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*Peter Herrmann: Social Quality – Social Policy and Beyond*

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**Social Quality – Social Policy and Beyond**<sup>iii</sup>

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## 0) Abstract

Social policy is a field that appears today as distinct policy area, standing apart from other areas and also apparently competing with other areas. Social policy is especially frequently positioned as opponent and demander towards economy. Fiscal policy, then, seems to be the warden and finally as well the 'norm-giver'. However, this points on the core of the dilemma: the shift in normative frameworks. Though disjoined, there is of course an inner band between these policy domains. Relating fiscal, economy and social to each other in terms of policies, we can see two major issues: First, there is a shift from the definition of the social existence: (i) we can begin with people living together and (re-)producing in daily circumstances their life – the genuine social existence; (ii) this develops and we find then the disentanglement of the economy as distinct form of production. The core of this process is, however, the exhaustive individualisation that goes hand in hand with this process: as cause and consequence. (iii) We are now confronted with the need of overcoming this individualist economic model, on the one hand 're-establishing the social', on the other hand elevating the social from a state of pure social production to a higher stage of 'development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis.' (Marx, 1894: 807).

The Social Quality Approach, work undertaken by the European Foundation on Social Quality, now located in The Hague, will be guiding this exercise. The contribution, after briefly analysing the process of societal atomisation and the mainstream understanding of social policy, will present the architecture of the Social Quality Approach with its three pillars of conditional, constitutional and normative factors. It will then present the meaning of the approach for policymaking.

### 1) The Emergence of Today's Understanding of Social Policy

If we look at widely used policy definitions we find that social policy is commonly focussed along three lines, namely

- \* the line of risks: social policy acting as preventer or compensator in individual cases
- \* the line of resource mobilisation: social policy acting as facilitator of equal access and
- \* the line of last resource: social policy providing resources for 'people in need'.<sup>1</sup>

This is as well the distinction that serves as guideline for the classification of welfare regimes. It surely tackles key problems. However, it is important to note that this understanding is limited, not least as social policy is in such perspective grounded in a very specific economic system. Though surely resembling as well traditions that reach further back, the origins are in their core linked to the emerging and consolidating industrial society. This changes very much the character of social policy and also reduces its range. Pre-capitalist societies can be defined by their tributary character: as much as economic factors – in the sense of control over resources – play the central role, we find at the same time a 'dominance of the political'. As Samir Amin writes

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<sup>1</sup> See for a brief overview for instance Esping-Andersen, 2000.

*[t]he reproduction of precapitalist social systems rests upon the stability of power (which is the basic concept defining the domain of the political) and of an ideology that endows it with legitimacy. In other words, politico-ideological authority (the 'superstructure') is dominant at this point.*

*(Amin, 1989: 2)*

A major point I question has to be seen in the fact that wealth and power in pre-capitalist societies are predominantly based on land-ownership and political power (not least in the sense of force). This means as well that the workers, though being free in terms of not being owned as slaves, are depending on selling their work: paying a tribute from it to the (land-)lord. This changes only with the emergence of capitalism as an entirely economically based system, production-based and exchange-oriented, the free labourer now not paying with his work but with the labour power.

'Social policy', if we actually want to use this term for such early societies, has solely a quasi-voluntary basis: charity in the sense of almsgiving, pity and mercy – though surely going hand in hand with moral and ethical control – are the guiding lines for any support mechanism. 'Productive motives', as far as they played a role, had been marginal, we may say they occurred as inherent side-effects. In this respect, any social measures had been immediate part of the productive process – a process which had been very much seen as unity of production and reproduction.

However, with the emergence of capitalist society we find in respect of social policy a contradicting pattern. On the one hand, the economic system gains functional independence: the cycle of economic activities is now subordinated not under the political realm of maximising political power. Rather, the ultimate goal is now the maximisation of profit: accumulation of capital rather than maximisation and hoarding of money is centre-staged.

