Individual production of social well-being
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6.1. Introduction

After having gained a better conceptualisation of the three components of social well-being according to Social Production Function theory (Chapter 5), we are now ready to turn to the problem of identifying the common factors in the idiosyncratic means that people may use to realise status, behavioural confirmation and affection. One basic notion in SPF theory is that people may employ an almost unlimited number of combinations of activities and resources in order to produce their own well-being. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 2 (e.g. when discussing the Basic Needs approach of Stewart et al.), it is only through establishing a theoretical and empirical link between, at the one hand, a more or less limited set of objective conditions or available resources, and at the other hand, levels of social and overall well-being, that SPF theory may contribute to the field of Quality of Life studies. Therefore we should try to find some way to abstract from all too idiosyncratic production factors and find more general ‘classes’ or ‘kinds’ of production factors that may be translated into a practicable set of indicators for the objective conditions (or available resources) affecting levels of social well-being.

In section 3.6. the second research question was formulated as

*What objective information concerning the availability of production factors at the individual level is needed in order to be able to predict (within reasonable margins) the level of social well-being that individual can attain?*

This research question was further specified in two subquestions:

1) *Which are the essential production factors for status, behavioural confirmation and affection, respectively?*
2) *What are the complementarity and substitutability relations between these production factors?*

This chapter reports the results of the exploratory qualitative study regarding these research questions. First, in section 6.2., it is explained why I found it useful to start the inventory and analysis of production factors for social well-being by identifying a number of empirical fields
RESULTS II: INVENTORY OF PRODUCTION FACTORS FOR SOCIAL WELL-BEING

(i.e. contexts) in which people’s production of well-being takes place. In this same section, the six fields that I have identified on the basis of the qualitative study are introduced and discussed.

Next, in section 6.3., the typical production factors that are relevant in these six fields are presented for each of the three first-order instrumental goals for social well-being subsequently. These results are summarised and systematised in a matrix of the most relevant production factors per goal and field of production.

In section 6.4., I discuss what substitutability and complementarity relations appear to exist between the main production factors that were identified in 6.3. The discussion of these functional relations between production factors must remain hypothetical in character; only quantitative study can corroborate the tentative hypotheses concerning these interrelations. The chapter ends with a general conclusion, in 6.5., regarding the extent to which the research questions could be answered in this study.

6.2. Fields in which social well-being is produced

For our eventual aim of finding a way to relate objective living conditions of people to their levels of social and overall subjective well-being, the practically all-encompassing character of SPF theory is a point in its favour, but at the same time probably its most serious handicap.

On the one hand, this all-encompassing character of SPF theory is one of its recommendations, as it fits the theory very closely to concrete experienced reality, and as it enables the theorist to explain a large range of empirical phenomena through interpreting the observed behaviour as rational actions in the realisation of one of the first-order goals for well-being. On the other hand, however, the absence of limitations to the range of activities and resources that may contribute to the eventual production of well-being in one of its forms, poses a serious problem if we want to draw up a list of ‘objective conditions or resources’ that would predict the attainable level of well-being and the respective levels of its components (the first-order instrumental goals in SPF theory) that may be attained.

For making the inventory of ‘main relevant’ production factors in the data from the qualitative study, I had to find a way to deal with this problem. Merely summarising all activities and material resources that respondents mentioned by seeking a degree of abstraction (which respondents usually tend to do themselves also when talking about production) would not have been satisfactory, because the degree of abstraction would be arbitrary and, moreover, I wanted a systematic inventory, requiring that implicit notions of categories or rules for abstraction be made explicit. If a categorisation system could be found with which the unlimited number of entries in the inventory of production factors could be ordered, these categories might eventually also provide an approach for condensing the highly concrete production factors into somewhat more abstract and overarching ‘objective conditions’ such as might be related to attainable levels of well-being.

The most sensible approach to arrive at a categorisation system for all production factors that might be found, not only in my data but also more general in empirical research, appeared to

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1 In a first attempt to inventory and categorise all production factors I found in my data, I have tried to categorise the production factors per first-order goal (the well-known trio: status, behavioural confirmation and affection). This proved not to solve the problem. Per category / first-order goal there remained too many production factors which appeared to be too heterogeneous to reduce them on the basis of common features to
be the identification of distinct contexts in which the well-being producing activities take place. This approach was partly inspired by the convention in applications of the grounded theory approach to define empirical fields, within which emerging concepts have particular meaning and relevance (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

I expected that the meaning of particular (classes of) production factors and the way they contribute to the three components of social well-being would differ depending on the empirical field in which the productive behaviour is set. Therefore I listed the distinct settings in which the production of status, behavioural confirmation and affection reported by respondents took place. The three resulting lists partly overlapped, with in total over fifty different settings. Next I clustered these fields into a smaller number of appealing, easy-to-handle general fields. Eventually, I have decided on a set of six fields that appear to have a universal relevance, at least for Dutch society, and that applies equally to the production of status, behavioural confirmation and affection. These six fields closely fit general classifications of activities in which people themselves seem to think about what they do. Three fields are located in the private domain, the other three in the public domain.

One remark should be made to prevent misunderstanding. The fields that I distinguish here are abstract categories of functional contexts in which people act and produce well-being. They are in that respect fundamentally different from categories of concrete locations or settings. They also differ from what Feld (1981; 1982) calls foci of activities. Feld (1981, p. 1016) defines a focus of activity as “a social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around which joint activities are organized (e.g., workplaces, voluntary organizations, hangouts, families, etc.).” In this concept of foci, functional contexts and actual physical settings or places are confused. Feld does not choose a consequent perspective from which different foci of activity may be distinguished. This hinders the making of an exhaustive list of (mutually exclusive) foci. Therefore I decided not to follow Feld’s concept of foci, but to define the fields for the production of social (and physical) well-being from the more systematic perspective of functional contexts.

Sometimes categories of functional contexts may coincide more or less closely with actual locations or settings (‘geographical contexts’). For example, our fourth field, the field of productive activities in the public domain, which includes the functional contexts of formal paid and unpaid work and schooling, apparently coincides with the corresponding clear, actual settings of the work organisation and the school. However, such incidental correspondence with easily identified actual settings should not induce one to mistake our categorisation system as based on categories of actual settings. For example, within the actual setting of the school or the classroom, some behaviours or resources used in the production of well-being should according to our classification of fields of production be classified as part of the field of personal relationships in the private domain rather than that of the field of productive activities in the public domain. We may imagine two classmates being close friends, and having some conversation or exchange of affectionate nonverbal signals during the lessons. This behaviour is, from a social production function perspective, better categorised as a production activity within the private domain (i.e. the field of personal relationships) than as a production activity belonging to the school setting.

more abstract factors. Also, as many production factors are multi functional, the categories discriminated insufficiently; a problem that I was unable to solve until I found another way to categorise production factors.
It is our present aim to find a way to reduce the potentially limitless inventory of production factors for social well-being to a more practicable list of abstract production factors, which each represent multiple concrete production factors that are functional equivalents. The example above shows that, given our present aim, the use of abstract categories of functional contexts is to be preferred above the use of categories of actual locations or settings like Feld’s ‘foci’.

As indicated above, I developed a classification scheme for all contexts in which people may produce well-being, which consists of six fields of production, three in the private domain and three in the public domain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.1.: Six fields in which well-being is produced</th>
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<td><strong>Private domain</strong></td>
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<td>1. productive activities</td>
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<td>2. personal relationships</td>
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<td>3. recreation and discretionary activities</td>
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<td><strong>Public domain</strong></td>
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<td>4. productive activities</td>
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<td>5. citizenship: legal rights and obligations</td>
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1. **Productive activities in the private domain**

The first field of the six that I have distinguished covers all contexts of productive activities in private settings. It includes important classes of informal production, such as housekeeping, odd jobs and maintenance, child raising, self care, and informal care giving to others. What all these contexts have in common, from our perspective, is that the grounds on which one can obtain status or behavioural confirmation from these types of productive activities in the private domain are rather similar, while also the production factors that may be used in such contexts overlap substantially. The field of productive activities in the private domain coincides largely with what are, in the literature on time use studies, sometimes referred to as ‘obligatory activities’. To some extent these activities are necessary for individual or collective survival, but more importantly (and probably based on that), these activities are subject to strong social norms by which members of society are more or less ‘obliged’ to perform these productive tasks.

Although the actual activities belonging to this field often take place in the presence of, or on behalf of one’s personal relations, the obligatory character and subjection to productivity norms clearly distinguish this field, as a separate field for the production of social well-being, from the field of personal relationships (see below).

