Preaching to the Choir: Are the Commission's Recommendations Already Applied?

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Preaching to the Choir: Are the Commission's Recommendations Already Applied?

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Abstract As we have seen, the Commission's final report outlines a comprehensive framework by defining some guidelines by: (a) identifying the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including measurement problems; (b) considering what additional information might be required for the production of more relevant social progress indicators; and (c) assessing the feasibility of alternative measurement and presentation tools. The report argues that GDP should not be completely eliminated by the options for measuring progress, but must be integrated with other information. In particular, the Committee defines three major areas in which indicators should be developed: economic conditions, quality of life and sustainability. In the European scene, but not only, there are many initiatives that aim at measuring the progress of countries and well-being through different conceptual frameworks and by using several indicators. This work intends to analyze some of those relevant initiatives by comparing and confronting them to the Commission's recommendations, in order to check what already fits the commission recommendations and what still needs to be defined in that perspective.

Keywords Measuring progress · Beyond GDP · Country well-being · Social progress indicators

1 Introduction

Measuring and monitoring well-being of societies require a complex and comprehensive framework and integrated approaches at conceptual and methodological levels. This perspective is urged not only by academic researchers but also by other important organizations and institutions.

In 2008, the President of the French Republic appointed Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean Paul Fitoussi to create a Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (CMEPSP). The commission's final report (September 2009) outlined a comprehensive framework by defining also some guidelines by:

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Table 1 Comparable aspects for each experience to be compared

		Comparable aspects			
		Conceptual model	Policy goals	Indicators suggestions	Indicators
Experiences to be compared	CMEPSP (2009)	**X**	**Xp**	**Xp**	
	EUSI (2000)	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
	OECD Factbook (2005)		**Xp**		**X**
	OECD—Global Project—taxonomy (2009)	**X**			

Xp = Partially comparable

- identifying the limits of GDP as an indicator of economic performance and social progress, including the problems with its measurement;
- considering what additional information might be required for the production of more relevant indicators of social progress;
- assessing the feasibility of alternative measurement tools, and to discuss how to present the statistical information in an appropriate way.

The report argues that the GDP should not be completely eliminated by the options for measuring development, but must be integrated with other types of information. In particular, the Committee defines three major areas in which indicators should be developed: economic conditions, quality of life and sustainability.

In the European scene, but not only, there are many relevant initiatives aimed at measuring the progress of countries and well-being of citizens through different conceptual frameworks and by using several indicators.

We try to compare them to the Commission's recommendations, in order to check what already fits the commission recommendations and what still needs to be defined in that perspective. However, the comparison was not accomplished with experiences involving just single composite indicators.

In order to accomplish our purpose, we identified three different experiences showing different perspectives and basics[1]:

– the European System of Social Indicators (EUSI), based upon a strong conceptual framework(by GESIS)
– the OECD Factbook, representing well-known informative instruments
– the OECD—Global Project—Taxonomy.

2 The Adopted Methodology for the Comparisons

Consistently with the characteristics of the selected experiences, the comparison was accomplished with reference to different aspects: conceptual model, policy goals, indicators suggestions, indicators. Table 1 reports the comparable aspects for each experience to be compared.

By taking into account the characteristics of the CMEPSP's suggestions, our work aimed firstly to schematically rebuild the underlying CMEPSP's conceptual framework. The following outline describes the identified structure:

[1] We have also considered the opportunity to include United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in this analysis. Actually, this comparison turned out to be not appropriate for our purposes since the MDG is oriented to goals measures much more than monitoring measures.

The CMEPSP's conceptual framework identifies three broad areas: (i) classical economic issues, (ii) quality of life and (iii) sustainable development and environment.

According to the Report, the complexity traced in measuring and monitoring societal well-being

- arouses a great need of statistics but statistics needs to elaborate new and shared working models
- requires huge investments in order to accomplish survey projects (systematic or finalized) and systematic control on data quality
- requires the involvement of different governance levels, which represents a new challenge for statistics and for the statistical offices.

In Table 2, the identified sub-areas and the corresponding recommendations are reported for each area.

The table allowed us to accomplish the comparisons by identifying the correspondence between the CMEPSP's and each applied approach.

Due to the characteristics of the CMEPSP's proposal, which does not always suggest indicators, the results of the comparing process show the correspondence of topics, sub-topics or indicators.

In order to make the comparing process easier, we highlighted different topics with different grey nuances: the topics/indicators pointed out in a {certain colour-we have no colours in SIR} is covering the corresponding CMEPSP's topics.

A particular note on the "sustainable development and environment" area: in this section, CMEPSP's report provides hints concerning methods but not measures/indicators and discusses the distinction between dashboards, sets of indicators and composite indicators as if this was a specific problem to be faced in the "sustainable development and environment" ambit, while that distinction is valid regardless of the considered area.

Note that the comparison results will be represented mainly through tables, followed by some explicative notes.

3 The Comparisons

3.1 CMEPSP vs. EUSI

3.1.1 EUSI: Conceptual Framework and Structure

The conceptual framework of the European System of Social Indicators—EUSI—(Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000) represents an excellent example of a comprehensive approach in measuring societal well-being.

