For example Putman defines it as horizontal associations between people, i.e. social networks (networks of civic engagement) and associated norms that have an impact on the community. Social capital refers to people's voluntary

⁶⁰ P. Bourdieu, The Forms of Capital, in: J. Richardson (eds), *Handbook or Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Westpoint: Greenwood Press, 1096, p-249.

⁶¹ D. Phillips, note-5, p-138.

⁶² M. Paldam, G. Tinggaard Svendsen, *Is Social Capital an Effective Smoke Condenser. An Essay on a Concept Linking the Social Sciences*, New York: World Bank, 1999, p-10.

⁶³ A. Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*, New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, p-2.

⁶⁴ D. Phillips, note-5, p-136.

⁶⁵ World Bank, *The Initiative on Defining, Monitoring and Measuring Social Capital: Overview and Program Description*, New York: World Bank, 1998.

engagements in social and civic organizations.⁶⁶ He supposes, social capital functions as a bridge between different groups, resulting in 'bridging capital'.⁶⁷ It strengthens also the connections of members within a group, resulting in 'bonding capital'. And according to Putman this is too less a topic in The Netherlands. This country should look for national symbols for the increase of 'bridging capital'. And he was serious.⁶⁸ This way of reasoning is also familiar for the OECD which says that it concerns networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation among groups and within groups.⁶⁹ In the case of Putman, a hodgepodge of undefined concepts paves the way for his advises for high level policy-makers in the USA. Later we will reflect on its supposed consequences. Kawachi cs defines social capital as the features of social organisation, such as civic participation, norms of reciprocity and trust in others, that facilitate co-operation for mutual benefit.⁷⁰ Also Portes focuses on networks in the family, communities and labour relations.⁷¹ This is also the case of White.⁷² Sennett supposition about social capital refers to the judgements people make of their involvements. We can speak of low social capital if people's engagements are of poor quality.⁷³ Also Woolcock may be seen in this tradition. He sees it as the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks.⁷⁴

Fukuyama's definition may be seen as an aspect of the second strand as well. He supposes, social capital emphasises trust as an essential component, as a set of informal values or norms shared among members of a groups that permits co-operation between them.⁷⁵ He sees the most important of these values as being trust and argues that differential stocks of social capital exist depending upon the 'radius of trust' especially if it extends outside the family.⁷⁶ His supposition may be summarised with the following interpretation, that in addition to skills and knowledge, a distinct portion of human capital had to do with people's ability to associate with each other. That is critical not only to economic life but to virtually every other aspect of social existence. Without any hesitation this results for Fukuyama in the concept of social capital. We suppose, there must be a distinction between human capital and social capital. And indeed, Portes says that economic capital is in people's bank accounts, human capital is inside their heads, and social capital inheres in the structure of their relationships.⁷⁷

⁶⁶ R. D. Putman, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, pages 33-37

⁶⁷ R. D. Putman, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, New York: Touchstone, 2000.

⁶⁸ A. Vink, Interview with Robert Putman about trust and ethnic diversity in The Netherlands [in Dutch], *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 December 2007, p-31.

⁶⁹ Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, *The Well-Being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*, Paris: OECS, 2001.

⁷⁰ I. Kawachi, B. Kennedy, K. Lochner, D. Prothrow-Stith, Social Capital, Income Inequality and Mortality, *American Journal of Public Health*, 87 (1997), pages 1491-1498.

⁷¹ A. Portes, Social Capital: Its Origins and Application in Modern Sociology, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24 (1998), pages 1-14.

⁷² H.C. White, *Markets from Networks: Socioeconomic Models of Production*, Princeton: Princeton Press, 2002.

⁷³ R. Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, p-63.

⁷⁴ M. Woolcock, note-59, p-153.

⁷⁵ F. Fukuyama, *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstruction of Social Order*, London: Profile, 1999.

⁷⁶ F. Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, New York: Free Press, 1995, p-25.

⁷⁷ A. Portes, note-71, p-7.

In the third strand the concept of social capital refers to the nature of social structures. It concerns the broad social capital concept. For Coleman, it consists of some aspect of social structure and it facilitates certain actions of actors within the structure. He appreciates social capital as neutral, and it merely facilitates the goal of actors, whether they are socially desirable or not.⁷⁸ In his later work he sees social capital as facilitating social exchange, acting as a substitute for 'social currency'.⁷⁹ For Brehn and Rahn argue, that social capital is a tight reciprocal relationship between civic engagement and interpersonal trust. It moves beyond network-specific norms in that it introduces a civic dimension.⁸⁰

3.2 Three theoretical comments

We like to make three comments from the perspective of the social quality approach as an exercise to sharpen our ideas about the later. First, in the context of the social capital theorists we may notice a functionalistic way of reasoning, so well-known in circles of the European Commission. Jenson argues, that social capital is also seen as an important indicator of the wealth of a nation and as vital for economic growth.⁸¹ For example the World Bank encourages optimising social capital in developing countries arguing that it enhances economic growth and political stability.⁸² Similarly Fukuyama supposes that social capital is a major component of a nation's wealth. He remarks, *'in calculating comparative advantage, economists need to take into account relative endowments of social capital, as well as more conventional forms of capital and resources'*.⁸³ In the same way, Putman suggests that it is a precondition for both economic growth and effective government.⁸⁴ This form of reasoning resembles the EC's approach of social protection as a productive factor. Fouarge presents a clear functionalistic approach, and refers to the social capital debate as well by arguing that

*'a generous level of social protection does not necessarily lead to lower economic achievements. On the contrary, social policies based on investments in human and social capital are conducive to higher economic efficiency because they improve productivity and the quality of the labour force. Social policy is therefore a productive factor, even though its costs are generally visible in the short term while its benefits are often only apparent in the long term.'*⁸⁵

But this form of closed functionalistic reasoning is theoretically untenable. The comment by Van Kersbergen on this form of reasoning is that the vulnerable part of the argument concerns the causal feedback loop: *'events are explained by their consequences to the extent that an effect does not so much become a cause but is a cause (...) most defences of functional explanations do try to offer*

⁷⁸ J.S. Coleman, Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital, *American Journal of Sociology*, 94 (1988), pages 95-120, p-98.

⁷⁹ J.S. Coleman, 1998.

⁸⁰ J. Brehn, W. Rahn, Individual-level Evidence for the Causes and Consequences of Social Capital, *American Journal of Political Science*, 41 (1997), pages 999-1023.

⁸¹ J. Jenson, *Mapping Social cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*, Ottawa: Renouf, 1998.