For activities in the contexts of child care or child raising, for example, the distinction from the field of personal relationships may seem unclear. The relevant criterion, however, is always whether the particular production activity or resource pertains to the relationship proper (in which case it belongs to field 2) or to the caregiving to the other person, the care for the physical well-being and healthy development of the care-receiver (in which case it belongs to field 1).
2. Personal relationships in the private domain
This field covers all functional contexts of production, maintenance and consumption of personal relationships. The personal relationships that people have provide a context in which status, behavioural confirmation and affection may be produced or lost. Having certain bonds or relationships and having relationships with particular others is a source of status; the way one behaves in one’s personal relationships and the choices one makes regarding these relationships form a potential source of behavioural confirmation from both people within and outside the personal network; and of course it is for a large part within personal relationships that affection is brought forth. The contexts respondents mentioned that were categorised within this first field of production include, amongst others, one’s partner-relationship, neighbourship, parent-child relations, siblingship, friendship, and acquaintance. Personal relationships need thus not necessarily be intimate relationships. With some of one’s personal relations there may exist also functional bonds, like when a friend is also a colleague, or when a couple runs a firm together, or - very commonly - when members of a family or household not only share an emotional bond but also engage in informal productive activities, like child raising and informal care giving. Such multiple bonds imply multi-functionality in one’s social production functions. It also means that some of the interactions with one’s personal relations would, in our conceptual framework, belong to other fields than that of the personal relationships in the private domain. Summarising, this first field refers to all contexts or situations where the production, maintenance or consumption of personal relationship is the prime functional objective.

3. Recreation and discretionary activities
This field covers all contexts of activity and production in the private domain of a primarily recreational and discretionary character. It thus includes all settings in which the main aim is the individual’s recreation rather than the performance of productive private tasks or the maintenance, production or consumption of personal relationships. Examples of classes of activities that are categorised in this field are, of course, hobbies, and sports (if not primarily undertaken to maintain fit, in which case it is rather a self care activity which belongs in field 1). But also passive leisure, like watching TV or simply doing nothing belong to it, as well as other discretionary activities such as church-going, participation in discussion groups or various courses. All contexts that can be categorised in this third field have in common that there are certain similarities in the production factors that may be used to obtain status, affection or behavioural confirmation in these contexts, which distinguishes these production factors from those that are relevant in other fields for producing social well-being. In the next section, 6.3., where the main relevant production factors for each of the three first-order instrumental goals are presented per field, this will become clear.

4. Productive activities in the public domain
This fourth field for individual production of social well-being covers all contexts of productive efforts in the public sphere. These contexts mainly contain paid work and voluntary work, and schooling. Intuitively, paid and voluntary work fit in logically in this category of functional contexts, whereas for schooling this is less obvious. However, when schooling is regarded in its function of qualification for the labour market, I find its categorisation with paid and voluntary work in this field is well defendable. The main reason for distinguishing this field for the production of social well-being and delineating it as I have done (to include paid and unpaid work and schooling as its three main sorts of contexts) is
found in the objective to arrive at a useful categorisation scheme for production factors for social well-being. As I have found that the main relevant production factors for status, behavioural confirmation and status in the contexts of paid and unpaid work and schooling reveal strong similarity in a number of features, there was good reason to identify these contexts as belonging to one field.

Some confusion may arise concerning the proper categorization of doing unpaid jobs within clubs or associations that belong to the field of private recreation. I have chosen to categorise such instances in field 3 when occasional unpaid jobs are concerned (like being organiser of a jubilee of the chess-club, or taking the monthly turn as bartender at the club) within organizations in which one participates as an ordinary member too. All other voluntary jobs are considered to belong in field 4.

5. Citizenship: legal and bureaucratic rights and obligations in the public domain
This fifth field for individual production of social well-being covers all contexts in which people primarily deal with the bureaucratic regime and the general rights and obligations connected with citizenship. Mirroring the personal relationships in the second field, it covers people’s formal relationships to ‘society’. It includes all contexts in which the contact with and rules of formal ‘bureaucratic’ offices affect the realisation of (social) well-being. These contexts include, for example, the bureaucratic regime faced by the unemployed who receive social benefits (the work test etcetera), rehabilitation programs for ex-delinquents, the tax system that applies to all income earners, the requirements for obtaining the Dutch nationality, but also the traffic rules when driving on public roads, regulations regarding the disposal of waste (separating recyclable from other waste) and more such homely rights and obligations of (Dutch) citizenship.

6. Non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain
This sixth and last field in which individual production of well-being can be found covers all contexts in the public domain that lie outside laws and regulations of citizenships as well as outside the contexts of work and schooling. The most typical context belonging to this field may be interaction with strangers in the street, in shops or in public transport. But also indirect contact and communications with other people (outside one’s personal relations) and with society at large, such as take place through public media, belong to this field. As will be seen in section 6.3., even watching soap-series on TV, and reading the readers-columns in newspapers or magazines can serve the production of behavioural confirmation and affection, by means of the relations it creates with the impersonal public or with - sometimes virtual - public figures. Contexts of this sort are also categorised in this sixth field for the production of well-being. Summarising, the sixth field includes all ‘chance’, unorganised interactions with strangers, but also the indirect perception of others through (interactive) media like talk shows, journals and the like. This field is in particular relevant with regard to the influence on well-being of the prevailing general norms and culture in one’s extended living context and of being part of ‘society at large’.

It should be noted that the categorisation that I have chosen, the six fields of production described above, is by no means the only possible categorisation, nor is it necessarily ‘the best’. Whether it is a good and useful categorisation depends on one’s aims, and for the present aims - making a practicable inventory of main relevant production factors for social well-being - I have found the categorisation described above very useful. Not only did it
provide much help in making a systematic inventory of concrete production factors and distilling from these a set of distinctive production factors at a higher level of abstraction, it also proved to be highly practicable in steering the collection of data, as the six fields (in particular the first four of these) appeared to fit neatly the intuitive domains in which people tend to regard their own lives.

Collecting data on available production factors for each field subsequently provides a focus that allows respondents to inventory step-wise all the production factors that they use. That is, it appeared easy to ask people after their activities and resources per field, which was a delineation they could easily apply. Per field, people can apparently oversee their own activities and resources quite well, while when asking them about all their activities and resources at once, the terrain would have been too large and heterogeneous to obtain a complete inventory. Of course, the success of using the different fields in this way to guide the interviewing of respondents, depends for a large part on the extent to which the delineation of the field is intuitively clear to people and fits the domains which they are used to distinguish in their own perception of their life. Judged by these criteria, the six fields distinguished in this section were found satisfactory.

6.3. Identification of main production factors per first-order instrumental goal

6.3.1. Production factors per first-order goal per field of production: A matrix of fields and goals

Building on the classification of contexts for the production of well-being (more specifically: of the three first-order goals), it is now possible to proceed systematically in making an inventory of the most prevalent and relevant production factors per field per goal.

In analysing the transcripts of the focus group interviews, I had found it impracticable to draw up comprehensive inventories of production factors for each of the three first-order instrumental goals, because of the very large number of different concrete production factors I found even in the thirty-one cases in my qualitative study. Moreover, the concrete production factors that I categorised under a first-order goal differed from each other in so many different ways, that initially I could not find a good (systematic) way of reducing them by abstraction to a smaller set of factors. This is where the distinction of different fields of production comes in: the notion from grounded theory that abstract concepts may relate to different empirical phenomena in different ‘fields’ of reality, or relate to them in different ways, had led me to believe that it would make sense to explore and elaborate the production factors for social well-being separately for different fields of reality.

The systematic inventory of production factors for social well-being that resulted, can be represented as a matrix. This matrix consists of three columns, corresponding to the three first-order instrumental goals for social approval, and six rows, corresponding to the six fields described in section 6.2. in which the individual production of social well-being takes place (see Table 6.2.).
### Table 6.2: Matrix of production factors per first-order goal by field of production

Each of the cells of this matrix contains a number of entries referring to the main relevant production factors for the corresponding component of social well-being in the corresponding field of production. It can be seen that per column, that is, per first-order instrumental goal,
the production factors in the different cells show considerable resemblance. For example, it can be seen that in most fields of production ‘independence from others’ is relevant for the realisation of status, that ‘time spent together’ is a central production factor for affection in all fields of production, and that ‘avoidance of costs to others’ and the presence of applicable norms are relevant for the production of behavioural confirmation in all six fields of production. To a lesser extent this also holds for the production factors in the rows of the matrix: although different features of resources and activities matter for the production of the three different components of social well-being, there are usually a few typical production factors (activities and resources) that are relevant in a field of production. For example, in the field of personal relationships the number of personal relations a person maintains plays a role in the production of each of the three forms of social well-being; in the field of public productive activities, job or occupation and schooling matter - though in different ways - for all three first-order goals, et cetera. In general, the production factors per goal per field of production can be seen to include production factors (or: lower order instrumental goals) at different ‘levels’ in the SPF hierarchy of goals.