EUSI's conceptual framework is based on a reflection of the scientific discourse on notions of welfare and related goals of societal development. In addition, an inventory of the goals and objectives pursued by the policies of the European Union has been undertaken. From both types of analyses, the conclusion was drawn that there are six major perspectives and dimensions of societal development in Europe which ought to be addressed by the EUSI and should be used to derive and select measurement dimensions and indicators.

The concepts considered by EUSI define three pillars, (i) quality of life, (ii) economic and social cohesion and (iii) sustainability.

Table 2 Commission on the measurement of economic performance and social progress *Report's Outline*

Classical GDP issues		
A. Existing measurement framework	1. Improving measurement of	National accounts aggregates Services (general) Government-provided services
	2. Revisit the concept of "defensive" expenditures (investments—capital goods—maintenance)	Security (prisons, police, …) Health (hospitals, …) Environment (pollution, …)
	3. Income, wealth and consumption have to be considered together (→ sustainability)	[Gross investments (physical & human capital)]—[depreciation & depletion (physical, human, natural capital)]
B. Bringing out the household perspective	1. Adjusting household income measures for government services in kind	Household disposable income Actual final consumptions (services access and quality)
	2. Medians and means vs. distribution of income, consumption and wealth	Wealth measured in terms of income redistribution and consumptions (Gini coefficient and other statistical indexes describing the distribution)
	3. Prices indices	Spatial and temporal comparisons
	4. Risk and vulnerability	Presence of less guarantees (e.g., risk caused by pensions system and individual investments)
	5. Broader measures of household economic activity	Cleaning, cooking, child and old people care, driving to work, … (in monetary terms)
	6. Time use	Any individual activities measured in terms of time (also paid work and study)
	7. Valuing the production of household services	
	8. Valuing leisure	
	9. Distribution of full income	
Recommendations	1. When evaluating material well-being, look at income and consumption rather than production 2. Consider income and consumption jointly with wealth 3. Emphasise the household perspective 4. Give more prominence to the distribution of income, consumption and wealth 5. Broaden income measures to non-market activities	

Table 2 continued

Quality of life			
A. Subjective measures of quality of life			
A. Objective features shaping quality of life	1. Health	Mortality (life expectancy at birth, standardized mortality rate, median life expectancy)	
		Morbidity	
		Combined health measures (disability-adjusted life year, disability-free life expectancy, health adjusted life expectancy)	
		Health inequalities (groups, life-styles, genetics)	
	2. Education	Inputs (school enrolment, education expenditures, school resources)	
		Outputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)	
		Throughputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)	
	3. Personal activities	Paid work	
		Unpaid domestic work	
		Commuting	
		Leisure time	
		Housing	
	4. Political voice and governance	Citizens' voice	Democratic participation
			Participation in governance
			Support from outside government
		Legislative guarantees	Constitutional guarantees
			Legal guarantees for basic economic needs
			Political and social rights guaranteed by law
			Ratification of international treaties
		Rule of law	Judicial institutions
			Equal access to and treatment for all
			Functioning of legal institutions
			Arrests and detention of political prisoners

Table 2 continued

	5. Social connections	Social trust, social isolation, informal support, work place engagement, religious engagement, bridging social capital.
	6. Environmental conditions	Access to environmental services (water), environmental amenities and disamenities, climate variations, natural disasters.
	7. Personal insecurity	Crimes and incidents
	8. Economic insecurity	Unemployment, illness, old age
Recommendations	1. Measures of both objective and subjective well-being provide key information about people's quality of life. Statistical offices should incorporate questions to capture people's life evaluations, hedonic experiences and priorities in their own surveys 2. Quality of life depends on people's objective conditions and opportunities. Steps should be taken to improve measures of people's health, education, personal activities. In particular, substantial effort should be devoted to developing and implementing robust, reliable measures of social connections, political voice, and insecurity that can be shown to predict life satisfaction 3. Quality-of-life indicators in all the dimensions they cover should assess inequalities in a comprehensive way 4. Surveys should be designed to assess the links between various quality-of-life domains for each person, and this information should be used when designing policies in various fields 5. Statistical offices should provide the information needed to aggregate across quality-of-life dimensions, allowing the construction of different scalar indexes	
Sustainable development and environment		
Dashboards or sets of indicators		
Composite indices		
Adjusted GDPs		
Sustainable standard of living,	Adjusted net savings (ANS)	
	Footprints	

Table 2 continued

Recommendations	1. Sustainability assessment requires a well-identified sub-dashboard of indicators. The distinctive feature of the components of this dashboard should be that they are interpretable as variations of some underlying "stocks". A monetary index of sustainability has its place in such a dashboard but, under the current state of the art, it should remain essentially focused on economic aspects of sustainability 2. The distinctive feature of all components of this sub-dashboard should be to inform about variations of those "stocks" that underpin human well-being 3. A monetary index of sustainability has its place in such a dashboard, but under the current state of the art, it should remain essentially focused on economic aspects of sustainability 4. The environmental aspects of sustainability deserve a separate follow-up based on a well-chosen set of physical indicators. In particular there is a need for a clear indicator of our proximity to dangerous levels of environmental damage (such as associated with climate change or the depletion of fishing stocks.)