The complex causes and the not less momentous shift in meanings cannot be looked at in detail; however, one contradiction deserves special attention. On the one hand, the capitalisation of the process of production depends fundamentally on individualisation: the free economic actor, able to enter contractual relationships based on equality between parties. On the other hand, however, these contractual relationships are now substituting more far-reaching special relationships. In other words, the social is now externalised from the economic process and at the same time it is entirely absorbed, better to say: subordinated. Risk orientation, resource mobilisation and even the reference to the last resort are all in one or another way referring to the core economic process of the accumulation of capital. As much as moments as empowerment, social inclusion, cohesion or others are brought forward in political debates, the core of the argument is geared towards the facilitation of the socio-economic process: the concern for and maintenance of the free individual as free, i.e. rational economic actor. As such, it starts from the assumptions of individuals

- \* following rational preferences
- \* aiming on maximising utility (in the cases of firms this is expressed in profit)
- \* being able to obtain full information and
- \* being in a position that allows making full use of this information for guiding actual action.

Consequently we have to see that we cannot speak of the loss of the social even in the light of the classical school of economics (and their later adherents) – rather, we are facing a redefinition of the social in individualist terms. This new definition of the social is reflected in social science as methodological individualism – the individual,

purposefully acting and doing so in isolation, where purpose is by and large defined as oriented towards realisation of individual interests.

A question that is closely linked concerns the norms that guide related social policy. Having been set in pre-capitalist societies by an ‘external will’,<sup>2</sup> they had been now shifting to norms of direct control of performance within the economic process. But this shift went further – it hadn’t been primarily the shift of the instance of explicit control – e.g. from god and the secular representative: the clergy and the feudal rulers who claimed their might being derived from god. Instead, we are now dealing with the power derived from the individual: the people being the sovereign. However, this has to be qualified as ‘the people’ are implicitly and at times even explicitly defined more or less narrowly: as the free, rational and economically independent citizen, all this, however, led by the definition of the ideal of what would later become known as Schumpeterian entrepreneur and what had been defined before by the four assumptions of the ‘free individual’ as outlined before. But going beyond this shift of the instance of control we find also a substantial shift. Whereas the ideal citizen had been defined by Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative,<sup>3</sup> (s)he needed ideally to be complemented by the ideal bourgeois, following the

*utilitarian imperative: that utilitarianism is unavoidable, that morality rests ultimately on utilitarian self interest, that in the final analysis all of us are personal utilitarians and most of us are social utilitarians.*

*(Ratner 1984: 727)*

Leonard Ratner claims that morals, ethical values could be derived from these ideals, set by striving for ‘the greatest happiness’.<sup>4</sup> However, in actual fact they always needed to be complemented by other references – for instance laid down as Theory of Moral Sentiments (Smith, 1759) in the voluminous work, contributed by Adam Smith to the social thinking of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But not least political movements behind the now emerging new classes: *citoyenneté*, bourgeoisie and proletariat played a decisive role. Moreover, also political movements of other groups that now gained a new status and came into play: gender, ethnicity, age<sup>5</sup> and various others.

## 2) The Traditional Distinction of Welfare Regimes

Already since a long time, especially with launching the study ‘Industrial Society and Social Welfare’ by Harold Wilenski and Charles Lebaux (Wilensky/Lebeaux, 1958), we find attempts to classify different welfare regimes, a regime being understood as

*as the combined, interdependent way in which welfare is produced and allocated between state, market, and family.*

*(Esping-Andersen, 1999: 34)*

Whereas Wilenski and Lebaux, looking especially at the debates within the United States of America – concentrate strongly on the side of the overall political meaning

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<sup>2</sup> Here it does not play a role to investigate the underlying norms which have been very much internal to the society and ‘secularistic’

<sup>3</sup> ‘act so that the maxim of thy will can always at the same time hold good as a principle of universal legislation.’ (Kant, 1788)

<sup>4</sup> though in John Stuart Mill’s understanding different to content.

<sup>5</sup> for instance can ‘age’ be seen not least as social construct: the distinction of different ‘generations’ gaining specific relevance only now by the focus on the ‘utilitarian value’ of the different cohorts.

of the concept of welfare, Richard Titmuss takes this later up, but pushes the analysis further, using it for developing a comparative perspective and as well elaborating the ‘organisational structure’. He distinguishes three models, namely:

- \* the residual welfare model of social policy,
- \* the industrial achievement-performance model of social policy and
- \* the institutional-redistributive model of social welfare (see Titmuss, 1974: 30 f.).

Later again, Gøsta Esping-Andersen developed this further – but made at the same time a step back: the step forward can be seen in the extended empirical orientation and the clear political and national classification. However, the step back has to be seen in restricting social policy by and large on benefit transfer. Also, though Esping-Andersen claims to deliver an analysis of three worlds of capitalism, thus suggesting a strong consideration of the mode of production or accumulation regime, he fails in doing so. Despite many other critical points – as for instance the disregard of social services, the role of NGOs, the position of women within and as constitutive parts of any welfare regime – a fundamental point is the neglect of a sound theory of society as point of departure for the analysis of welfare regimes.