Each cell of the matrix (Table 6.2.) contains different ‘kinds’ of production factors: concrete activities (such as talking, doing one’s work, making choices, participating in recreational activities); more or less endogenous environmental factors (such as the resources the individual possesses, for example money, acquaintances, job or career, educational credentials, et cetera); largely exogenous environmental factors (such as the existence, clarity and consistency of prevailing norms in the individual’s social environment); and relatively stable skills and personality characteristics (such as social or relational skills; extraversion). In the cells of the matrix these different kinds of production factors are roughly presented in this order. The ‘common factors’ per row of the matrix (i.e. per field of production) seem to be located mainly at the level of concrete activities and resources. The ‘common factors’ per column of the matrix (i.e. per first-order instrumental goal) seem to be located rather in more general characteristics of activities and in the kind of skills or environmental conditions that matter.

All cells together (that is, the complete matrix) provide a systematic and comprehensive tool for assessing the available production factors of respondents in empirical research. It is useful now to take a look at the production factors proper, for each cell of the matrix in Table 6.2. subsequently. In fact, the matrix provides a summary of the production factors described in section 6.3.2. It should be remembered that the term ‘production factors’ covers both production activities and resources, the latter including not only material resources but also skills and nonmaterial conditions.

6.3.2. PRODUCTION FACTORS FOR STATUS, PER FIELD OF PRODUCTION

By the productive activities or ‘obligatory’ activities one performs in the private domain, one may gain or lose status. People may attribute status to you and pay you respect if they perceive that your self-care, housekeeping, child raising or informal care giving are performed excellently. But they may also look down upon you when your appearance is uncared-for, when they notice that your house is untidy or not well cleaned, when it appears that you cannot manage to provide informal care to your ageing parents, or when your children are ill-mannered. The main production factors to attain status in the field of productive or obligatory activities in the private domain are:
the demand for and employability of one’s skills as indicated in the extent to which one is busy doing productive activities in the private domain. Being busy can be seen as an indicator of one’s indispensability, of being irreplaceable by others in the productive activities one performs;

• the visible results of one’s private productive activities, in particular distinguishing oneself from others in one’s personal appearance and in the neatness and maintenance of one’s house and garden. This visible output indicates both one’s skills, one’s efforts and one’s standards regarding private productive activities;

• the extent to which one is self supporting or independent in one’s private productive activities;

• the level and scarcity of one’s skills regarding private productive activities.

People may obtain or produce status on the basis of the personal relationships they have. A person can be admired because of the number of people with whom he is acquainted. One may also be taken more seriously because of having certain type of relationships (e.g. having a spouse or having children), or be slighted because one lacks certain kinds of relationships (the proverbial ‘old spinster’). Whereas these first two factors refer to having relationships, status can also derive from the person(s) with whom one has a relationship. It often appears that the ‘lustre’ of the people one knows (or the homeliness or mediocrity of them) rubs off on oneself. If you are befriended with, say, Pieter van den Hoogenband, or if you are dating a popular actress, this is likely to raise your status far beyond what you would get for merely having ‘a’ friend or ‘a’ girlfriend. On the other hand, even popular sayings imply that having personal relationships with low-status people pulls yourself down to their level: “Who keeps company with the wolf will learn to howl”, “If you play with fire you get burnt” and “He that touches pitch shall be defiled”. Even kids at school are fully conscious of the fact that if you are friends with the most popular classmate, the others will respect you, which they will not if you are friends with the ‘losers’.

Summarising, the main relevant production factors for status in the field of personal relationships are:

• the number of personal relationships, in which two thresholds seem to be relevant for realizing status, namely the zero-one threshold (having relationships or not) and some less well-marked threshold between having an average or ‘normal’ number of relationships and having a remarkably large number of friends and acquaintances. The zero-one threshold seems particularly relevant with regard to specific categories of relationships, such as partner or children. Three indicators are suggested to assess this factor, namely ‘having a partner’, having children, and ‘number of friends, relatives and acquaintances’;

• the character or type of personal relationships. Two things appear to play a role here. Firstly, the intensity of relationships, which may be reflected in their formal status (e.g. whether one is legally married to his partner). Secondly, the achievement aspect of relationships (e.g. having parents and siblings is no personal achievement, whereas having a partner or children may be considered as such. The achievement aspect is also stronger in having friends than in having relatives). Suggested indicators for assessing this production factor are simply ‘marital status’, ‘parenthood’, and - again - the ‘number of friends’;

• the status of the persons with whom one has a personal relationship, in which being befriended or related to high-status persons yields more status than being befriended or
related to low-status persons. For this production factor no straightforward or obvious indicators are at hand. Depending on the method of data collection, researchers may decide to use different indicators to assess the status of respondents’ personal relations.

People may get status on the basis of their hobbies and recreational activities. If you’re a good basketball-player, people who know about that may look up to you because of it. But not only through excelling in your hobbies you may get status, also through the type of recreational activities that you engage in, you may distinguish yourself from others and produce status. This may be the case when you engage in ‘high culture’ activities, like going to museums or to theatre plays, but also when your recreational activities are considered difficult (e.g. playing the violin), trendy (bungee-jumping, or - in the mid 90’s - in-line skating), expensive (going on a holiday to Tibet) of exclusive (playing golf). Of course, the more visible one’s discretionary activities and the achievements in one’s hobbies are for others, the more status these activities and achievements may yield. Even if others cannot assess very well what you do for recreation and how good you are at it, the extent to which they perceive you to be active and busy in this field of activities may function as an indicator for energy and for varied interests and abilities. Of course, if people can distinguish themselves from others positively in their recreation and discretionary activities, it is also possible to distinguish oneself from others negatively. This may not only occur in similar but opposite ways as the ones just mentioned, but it can also occur through lack of independence from others concerning recreational activities. Dependency on others, either for finding a pastime, for deciding ‘what shall I do’, or for executing planned activities, is likely to lower one’s status, whereas independence from others and autonomy will yield respect.

Summarising, four production factors are central for the realisation of status in the field of recreation or discretionary activities in the private domain:

- **being busy**: as an indicator of one’s active and energetic character and varied interests and abilities, and of one’s ability to use one’s time well;
- the **visibility of ones distinction from others** in one’s recreational or discretionary activities, such as through cultural participation (visiting concerts, theatre, lectures etc), one’s style of consumption, but also through performing for public (e.g. participating in sports tournaments, giving shows, concerts and expositions etcetera);
- the extent to which one is **self supporting or independent** in one’s recreational or discretionary activities;
- the **level and scarcity of one’s skills and resources** regarding recreational or discretionary activities, such as excellence in sports, hobbies or arts, but also one’s general education and ones available financial resources.

Status can be produced through one’s productive activities in the public domain. In fact, it is usually the status produced here that conventional status-research (as well as common speech) refers to. As a rule, when ‘status’ appears as a variable in social research, it denotes the status attributed to people on the basis of their occupation, their educational achievements and their income. Productive activities in the public domain include paid and voluntary work, and formal schooling. A number of factors are relevant for the amount of status that can be realized in this field. In the first place, the level and scarcity of one’s skills are relevant factors for the realization of status in this field. The level and scarcity of one’s skills is reflected in such conventional indicators of status as having a job, the level of one’s job, the prestige of
the type of work one does, one’s income, and one’s educational achievements (or the level and type of schooling one follows and one’s results at school).

Besides these factors that are since long used as indicators of status, there are also other factors which are relevant for the respect and status people attribute to you on the basis of your public productive activities. ‘Being busy’ (the epidemic ‘disease’ of the mid-1990’s), appears to function as a status symbol. Full agenda’s and overloaded time schedules can be used to impress people. They suggest that you are important and irreplaceable, that your skills, experience and knowledge are scarce and in high demand, and that you’re an active, energetic person. Even if this suggestion is not fully justified, ‘being busy’ appears to have become an autonomous source of status.