⁸² World Bank, note-65.

⁸³ F. Fukuyama, note-75, p-16.

⁸⁴ R. D. Putman, note-67.

⁸⁵ D. Fouarge, *Costs of Non-social Policy: Towards an Economic Framework of Quality Social Policies – and the Costs of not having them*, Brussels: Report for the Employment and Social Affairs DG, January 2003, p-3.

elaborations of mechanisms but give little or no attention to the problem of the point of reference'.⁸⁶ He says that one can only legitimately speak of functional reasoning when the object of investigation – in this case social capital - concerns objective social necessities instead of subjective needs or interest. And that is the question especially in the light of the second and third comment.

A second comment is, that in many times social capital is defined as a subset of social cohesion. Whitely has attempted to distil various approaches into one definition of social capital. He suggests that social capital is the extent to which citizens are willing to co-operate with each other on the basis of interpersonal trust. He argues that social capital encompasses various characteristics such as, co-operation, trust, friendship, self-discipline, and community discipline.⁸⁷ Turner remarks explicitly that, it is about relationships between members of a community, at a local or national level, and, therefore, it is about social cohesion.⁸⁸ Also Lockwood refers to this connection. For him altruism and other-regarding behaviour are central to the development of social capital, as well as social cohesion.⁸⁹ With regard to the first strand – social capital as a form of capital, like economic capital – we may conclude it is contradictory to the social quality approach because its specific interpretation of the adjective social. With regard to the second and the third strand unclear is, why themes as trust, values and norms are discussed under the head of social capital instead of social cohesion. In our opinion we have to take Turner's suggestion on board and to elaborate the concept of social cohesion. This is also done in the context of the social quality approach. If this happens in a functionalistic way as referred to above, it will differ from the social quality approach as well. For this approach the question is, if there are scientific arguments to elaborate the concept of 'social capital' anymore if we try to analyse the real conditions – including social cohesion as a conditional factor- for individual people to contribute to the enhancement of the social quality of their daily circumstances.

A third comment – and possibly an answer on the second comment – is that all theorists referred to above do not bother about the adjective 'social' and supposes, the concept of 'capital' – embodied in economic sciences – may be connected with an adjective without a real meaning. Furthermore, that this connection – in theoretical sense not clarified - may deliver concrete points of departure for analysing societal wholes and processes of transformation. This brings us to the conclusion, that little attention is dedicated to the analyses of the ontological and epistemological aspects of concepts used in these theories. More or less social capital has an evidence sui generis. For the social quality theory explorations of both aspects are essential as well. This may be even true for the related concept of social capitalism. It is Senett who presents a recent view of Western relationships based on his impressing empirical work during the foregoing decades. Due to new technologies the new elite disposes of strong networks and, in general, the lower down in an organization, the thinner one's

⁸⁶ K. van Kersbergen, *Welfare State Theory and Social Quality*, in: W.A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A.C. Walker, *Social Quality A Vision for Europe?*, The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2001, pages 87-103, p-96.

⁸⁷ Whitely, 2000.....

⁸⁸ Turner, 1998....

⁸⁹ D. Lockwood, *Civic Integration and Social Cohesion*, in: I. Gough, G. Olofson (eds), *Capitalism and Social Cohesion: Essays on Exclusion and Integration*, London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1999, pages 63-85.

network. This, and see above, undermines their social capital. This conclusion results in the following one:

*'one way to sum up the issue, so far developed: the erosion of social capitalism has created a new formulation for inequality (...) The old institutional structure [of industries etc] has indeed been taken apart in the special realm of flexible organizations. In its place comes a new geography of power, the center controlling the peripheries of power in institutions with ever fewer intermediate layers of bureaucracy.'*⁹⁰

Thus far in his study, his concept of social capitalism is not defined at all and the theory, methodology and policy connected with social capitalism seems to be hanging in the air. By using such unexplained concepts for understanding recent processes of transformation is bringing us out of the frying-pan into the fire. It is the easy going approach like Fukayama's broad approach describing the end of history. All comments on the concept of social capital can be applied to the application of the concept of social capitalism and even more seriously. In our opinion, the lack of theoretical clarity hinders the needed analytical distinction between the economic, the socio-political and the environmental aspects of sustainability in order to pave the way for their integration, resulting into sustainable welfare societies.

3.3 Related policy questions

Especially the lack of consensus about the epistemological aspects due to the diversity of its adherents, social capital approaches may be functional for hidden policy purposes. Coole presented recently her analysis for explaining the popularity of this concept (and approach) by Western national governments. On the basis of her study of related literature she demonstrates that the content of the concept significantly has shifted. It is now entangled in relations of power instead of stimulating democratic based relations. This theme is less critically discussed than the ontological questions (its conceptualization) and its epistemological questions (methodologies and methods resulting into effective indicators) as happens by, for example, Fine⁹¹ and by Roberts.⁹² She follows the way of critical theorists focussed on the exploration how the meaning, significance and salience of terms such as social capital changed as they become imbricated in relationships of power. In particular she accepts the genealogical approach that although particular acts are intended, the systems of power to which they contribute are not typically intentional or planned but evolve in more haphazard or indirect ways as responses to particular exigencies.⁹³ She supposes:

'Recent attention to social capital is best understood as a policy initiative designed to repair the ideological resources of contemporary liberal states. Its significance has altered as it is subordinated to strategies of governance and becomes integral to experiments that Western governments are undertaking to renew or reinvent the means of managing their populations as a project of civic renewal (...) Its context is

⁹⁰ R. Sennett, note-73, p-81.

⁹¹ B. Fine, *Social Capital versus Social Theory. Political Economy and Social Science at the Turn of the Millennium*, London/New York: Routledge, 2001.

⁹² J. Roberts, What's Social About Social Capital?, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 6.4 (2004).

⁹³ D. Coole, *Repairing Civil Society and Experimenting with Power: A Genealogy of Social Capital*, London: Birbeck College University of London, p-3.

*profound economic and demographic changes associated with globalisation coupled with a new localism in public policy*⁹⁴

She refers to the conceptual framework of Foucault who discussed capital accumulation as supportive for a system that sustains and uses the surfeit of people by bio political techniques.⁹⁵ Coole concludes that especially the deterritorialised flows of capital stimulates governments to stress social capital as a new form of governmentality by - as we already noticed – bridging capital and bonding capital.