A different turn is taken by Michel Albert who is approaching the regime-question from a distinct perspective, focussing on two models, namely the neo-American and Rheinian Model (see Albert, 1993). His plea for the superiority of the latter is measured along three criteria, namely:

- \* the degree of security provided,
- \* the reduction of social inequalities,
- \* the extent to which it is an ‘open’ society (see *ibid.*: 147).

This comes much closer to an actual link to the analysis of welfare capitalism. Importantly, Albert includes as well the ‘social regime’ as it occurs within ‘pure economics’, considering for instance the entrepreneurial behaviour or the ‘well-managed consensus’ (*ibid.*: 110). One may well question the analysis Albert presents. However, it surely allows a comprehensive view on a wider set of socio-economic relationships. Nevertheless, the limitation is clear as well. Albert’s analysis is not based in a systematic collection of data but refers in many cases to anecdotal references, compiling them to some form of idealised pictures. As well, it does not allow developing further comparative perspectives. Instead, the analysis is restricted on two ideal models – the comparative perspective being limited on positioning countries on a position on the scale between these extremes. The actual economic system as matter of the mechanisms of accumulation of capital are as well not seriously looked at. On the other hand, the definition of ‘the social’ remains also desultory and is not made explicit.

Different in a more fundamental way is an approach coming from the Régulationist Theory which looks at the foundation of the social, being based in the core of the economic process itself: the accumulation regime and the mode of regulation, the latter captured as institutional ensemble and complex of norms which can secure capitalist reproduction *pro tempore* despite the antagonistic character of capitalist social relations’ (Jessop, 1990: 308), while the first is defined as ‘a particular combination of production and consumption which can be reproduced over time despite conflictual tendencies’ (*ibid.*). Thus, the Régulationist approach, though hugely differentiated in itself (cf. Jessop/Sum, 2006), can be seen as the only approach that overcomes the dichotomy between economy and social by defining the economic process itself as essentially social process. The largely structuralist orientation breeds however a procrustean bed, not sufficiently allowing the acknowledgment of differentiation within certain accumulation regimes. In fact, the

typology which comes out of this analysis is mainly geared towards the historical differentiation between Fordism and Post-Fordism. This means as well that the standard orientation on social policy in the Régulationist school is very much coined by looking at the traditional aspects of welfare provision (see Jessop, 2002), rather than following the integrated concept as it is entailed in the understanding of the socio-economic process.

### 3) State, Welfare and Society

Looking for the background, we have to return to the theory of economics and derive from here the role and function of the state and ultimately the welfare state. However, rather than recapitulating the various theories of the state and its welfare function from the analysis of the state as agent of the capitalist economy (eg. Offe, 1982; O'Connor, 1973), the aim here is to outline at least some fundamental issues that are linked to the fundamentally and principally individualist ideology of capitalist production – it is in actual fact an issue that needs much more exploration than we are able to dedicate here.

One way of tracing the state, as we know it today back is to link it to the three major sources of modern European thinking, all maturing with and during the enlightenment (see Engels, 1880). These are (i) the classical philosophy, rooting in Germany and glorifying and even sanctifying the individual as rational and isolated actor, (ii) the utopian socialism, reflected in the words of Frederick Engels' who states with reference to Morelly and Mably

*There were theoretical enunciations corresponding with these revolutionary uprisings of a class not yet developed; in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Utopian pictures of ideal social conditions;*

*(Engels, 1880: 287)*

(iii) One may say that these two strands culminated in the English-Scottish classical political economy. The latter itself found its finale in two orientations that should from then on shape political thought, going much beyond a simple determination of the state by the power of the economically dominant groups.

First, the economy had been centre-staged. But this claim of centrality had not been based on the materialist realisation of the centrality of the process of production and the insight that

*[t]he mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness*

*(Marx, 1958/59: 263)*

Rather the point had been on the contrary the claim that had been expressed in the second stance: it is the free individual, following with his/her action the principals of utilitarian being as already outlined before.