The career that you have made may also bring you status and respect from others, apart from your present income and occupation. That is, people may evaluate your achievements in schooling and in the labour market with reference to your starting position. The manager of a supermarket who once started, after his lower vocational training, as a cleaning help in the warehouse, may get more status from others because of the great advance he has made, than a piano teacher who completed higher secondary education before she went to the conservatory and who never advanced beyond the level that she started out at.

Another factor that is relevant for the realization of status in this field is power or influence. In the large majority of jobs there exist formal and informal hierarchical relations between oneself and one’s superiors or subordinates or one’s clients. The extent to which one is able to exert influence over others or over the affairs of the organization in general contributes to one’s status, while the extent to which one is subjected to the authority of others affects one’s status negatively. Job autonomy is one of the manifestations of this factor: if you are highly autonomous in your job, if you are ‘your own boss’, people will look up to you more than they would merely on the basis of your occupation itself.

Finally, being able to earn your own living, and to find and hold your own job, is a rather basic factor for producing status in the field of productive activities. Thus, people working in e.g. sheltered workshops are likely to receive less status from others than people employed through the open labour market.

Five main production factors for status in the field of productive activities in the public domain are distinguished:

- **being busy**: as an indicator of one’s importance and indispensability, of being irreplaceable by others in the productive activities one performs, and of one’s active and energetic character;

- the **visibility of one’s achievements and position**, both with regard to educational achievements and to occupational position and career;

- the **extent to which one is able to exert influence**, both over one’s own productive activities and work (job autonomy) and over (the work of) others or the organization;

- the extent to which one is **self supporting or independent** in earning a living;

- the **level and scarcity of one’s skills and resources** regarding productive activities in the public domain, in particular as reflected in one’s occupation, job level and career, in having a paid job at all, in doing (specific types of) voluntary work, in one’s income, and in one’s educational achievements (type and level).

A more formally based status is that which is produced in the field of citizenship, of people’s legal or otherwise formalized rights and obligations. All individuals in modern society are subject to a variety of rules, formal classifications, obligations and regulations. One’s legal or...
bureaucratic classifications are one of the sources for status, as they suggest a relative rank compared to others. If you are independent from social security benefits and need not make use of any form of social allowance, this gives you a higher status than people who cannot claim independence from social security. When you are forced to rely on social security benefits or become in other ways subject to formal controlling agencies (as, say, when you are in a rehabilitation program) it is not only the loss of independence from these forms of support that lowers your status, but you also lose part of your autonomy. Over certain parts of your behaviour, such as financial transactions, you are no longer allowed to decide on your own, while you also have to give account for behaviours that normally belongs to a person’s autonomy (as when you have to prove to a reemployment agent that you have sent the minimal number of job applications in the past month). This loss of autonomy is a second factor that may lower your status, both in the eyes of others and in your own, when you become a ‘client’ of social security or other bureaucratic controlling agencies.

Most bureaucratic agencies that you may get to deal with, use formal classifications of clients. Employment agencies in the Netherlands, since the mid-1990's categorize the unemployed in their client system as belonging to either of four ‘phases’; ‘phase 1’-clients being those with good reemployment chances and little need for assistance in finding a job, and ‘phase 4’-clients being those with practically zero reemployment chances in the short run and usually an extensive complex of (psychosocial) problems. Obviously, such categories can have stigmatising effects, and all people who know how you are categorized and know the meaning of the categories, will attribute high or low status to you accordingly. A different example is the classifications by rehabilitation agencies, or the A-status or B-status given to political refugees and other applicants for immigration.

Finally, even if you have never come to deal directly with particular bureaucratic agencies in our society, you are subject to Dutch law, which regulates all citizens’ extent of legal competence. Legal competence refers to the right to act and contract, the right to get your driving license and drive, the right to vote, the right to marry, the right to decide over medical treatments on your own person, etcetera. Whether one has the rights to do all these things or not, is a factor in one’s self ranking as well as in the extent to which you are taken seriously by others.

Summarizing, four production factors for status are distinguished in the field of citizenship and formal rights and obligations:

- **autonomy**: freedom from formal controlling agencies, i.e. autonomy over one’s behaviour. In fact this means not being deprived of normal autonomy;
- **independence** from social security and financial or other forms of support;
- the **extent of legal competence**, which refers to the right to act and contract, the right to drive and vote etcetera: rights that are usually associated with adulthood (and in some ages or societies with gender);
- **one’s formal classification** by bureaucratic organizations.

The sixth and final field in which status can be produced is the field of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain. People may realize status by driving around in a conspicuously expensive convertible car or wearing exclusive designer clothing. In doing so they may increase their self ranking, but also strangers, accidental passers-by, may attribute status to them on the basis of such conspicuous consumption. Not only what one wears or what one has may elicit status in the context of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain. Also one’s own social manners and
demeanour may cause others (be it strangers or people from inside one’s social network) to look up to or look down upon one. If you show through your manner to feel perfectly at ease in a classy environment, others may look up to you because of that, while if you appear uneasy and clumsy there it may lower your status. Besides your own social manners and demeanour, also the demeanour of others towards you is a factor that may contribute to the realization of status. If people see others treat you with reference and respect, they may take this as a signal of your due status, and treat you likewise. If, in contrast, people see that others do not take you seriously, this may lower your relative position in their eyes.

The fourth production factor for status in the field of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain is management of comparison. Obviously, it depends on the qualities (performance, appearances, etcetera) of the company one is in, what one’s relative ranking in that situation is. So by selecting those situations where your own qualities are likely to be somewhat higher than those of the others, you secure a high relative ranking and thus a high local status. This strategy is what Frank (1985) has aptly called ‘choosing the right pond’ (see also Chapter 5, section 5.2). However, you may also produce status by being seen ‘in the right company’. Above it was already argued that the status of your relations tends to shine off on yourself. It is thus not at forehand clear how one should select the optimal company to be seen in. In general it seems that it can contribute to your status to be seen ‘in the right places’ or ‘with the right people’, but that it must be avoided to stand out negatively in such settings.

The four production factors for status in the field of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain are thus:

- the degree to which one visibly distinguishes oneself from others through conspicuous consumption. Obviously one’s financial and cultural resources form the relevant restrictions here;
- the choice of reference groups or the management of comparison: both self-rewarded status and the status attributed by others may be affected in this way;
- one’s own social manners and demeanour;
- the way one is treated by others.

6.3.3. PRODUCTION FACTORS FOR BEHAVIOURAL CONFIRMATION, PER FIELD OF PRODUCTION

People can obtain behavioural confirmation from others by means of what they do and how they behave in the field of productive or obligatory activities in the private domain. The productive activities in this domain are generally beneficial not only for oneself, but also for others. In other words, as a rule there are positive externalities of productive activities in the private domain. This is the main reason why people’s behaviour in this field is subject to the approval or disapproval of others. These ‘others’ can be the direct recipients of the productive activities, such as one’s family that benefits from good housekeeping and one’s relatives that benefit from informal care giving, but they may also be people beyond that set of direct beneficiaries. For example, anyone who hears of how you took care of your neighbour when she had a broken leg may give you behavioural confirmation for that. Also self approval may be produced through your private productive activities, as when you feel you did a proper job of cleaning the house. And of course, there may be very immediate though unspoken (dis-) approval in the reactions of others to your appearance, which indicates to some extent your adherence to norms regarding self-care. Five general factors can be used to summarise the concrete production factors for behavioural confirmation in the field of productive activities in the private domain:
• the norm-conformity of one’s choice of private productive activities including the choices regarding the division of tasks in the household and the decisions of how to balance private and public productive activities. These choices can be more or less conform the norms of relevant others;
• the behaviour within one’s private productive activities: in particular the contributions one makes to ‘the larger whole’ (one’s household, one’s relatives, to neighbourhood, to the maintenance of norms regarding private productive activities in society), and the avoidance of costs for others. The main norm in this field appears to be that one contributes according to one’s capacity (not, as in the other fields, that one contributes at least as much as one receives). Thus, children who help their parents with some household chores may receive much approval even though their contribution may be trivial and may even create more work than if the parent had done the chore alone. One’s contribution may also take the form of maintenance of norms regarding housekeeping, child raising, self-care, informal care giving etcetera, as when the importance of particular standards is stressed;
• the extent to which one’s behaviour is actually open to judgment: this depends on the visibility of one’s behaviour for others (house maintenance or care giving may be more visible to others than self-care or housekeeping: the latter two may only be noticed in case of bad performance);
• the norms regarding private productive activities held by relevant others (e.g. one’s colleagues at work and one’s relatives) and by oneself. There may exist norms regarding the choice of productive activities (the feminist norms regarding women’s choices for housekeeping and child raising versus the then conventional norms regarding women’s proper tasks offer an interesting example); norms regarding the division of tasks; and norms regarding the performance of the chosen activities (standards). Most important are the existence, the clarity, and the congruence of such norms;
• one’s productive skills.