Table 3 Quality of life dimensions in Zapf's model

	Level of subjective well-being	
	High	Low
Level of objective living conditions		
High	Well-being	Dissonance
Low	Adaptation	Deprivation

(i) "Quality of life" concept (micro level) The concept of quality of life incorporates two major dimensions:

- **Objective Living Conditions**. This dimension concerns the resources, results and ascertainable living circumstances of individuals, such as working conditions, state of health or standard of living.
- **Subjective Well-Being**. This dimension covers the subjective evaluation of living conditions (*assessment*) and the investigation of the affective and cognitive components of subjective well-being.

The adopted approach refers to Zapf's model (1975, 1984), which identifies the combination between the two degrees (low and high) of the two components (objective living conditions and subjective well-being). The taxonomic model produced by this combination produces is represented in the Table 3.

(ii) "Economic and social cohesion" concept The two basic dimensions extracted from the concept of social cohesion are:[2]

- **Disparities, Inequalities and Social Exclusion**. This dimension refers to aspects of the distribution of welfare within a society such as regional disparities, equality of opportunities for women and men or other population groups.
- **Social Relations, Ties and Inclusion**. This second dimension of social cohesion concerns the social relations, bonds and ties within a society or what has been denoted as 'social capital'. The existence of informal networks, associations and organisations and the performance of societal institutions are issues addressed by this dimension of social cohesion. Moreover, the cohesion between and integration of European societies is also covered by this dimension.

(iii) "Sustainability" concept The sustainability concept refers to the World Bank's four capital approach. In particular, the four goal dimensions are the enhancement and preservation of social, human, produced and natural capital. For each type of capital two aspects have been considered: (i) preservation or enhancement of the capital of present generations and (ii) provision for future generations. In other words, according to this approach, sustainability means to preserve the societal capital (physical capital, social capital, human capital, natural capital) in order to secure equivalent living conditions for future generations:

- Preservation of **Human Capital**. Measurement dimensions and indicators related to this goal dimension focus on processes and measures that affect people's skills, education and health.

[2] Each dimension refers to one goal dimension, respectively:

(a) reduction of disparities and inequalities and fighting social exclusion
(b) strengthening of connections and social ties including the enhancement of social capital.

- Preservation of **Natural Capital**. This dimension concerns the current state as well as processes and measures that improve or deteriorate the base of natural resources.

Besides these six goal dimensions concerning the quality of life and societies, the European System of Social Indicators also addresses selected trends of general social change in terms of

- **Demographic and Socio-Economic Structures**
- **Values and attitudes**.

The eight dimensions of welfare and general social well-being (Table 4—column 2) are being applied to the 12 life domains (Table 4—column 1) establishing the basic structure of the European System of Social Indicators. Thus, within each life domain up to eight dimensions of welfare and general social change are distinguished and operationalized in terms of domain-specific measurement dimensions, subdimensions and indicators (Table 4—column 3).

EUSI is based upon a systematic review of the main conceptual models aimed at building a system of indicators with a high methodological soundness, by avoiding the tendency to construct a system of indicators "around data".

The conceptual model includes all the notions related to European policy goals: quality of life, social cohesion and sustainability. The first concept, is related to the individual well-being, while the second and the third refer to societal well-being. However, the limits between those concepts are unclear, consequently also each defined policy goal does not refer to just one concept but crosses all of them.

3.1.2 Comparison

What Eusi has with reference to CMEPSP (Tables 5 and 6).

To be noticed

With reference to the classical economic ambit, EUSI

- takes into account also subjective measures
- takes into account the different indicators in different areas (life domains)
- allows space/time comparisons (direct or trend, depending on the considered indicator)
- partially explores also time use (e.g., time spent in studying is not measured because no European survey is available).

Subjective measures of quality of life. EUSI's conceptual framework,

- considers subjective well-being as a dimension crossing all the life domains
- explores (simultaneously or individually) the cognitive and affective aspects of subjective well-being, according to the life domain. The distinction is not considered by the CMEPSP's report.

Health. This dimension is deeply explored by EUSI also with reference to aspects not considered by CMEPSP's report (e.g., health in terms of prevention, of working safety, etc.).

Education. EUSI explores also the "opportunity" dimension and considers the expenditure item by differentiating public/private and state/household perspectives, while this distinction does not come clearly into light in CMEPSP's recommendations.

Laws. In CMEPSP report, this dimension describes the national system in terms of macro qualitative pre-conditions and cannot be measured through quantitative approaches.