In this light that it is as well more justified to see the state emerging from the social contract rather than characterising it as result of a treatise. The underlying idea is at least that social relationships are now defined as matter of individuals entering contractual relationships. This is especially clear in the expression by Thomas Hobbes, to be found in the Leviathan as 'The Third Law of Nature':

*But because covenants of mutual trust where there is a fear of not performance on either part ... are invalid, though the origin of justice be the making of covenants, yet injustice actually there can be none till the cause of such fear be taken away, which, while men are in the natural condition of war, cannot be done. Therefore, before the names of just and unjust can have place, there must be some coercive power to compel men equally to the performance of the covenants ...*

*(Hobbes, 1651: 89)*

The point in question is that in this tradition individualism is deeply engraved into the idea of the modern state: the ‘dominance of economic thinking’, frequently bemoaned, is as such not the problem. The problem is the fundamentally individualist turn – individualist in terms of utilitarian conceptualisation of the state and its ‘social policy’.

The doom of freedom of the individual occurs however as loss of society. As greater this loss is, as more society re-enters from behind, now taking a perverted form: as means of control, as means of patronage and/or as benevolence.

In this context, two particular issues have to be raised in connection with the development of law.

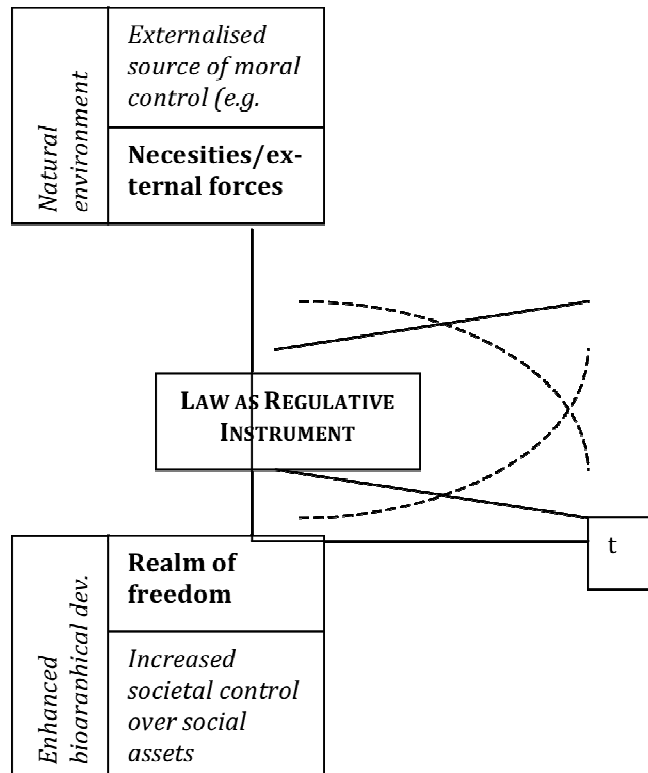
First, the general trend to juridification. This has to be understood on the basis of two developments. We can refer to Uwe Wesel who draws attention to a decrease of (law as being identical with) moral and an increase of (law as depending on) politics, arriving from there at an increasing role of law as means of regulation. However, here it is suggested to chose different lines of references, namely the decrease of dependence of external forces, in other words the increasing control of external factors of a realm of bare necessities; this going hand in hand with an increasing space for defining and ‘negotiating’ dependencies. It is a double-edged process by which the control over external factors is paralleled with extending internal necessities: the shift of Ruling between God, Government and People (see the contribution under this title in Herrmann, 2009 b).

Obviously this makes reference to what Karl Marx states in the third volume of the Capital, namely

*The actual wealth of society, and the possibility of constantly expanding its reproduction process, therefore, do not depend upon the duration of surplus labour, but upon its productivity and the more or less copious conditions of production under which it is performed. In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; ... Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond, it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working day is its basic prerequisite.*

*(Marx, 1894: 807)*

Translating the basic idea offered by Uwe Wesel (Wesel, 1997) into the Marxian framework, we arrive at the following figure.



**Figure 1: Development of the Meaning of Law**

This can be read as putting forward a secular movement, understanding development as humans' increasing independence from external forces. The ambivalence arises from the fact that this is an individual process and also a soci(et)al process. This can be seen as basis for tensions and power imbalances between individual and society and more so as contradiction within society.