People may also obtain behavioural confirmation on the basis of the personal relationships they have and how they behave within these relationships. This behavioural confirmation need not be given by the personal relations themselves, but may also be received from others, outside the personal network, who approve of one’s behaviour regarding one’s personal relationships. For example, when you put your arm around your mother in public, anonymous passers-by may signal appreciation, while people overhearing you gossiping about your friends may even directly reprove you.

Four main production factors for realizing behavioural confirmation in the field of personal relationship can be distinguished:
• the norm-conformity of the choice of personal relationships. The decision with whom one maintains personal relationships can be more or less in accordance with the norms of others, and therefore elicit more or less approval;
• the behaviour within one’s personal relationships. What in particular matters here is the contributions one makes to the maintenance and growth of the relations one has, and the avoidance of imposing costs on the other, i.e. of asking or expecting more of the other than one contributes oneself. The main thing is the balance between giving (contributing) and taking. For the production of behavioural confirmation the optimal
People may approve or disapprove of your choices of hobbies or recreational activities. For example, if you spend most of your discretionary time watching MTV or hanging around in cafes, most people will probably give you little behavioural confirmation, while, if you would spend your discretionary time reading French literature, or gardening or training for a triathlon, this would get you a lot of approval. Not only your choices regarding what you do are factors in the production of behavioural confirmation, also how you do the things you do. Just like in the first two fields, what is crucial for realizing behavioural confirmation is the balance between contributing and receiving, thus the extent to which you can contribute to the enjoyment of others and avoid imposing ‘costs’ on them. In order to get the approval for your behaviour that it is worth, it is necessary that others actually perceive it or get to judge it in another way. All these factors are more or less under your own control. There are two more factors for which this is not the case but which are rather given conditions in any concrete situation: firstly, the presence of clear and congruent norms regarding choice of and behaviour in recreational activities, and, secondly, the relevant social and activity-specific skill that one has.

The five main production factors for behavioural confirmation in the field of discretionary activities in the private domain are thus:

- the norm-conformity of one’s choice of recreational activities: the decision what to do in one’s free time can be more or less conform the norms of relevant others;
- the behaviour within one’s recreational or discretionary activities: in particular the contributions one makes to the group or organization these activities take place in, and the avoidance of imposing ‘costs’ on others. The main thing here is the balance between giving (contributing) and taking, for behavioural confirmation the optimal balance seems to be to contribute slightly more than one takes or expects the other to contribute. This depends of course partly on one’s command over relevant social and activity-specific skills. One’s contribution may also take the form of maintenance or preservation of group norms;
- the extent to which one’s behaviour is actually open to judgment: this depends on the visibility of one’s behaviour for other, and on the objectivity and discrimination of the person(s) who do judge the behaviour and reward it with more or less approval;
- the norms regarding choice of and behaviour in recreational activities held by relevant others (e.g. from one’s private relationships), by the persons one interacts with in the recreational and discretionary activity, and by oneself. Most important are the existence, the clarity, and the congruence of such norms;
- one’s command over relevant social and activity-specific skills.
An important field for the production of behavioural confirmation is the field of public productive activities. The five production factors that are most relevant here, are analogous to those that were distinguished for the production of behavioural confirmation in the first three fields. In the first place, people may approve more or less of your choices regarding schooling and work. The decision whether and for how many hours you want to do paid or voluntary work and the type of work or schooling that you choose are evaluated by others against their norms. Choosing not to do any paid or voluntary work is against dominant norms and will elicit considerable disapproval (negative behavioural confirmation). Choosing to work as a salesman in a sex-shop will in most social circles not yield much behavioural confirmation, nor will working as an engineer on the development of ultra modern weapons. If, in contrast, you choose to work as a nurse for a humanitarian help organization, or as an engineer on the development of ecological production of appliances, your choice of work may bring you the approval of others. The relevant factor in these examples is the extent to which one’s work or education serves society at large, thus the external effects of one’s productive activities, or the contribution one makes to society as opposed to the costs one’s work imposes on society. Not only what you do matters, but also how you do it. If you cooperate well with your colleagues, if you do your job well, if you help your colleagues when needed, and if you show yourself a nice and pleasant team-mate, this will earn you the behavioural confirmation of others. Provided, of course, that the others are indeed aware of your good performance, that this is open to their judgment. Finally, in order to get approval for your choice of job or schooling and for your performance at work or at school, the existence of norms is a prerequisite. And if relevant norms exist, their clarity and consistency is a further factor that affects the possibilities for realizing behavioural confirmation.

Summarising, the main production factors for behavioural confirmation in the field of public productive activities are:

- **the norm-conformity of one’s choice of public productive activities**: the decision whether and for how many hours one participates in paid or voluntary work can be more or less conform the norms of relevant others, and so is the choice of the type of work or education: the extent to which one’s paid or voluntary work forms a contribution to larger society, or is a related to societal ‘goods’ is positively related to the amount of behavioural confirmation that can be got through doing this work. Certain types of work, such as in health care, education, social activation et cetera, have a stronger link to public benefits than other types of work, such as commerce et cetera. In general, this will be reflected in the behavioural confirmation from others and from oneself;

- **the behaviour within one’s public productive activities**: in particular the contributions one makes to the work group or organization these activities take place in, and the avoidance of imposing ‘costs’ on others. This depends of course partly on one’s command over relevant specific work skills. Contributions may take the form of hard work and high performance as well as contributions to the working atmosphere. A very strong way to realize behavioural confirmation in one’s work group is to let the group or work interest overrule one’s own direct interest in particular instances;

- **the extent to which one’s behaviour is actually open to judgment**: this depends on the visibility of one’s behaviour for others, the accountability of results on one’s performance, and thus also one’s job autonomy, and on the objectivity and discrimination of the person(s) who judge the work performance;

- **the norms regarding adequate behaviour and performance in one’s work**
• one’s relevant productive skills for one’s work or education: these do not only include general skills and endowments like intelligence, but also more specific skills that may be used to perform better in one’s specific job.

One’s level of behavioural confirmation is further affected by the approval or disapproval of others that is obtained through one’s position and behaviour in the field of citizens’ rights and obligations. In the first place, your behaviour and attitude towards the formal institutions of the social system and towards broadly accepted obligations can elicit more or less approval. If you contribute to the functioning of the bureaucratic institutions of the state and other institutions of the social system, as for example by means of paying taxes and voting in elections, you may receive both approval from others and from yourself. A further factor in realizing the approval of others as well as self approval may be to avoid imposing costs or burdens on society or on the social system (in particular: avoiding the use of social security and welfare). If you are forced to fall back upon social security, you may experience a loss of behavioural confirmation from others as well as from yourself.

As soon as you get to deal with bureaucratic institutions the observance of rules and regulations is important for the production of behavioural confirmation of those who observe it. Accurate adherence to regulations for job seeking when you are unemployed is likely to elicit behavioural confirmation from your reemployment counsellor. Neglecting or trespassing the rules laid by controlling agencies, say when you are under financial supervision when you have debts to pay off, will be met with disapproval and a loss of behavioural confirmation. If you behave in accordance with rules and regulations, others can only reward this with behavioural confirmation to the extent that they are informed about it. So they either must directly observe or experience your behaviour or its consequences, or it must be reported to them by yourself or others.

Finally, the possibility to realize behavioural confirmation in the field of citizens’ obligations depends strongly on the clarity, consistency and congruence of prevailing norms and regulations. Per definition, rules, regulations and / or norms exist in this field (cf. the existence of norms as a relevant production factor for behavioural confirmation in other fields). But if regulations are ambiguous or unclear, it is far more difficult and risky to produce behavioural confirmation through conformity, than when they are clear and unambiguous. Furthermore, if the rules and norms of formal institutions coincide with each other and with the norms in one’s informal social network, this allows for much more efficient production of behavioural confirmation than if there is incongruence between different norms. If your friends reject the dominant norm that all healthy adults should work for a living, and are hostile towards employment agencies, you can hardly realize behavioural confirmation either by conforming to their norms or by active job seeking as the employment agency orders you to do.