*'Privatising public and natural assets and the increasing use of credit in a restructured financial system are among the procedures by which populations are being displaced and managed by market mechanisms. A large reservoir of the poor and recently impoverished is surplus to market requirements, while deregulation means more economic instability as surges and crises occurs'.*⁹⁶

This stimulates modern states to repair a sense of the nation that is congruent with globalisation and the precariousness it brings to their monopoly of the means of violence and authority. She concludes that social capital thus enters political discourses as a panacea for addressing the social consequences of deregulated market and the effects of demographic mobility on ethno-cultural diversity.⁹⁷ In this vein Putman advised 'Dutch people' to look again for national symbols and to strengthen its social capital.⁹⁸ A better underpinning of her arguments cannot be found. As we may conclude now the social capital approach is too different from the social quality approach – in ontologically sense, in epistemologically sense and on policy level – that they can complement each.

4. Human security discourses

4.1 Exploring similarities and differences

According to Ogawa, the theme of human security is highly relevant for Japan and other Asian countries. In order to understand the meaning of the social quality approach for South-East Asia and the Pacific there is a need for discussing theoretical questions about their similarities and differences.⁹⁹ Interventions by the United Nations in post-conflict situations become an essential aspect for defending peace all over the world. The main purpose is to defend and to support human rights within national states. In order to act, universal based arguments are a condition for the legitimization of these interventions. According to Hasegawa, a UN operation in any given context must now work beyond institutional boundaries and may contain military, political, human rights, humanitarian and development components and agencies. A manifold of documents paved the way

⁹⁴ D. Coole, note-93, p-5.

⁹⁵ M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

⁹⁶ D. Coole, note-93, p-8.

⁹⁷ D. Coole, note-93, p-9.

⁹⁸ A. Vink, note-68.

⁹⁹ T. Ogawa, *A new Perspective on Social Development: Social Quality and its Potential Role for Public Policy Making in Asia and the Pacific*, Chiba: Chiba University, 2007.

for UN operations to respond effectively to human rights catastrophes. The elaboration of the concept of 'human security' is necessary for delivering the juridical background for these arguments. Its rational is the growing recognition worldwide that the protection of human security, including human rights and human dignity, must be one of the fundamental objectives of modern international institutions.¹⁰⁰ He refers to the definition of human security as formulated by the UN's Human Security Commission, which was established at the 2000 UN millennium summit and co-chaired by Sen and Ogata, namely:

'to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity'.¹⁰¹

The affinity with the Amsterdam Declaration on the social quality of Europe - which was signed by thousand European scholars in 1997 - is remarkable. It says that

'Respect for the fundamental human dignity of all citizens requires us to declare that we do not want to see growing numbers of beggars, tramps and homeless in the cities of Europe., Nor can we countenance a Europe with large numbers of unemployed, growing numbers of poor people and those who have only limited access to health care and social services (...).We want, in contrast, a European society that is economically successful, but which, at the same time, promotes social justice and participation for its citizens'.¹⁰²

We may notice that at this stage social quality does not refer anymore to participation or integration of people in societal systems but to social empowerment for playing a responsible role to pave the way for daily circumstances which address the four normative factors, namely social justice, solidarity, equal valuation and human dignity. The interpretation of the human security definition is essential for connecting the social quality approach with this global discourse about human rights and dignity as happens in the context of the United Nations. The human security concept (see above) concerns a first order condition for human rights and dignity in daily circumstances. Its aim is to deliver a legitimation to combat civil wars, misuse of women and children, lack of fundamental resources as water, food, housing, health care and education and all forms of discrimination. The social quality approach is oriented on a second order of daily circumstances with an already determined level of its conditional factors. And according to the social quality architecture (Figure 1) the social quality's concept of human (personal) security concerns one of the constitutional factors with which to develop human potentiality to act for elaborating socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment in daily life. In other words the 'second order human (personal) security' is more specific than the 'first order human security'. Furthermore, for making a distinction between the UN's

¹⁰⁰ Y. Hasegawa, *Is a Human Security Approach Possible? Compatibility between the Strategies of Protection and Empowerment*, Journal of Refugee Studies, Vol. 20, no 1 (2007).

¹⁰¹ Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now*, New York: United Nations, 2003. The commission is established at the 2000 UN millennium summit and co-chaired by Amartya Sen and Sadako Ogata.

¹⁰² 'The Amsterdam Declaration on social Quality of Europe', in: W.A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése, A.C. Walker, *Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*, The Hague/London/Boston: Kluwer Law International, 2001, pages 385-389.

approach and the social quality approach we have to analyse the UN's indicators for determining the nature of the first order condition of daily life. We will find a presentation in the Millennium Development Goals by the UN. In the Introduction by the Secretary-General we read, that:

*'The Millennium Development Goals set time-bound targets, by which progress in reducing income p[poverty, hunger, disease, ;lack of adequate shelter and exclusion – while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability – can be measured. They also embody basic human rights – the rights of each person on the planet to health, education shelter and security., The Goals are ambitious but feasible and, together with the comprehensive United Nations development agenda, set the course for the world's efforts to alleviate extreme poverty by 2015.'*¹⁰³

If the outcomes of the UN's strategies will become positive in deprived circumstances, we may conclude that the application of the social quality approach in these circumstances makes sense because in that case the second order is achieved or is existing. In other words, their indicators may mark the moment we can accept daily circumstances as being of the second order. If this is arrived, the instruments for determining the quality of the social by applying the social quality approach may be used for exploring the extent of social quality at a specific place at a specific time. The question may be if the Millennium Development Goals and related Indicators are really adequate for this role. In fact this question refers to our questions about the quality of life and social capital approaches, as well as the new sustainable development indicators as proposed by the European Commission. Furthermore, are the social quality indicators suitable to be used at all places of the world or are they too much European biased. Further research on the potential complementarity of the human security and social quality approaches may pave the way for the evolution of both approaches in order to address these questions and to become adequate everywhere.

4.2 Theoretical questions¹⁰⁴

As suggested implicitly, the human security discourses may be appreciated as a specific elaboration of the human development approach which emerged in the late 1980 in response to negative effects of structural adjustments programmes applied in the so-called developing countries. It was led originally by two South Asian scholars, namely Haq and Sen. It was Haq who added this theme for purposes of prioritisation within the open-ended space of human development, as well as the nature of the debate on human rights.¹⁰⁵ Sen also contributed to underpin its comparative perspective and its meaning for global relations.¹⁰⁶ Over the years an integration of the three themes – human development, human rights and human security – could happen. It is Gasper, who follows carefully the start of human security in this context.¹⁰⁷ This integration is adopted by the United Nations. It focuses on development

¹⁰³ *High-level event on the Millennium Development Goals 25 September 2008, Committing to action: achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, New York: United Nations, July 2008.