Table 4 EUSI: The dimensions of welfare and general social well-being

1	2	3
1. Population, households and families	Objective living conditions	Social services for families
	Subjective well-being	Subjective quality of services (data currently not available)
		Evaluation of housekeeping (data currently not available)
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Equal opportunities of women and men
	Social relations and ties	Social relations within households
		Social relations between households
		Quality of relations between household members
	Human capital	Provision of social services by families
	Socio-economic structure	Population size and growth
		Processes of family formation
		Population and household structure
		Population density and agglomeration
		Migration and foreign population
	Values and attitudes	Attitudes towards marriage and partnership
		Attitudes towards family roles
2. Housing	Objective living conditions	Housing conditions
		Residential area
	Subjective well-being	
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Regional disparities in housing conditions
		Income-related inequality of housing conditions
		Social exclusion
	Natural capital	Environmental impacts of housing
	Values and attitudes	Housing preferences
3. Transport		
4. Leisure, media and culture		
5. Social and political participation and integration		
6. Education and vocational training	Objective living conditions	Level of education and vocational training
		Educational performance
		Accessibility of educational institutions (under preparation)
	Subjective well-being	Subjective perception and evaluation of education
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Regional disparities of education (under preparation)
		Equal educational opportunities of women and men

Table 4 continued

1	2	3
		Equal educational opportunities of people with different social background
		Equal educational opportunities of nationals and non-nationals
		Social exclusion (under preparation)
	Social relations and ties	Trust in institutions
		Europe-specific concerns
	Human capital	Participation in education
		Investment in education
		Private expenditure on education (under preparation)
		Subjective importance of education (under preparation)
	Natural capital (under preparation)	
	Demographic and socio-economic structures (under preparation)	
	Values and attitudes (under preparation)	
7. Labour market and working conditions	Objective living conditions	Employment: potential and level
		Employment level
		Labour market: opportunities and risks
		Working conditions
		Mobility
		Unemployment and underemployment
	Subjective well-being	Subjective perception and evaluation of the personal employment situation
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Regional disparities of employment opportunities and risks
		Equal opportunities/inequalities of women and men
		Equal opportunities/inequalities of different generations
		Equal opportunities/inequalities of disabled and non-disabled
		Equal opportunities/inequalities of nationals and non-nationals
	Social relations and ties	Participation in the area of working life
		Quality of social relations in working life
		Quality of societal institutions
		Europe-specific concerns
	Human capital	Job-related health impairments
		Promotion of vocational qualification

Table 4 continued

1	2	3
	Natural capital	Consumption of natural resources by economy
		Environmental pollution by economy
	Socio-economic structure	Labour force status
		Structure of employment
	Values and attitudes	General importance of work
		Importance of job characteristics
8. Income, standard of living, and consumption patterns	Objective living conditions	Income level
	Standard of living	Security of financial situation
	Subjective well-being	Subjective evaluation of financial situation and level of living
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Total income inequality
		Intergenerational inequality of income and standard of living
		Social exclusion
	Social relations and ties	Support of people in need of financial help
		Europe-specific concerns
	Human capital	Private provision for risks and needs
		Expenditure on private health insurance (data currently not available)
	Natural capital	Consumption of natural resources by private households
		Environmental pollution by private households
		Life styles and attitudes relevant to the environment
	Demographic and socio-economic structures	Income sources
	Values and attitudes	Subjective importance of income and standard of living
		Attitudes towards inequality of income and standard of living
9. Health	Objective living conditions	State of health
		Health care facilities and resources
	Subjective well-being	Subjective evaluation of state of health
		Subjective evaluation of health care resources
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Regional disparities in the accessibility of health care facilities (under preparation)
		Inequalities between different social strata (under preparation)
		Social exclusion
	Social relations and ties	Trust in institutions

Table 4 continued

1	2	3
	Human capital	Health-relevant life styles
		Health prevention
		Measures of rehabilitation (under preparation)
		Security of future health care resources
	Demographic and socio-economic structures	Health care expenditure
		Health care utilization
10. Environment	Objective living conditions	Environmental quality
	Subjective well-being	Perception of the environment
		Satisfaction with the environment
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Environmental justice
	Social relations and ties	Trust
	Natural capital	Stock and supply with environmental goods
		Biodiversity
		Activities with an impact on environment
		Environmental protection and eco-efficiency
		Financial resources for environmental protection
	Values and attitudes	Importance of environment
11. Crime and public safety	Objective living conditions	Crime load
	Subjective well-being	Subjective perception and evaluation of public safety
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Inequalities
		Social exclusion
	Social relations and ties	Trust in institutions
		Europe specific concerns
	Human capital	Crime prevention
	Preservation of natural capital	Environmental crime
	Demographic and socio-economic structures	Crime structure
	Values and attitudes	Public safety
		Sanctioning
		Cause of crime
12. Total life situation	Objective living conditions	Index of living conditions
	Subjective well-being	Cognitive components of subjective well-being
		Affective components of subjective well-being

Table 4 continued

1	2	3
	Disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	Gender inequality of living conditions
		Intergenerational inequality of living conditions
		Inequality between social strata
		Inequality between nationals and foreigners
		Social exclusion
	Social relations and ties	General trust
		Sense of belonging
	Values and attitudes	Solidarity—selfishness

The originality of CMEPSP's approach comes from considering these [macro] aspects as part of quality-of-life dimension (typically micro).

Environmental conditions. In CMEPSP report, the description of this dimension is unclear since it considers only aspects (like natural disasters) representing extreme effects of conditions and/or behaviours not considered in terms of monitoring. EUSI takes into account both macro and micro conditions and behaviours.