The following four factors are thus proposed as the main production factors for behavioural confirmation in the field of legal rights and obligations or ‘citizenship’:

• the norm-conformity of one’s behaviour towards the bureaucratic (formal) institutions of the social system, consisting of (a) the extent to which one contributes to the functioning of bureaucratic society and citizenship (in particular through paying taxes and voting); and (b) the extent to which one avoids imposing costs on society and the social system (in particular avoiding the use of social security and welfare). Of course having paid work and the required skills to acquire this are prerequisite;

• the norm-conformity of one’s behaviour within bureaucratic institutions: in particular the extent to which one observes the rules and regulations;
the extent to which one’s behaviour is actually open to judgment: the extent to which relevant others and the bureaucratic agents one deals are informed about one’s behaviour;

the unambiguity of norms and regulations regarding the use of and behaviour within formal institutions of the social system: the extent to which the norms held by relevant others (oneself, one’s private relationships and the agents and officers one deals with) are clear, consistent and congruent.

Besides the five fields already discussed, where behavioural confirmation may be produced, there is also the field of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain. In non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain, say, interactions with strangers in the street, approval or disapproval may be gained, depending mainly on four factors. Firstly, your behaviour in chance interactions in public will be evaluated according to prevailing norms, which may differ per society and within a particular society, per setting. As a rule, however, norms regarding behaviour in public prohibit making trouble, disturbing and causing inconveniences to others, and prescribe that you should give help to others when this is called for. The norm of not disturbing or interfering with others may also be formulated as a norm about keeping the right or proper distance to others, both by figure of speech and literally. Of course, one can only realize behavioural confirmation in this field if one goes to public places and, while there, does not avoid interaction with others altogether. And of course one should know and understand prevailing norms about behaviour in public places. If these norms are clear and homogeneous (in public places all subgroups of the population may be present, thus the homogeneity of norms is not obvious, but varies with the cultural homogeneity of the population), you are more secure about what behaviour will produce approval of others than if norms are heterogeneous and ambiguous. Of course, here again, the choice of where one goes in public is highly important, i.e. whether one only goes in places where one knows and understands the rules for public behaviour or whether one ventures in situations where one is not familiar with the culture and norms.

Finally, it demands certain social skills to realize behavioural confirmation through one’s behaviour in public, the most important of which appear to be a sufficient measure of civility and self respect.

Summarising, the production factors for behavioural confirmation in the field of non-institutionalised interactions in public are:

- the norm-conformity of one’s behaviour in public places: avoiding causing trouble, helping others in case of need, and maintaining the ‘right’ distance to strangers;
- the extent to which one actually exposes oneself to judgment: whether one ventures in public places at all, whether one goes there alone or together with relevant others, the extent to which one seeks or avoids social interaction in public;
- the norms regarding behaviour in public: the clarity, consistency and homogeneity of public norms (e.g. in case of multicultural societies);
- one’s knowledge and understanding of the dominant culture and of (sub)cultural norms;
- one’s social skills.

6.3.4. PRODUCTION FACTORS FOR AFFECTION, PER FIELD OF PRODUCTION

Affection can be produced through one’s productive activities in the private domain affection. Simply by spending time together while doing housekeeping chores, or in interaction with
your children ‘while raising them’ affection may be realized. The closer and more intimate one then is to the other in the time spent together, be it physically (as in care giving when the other is ill) or psychologically (as in child care) the more this will contribute to the production of affection. Of course, certain preconditions need to be present if one is to produce affection in this field: only if one has a partner or house mates, children, or other caretakers, will the activities in this field yield affection. The same holds, to some extent, for having a house(-hold) and a garden, these are also resources that, if there, give the opportunity for private productive activities and thus for the production of affection. Further, the productive activities in the private domain may constitute important investments in one’s future production capacity for affection. In raising one’s children, one may invest in the future affective relation with them. In informal care giving, but also in plain housekeeping one may invest in the continuation of present partner-relations. And self care may form a contribution to the maintenance of an attractive appearance, which is relevant for the chance of attracting physical proximity and of getting hugged.

Five production factors are thus central to the realization of affection in the field of productive activities in the private domain:

- **spending time together** with others in the course of performing private productive activities;
- the extent of **sharing and proximity** in one’s private productive activities: in particular the amount of physical contact and intimacy involved;
- **keeping attractive through self-care**: to increase the likelihood that others may want to be with you and hug or hold you;
- the **presence of the preconditions** for realizing of affection in the field of private productive activities: having a partner, a household, children and caretakers;
- investment in future realization of affection. E.g. in case of child raising, the extent to which one teaches one’s child(-ren) to maintain relationships should be considered an investment in the future realization of affection.

In the field of personal relationships, people may, as we saw above, produce status and behavioural confirmation, but the most obvious form of well-being that may be produced in this field is affection. In chapter 5, section 5.4, I have argued that the production of affection is not restricted to ‘close and caring relationships’; it can also occur in one-shot interactions between mutual strangers. However, for several of the aspects of affection described in 5.4., the context of a personal relationship is at least a facilitating condition. Personal relationships, be it between neighbours, between relatives of between lovers, usually provide at least some necessary preconditions for the emergence and expansion of various aspects of affection. For example, the existence of a neighbour-relation, with the background information on each other implied, may create sufficient confidence for talking about somewhat personal affairs. When the neighbours find that this self-exposure is not taken advantage of, they may gradually come to confide in each other more and more.

When speaking of production factors that may yield affection in the field of personal relationships, the focus is on the resources and behaviour regarding one’s personal relationships that help to get affection. The five main production factors for affection within the field of personal relationship that I distinguish are:

- **spending time together** with the persons one has these relationships with. Physical proximity and mobility are facilitating factors or preconditions for spending time together; these can be partly substitutes but also partly complements. In case of having
a partner or children with whom one lives together, spending time together is almost automatically given. This production factor can thus appear either as a production activity (‘spending time together’) or as a resource (‘time spent together’), or both;

- the amount of *sharing and being known* in one’s personal relationships. More specifically, we should think here of the amount of emotional sharing through self-exposure, and of the shared ‘history’ which may be indicated by the durability or ‘age’ of the personal relationships;

- the *exchange of relational signals*, like keeping in touch by phone or letters, giving gifts etcetera. By exchanging gifts and relational signals, one produces not only direct instances of affection-exchange, but one also affirms that the relationship still exists and that one desires it to continue; one may redefine the ‘value’ and character of the relationship, and one invests in the expected future benefits of this relationship, as each gift - material or immaterial - is more or less subject to norms of (delayed) reciprocity, and thus creates a ‘credit slip’;

- the *number of personal relationships*. The more personal relationships one has, the more ‘material’ one has to realize all the different aspects of affection identified in 5.4.;

- one’s *relational skills*, in particular empathy, extroversion, and self-respect. These skills facilitate the successful establishment of affectionate personal relationships, and are important in expanding personal relationships into more intimate, strong and rich relationships.

The contexts of recreational and other discretionary activities also offer possibilities for the production of affection. In one’s recreational activities, one may meet others who engage in the same activity. The activity being discretionary, it may be assumed that there is a similarity in tastes or interests with these other persons, which provides a basis for liking and talking. In reverse, the way you choose to spend your discretionary time, the hobbies and activities that you engage in, are also telling about yourself: there is a measure of self-exposure in the choice of discretionary activities. Again, this self-exposure appears to be a relevant factor for the realization of affection. Some recreational activities reveal more of one’s inner self than other activities. When you participate in a debating club, the other participants are likely to get to know more about your character and your views than when your hobby is swimming, an essentially solitary sport during which the opportunity for social talks is limited.

Perhaps less obvious than the previous point about psychological contact, I think that also the extent of physical contact is relevant for the realization of affection. If your hobby involves frequent physical contact or close physical proximity, as is the case in, say, combat sports, rugby, ballroom dancing, or going to the movies (sitting close besides one another), this offers more favourable conditions for the realization of (aspects of) affection than when your hobbies are solitary (e.g. collecting post stamps) or involve no physical contact and proximity (e.g. fishing, reading, making music, playing tennis).