¹⁰⁴ This section will be based on the working-paper on human security and social quality, note-7.

¹⁰⁵ M. ul Haq, *Reflections on Human Development*, New York/Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999.

¹⁰⁶ A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

¹⁰⁷ D. Gasper, Securing Humanity – Situating Human Security as Concept and Discourse, *Journal of Human Development*, Vol 6, 2 (2005), pages 221-245.

of, by and for people which means, in terms of social quality, on social empowerment for advancing human well-being.¹⁰⁸ The original priority was to integrate 'freedom from fear' (peace) and 'freedom from want' (development). This dual idea is inscribed in the preamble of the Japanese Constitution, promulgated in 1946 and upheld in the post-war formative years of the United Nations.¹⁰⁹ According to Lutz, during the elaboration of this approach it uses a welfare standard explicitly expressed in terms of human welfare rather than economic welfare and does not centre on a utility category imputed from market choices.¹¹⁰ With this in mind at least two themes are of interest from the perspective of social quality: (i) the question of the conceptualisation of human security and (ii) the way it incorporates the question of the social.

With regard to the first point Hasegawa notices, the UN's concept of human security still misses a real adequate conceptualisation, despite its being used in debating operational and policy issues. He refers to Paris who considers that the concept is merely serving a jumbled coalition of middle power states, agencies and NGOs.¹¹¹ Just by confronting this first order concept with the social quality approach and its conceptual framework adherents of the social quality approach may contribute to its conceptualization. For example, the UN's human security approach is, according to Hasegawa, linked to the question of empowerment. It concerns supporting local constituencies for peace, creating local capacity including that of government and encouraging bottom-up pressure for peace.¹¹² Therefore a comparison with the social quality's approach of social empowerment may also contribute to the theoretical challenges of the UN for elaborating its concept of human security. This provokes the question if we can distinguish between a first order empowerment and a second order of social empowerment as well. This is also the case with the concept of human dignity: both are applied in the UN-discourse and the social quality approach.

An implicit strong argument for this theoretical work is given by Truong cs. who put forward the theme of the social. They conclude, that the human security as a new policy framework is based on the intellectual foundations of the capability theory by Sen and Nussbaum. In the following section we will refer to this theory. Applying their interpretation of a feminist standpoint they will enhance the concept of human security by taking as its point of departure

*'the conception of security as the human experience in everyday life mediated through a variety of social structures of which gender is one. In these terms, the referent of security is not just the individual with rights and entitlements but also the social relations that mediate human life in ways that ensure its quality and flourishing – inwardly towards the self and outwardly towards society'.*¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ UNDP, *Human Development Report (annual)*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

¹⁰⁹ Y. Mine, note-12.

¹¹⁰ M. Lutz, Humanistic Economics: History and Basic Principles, in: P. Ekins, M. Max-Neef (eds), *Real Life Economics*, London: Routledge, 1992, pages 90-112, p-103.

¹¹¹ R. Paris, Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?, *International Security*, Vol. 26, nr.2 (2000), pages 87-102.

¹¹² Y. Hasegawa, note-100.

¹¹³ Th-D.Truong, S. Wieringa, A. Chachhi, *Engendering Humans Security: Feminist Perspectives*, London/New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2006, p-xii.

This refers to the first assumption of the theory of social quality concerning 'the social' as an outcome of the dialectic between processes of self-realization of individual people and the formation of collective identities. They argue furthermore, that in the case of health and social care human security approach has yet to free itself also from the

'regnant tendency in neo-liberal reform which tends to apply primarily male norms in valuing and regulating social life, obliterating the significance of arrangements which provide care for the very young, sick and elderly (...) the global reality – of young men, women, boys and girls being traded as commodities, and the elderly being subject to neglect and abuse often without kin support – tells another story, and brings home the message that these tendencies may reflect a deep crisis in care systems worldwide'.¹¹⁴

The human security approach seems to be between the more individualistic human rights thinking and the social quality focus on relationships and processes. In the working-paper about the complementarity of human security and social quality approaches the authors conclude, that the first approach emphasizes on the human species as a whole and its share security, insecurity and fragility. By encouraging thinking deeply at individuals, all individuals, the human security perspective thus grounds human rights language in a way that helps to counter dangers that can arise otherwise through the selfish or myopic use of rights language.¹¹⁵ Notwithstanding this, in its conception of 'human' we recognize according to Apthorpe, a gap in respect of 'the social' what is usual in much humanitarian and developmental actions.¹¹⁶ Therefore

'an inter-paradigmatic communication is required in order to enrich understandings of the concept of human nature and offer a 'thicker' version of a concept so central to society yet for which it is so difficult to find meanings suitable to all creeds at all times A plural and situated political ontology is desirable since it allows a conception of human nature as a social and historical product, without having to abandon awareness of basic biological imperatives such as interdependence and the life cycle'¹¹⁷

4.3 Methodological questions and policy challenges

As a consequence of its ontological position – the absence of a deep conceptualization of self and self-development (or in our terms 'self-realisation')¹¹⁸ – its epistemological position refers to the methodological individualism. Therefore Mine remarks, we need a different concept in order to pave the way for a holistic approach, which would also accommodate sustainable interaction between nature and human security:

'The human security approach does not provide a framework to expound directly the future shape of human society, nor to explain the structural causation of poverty and insecurity, but rather to bring forward just a way of how to see critical things. In order to examine if a certain system, capitalist or non-capitalist, is sustainable, we have to look for a different framework or theoretical scheme, beyond the perspective of community resilience and individual coping. Despite the weakness of human security,

¹¹⁴ Th-D. Truong et al, note-113, p-xii.

¹¹⁵ D. Gasper et al, note-7, p-8.

¹¹⁶ R. Apthorpe, Human Development Reporting and Social Anthropology, *Social Anthropology*, Vol. 5, nr.1 (1997), pages 21-34.

¹¹⁷ D. Gasper et al, note-7, p-13.