Economic insecurity. EUSI takes into account economic insecurity by analysing

- both work risks and work opportunities, also in terms of subjective perceptions
- inequalities and differences in job opportunities among groups of population.

CMEPSP report does not clearly explain which measuring approach should be adopted in order to measure economic insecurity in terms of illness. Can the financial support from family or public system be considered the indicators of economic security?

Poverty. CMEPSP's report refers to poverty in terms of "effect", so no indication is provided concerning poverty indicators, which are widely considered by EUSI.

Sustainability. In the EUSI's conceptual framework, sustainability is considered as a dimension crossing all the life domains and not strictly and exclusively related to the environmental dimension. While CMEPSP's report simply refers some well-known experiences (e.g., ecological footprints), EUSI considers the sustainability concept not only in terms of environment but also in a wider perspective, considering human, social, produced and natural capital. Concerning the natural capital, EUSI considers a wide range of indicators, e.g., use of agricultural pesticides, measures to save energy and protect the environment (macro perspective), cutbacks on driving a car and use of public transport (micro perspective), subjective trust in institutions delegated to environmental protection (subjective perspective).

3.2 CMEPSP vs. OECD Factbook

3.2.1 OECD Factbook: Structure

The OECD World Forum on "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy", organized by the OECD in November 2004 addressed key issues for the development of modern democracies, including the transparency and accountability of public policies, people's capacity to understand the characteristics and the evolution of the economies and societies in which they live, and the role of the media in contributing to the development of a common knowledge among citizens. All these issues highlighted the necessity of special effort in

Table 5 CMEPSP vs. EUSI: Classical GDP issues

CMEPSP			EUSI ⇩
Classical GDP issues			
A. Existing measurement framework	1. Improving measurement of	National accounts aggregates	**X**
		Services (general)	**X**
		Government-provided services	**X**
	2. Revisit the concept of "defensive" expenditures (investments—capital goods—maintenance)	Security (prisons, police, …)	**X**
		Health (hospitals, …)	**X**
		Environment (pollution, …)	**X**
	3. Income, wealth and consumption have to be considered together (→ sustainability)	[Gross investments (physical & human capital)]—[depreciation & depletion (physical, human, natural capital)]	Indicators are provided but not in the suggested combination
B. Bringing out the household perspective	1. Adjusting household income measures for government services in kind	Household disposable income Actual final consumptions (services access and quality)	Income related to inequality concept and measured also through subjective indicators
	2. Medians and means vs. distribution of income, consumption and wealth	Wealth measured in terms of income redistribution and consumptions (Gini coefficient and other statistical indexes describing the distribution)	**X**
	3. Prices indices	Spatial and temporal comparisons	**X**
	4. Risk and vulnerability	Presence of less guarantees (e.g., risk caused by pensions system and individual investments)	**X**
	5. Broader measures of household economic activity	Cleaning, cooking, child and old people care, driving to work, … (in monetary terms)	**X**
	6. Time use	Any individual activities measured in terms of time (also paid work and study)	**X**
	7. Valuing the production of household services		**X**
	8. Valuing leisure		**X**
	9. Distribution of full income		**X**

producing high quality statistics and presenting them in a "user-friendly" manner. The OECD *Factbook: Economic, Environmental and Social Statistics*" is closely related to this general project. From 2005, it is yearly published.[3]

[3] http://lysander.sourceoecd.org/vl=8034723/cl=21/nw=1/rpsv/factbook2009/index.htm
http://oberon.sourceoecd.org/vl=2639866/cl=72/nw=1/rpsv/fact2009/
http://www.oecd.org/site/0,3407,en_21571361_34374092_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
http://lysander.sourceoecd.org/vl=23854683/cl=45/nw=1/rpsv/factbook2009/index.htm
http://www.oecd.org/document/62/0,3343,en_21571361_34374092_34420734_1_1_1_1,00.html.

Table 6 CMEPSP vs. EUSI: Quality of life

CMEPSP				EUSI ⇩
Quality of Life				
A. Subjective measures of quality of life				**X**
B. Objective features shaping quality of life	1. Health	Mortality (life expectancy at birth, standardized mortality rate, median life expectancy)		**X**
		Morbidity		**X**
		Combined health measures (disability-adjusted life year, disability-free life expectancy, health adjusted life expectancy)		**X**
		Health inequalities (groups, life-styles, genetics)		**X**
	2. Education	Inputs (school enrolment, education expenditures, school resources)		**X**
		Outputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)		**X**
		Throughputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)		**X**
	3. Personal activities	Paid work		**X**
		Unpaid domestic work		
		Commuting		
		Leisure time		**X**
		Housing		**X**
	4. Political voice and governance	Citizens' voice	Democratic participation	
			Participation in governance	
			Support from outside government	
		Legislative guarantees (*)	Constitutional guarantees	
			Legal guarantees for basic economic needs	
			Political and social rights guaranteed by law	
			Ratification of international treaties	
		Rule of law (*)	Judicial institutions	
			Equal access to and treatment for all	
			Functioning of legal institutions	
			Arrests and detention of political prisoners	

Table 6 continued

CMEPSP			EUSI ⇩
Quality of Life			
	5. Social connections	Social trust, social isolation, informal support, work place engagement, religious engagement, bridging social capital.	**X**
	6. Environmental conditions	Access to environmental services (water), environmental amenities and disamenities, climate variations, natural disasters.	See notes
	7. Personal insecurity	Crimes and incidents	**X** (only crime)
	8. Economic insecurity	Unemployment, illness, old age	**X**

OECD Factbook, representing the best-selling annual title from the OECD, provides a global overview of today's major economic, social and environmental indicators, in a range of user-friendly formats.