Not only the solitary or social character of the activity one engages in determines the extent to which one gets known and gets to know others; also the regularity of the activity pattern plays a role. If your hobby is fishing, and you fish at the same spot for years, always on the Wednesday afternoon, you will probably get to know the other solitary fishing guys who come there quite well. While if you like dancing and go to a different place to dance every time, sometimes on Thursday nights, sometimes on Fridays and sometimes in the weekend, the
conditions to develop an affectionate relationship with any of your dancing partners, are weak
despite the character of the activity.
Even if the kind of activities one engages in provide good conditions for the realization of 
affection, much depends still on one’s own social or relational skills. If you are not extrovert 
and little empathic, it is likely that you will be able to produce less affection while visiting a 
concert or attending church meetings than others who are more empathic and extrovert.
Summarising, four production factors are central to the realization of affection in the field of 
recreation and discretionary activities in the private domain:

- *spending time together* with others in one's recreational or discretionary activities, i.e. 
  the extent to which one’s activities in this field are of a social character. Also the total 
  available time for one’s recreational activities is a resource here;
- the *extent to which one knows and is known by* the persons with whom time is shared 
  in one’s recreational or discretionary activities. Important here are the similarity in 
  activities of one’s existing friends: do they engage in the same kind of activities, at the 
  same times and places; and the extent to which one’s activity pattern involves 
  regularly repeated interaction with the same others;
- the *amount of self-exposure* involved in one’s recreational or discretionary activities, 
  which refers to both psychological and physical contact and proximity;
- one’s *relational skills*, in particular extroversion, empathy and self-respect.

Affection may also be produced in the field of public productive activities. Production factors 
for affection in this field are activities and resources that belong to the field of paid and 
voluntary work and education, that lead to the realization of affection of *whosoever*. If, 
through the performance of one’s job, one wins the sympathy and love of someone who is not 
part of the work context, this still is a case of affection produced in the field of public 
productive activities.
Affection may grow by merely spending time together. As Lewis describes in *The Four Loves* 
(1960), the peculiarities of the people you meet every day may first irritate you, but in many 
cases we gradually get used to them, and find some day that we have even grown fond of 
them. As many people spend a considerable part of the day on public productive activities 
(e.g. a paid job), the extent to which they spend these hours together with others (colleagues, 
clients) becomes an important factor in the realization of affection. Of course, it also matters 
what happens during the hours spent together: if you work with a number of colleagues in the 
same room, but your work does not demand or allow much interaction, the time spent together 
offers less opportunity for realizing affection than if your work demands frequent consultation 
of colleagues, or if you work in a day-care centre for children.
Next, the more overlap or contact exists between the people you meet at work and the people 
you meet in other contexts, the higher the possibility that what you do at work (or in school) 
has an effect on the opinion that these people from other contexts have of you, and on the 
affection they give you. Likewise, the higher the durability of your relations with colleagues 
and clients, the better they will get to know you. This is also a relevant factor for the 
possibilities of realizing affection. Finally, you of course need social or relational skills in 
order to realize affection. The main important skills for the realization of affection in this field 
appear to be extroversion, empathy and self-respect.
There are thus five main production factors distinguished for the production of affection in the 
field of public productive activities:
• spending time together with others in one’s public productive activities, i.e. the extent to which one’s activities in this field are solitary or not. In paid or voluntary work time may be spent together with either clients or colleagues;
• the intensity of the time spent together: with clients, the intensity is higher when physical or mental care is given than when e.g. orders are discussed and with colleagues the intensity is higher when collaborating or exchanging advice than when merely working alongside in the same place;
• the amount of self-exposure involved in one’s public productive activities: in certain occupations (or types of education or voluntary work), one reveals more of oneself than in other types of work or education. Even the mere choice of occupation may be a form of self-exposure towards others that can serve to realize affection;
• the extent to which one knows and is known by the persons with whom time is shared in one’s public productive activities: this depends on the durability of relations with colleagues and clients;
• one’s relational skills, in particular extroversion, empathy and self-respect.

The fifth field of production, the field of citizens’ rights and obligations, provides little opportunity for realizing affection. Yet also in the settings belonging to this field, affection may spring up. Attachments may grow between clients of bureaucratic agencies and the agents that counsel them. The chances that it does, depend, as in other fields, on the time you spend with counsellors or other agents, on the self-exposure that your position in the relation with the bureaucratic institution entails, on the durability of client-agent relations (is it always the same agent that you deal with, or do you get to deal with different agents every time), and on your social skills which enable you to cope with your client-position in ways that are more or less successful in eliciting the liking and personal interest of the agents you deal with.

It should be stressed that the claim that affection may be realized in settings of this type is not too far-fetched. In one of the focus group interviews, Gerda Passies told about her ‘case manager’ at the local social welfare office:

“I have had other case managers before. And they just never really listen to what you are telling them, they just regard you as a number. But this new guy, who is my case manager since almost a year now, he really looks at you, tries to understand your position, gives you the feeling that he is sincerely interested in your side of things. I always get such a good feeling when I have had an appointment with him. I find understanding and sympathy. It does one good, to experience such a case manager, for a change. And he is a nice guy too”

There is one more factor in the field of citizens’ rights and obligations that is relevant for the production of affection, namely legislation. The legal factor includes two elements: personal legal competence and general marriage and divorce laws. If a person wants to marry his or her partner in order to increase, improve or ensure the production of affection, one’s legal competence, or, more specifically, the right to marry becomes a relevant production factor. General laws and regulations concerning marriage, divorce and adoption may also affect a person’s possibilities for producing affection: if laws are permissive and flexible, there are fewer obstructions to the optimisation of one’s production functions for affection than if
prevailing laws are severely restrictive. Summarising, the following factors in the field of citizens’ rights are relevant for the production of affection:

- the extent to which one’s position in the social system involves spending time with agents or officers of bureaucratic institutions (receiving regular coaching or counselling from social workers, rehabilitation workers, reemployment offices);
- the extent to which one’s position and behaviour within the bureaucratic institutions involves self-exposure towards the agents of the bureaucratic institutions (e.g. when one receives coaching or counselling involving more personal, emotional or revealing matters of one’s life);
- the extent to which one knows and is known by the agents with whom one deals: this depends on the durability of relations with colleagues and clients;
- one’s relational skills, in particular extroversion, empathy and self-respect;
- laws regarding marriage and divorce and also adoption, and one’s legal competence.

The sixth and final field in which people may realise social well-being, is the field of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain. As I have argued in chapter 5, section 5.4., the production of affection is not restricted to ‘close and caring relationships’; affection may be realized in anonymous interactions in the public domain too.

Just like in the other fields, spending time with people is an important factor for the production of affection. Here, spending time with people means spending time in public places, and taking time for people one meets there. Also important is again the amount of self-exposure. Whether you engage in casual chat with others in public, and how much personal opinions or personal information you are willing to expose, are important factors in the eventual amount of affection you may produce in this field. In public places, however, you may meet people who are different in many respects from the people in your personal social network, and the people you meet in recreation and work. In public places like shops, public transport and on the streets, cultural and ethnic subgroups are more likely to meet than in other settings. One of the prerequisites for affection being empathic understanding, it is obvious that the degree of cultural homogeneity or cultural congruence (at least, some degree of knowledge and understanding of other subcultures) between the people in public places is a relevant factor for the production of affection in public interactions. Equally obvious is that your social skills are important resources if you are to derive affection from people with whom you are not involved in a close personal relationship, and which may even remain anonymous.

Finally, there is a form of interaction with ‘the public’ or ‘people in society at large’ which does not take place in public places, but which does belong to this field of contexts. This form is ‘mass communication’, a largely one-way form of interaction, in which you yourself remain anonymous, while the other(s) may or may not remain so. You may realize affection by sitting at home and watching your favourite soap series: if you feel sympathy for the personages in the soap, and if you feel for them in what happens to them, this may discard feelings of loneliness and isolation. Instead of watching a soap opera, you may also watch talk shows or listen to serious discussions about certain topics. Hearing the opinions and ideas of others in this way, may give you a sense of affective belongingness:

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2 As an example one may think of the recent change of law in the Netherlands, by which homosexual couples can now legally marry. The long struggle that people have fought to achieve this change of law may indicate the relevance of such legal rights for people’s social well-being.
Simon Goudsmid: “People are nice, they feel and think like me. There’s a good many nice people in this society”.

It may also, in contrast, make you feel isolated, out of place with the people in your society:

Annette de Hoog: “I do not feel at home in our society anymore. I just do not understand these people that you see and hear talking on TV. They are so different from me, the way they look at things is so alien to me. I just don’t understand them. I do not think I like people much, nowadays”.