¹¹⁸ A.K. Giri, Rethinking Human Well-Being: A Dialogue with Amartya Sen, *Journal of International Development*, Vol. 12, nr.7 (2000), pages 1003-1018.

however, we cannot think on the future shape of a sustainable society separately from the examination of human insecurities, simply because a system which fails to provide substantial security for every part of social can not be sustainable.¹¹⁹

At is just with this in mind that the human security and social quality approach have to offer each other. Both are strongly oriented on the multidimensionality in their conception of human well-being, rather than a reduction to a single denominator of money or 'utility'. Both apply a holistic analytical style, which leads to concerns about interconnections which can overstep boundaries and threaten sustainability. Both are highly susceptible for an 'emerging paradigmatic change' in which the understanding of the social is not pre-determined but evolves with the monitoring of social changes, interacting with and learning from other perspectives (see the connection between deductive forms and inductive forms of reasoning). The first exploration of the complementarity of both approaches concludes with the words, that previous understandings of the social did not describe a world with the internet as a conduit for social construction of meanings. Many of the boundaries of the social that are being formed by the new technologies are new. Renewing a political humanism must involve exploring 'the social' as a multilayered entity open to transformation by diverse transnational forces, such as transnational families, transnational social activism and new transnational space of communication.¹²⁰

But for offering something to each other a lot of work has to be done. According to Ananta Giri:

*'Our understanding of the human and the social, as well as realization of these, are in need of fundamental transformations as our present day use of these are deeply anthropocentric, Eurocentric and dualistic. Human development discourse looks at human in an adjectival way; so does the social quality approach for the category of the social; and both have rather a naive understanding of both the human and social and do not reflect the profound rethinking both the categories have gone through even in the Western theoretical imagination (for example, the critique of humanism in philosophy and critique of sociocentrism in sociology)*¹²¹

With his comment on the social quality approach he refers to the Foundation's second book.¹²² The challenging question remains if also the coming third book will present a naive understanding of both the human and the social.¹²³ It concerns a main ontological question referring to deductive forms of reasoning. A related epistemological question refers to our understanding the difference between social indicators used in context of human development and human security and social quality indicators is a condition for understanding. Both approaches, what are they learning from inductive forms of reasoning. As a consequence of the methodological individualism social indicators as the quality of life indicators concern the micro-economics perspective seen the social world abstractly as aggregations of individuals with given preferences. According to Raymond Apthorpe in Human Development Reports:

'social indicators used in development and planning are demographic and sectoral, rather than about social institutions and social structures or with reference to groups' own social representations, interests, values, needs and knowledge's, as emicly

¹¹⁹ Y. Mine, note-12, p-6.

¹²⁰ D. Gasper et al, note-7,

¹²¹ Á. K. Giri, *Rethinking the Human and the Social: Towards a Multiverse of Transformations: a paper for the New Delhi Conference, September 2008*, Madras: Madras University, 2008.

¹²² W.A. Beck et al, note-1.

¹²³ L.J.G. van der Maesen et al, note-2.

*determined. Correspondingly, the types of social analysis, evaluation and prediction provided are often superficial, and such discussion of 'the human face' of development (and update of the older 'the social aspects of development') can become a cosily cute substitute for social analysis, an evasions of political analysis, and a seriously misleading path therefore to human security analysis for instance with regard to humanitarian assistance and protection for emergency relief and rescue*¹²⁴

This Point refers to our questions at the end of section-4.1. As well as Giri's point as Apthorpe's point have to be elaborated in order to contribute as logical as possible to ideas of sustainable welfare societies in the future as proposed during the three Asian conferences on social quality. This implies as well the elaboration of our understanding of sustainability based on a new meta-theoretical integration of economic, socio-political and environmental sustainability. According to Des Gasper this should address an activist strand in capitalist society, which is perhaps not yet well treated in the Human Security and Social Quality approaches. The unending expansionist drive of capitalism stems not only from its institutional design. Neither in Phillips' book about the state of the art of quality of life approaches¹²⁵ is one dominant perception in the world today:

*'that well-being consists in maximizing monetized flows, which reflects the activist stance that the good life is the packed, busy, strenuous life – the exertion to the full of one's human forces, in unceasing aspiration, acquisition and contestation. At the moment that we watch the near disappearance of the Northern polar cap far faster than previously feared, it becomes essential for work on social quality and human development [human security] to look not only at environmental devastation and dangers but at the deeper forces driving it.'*¹²⁶

5. The capability theory¹²⁷

5.1 The question of conditional factors and indicators

A fundamental problem when turning to indicators rather than dealing with simple statistical datasets is the underlying understanding of society and complex social interdependencies. For our purpose a useful reference can be made to Bourdieu's definition of habitus and cultural fields.¹²⁸ This theme is discussed by Ante who says, that

*'a cultural field in Bourdieu's terms can be defined as a series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments, and titles which constitute an objective hierarchy, and produce and authorize certain discourses and activities. It is also constituted by, or out of, the conflict involved when groups or individuals attempt to determine what constitutes capital within that field, and how that capital is to be distributed.'*¹²⁹

¹²⁴ R. Apthorpe, *Security for Whom, and in what? Bringing the Social to the Human: a paper for the New Delhi Conference, September 2008*, Canberra: Australian National University, 2008. See also: R. Apthorpe, Humanitarian action and social learning: notes and surmises on ten consultative tools, in: JCAS Symposium Series, *Between knowledge and commitment*, Osaka: Japan Centre for Area Studies, 2004.

¹²⁵ D. Phillips, note-5.

¹²⁶ D. Gasper, *The Human and the Social: A comparative framework and an initial systematised comparison of the discourses of Human Development, Human Security and Social Quality*, The Hague: ISS, June 2009, p-12.

¹²⁷ This part of the working-paper refers to Peter Herrmann's contribution to the Foundation's third book, note-2.

¹²⁸ P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p-93.

¹²⁹ A. Ante, *State Building and Development: Two Sides of the Same Coin?*, Wien, July 2008. p-126.

Notwithstanding the confusing concept of social capital – see section-3 - such perspective should make clear that at the heart of indicator research we see not the collection of data that describe static realities (and their change over time). Rather, at the centre we are dealing with processes and relationships which cannot be understood when referring to concepts as life situation or life circle. Though for instance the latter refers to some kind of process – the developments during the life span of individuals – it falls short when orienting on a comprehensive actor perspective as happens in the quality of life school. In this school, actors are either seen as individuals – rational actors who ideally have complete insight into information needed and make decisions in complete compliance with rational calculations (cost-benefit analysis) or actors who actually are entirely powerless, bound by structures and conditions without being even responsible for their activities to which their action seems to be reduced. Here we recognise the application of two different conceptual frameworks, namely the mechanic-utilitarianism and the structural functionalism.¹³⁰ As important as the observation of changes over time is, in the context of social quality these are only part of what is understood as processuality in the context of social quality. Here processuality is immediately linked to relationality as complex field of social practice.