The indicators cover many countries and enable direct comparisons for many indicators between OECD Members and Brazil, Russian Federation, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa.

In OECD's view and aim, the *Factbook* should bring statistics closer to old and new audiences, make comparative data more interpretable and usable, and underline the long-term perspective of economic, social and environmental developments.

In other words, *Factbook*'s main aims are to:

- meet the needs of a wide range of users in the form of a one-stop resource containing broadly- based, comparative, country-based, economic, social and environmental data;
- build a product that enhances the visibility of the OECD vis-à-vis non-experts, both in OECD countries and in non-Member economies;
- help users to assess the position of a single country taking into account multiple dimensions;
- highlight measurement issues, underlining areas where the comparability of statistics across countries is weak, and describe initiatives undertaken to overcome these problems.

Each edition of *Factbook* contains a special chapter, focusing on a particular topic. The selected year (2005) was focused on Inequality. Table 7 synthesizes the *Factbook*'s structure.

3.2.2 Comparison

To be noticed (Tables 8 and 9)

Population. Unlike Factbook, CMEPSP's report is less interested in classical indicators (e.g. trends in migration) but more in qualitative dynamics (social connections). For example:

- elderly population is considered and interpreted in the ambit of economic insecurity

Table 7 OECD *Factbook's* structure (2005)

Population and migration	Total population	Evolution of the population Regional Population
	Elderly population	Ageing societies Elderly Population by region Public and private pension expenditures
	International migration	Trends in migration Immigrant population Migration and employment by educational attainment Migration and unemployment
Macroeconomic trends	Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Size of GDP National income per capita
	Economic growth	Evolution of GDP Household saving Investment rates Inflation Steel production
	Productivity	Income and productivity levels Growth in GDP per capita Labour productivity growth Growth accounts for OECD countries
	Economic structure	Value added by activity Evolution of value added by activity Small and medium-sized enterprises
Economic globalisation	Trade	Share of trade in GDP Trade in goods Trade in services Trading partners Balance of payments
	Foreign direct investment (FDI)	FDI flows and stocks Activities of multinationals
Prices	Prices and interest rates	Consumer Price Indices (CPI) Producer Price Indices (PPI) Long-term interest rates
	Purchasing power and exchange rates	Rates of conversion Effective exchange rates
Energy	Energy supply	Primary energy supply Energy supply and economic growth Energy supply per capita Electricity generation Nuclear energy Renewable energy
	Energy production and prices	Energy production Oil production Oil prices
Labour	Employment	Employment rates by gender Employment rates by age group Part-time employment Self-employment
	Unemployment	Unemployment rates Long-term unemployment Regional unemployment
	Labour compensation and hours worked	Labour compensation Hours worked

Table 7 continued

Science and technology	Research and development (R&D)	expenditure on R&D Investment in knowledge Researchers Patents
	ICT	Size of the ICT sector Investment in ICT Occupation and skills in the information economy Computer and internet access by households
	Communications	Exports of information and communications equipment Telephone access
Environment	Water and natural resources	Water consumption Fisheries
	Air and land	Emissions of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Municipal waste
Education	Outcomes	International student assessment Trends in tertiary graduation and entry rates Tertiary attainment
	Expenditure on education	Change in expenditure on education Relative earnings of graduates Public and private expenditure in tertiary education Expenditure on educational institutions
Public finance	Government deficits and debt	Government deficits Government debt
	Public expenditure	Health expenditure Social expenditure Law, order and defence expenditure
	Support and aid	Agricultural support estimates Government support for fishing Official development assistance
	Taxes	Total tax revenue Taxes on the average worker
Quality of life	Health	Life expectancy Infant mortality Mental health Obesity
	Society	Suicide Subjective well-being Volunteering and social support Youth inactivity
	Leisure	Leisure time Recreation and culture Tourism: Hotel nights
	Security	Victimisation rates Road fatalities
Inequality	Income Inequalities	Measures of income inequality Income at different points of the distribution
	Income poverty	Poverty rates and poverty gaps Poverty by individual and household characteristics
	Government Redistribution	Public benefits, taxes and income inequality Public benefits, taxes and income poverty

Table 7 continued

	Inequalities in Education	Reading proficiency of 15-year-old students Performance of 15-year-olds by immigrant status Participation in higher education by father's job and education
	Inequalities in Health	Health status Access and use of health care
	Inequalities Among Regions	Regional GDP Regional labour markets Regional access to education and health services