Summarising, in the field of non-institutionalised interactions in the public domain, I distinguish five main relevant production factors for affection:

- the extent to which one spends time in public and takes time for people one meets there. This of course implies going out, venturing in public places; it requires some discretion over one’s time too;
- the extent of self-exposure in public places, most importantly whether one engages in or initiates casual chat;
- the possibilities for emphatic understanding, as determined by the degree of cultural homogeneity or congruence and cultural understanding or knowledge of other subcultures;
- (exposure to) mass communication involving emotion and intimate concerns, such as TV soap series (cf. Argyle 1987), talk shows, or columns for personal questions and advice in printed media;
- one’s social skills, most important here seem to be extroversion and empathy.

All main production factors that have been discussed in this section are represented in the cells of the matrix of production factors by first-order goals by field of production, Table 6.2. Although this is still a large number of factors, the systematic inventory and classification allows for at least some overview as well as for guidance if a researcher would want to investigate the relevant conditions for the realization of status, behavioural conformation or affection in any specific context.

In the next section, 6.4., I will discuss whether the systematic inventory of production factors for social well-being achieved in this subsection, does also help to specify the functional interrelations between production factors.

6.4. Substitutability and complementarity of the main production factors for social well-being

The main relevant production factors per field per first-order goal that were identified in section 6.3. can only be used as indicators for people’s possibilities to produce social well-being if the functional relations that exist between these production factors are specified correctly and consequently dealt with duly. It would be pointless to collect data on the availability for respondents of all the production factors shown in the matrix in Table 6.1., if they were next treated either as completely isolated indicators of chances to produce social well-being, or as simply coordinate factors that can be summed to obtain an indication of the favourableness of conditions. In Chapter 2, it was argued that one of the recurring problems in most studies using objective indicators for quality of life is that no attention is given to the
existence of functional substitutes, nor to complementarity of certain objective resources. If it is our ambition to make some contribution to quality of life research by linking the use of indicators for objective conditions to a theory and measurement of how these are related to subjective (social) well-being, we surely cannot neglect the functional relations between the production factors we propose to use as objective indicators.

The systematic inventory of production factors for the three first-order instrumental goals, presented in section 6.3., suggests three general of hypotheses about the interrelations between the production factors it contains.

In the first place, it should be expected that production factors in different fields for the same first-order instrumental goal are to some extent functional substitutes. If a person lacks the means to realise behavioural confirmation in the field of recreation and discretionary activities, she may seek substitution in her work and in her private productive activities. If a person has a large number of friends at his sporting club, with whom the interaction is usually warm and affective, this may to some extent make up for the fact that he does not have a girlfriend at the moment.

In the second place, it should be expected that, as a rule, the different types of production factors within each cell of the matrix of production factors per goal per field (that is, for each specific goal-field combination) are complementary, at least to some extent. When we look at Table 6.2., we see for example that in each field of production, the production factors for behavioural confirmation include factors that refer to one’s choices what to do; one’s subsequent enactment of this choice (how one behaves); the existence of relevant behavioural norms; the visibility of one’s behaviour for relevant others; and the command of relevant skills. These production factors lie on different levels in the SPF hierarchy of goals and, as argued in section 6.3.1., are different in kind. I believe that, as a rule, the exogenous environmental conditions, the skills and personality traits, the resources and the activities that are mentioned as relevant production factors for a certain first-order goal in a certain field of production, are functional complements. To use a simple metaphor: in order to bake a cookie, one cannot do without any of the different kinds of production factors: raw ingredients (flour, butter, sugar etc.); kitchen tools (bowl, mixer); an oven, and activities (mixing, kneading, heating the oven, etc.). Without having the necessary skills, one cannot realise behavioural confirmation for the adequate performance of one’s chosen activities. Without the existence of relevant norms, there is neither a basis for others to evaluate one’s behaviour, nor does one have any guidance as to how one should behave at all. So, to a large extent, the production factors within each cell of the matrix of goals and fields are functional complements.

In the third place, Social Production Function theory itself assumes that, if we take overall social well-being as outcome measure, the three first-order goals for social well-being are (at least as soon as each component exceeds a certain minimum level) substitutes themselves. This of course implies that, given that a person’s levels of status, behavioural confirmation and affection exceed the minimum level for well-being, the production factors for these different goals within a certain field of production are functional substitutes too. However, they are less close substitutes than those within a goal; therefore people will first seek to substitute for the same first order goal between different fields of production and only if that fails, turn to substitution between goals.

Admittedly, these three general hypotheses are far from exhaustive for all possible combinations of production factors. For example, it is likely that the production factors for the
three first-order instrumental goals within each single field of production are functionally related also. For some combinations of production factors for different goals within one field, a complementarity relation seems most plausible. For example, if one would lack (most of) the production factors for behavioural confirmation in the field of non-institutionalised interactions in public, it is hardly likely that spending time with others and self-exposure would lead to the production of affection in such settings.

But there are also combinations of production factors for different goals within one field of production for which the assumption of complementarity is not plausible.

Summarising, it appears that the systematic inventory of production factors per first-order goal per field of production helps the specification of the functional relations between production factors. These functional relations can, however, only be specified in a general and hypothetical mode. In order to be more precise about the functional relations between different production functions, further empirical research is required.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the second research question was taken up:

*What objective information concerning the availability of production factors at the individual level is needed in order to be able to predict (within reasonable margins) the level of social well-being that individual can attain?*

The main relevant production factors for status, behavioural confirmation and affection were explored. Starting out from the qualitative data obtained in the focus group discussions, I developed a system of six fields of production, in which all contexts in which people may produce either of the three components of social well-being can be categorised. This categorisation of fields for the production of social well-being allowed a systematic inventory of the main relevant production factors, evidence for which was found both in the focus group data and through theoretical reasoning. With this inventory of production factors, the first subquestion of research question 2:

*Which are the essential production factors for status, behavioural confirmation and affection, respectively, for Dutch adults?*

is answered in a tentative mode.

Not surprisingly, it appeared that the essential production factors differ for each of the three first-order instrumental goals, while per goal several (characteristics of) production factors were seen to be constant over the six different fields of production (see Table 6.2.). Also, there appeared to be some common features of the main relevant production factors for the three first-order goals for each of the distinguished fields of production. Further it was seen that the ‘sets’ of main production factors per goal per field consist, as a rule, of different ‘kinds’ of production factors (or ‘lower order instrumental goals at different levels of the SPF hierarchy of goals).

In short, the yields of exploring the first subquestion of research question 2 are:

- a systematic and broad (in theory all-encompassing) inventory of the main relevant production factors for status, behavioural confirmation and affection. The level of abstraction that was used to achieve an ‘all-encompassing’ inventory of production factors without drowning in the unlimited mass of concrete activities, resources and (im-)material environmental conditions, lies between the highly concrete terms in which people daily perceive and talk about activities and resources, and the quite
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abstract and general terms in which assumedly relevant production factors were thus far referred to in SPF theory;

- a systematic heuristics for charting, in non-exploratory empirical studies, the main production factors available to, or used by, respondents. This systematic heuristics consists of asking respondents for each of the six fields of production consecutively about the available or used production factors, preferably ordered according to the different kinds of production factors, such as exogenous environmental conditions, personality traits and skills, more concrete resources, and productive activities. It is claimed here that by structuring the empirical investigation of individuals’ production factors according to the six fields of production, facilitates correct and complete responses.

In section 6.4., I took up the second subquestion of research question 2:

What are the complementarity and substitutability relations between these production factors?

Lacking adequate empirical data, the answer proposed to this question could only be tentative. I have proposed a set of hypotheses about the functional relations between the main production factors for social well-being, based on the notions behind the matrix of production factors per goal per field.

It is expected that the different kinds of production factors for a certain first-order goal within a certain field of production are, as a rule, functional complements, while the production factors in the different fields of production, for each of the first-order goals, are generally functional substitutes.

Besides these functional relations between the main production factors for social well-being, the assumption of limited substitutability between the three first-order instrumental goals for social well-being in SPF theory suggests some further complementarity and substitutability relations between production factors from different fields of production and / or for different first-order goals. These complementarity and substitutability relations, however, are conditional upon certain threshold levels of status, behavioural confirmation and affection, which are not (and are not expected soon to be) specified empirically. As yet, it is therefore hard to say how this latter category of functional relations between production factors should be reckoned with in interpreting people’s possibilities for realising social well-being on the basis of the production factors available to them. The hypothesised functional relations between production factors for each of the first-order goals from different fields, and between production factors for one goal within a certain field of production, however, seem to provide a rough but solid guidance for interpreting people’s available production factors in terms of the levels of social well-being that may be attained.

Still, I think it desirable to test these hypotheses about the complementarity and substitutability relations between production factors for social well-being empirically in a later study.