It is in this context as well getting clear that the understanding of the capability approach as put forward in particular by Sen and Nussbaum has to be seen as double-edged sword. Whereas many objectivist approaches of quality of life analysis – and also their next siblings of subjective well-being analysis – fall short of fully acknowledging the individual as social subject, in particular the capability approach is characterised by a different figure of thinking. On the one hand the Human Development approach and the capability approach which is here seen as specific characteristic of the first emphasise the actor perspective, however, they do so only by orienting on allowing individuals to realise themselves as individuals, enhancing their well-being. For this Sen aims on 'conditional factors' that are fundamentally different from those proposed by the social quality approach.¹³¹ Looking at Sen's proposal, there are two aspects that are of crucial importance as well when discussing social quality indicators. First, development indicators are output and outcome oriented. This complies with the proposal of our own approach to engage in the development of constitutional factors. But social quality indicators are especially oriented on the registration of changes of the sub-domains of the conditional factors, caused by explicit or implicit policies. Second, Sen and Nussbaum emphasise the individual freedom as central to the entire undertaking, establishing in this way a strong voluntarist orientation. It is extremely difficult to make out the basic needs and Sen knows this well. Consequently he utilises the concept of 'functionings',

'which has distinctly Aristotelian roots, reflects the various things a person may value doing or being (...)' The valued functionings may vary from elementary ones, such as being adequately nourished and being free from avoidable disease (...) to

¹³⁰ These conceptual frameworks will be summarised in the Foundation's third book and compared with other dominant conceptual frameworks, see note-2.

¹³¹ A. Sen, note-106, p-75.

very complex activities or personal states, such as being able to take part in the life of the community and having self-respect.¹³²

Consequently, Des Gaspers et al state that

*'the resulting conception of development focuses on ends – improvements in the content of people's lives and in their access to valued 'be-ings and do-ings' – not only on means and especially not only monetized (proposed) means and their ever-expanded production and disposal. Development is understood as a normative concept distinct from economic growth or social change. Attention to the content of people's lives leads to a disaggregated approach, looking at health and housing, work and recreation and diverse other aspects such as seen in the wide-ranging tables of indicators in the HDRs.*¹³³

But they conclude that

*'only part of this conceptualization of 'ends' is captured by UNDP's Human Development Index, which combines (i) the conventional indicator of national per capita income (adjusted to reflect real purchasing power) and measures of (ii) basic education and (iii) life expectancy and gives equal weights to relative performance in these three areas.'*¹³⁴

The reason for this limited realisation of the comprehensive claims can be seen in the fact that the recurs on a normative concept, continuing the disjunction between normative considerations, economic growth, social change and the content of people's lives cannot be properly operationalised. Furthermore, there are three questions that need further debate. First, the concept of human development is very much geared towards questions of 'development', to be precise: to so-called developing countries. Thus, the concept of functionings is by and large concerned with bare needs, only allowing in a very limited way to be applied on a higher level of social and societal inclusion and access of power. The understanding of power leans towards *pouvoir* in a limited sense of being able to rather than being concerned with opening possibilities.¹³⁵ Second, indicators in this framework are very much geared towards a positive approach to an employment-based economic system. Though employment is not the only focus (see below), Sen's understanding of the economic process is very much informed by classical economics, favouring the market, the matter being how to control 'market transactions, unconstrained concealment of information, or unregulated use of activities that allow the powerful to capitalize on a asymmetrical advantage.'¹³⁶ In other words, any orientation is at the end lead by the idea of market integration. Third, though Sen demands for an orientation on capabilities rather than functionings he actually underlines the individualist perspective: at the core he sees the 'enhancement of real freedoms of individuals'.¹³⁷ Collective practice and structural changes of societies seem to be faded out as real perspectives, and being relevant for action.

¹³² A. Sen, note-106, p-75.

¹³³ D. Gasper et al, note-7, p-7.

¹³⁴ D. Gasper et al, note-7, p-8.

¹³⁵ P. Herrmann, D. Claire, Critic of Pure Individualism, in: D. Claire, P. Herrmann, *Social Professional Activity: The Search for a Minimum Common Denominator in Difference*, New York: Nova Science, forthcoming.

¹³⁶ B. Kliksberg, Rebuilding the State for Social Development: Towards smart government, *Review of Administrative Sciences*, Vol. 66, nr.2 (2000), p-251.

¹³⁷ J. Bonvin, Der Capability Ansatz und sein Beitrag für die Analyse gegenwärtiger Sozialpolitik, *Journal für Empirie und Theorie Sozialer Arbeit*, Heft 1 (2009), pages 8-22, p-10.2009, p-10.

5.2 *The individual and social relations*

This brings us back to what had been briefly pointed at already before: the conditional factors of the social quality factors do not aim on measuring the individual's capabilities; rather, the decisive difference is that they are aiming on looking directly at the actor-structure link. The question is not which conditions are given for the individual to develop him/herself? Instead we ask to which extent do the given conditions allow the individual to enhance relationships and realise him/herself by actively shaping the conditions? As argued earlier, the social quality approach is concerned with relational processes. It may be an ambition, which is of course very complicated. Recognising this ambition is even more important if we briefly look at the history of social indicator research. First, a useful overview is provided on the Internet, showing the 'Chronological Evolution of Related Measures of Progress', marked by simple comparative measures of economic income measures in the first decades of the last centuries, moving on from the 1960 to broader concepts of welfare, quality of life, social health etc. and moving further from the end of the last century by orienting towards a global level.¹³⁸ Looking at this development in more thorough terms, it is getting clear that the major notion is due to the fact of an increasing socialisation that stands behind the actual meaning of the measurements. In other words, we are not simply concerned with an increasing interest in different issues of life. Rather, life is increasingly socialised to the extent to which first production of goods is taken out of the individual realm, consequently labour is following this step onto the market as social institutions, itself followed by the incremental socialisation of all life courses, living circumstances and moreover the conditions under which these are taking place and the framework in which they are located.

This is considered in different approaches to measure social progress as presented by Bagó who distinguishes between 'one number' approach, 'account-based' approach and 'indicator set' approach.¹³⁹ This reflects not primarily an epistemological shift. More important is a contravening aspect of the underlying ontological shift. This suggests that societies are seen as increasingly levelled. Rather than suggesting contradictions of relationships between different groups and classes, they are seen as 'institutional systems, independent from the relevant actors'. In political terms, in the extreme case actors are defined as stakeholders, their interests being a matter of weighing processes rather than of interactive structures of collaboration and struggles against each other. Inconsistencies and contradictions are reinterpreted as non-existent, an expression of 'partnership' in which different interests come to a compromise. This is also the interpretation by the EC Commissioner Spidla.¹⁴⁰ This leads as well to the wrong conclusion of another form of 'collectivity', namely the need for collecting more data and as well to collect different data, namely data on various issues. This marks as

¹³⁸ OECD, <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/24/56/41288178.pfd> -16/06/2009.