This brings us to a second point: we can understand jurisprudence as a specific process of regulation that has an instrumental dimension but is welded into a process of defining norms. This is hugely consequential as we can now see that the secular development is not only characterised by the internalisation of control (rather than the control of the external environment); moreover the regulation within societies shows as well a specific shift. We can refer again to Uwe Wesel, who suggests four basic dimensions or functions of law, namely the function of order, the function of justice, the function of ruling<sup>6</sup> and the function of controlling ruling<sup>7</sup> (ibid., 49).

It is surely correct to classify these four dimensions as inherent in any kind of contemporary law. However, it is equally tempting to see them (i) as part of a hierarchical order and (ii) as sequential parts of a development. As hierarchy they present a pattern from a general systemic perspective (the function of ordering) to an instrumental perspective of dealing with the thus defined order. In a developmental perspective this occurs as the move away from general regulation, strongly linked to 'social norms preceding legislation' (Zacher) towards the system of self-reflexive legislative patterns that gain and maintain legitimacy by formal cohesiveness. –

<sup>6</sup> In German: Herrschaftsfunktion

<sup>7</sup> In German: Herrschaftskontrollfunktion

Methodologically we can understand hierarchy and sequence as well as meshing of structure and process – hugely tensional, hugely contradictory and only providing a (possible) temporary equilibrium of hegemonial power structure. In the words of Hans F. Zacher it is characterised by the following moments.

*The social is a set of activities, a process and it is a norm. The set of activities is 'social' as it is driven and determined by the norm of the social. Law is the positive system of what is happening, of the process. It aims on putting into actual practice what it can contribute to realising the social. Positive law means consolidation and assertion. On the other hand, the lived norms within society, at the end being political norms are vague, open. They are potentially due to permanent change. They are preceding legislation and are going in parallel with it. They are the critical horizon, against which the activities are assessed – and as such positive law is self-referential.*

*(Zacher, 2004<sup>3</sup>: 714 f. – translation P.H.)*

Of course, applying this on discussing welfare states, we have to be careful, avoiding throwing the child out with the bathwater. However, these are the recurrent issues in welfare regime debates: as much as we have to defend the welfare state measures, we have to look also for a fundamental shift that allows detecting the fundamental limitation of the capitalist welfare individualism and fosters rethinking welfare by reintroducing a fundamental stance of the social (see already as well Herrmann, 2007).

#### **4) Going Beyond**

A new approach had been presented by Peter Herrmann, centrally connecting to the Régulationist Theory and the Social Quality Approach (see Herrmann, Peter, 2007). He extends the Régulationist approach by complementing accumulation regime and mode of regulation by the concepts of life regime and mode of life (for a first approach see Ryan/Herrmann, 2005). These are defined as (i) a combination of factors regarding the individual, locating him/her in the physical and social environment that can be reproduced over time despite conflictual tendencies and (ii) the mode of life is defined as an ideological and psychological constellation of various and complex norms that can secure the individual's integration into the capitalist circle of reproduction. Referring thus to the economic dimension in connection with the real 'life courses' is of special importance as it pushes towards opening the structuralist limitation of the previously presented approaches towards a perspective that is more open to the actor and agency perspective. Herrmann did this in his own work only by looking at social professions and in another case by setting a theoretical framework for the analysis of social services (see Herrmann, 2006). This may offer a point of departure in two respects: it opens the Social Quality Approach towards questions that had only been implicitly tabled by this paradigm: the economy of the social. Furthermore, it offers a useful point allowing the extension of regulationist thoughts in its relevance for citizens' every day's life.

It is especially advantageous to apply this approach on the local level. On the one hand, it allows referring to deep-seated ideological traditions: the thesis, for which some evidence is already shown (see Herrmann, 2009 a), is that we can find in lasting effects of traditional ideologies on people's behaviour. This is especially obvious for

instance when it comes to rights – as abstract as liberty, equality and freedom appear as principles from the European era of enlightenment it is remarkable how different they are in their meaning in the various countries. – This can be followed through for instance to the ways in which people approach their right to make use of medical services. Similarly, abstract principles as that of subsidiarity, civil engagement etc. find the roots for their concrete interpretation in people's every day's life. This means that we may find a general convergence on the system level of states – at least a set of comparable trends in social security, development of services of general interest etc.; however, looking at the concrete level of local welfare systems we can see the ongoing meaning of the formal principles without seeing these as simple expression of individual conduct. Having the social quality approach as methodological basis, we can go beyond mainstream views on social policy as annex to economic policies: we reach at interpreting social policy as lived patterns of social justice, solidarity, equal value and human dignity, the four normative factors of social quality of which the architecture will be developed in the following.

