

European Integration and Social Quality – Opportunities and Threats

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Overview

- European social policy context
- European Foundation's initiative to create a monitoring tool on living conditions in Europe
- Interrelation between quality of employment and quality of life

Social policy on the European policy agenda

- EEC: more economic focus
- EC: Change
 - Social Charta (89)
 - Social Protocol to the Maastricht treaty (92)
 - AMS treaty (95)
- AMS treaty
 - Antidiscrimination, Equal opportunities
 - Combat social exclusion
 - Employment chapter, Luxembourg process

Lisbon agenda I (2000)

- Triangle
 - Social policy
 - Economic policy
 - Employment policy
- Objectives
 - Social quality, social cohesion
 - Competitiveness
 - Full employment, quality of work
- Process
 - Mutually supportive, positive feedback
 - Social policy as a productive factor

Lisbon agenda II

Ambitious objectives for 2010

- Most competitive and knowledge based economy in the world
- Capable of sustainable economic growth
- 20 mio more jobs
- Increasing employment rate to 70%
- Life-long learning
- Progress in fight against poverty and exclusion

Focus on quality

- Quality of work
 - Health and safety
 - Work organisation, employability
 - Working time, participation of employees
- Social quality
 - High level of social protection
 - Good social services
 - Fundamental social rights
 - Reduction of social exclusion

Modernising social protection

- Encouraging later retirement
- Modernising pension systems
- Combating discrimination
- Make work pay
- Welfare to work
- Active welfare state

Other relevant aspects

- Sustainable development
- Food safety
- Enlargement
- European identity

Open form of coordination as new policy method

- Based on AMS treaty
- Bench-marking, monitoring tools, indicators
- Peer pressure between Member States
- Policy areas applied
 - Employment policy
 - Social exclusion
- New areas
 - Pension, public health

European Foundation's activities to monitor living conditions in Europe

- Start in 2001
- Start-up phase prepared by an international research group lead by the ESRI
- Brief of the ESRI group
 - Development of concept
 - Database on existing data on quality of life
 - Report on quality of life in Europe
 - Proposal for the implementation of a monitoring tool

Criteria for conceptual framework

- Scientifically grounded
- Focus on European social policy agenda
- Filling gaps, identifying a niche for the EF

Living conditions and quality of life: Starting point

- Normative
- Culturally relative
- Based on societal institutions
 - Mass democracy
 - Market economy
 - Human rights

“Level of living” as the Swedish approach to quality of life

- Access to resources (capacity)
 - Money, possessions
 - Knowledge, social relationships
- Essential conditions
 - Health
 - Work environment
- Value of resources depends on the context (arenas)
- Linking resources to outcome
- Not about
 - Needs, subjective judgments

“Subjective well-being” as the dominant US approach

- Citizens evaluate their own conditions
- Life domains
- Relative judgement over time and in relation to other groups
- Problems
 - Cultural differences
 - Adaptation of expectations based on perceived reality

Social exclusion

- Poverty, but more than income
- Deprivation
- Dynamic over time
- Multidimensional perspective
- Social, everyday life networks

Social cohesion

- Absence of latent conflict
- Societal dimension
- Opposite to social in-equality (?)

Social capital

- Starting point: Despite
 - High level of resources and capabilities
 - High personal satisfaction
- Loss of social connectedness and participation in community life in the middle classes
- Withdrawal from social and civic life
- Consequence
 - Decrease in social capital
 - Decrease in quality of life

First conceptualisation of quality of life

- Objective and subjective indicators
- Resources and conditions
- Outcomes
- Different life domains
- Goal dimensions

EF focus in its programm of work 2002

Quality of life and

- Changing nature of employment, work organisation and working conditions
- Modernisation of social protection and access to social services
- Participation in employment and community life
- Disparities

Proposal: Part I

- Quality of life (EF: plus living conditions)
- Constraints, conditions, resources
- Outcomes
- Processes over time (e.g. life course)
- Satisfaction as gap between expectations and reality

Proposal: Part II

- Central domains
 - Health
 - Family life
 - Economic resources
 - Employment and working conditions
 - Social relationship, participation and integration
- Plus others

Goal dimensions

- Improvement of objective living conditions
- Enhancing subjective well-being
- Reduction of inequalities
- Strengthening connections and social ties
- Preservation of human capital
- Preservation of natural capital

Possible monitoring apparatus

- EF survey on quality of life and living conditions
- Joint venture with existing surveys
- Qualitative approach
- Re-analysis of existing data
- Combinations

Research agenda on the relationship of working and living conditions

- Caring and working conditions/working time
- Capabilities for active participation in society and work organisation
- Working poor
- Commuting and quality of life
- Relationship between working time and personal time arrangements
- Life long learning and quality of life
- Overall quality of life and quality of work

Relationship between working time and personal time arrangements

- Work-life balance
- In addition: Caring for the elderly
- In addition: Competence development, employability
- Different requirements in different life phase
- Life course

Final remark

- Specific role of Foundation
 - Advice for Commission and EF
 - Social partners involvement
- Interface living and working will be very important
- Comparison quality of life in Member States and Accession Countries

Other possible topics

- Social capital and social participation
- Access to public services and quality of life
- Disadvantaged groups

Objective of presentation

- Up-date on development
- Conceptual debate
- Emerging issues for cooperation in the EF

Project management

- Contract in place with a consortium lead by ESRI (Dublin)
- DIW (Berlin), Institute for social research (Essex)
- Meetings
 - 26.11.01
 - 8.2.02
 - 10/11.4.02