¹³⁹ E. Bagó, Establishing Indicators for Measuring Social Progress in Hungary, Newsletter Measuring the Progress of Societies, nr. 3 (2008), <http://www.oedeorg/dataoece/14/61/41577409.pdf> -16/06/2009, p-13.

¹⁴⁰ V. Spidla, *Speech for members of the Platform of Social NGOs*, Brussels: EC, July 2009.

well debates in the framework of the project on 'Measuring the Progress of Societies'.¹⁴¹ On the one hand we find that this is successively being transformed into a flood of quantitative data and of various approaches to combine them. The UNDP-data collection with the different indicators are surely helpful as are the quality of life studies, presented by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the mentioned more or less recent project or the OECD on Measuring the Progress of Societies.

This is on another level proving the importance is the global approach as we suggest it. The iterative process is surely at its heart and thus is the orientation on real and everyday life by people, personalities in their communities. However, at the same time we are confronted with the paradox situation in which indicators have to be developed from the top: reflecting the research orientation from universal-abstract to concrete-specific. This is reflecting as well what Crocker states with respect to the works of Sen and Nussbaum, highlighting an important point concerned with the normative factors, namely:

*'Sen correctly recognizes that a development ethic must be constructed / dialectical [????] relation with empirical investigation into what causes and impedes (good) development as well as what produces and prevents poverty, famine, endemic hunger, exploitation, sexism, and other developmental failures. Social science needs ethics to clarify what we should mean by human deprivation, well-being, standard of living, quality of life, and 'development.'*¹⁴² .

However, ethics can meaningfully be applied only if it is embedded in the process of practice. Then, looking at indicators, a useful differentiation is provided in the Oxford Poverty Human & Human Development Initiative.¹⁴³ Alkire points on some common dimensions of progress or well-being. These

*'include survival (health, safety, reproduction), working activities (employment, leisure, and quality/meaning of work), knowledge (education, access to media, skills), relationships (professional and personal including family), self-direction (empowerment, democratic practice, participation in decisions that shape one's life), expression (identity, creativity) and harmony (spirituality, philosophy, arts).'*¹⁴⁴

The problem remains: it is necessary to overcome the heuristic and random choice which is based on intuitive combinations rather than being based on a systematic and strategic, methodologically based selection as proposed by the differentiated social quality approach.

6. Social harmony

Thanks to the debates about the purpose of the third Asian conference on social quality, organised by the Nanjing University in China, questions are raised about the recent meaning of the principles of social harmony and what the differences and similarities are with the social quality approach. A first

¹⁴¹ OECD, <http://oecd.org/pages/0,3417,40033426,40033828,16/06/2009.2009/b...>

¹⁴² D. Crocker, Functioning and Capability: The Foundation of Sen's and Nussbaum's Development Ethic, *Political Theory*, Vol. 20, nr. 4(1992), pages 584-612, p-587.

¹⁴³ Oxford Poverty Human & Human Development (Initiative: <http://www.ophi.org.uk>

¹⁴⁴ S. Alkire, Measuring the Progress of Societies, Newsletter 1 (2008): <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/30/19/40288553>, 16/06/2009.

exploration of this question is made by Wong. He published a profound contribution to the conference.¹⁴⁵ This study functions as a pillar of this subsection. Wong argues, that social harmony

emerges in the East, particularly in the Chinese context and is essentially for coping with conflicts and contradictions between people and government, classes, ethnic groups, cultural and other differences in a peaceful way. He refers also to the study by Ai¹⁴⁶ and Lai cs.¹⁴⁷ Discussing these principles are rather urgent, because the Chinese government is worried about the increasing income gap, uneven development, and growing tensions between people and government due to the rampant corruptions of its lower-level cadres. In other words, the coping of conflicts are about life-threatening issues and the basis operations of this society (and other societies as well). Wong says,

*that the concept of social harmony neither explicitly nor directly implies the quality standard of a society, except relational. In the case of China today, social harmony is also associated with a xiaokang society; it literally means a small-welfare or moderately well-of society where people's living standards are just above survival standards, but not wealthy enough. In other words, China aims not to obtain a society with a quality social and economic life, but how its people can live in a cooperative, with mutual trust, and good relations terms; where a better life is implied, in the case of a xiaokang society, a life above basic survival needs, a humble goal to aspire.*¹⁴⁸(Wong: 481).

[will be elaborated further]

¹⁴⁵ Ch.K. Wong, note-9.

¹⁴⁶ G.H. Ai, Building a harmonious society and achieving individual harmony, Journal of Chinese Political Science, Vol. 13, 2 (2008), pages 143-164.

¹⁴⁷ L. Lai, Z. Wang, S.K. Tok, *China's Politics in 2006: Harmony on the Road to the 17th Party Congress*, Beijing/Nottingham: China Policy Institute/University of Nottingham, 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Ch.K. Wong, note-7, p-..

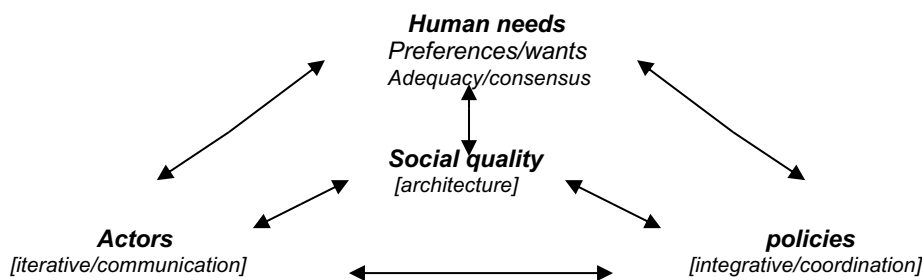
5. Some concluding remarks

5.1 The different rationale of social quality

Quality of life, social capital and social quality are promoted as positive concepts that aim to benefit society. While social quality provides a vision for the future, a normative statement about how the social quality of people of Europe can and should be improved, especially the quality of life approach aims to measure changes in objective living standards and subjective well-being through a series of social indicators and the social capital approach aims to cope with recent contradictions cause by global processes in national and local circumstances. However the absence of a theoretical rationale for quality of life tends to undermine its usefulness in the policy world. We argued that for the social capital approach this results into opening the way for dangerous forms of normative control. The inclusion or exclusion of particular domains in the quality of life approach may be a matter of common sense or up to the individual researcher or policy maker. In other words the content of any index constructed on the basis of quality of life is always likely to be open to question and, therefore, its role in the policy process may be, at best, contested and, at worst, manipulated to suit particular interests (a deficiency that the ZUMA groups has tried to address in its comprehensive framework). The difference stimulates to make explicit the particular characteristic of the social quality approach. But also the new orientation on the human security discourses and the social harmony principles delivers an extra stimulus for articulating this characteristic. Its adherents were motivated by a perceived imbalance in policy priorities at EU and national levels and, notwithstanding the necessity of scientific legitimation, it is to the policy making process and, by implication, the everyday circumstances of