This opens not least the opportunity to understand social policy in the new dimension as matter of socialisation – in this sense essentially positive rather than being only concerned with compensatory, basic-needs and on defence oriented notions.

## 5) The Architecture

The suggested architecture – at least the outline of its foundation – has to be seen in two fundamental tensions that provide the seedbed for the social. These are characterised by the tension between biographical and societal development on one axes and communities and institutional systems on the other axes.

As outcome of these tensions, the social develops, defined as the outcome of the interaction between people (constituted as actors) and their constructed and natural environment. With this in mind its subject matter refers to people's productive and reproductive relationships. In other words

- \* the constitutive interdependency between processes of self-realisation and processes of the formation of collective identities
- \* is a condition for 'the social', realised by the interactions of
  - actors, being – with their self-referential capacity – competent to act
  - and their framing structure, which translates immediately into the context of human relationships.

This provides the first step to defining the social not as normatively defined framework but as noun that provides itself a framework for defining norms – in general the social as set of objective relations and processes is the definiens.

It is suggested that within this framework three sets of factors play a decisive role, being defined as the outcome of the two dialectical tensions – so we have then as definiendum of the social conditional, constitutional and normative factors. Important is the distinction between social and its quality. This is important as a decisive switch comes now into play: Being definiendum of the social, the three sets of factors are at the same time definiens of the quality of the social, i.e. define the quality of the social and the quality of life within this social entity – it is important to underline that 'quality of life' is in this case an essentially social category. There is surely some circularity in it. However, it is an indispensable step, allowing us to step away from looking for external factors. In order to understand the argument it is important (i) to

fully acknowledge the dialectical character of the relationships; (ii) to totally accept with this as well the dialectic of processuality and relationality and (iii) to analytically elaborate on this basis the relationships of the three sets of factors and moreover, to see the concept of heuristic concept for analysing guiding soci(et)al practice (see in this context for instance Ilyenkov, 1960).

Without going into detail, the four conditional, constitutional and normative factors and their meaning are presented in the following table:

	<b>CONSTITUTIONAL FACTORS</b>	<b>CONDITIONAL FACTORS</b>	<b>NORMATIVE FACTORS</b>
<b>SHOWING</b>	Processes	Opportunities & Contingencies	Orientation
<b>FACTORS</b>	Personal (Human) Security Social Recognition Social Responsiveness Personal (Human) Capacity	Socio-Economic Security Social Cohesion Social Inclusion Social Empowerment	Social Justice (Equity) Solidarity Equal Valuation Human Dignity
<b>ASSESSMENT</b>	Qualified by Profiles	Measured by Social Quality Indicators	Allowing Judgement
<b>MAIN DETERMINANTS</b>	Each factor is an outcome of processes concerning the formation of a diversity of collective identities, strongly influenced by the interplay of processes of self-realisation across two main tensions and therefore also situated in one part of the quadrangle of the conditional factors.	Each factor is mainly influenced by aspects of the interaction between the two main tensions and is, therefore, especially situated in one part of the quadrangle of the constitutional.	Each factor is influenced by the dialectic relationship between conditional and constitutional factors and is therefore providing a thread, welding the different factors together.

## 6) Policy for Social Quality rather than Social Policy

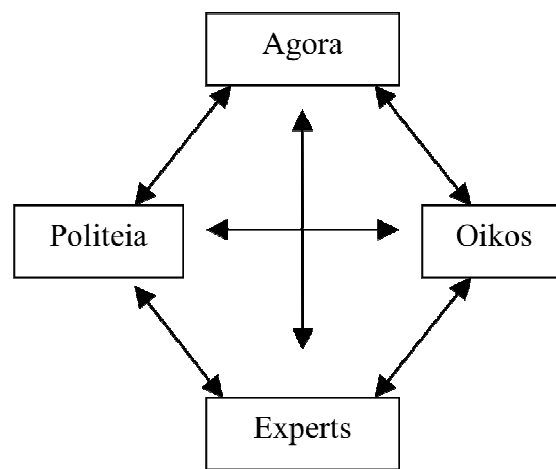
Going beyond, i.e. understanding social policy fundamentally linked into the process of socialisation requires first and foremost of course a sound understanding of the social. Starting from the constitutional analysis, we can see first two basic dialectical tensions, the one along a line between biographical and societal development, the other along a line between communities and institutions/systems. In this area of tensions the social develops in the understanding presented before.