Table 8 CMEPSP vs. FACTBOOK: Classical GDP issues

CMEPSP			Factbook ⇩
Classical GDP issues			
A. Existing measurement framework	1. Improving measurement of	National accounts aggregates	**X**
		Services (general)	
		Government-provided services	
	2. Revisit the concept of "defensive" expenditures (investments—capital goods—maintenance)	Security (prisons, police, …)	
		Health (hospitals, …)	
		Environment (pollution, …)	
	3. Income, wealth and consumption have to be considered together (→ sustainability)	[Gross investments (physical & human capital)]—[depreciation & depletion (physical, human, natural capital)]	**X**
B. Bringing out the household perspective	4. Adjusting household income measures for government services in kind	Household disposable income Actual final consumptions (services access and quality)	**X**
	5. Medians and means vs. distribution of income, consumption and wealth	Wealth measured in terms of income redistribution and consumptions (Gini coefficient and other statistical indexes describing the distribution)	**X**
	6. Prices indices	Spatial and temporal comparisons	**X**
	7. Risk and vulnerability	Presence of less guarantees (e.g., risk caused by pensions system and individual investments)	
	8. Broader measures of household economic activity	Cleaning, cooking, child and old people care, driving to work, … (in monetary terms)	
	9. Time use	Any individual activities measured in terms of time (also paid work and study)	**X**
	10. Valuing the production of household services		
	11. Valuing leisure		
	12. Distribution of full income		

Table 9 CMEPSP vs. FACTBOOK: Quality of life

CMEPSP				Factbook ⇩
Quality of life				
A. Subjective measures of quality of life				**X**
B. Objective features shaping quality of life	1. Health	Mortality (life expectancy at birth, standardized mortality rate, median life expectancy)		**X**
		Morbidity		**X**
		Combined health measures (disability-adjusted life year, disability-free life expectancy, health adjusted life expectancy)		**X**
		Health inequalities (groups, life-styles, genetics)		**X**
	2. Education	Inputs (school enrolment, education expenditures, school resources)		**X**
		Outputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)		**X**
		Throughputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)		
	3. Personal activities	Paid work		
		Unpaid domestic work		
		Commuting		
		Leisure time		**X**
		Housing		
	4. Political voice and governance	Citizens' voice	Democratic participation	
			Participation in governance	
			Support from outside government	
		Legislative guarantees (*)	Constitutional guarantees	
			Legal guarantees for basic economic needs	
			Political and social rights guaranteed by law	
			Ratification of international treaties	
		Rule of law (*)	Judicial institutions	
			Equal access to and treatment for all	
			Functioning of legal institutions	
			Arrests and detention of political prisoners	

Table 9 continued

CMEPSP			Factbook ⇩
Quality of life			
	5. Social connections	Social trust, social isolation, informal support, work place engagement, religious engagement, bridging social capital.	**X**
	6. Environmental conditions	Access to environmental services (water), environmental amenities and disamenities, climate variations, natural disasters.	
	7. Personal insecurity	Crimes and incidents	**X**
	8. Economic insecurity	Unemployment, illness, old age	**X**

– migration dynamics are not identified as a specific topic but acquire a meaning in almost each topic (migration and unemployment in Factbook)

Macroeconomics. What is considered by Factbook in terms of macro-economic trends, is included in CMEPSP's report but it is read in terms of resources and sustainability.

Energy. See Macroeconomics

Science and technology. This topic is interpreted in terms of investments in both approaches but the Factbook is concentrated on specific issues while CMEPSP's report considers these investments together with other investments.

Actually, this comparison allows us to realize that Factbook represents just a collection of indicators—not a system—that would need to be updated/shifted according to different time and space.

3.3 CMEPSP vs. OECD: Global Project: Taxonomy

3.3.1 OECD: Global Project: Taxonomy: Conceptual Framework and Structure

More recently, in the ambit of the Global Project, hosted by OECD (www.oecd.org/progress), a new taxonomy has been developed (Table 10).[4]

The defined ambits are related according to the frame illustrated in Fig. 1.

3.3.2 Comparison

Since the OECD—Global Project—Taxonomy represents simply a conceptual framework, the comparison refers just to the defined areas. Furthermore, the OECD—Global Project—Taxonomy, compared with CMEPSP and the previous OECD Factbook, seems to be more oriented to the observation of individuals' (Tables 11 and 12).

[4] Giovannini et al. (2009).

Table 10 OECD—Global Project—Taxonomy

Ecosystems condition	Land
	Freshwater
	Oceans and Seas
	Oceans and Seas
	Atmosphere
Human well-being	Physical and mental health
	Physical and mental health
	Work and Leisure
	Material Well-Being
	Freedom and Self- Determination
	Interpersonal relationships
Economy	National Income
	National wealth
Governance	Human Rights
	Civic Engagement
	Security and Crime
	Access to Services
Culture	Cultural heritage
	Arts and Leisure
Resource use	Resource extraction and consumption
	Pollution