people, that the concept is directed. But they are not content to stop there: the bold claim being made for social quality is that it provides a guideline for policy makers in the development and implementation of policies. It claims the ability to do so because it provides the essential connection between needs, actors and policies. Thus it can transform the abstract relationship between economic aspects, socio-political aspects, cultural aspects and environmental aspects of societies and related policies. An illustration of this supposition is already presented in the second main study (Beck et al, 2001: 370).

Figure- 6.3 **The social quality's genetic code**



5.2 The integrative role of its conceptual framework

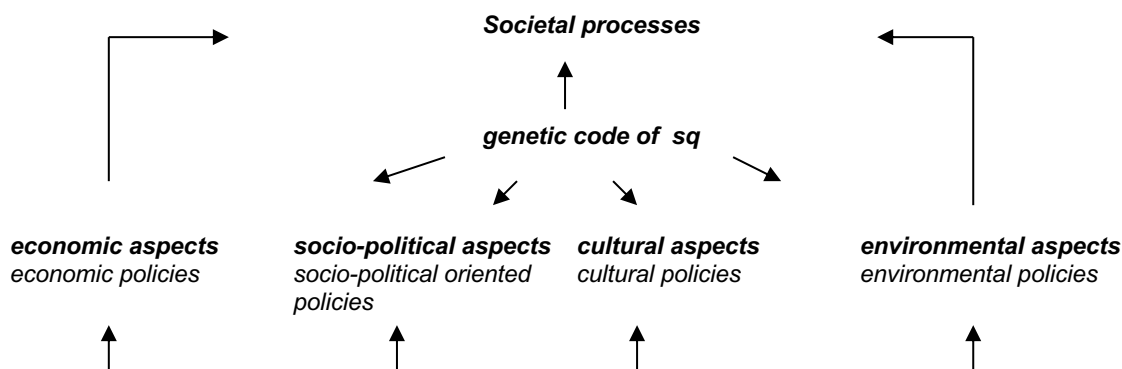
Compared to the second main study we dispose thanks to previous chapters of a deeper understanding of the theory and its architecture, as well as its measurement instruments, namely social quality indicators. We suppose to deliver the real points of departure for the elaboration and application of the following quotation of the second study:

'Supporting policies means also to be oriented on the impacts of policies as well. This point concerns an essential shortcoming of applied forms of benchmarking According to Mosley and Mayer [1998], this is connected with the question of interdependence. They say that because of a relatively high degree of correlation among the available basic levels of performance – which has to be taken into consideration in selecting and defining performance indicators – it is in man cases impossible to distinguish between cause and effect' (Beck et al, 2001; 371).

This integrative role of social quality requires some explanation. It means, first, that it encompasses all policies. Second, it covers all phases of policy making (from design to evaluation). Third success in the interrelationships between needs, actors and policies depends on the existence of basic conditions for social relations to develop (public for a, public ethics, systems for communication and understanding), Fourth, the appropriate method to develop policies promoting social quality is an iterative one (which depends on communication and dialogue). Fifth, policies have to be integrative in order to produce social quality (which implies, at the very least, mechanisms for coordination). Finally, the definition of problems has to be adequate – legal, legitimate and functional (which depends on consensus with regard to the notion of justice). In comparison to the quality of life or social capital approaches the social quality theory is – by articulating its basic assumptions - explicitly oriented on this integrative

role. Therefore not only social quality indicators but also profiles and criteria – and see the architecture - are essential to understand the nature and impact of policies. Thanks to the previous chapters the application of the genetic code may go a step further, see following figure:

Figure-6.4 *the integrative role of the conceptual framework of social quality*



As a consequence of the idea of the genetic code all types of actors in the worlds of the different policies will be recognised. The fallacy of for example the ‘welfare state approaches’ – namely the one-sided accent on the role and policies by national, regional and local institutions – will be prevented. In theoretical and practical sense the social quality approach is oriented on governmental institutions and systems, companies, non-for-profit organisations, NGOs, networks of citizens and families/households. The second point is that the genetic code of social quality as an outcome of its conceptual framework will pave the way for the integrative exploration and understanding of these four aspects and related policies. Finally, by creating a coherent, theoretically grounded, concept that not only embraces all policies but also all stage of the policy process it is intended to furnish both policy makers and the general public with an analytical tool with which to understand society and to change it. For example, while the ranking of countries (out of ten) for the quality of their health services in the European Foundation for Living and Working Conditions report – from 8.1 for Austria tot 3.7 for Slovenia – is informative, it is not apparent how it should be used in the policy process. (EFLWC, 2004). A similar ranking derived from the social quality concept would point directly to policy domains in socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion and social empowerment and the connections between them. This is precisely why the activities of the Network on Social Quality Indicators is such an important first step in realising a practical measure of social quality. Thanks to the comparison with the human security discourses the necessity to pave the way to coordinate public actions in an integrative, accommodating framework is more clearer than before (Mine, 2008: 7). This may be a stimulus for developing the complementarity with the social quality approach. We will refer to Des’ as final conclusion of this chapter, that

'not recognized in most classification of perspectives on quality of life – which typically have a normative rather than descriptive stance - is one dominant perception in the world to-day: that well-being consists in maximizing monetized flows, which reflects the activist stance that the good life is the packed, busy, strenuous life – the exertion to the full of one's human forces, in unceasing aspiration, acquisition and contestation. At the moment that we watch the near-disappearance of the Northern pole cap, far faster than previously reared, it becomes essential for work in social quality and human development (and human security) to loop not only at environment devastation and dangers but at the deeper forces driving it'.(Des, 2009: 12).