This provides the first step to defining the social not as normatively set framework but as noun that provides itself a framework for defining norms – in general the social as set of objective relations and processes is the definiens.

Again: The factors are defined as the outcome of the two dialectical tensions – so we then have as definiendum of the social conditional, constitutional and normative factors. Important is the distinction between social and its quality, as a decisive switch comes now into play: Being definiendum of the social, the three sets of factors are at the same time definiens of the quality of the social, i.e. define the quality of the social

and the quality of life within this social entity – it is important to underline that ‘quality of life’ is in this case an essentially social category.

We have now (see as well the previous table) a framework with which we can overcome the commonly perceived gap or contradiction between micro- and macrolevel without falling back on the methodological individualism as it is prevalent in social science (see as outstanding representative Coleman, 1990). The confrontation between the different poles is turned into a productive relationship of the tensions – by no means without contradictions, but now with a space where they can be decided. This means to start with serious investments; but at the core we find a new determination of the nature and the role of actors for contributing to the quality of the ‘*comprehensive condensation*’ that determines the social in the area in question (as for instance in the urban area if used as means of urban policy-making). In order to achieve this, a distinction is made between the different worlds of the local space – these are shown in Figure 2.



*Key:*

*Agora: the world of communities, families, networks of citizens (life world)*

*Politeia: the world of (local) politicians and their departments*

*Oikos: the world of semi-public and private organisations as well as companies (world of systems)*

*Experts: the world of people with specific interest and expertise, analysing and contributing to public policies<sup>8</sup>*

**Figure 2: Four Worlds of Urban Space**

For orchestrating the actions (investments) regarding all facets of the local policy areas of the partners from the Oikos – in collaboration with partners from the political administrative systems – a methodology of practice is needed. Aspects of this methodology are also important for the Agora, namely for underpinning the role of people living in the relevant area as responsible citizens, implying the renewal of the position of urban categories. The Politeia may represent a double function. It is responsible for the politics, namely about the game to be played and about settling the goals and the rules of it. Politics is responsible for the nature of the ‘comprehensive condensation’ and its aspects or parts. The Politeia in collaboration with actors from the Agora and Oikos is also responsible for policies; it concerns how to score in a

<sup>8</sup> Zygmunt Bauman made a comparable distinction between: (i) the Agora (private/public domain), (ii) ecclesia (or the site of politics) and the Oikos (the households), see Bauman, Zygmunt: ‘In Search for Politics’, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999: 86-88

given game with given rules. In order to make such a sharp distinction we need new forms of governance which imply new rules, because in the last decades the position of partners in the Oikos and Agora changed widely. With the change of the game and the rules, experts should play a new role as well. Actually we see this already in many cases: think tanks, expert committees, hearings etc. They have to be functional for the Politeia, Agora and Oikos in order to contribute to a ‘comprehensive totality’ which guarantees social justice, solidarity, equal value and human dignity, ie. the four normative factors of social quality. This implies a scientific methodology in order to go beyond the traditional support of scientific institutes to isolated fragments of the urban space, preventing and understanding of the ‘comprehensive condensation’.

## **7) Conclusion**

From the foregoing it is clear that social policy making should not restrict itself on a mono dimensional domain, limiting itself on a selected policy area that is defined in the traditional realms of a securing individuals in a process of which socialisation is determined elsewhere. Rather, more than ever it is necessary and possible to understand social policy itself as determining part of a wider process of socialisation. An apparent paradox is that with the widening of the understanding the political orientation shifts more and more towards the manageable space in which conflicts have to be immediately solved by the different actors: urban areas, communities, provision of services etc. This clearly marks as well the acknowledgement of the fact that any social policy is a matter of different and in part conflicting interests. A major task of social policy is then, in addition to its immediate role of protection, distribution, productivity and redistribution to provide a space in which these different interests can be decided. Surely, it is to some extent an illusion, contradicting the role of the state and its subunits to act as power instruments from above, protecting limited interests. However, it is not less sure that without such an orientation permanent conflicts and instabilities are predestined.

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*Editorial Note*

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- iii Document elaborated in Preparation of a Presentation at the Lomonosov Moscow State University in Mai 2010  
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