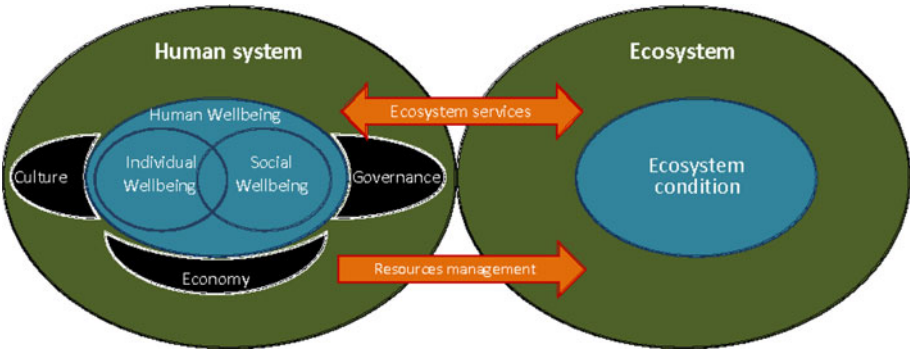

Fig. 1 The framework of the progress of societies

4 Conclusions

Our aim was just to explore—through an evidence based method—the originality of the message included in the CMEPSP's report.

Whereas our expectations were to find new perspectives and suggestions in measuring societal progress and well-being, our results shown that

1. nothing new is actually elaborated by the report, which did not consider many experiences that have been previously accomplished

Table 11 CMEPSP vs. OECD—Global Project—Taxonomy: Classical GDP issues

CMEPSP			OECD—global project—taxonomy ⇩
Classical GDP issues			
A. Existing measurement framework	1. Improving measurement of	National accounts aggregates Services (general) Government-provided services	**X** National income National wealth
	2. Revisit the concept of "defensive" expenditures (investments—capital goods—maintenance)	Security (prisons, police, …) Health (hospitals, …) Environment (pollution, …)	
	3. Income, wealth and consumption have to be considered together (→ sustainability)	[Gross investments (physical & human capital)]—[depreciation & depletion (physical, human, natural capital)]	
B. Bringing out the household perspective	1. Adjusting household income measures for government services in kind	Household disposable income Actual final consumptions (services access and quality)	**X** material well-being
	2. Medians and means vs. distribution of income, consumption and wealth	Wealth measured in terms of income redistribution and consumptions (Gini coefficient and other statistical indexes describing the distribution)	
	3. Prices indices	Spatial and temporal comparisons	
	4. Risk and vulnerability	Presence of less guarantees (e.g., risk caused by pensions system and individual investments)	
	5. Broader measures of household economic activity	Cleaning, cooking, child and old people care, driving to work, … (in monetary terms)	
	6. Time use	Any individual activities measured in terms of time (also paid work and study)	
	7. Valuing the production of household services		
	8. Valuing leisure		
	9. Distribution of full income		

2. a systematic and comprehensive view is not actually elaborated, depending on the specific competence of some of its members. On the contrary, some of the identified experiences, at least one of, the identified experiences was more comprehensive, innovative, and based on a conceptual framework and policy goals.

Actually, the great positive merit of the CMEPSP's work is represented by its capacity to have moved the debate from the academic level to the policy level.

In our view, this may have two effects:

– **positive**, since CMEPSP's report aroused more interest in measuring well-being and sustainability from new perspectives and alternative approaches

Table 12 CMEPSP vs. OECD—Global Project—Taxonomy: Quality of life

CMEPSP				OECD—global project—taxonomy ⇩
Quality of life				
A. Subjective measures of quality of life				
B. Objective features shaping quality of life	1. Health	Mortality (life expectancy at birth, standardized mortality rate, median life expectancy)		**X** Physical and mental health
		Morbidity		
		Combined health measures (disability-adjusted life year, disability-free life expectancy, health adjusted life expectancy)		
		Health inequalities (groups, life-styles, genetics)		
	2. Education	Inputs (school enrolment, education expenditures, school resources)		**X** knowledge and understanding
		Outputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)		
		Throughputs (graduation rates, expected numbers of completed years of schooling, standardized test measures of students and adult achievement in terms of literacy and numeracy)		
	3. Personal activities	Paid work		**X** work and leisure
		Unpaid domestic work		
		Commuting		
		Leisure time		
		Housing		
	4. Political voice and governance	Citizens' voice	Democratic participation	**X** freedom and self-determination Human rights Civic engagement Access to services
			Participation in governance	
			Support from outside government	
		Legislative guarantees (*)	Constitutional guarantees	
			Legal guarantees for basic economic needs	
			Political and social rights guaranteed by law	
			Ratification of international treaties	
			Rule of law (*)	Judicial institutions
				Equal access to and treatment for all
				Functioning of legal institutions
				Arrests and detention of political prisoners

Table 12 continued

CMEPSP		OECD—global project—taxonomy ⇩
Quality of life		
5. Social connections	Social trust, social isolation, informal support, work place engagement, religious engagement, bridging social capital.	**X** interpersonal relationships
6. Environmental conditions	Access to environmental services (water), environmental amenities and disamenities, climate variations, natural disasters.	
7. Personal insecurity	Crimes and incidents	**X** security and crime
8. Economic insecurity	Unemployment, illness, old age	

– **negative**, since increasing public debate aroused too much interest by "new-experts" (greenhorns), who propose new attractive creations, with no clear conceptual framework and methodological soundness are increasing (trivialization).

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