



International Association on Social Quality i.s.n.
Previously European Foundation on Social Quality
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
Ph:+ 31.70.4260.609
Fax:+ 31.70.4260.799
Email: efsq@iss.nl
ING-bank 7697156
RABO-bank 1427.67.107
IBAN NL 47 RABO 014267107
KvK 41216943
www.socialquality.org

FOUR STAGES OF SOCIAL QUALITY THINKING

And the transformation of the European Foundation on Social Quality (EFSQ) into the International Association on Social Quality (IASQ)

*Laurent J.G. van der Maesen and Alan Walker
10th October 2013*

Introduction: social quality's main focus

This document presents a short overview of the work done for starting and elaborating the social quality theory, methodology and approach since the 1990s up till now. It will try to answer the questions 'what' its advocates aim, 'why', 'how' and what the 'outcomes' are and especially the changes of their answers over time. An impressive amount of scientists in Europe, Asia and Australia contributed in one or the other way to its elaboration. The outcomes presented are a collective based endeavour. Of all them were and are inspired to present something new for addressing current and coming societal questions. The rationale was (and is) to contribute to an increase of humanity and humility instead of the incessant insisting on the 'look-at-me-ethos' as a modern expressing of hedonistic egocentrism. From the start the aim was and remains to make the outcomes applicable for addressing these societal questions as expressed in policy areas on local, nation, regional and global level. The main motive remained to **support citizens** to play a responsible role in the development of their daily circumstances. In actual terms it means circumstances which contribute to 'sustainable urban conditions'. In the context of this theory it refers to strengthen 'social empowerment of citizens'. This document encompasses an overview of the 'pre-stage' and hereupon based four stages of the elaboration of the theory, methodology and

approach. In the beginning the accent was laid on questions related with the nature of the European Union in the 1990s. Thanks to the extension of collaboration with scientists from other continents the focus turned upside down. This resulted in the beginning of the fourth stage with an orientation on the interrelationships of the 'development toward sustainability', the 'change of societal complexities' and 'sustainable urban development'. In the context of this encompassing 'problematique', processes in policy areas in Europe, Asia, Australia and other continents should be analysed. They are expressions of this context and cannot be understood 'an sich'. This concerns a challenging scientific journey with which to contribute to new politics and policies. As a final remark it makes sense to notice, that this overview is based on the Annual Reports of the EFSQ (www.socialquality.org).

The EFSQ's history and its European presentation (till 1998)

The establishment of the EFSQ

The European Foundation on Social Quality (EFSQ) was established at the European wide conference, held during the Dutch Presidency of the European Union on social quality in the beginning of June 1997. It was organized by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports with support by the European Commission, in collaboration with SISWO (the Dutch University Institute for the coordination of research in the social (and economic) sciences). Its restricted networking research infrastructure – supported by different Western European universities and especially from the beginning up till now by the University of Sheffield in the UK - was financed by SISWO till 2000. The possibilities for starting the theory of social quality were created by different research practices in the 1990s. First, on European level by the international conference on the 'problematique' of ageing in Stockholm – June 1992 – and by the work done of the European Observatory on Social Exclusion and the European observatory on Older People, both organized by the European commission. They brought together scientists who were looking for a new orientation. Second, six lively international oriented Dutch symposia on the future of the European welfare states and three international expert-meetings on the socio-economic transformation of Europe. They were initiated by SISWO and paved the way for connecting also scientists who participated in the first type of meetings. Especially the third expert-meeting, held in 1996, resulted into a tentative articulation of the concept of social quality. It should pave the way for exploring the quality of societal complexities (economic, juridical, political, cultural etc) in a comprehensive way.

The EFSQ's first main book

This new orientation is articulated in the first main book, *The Social Quality of Europe* (Kluwer Law International, 1997), produced by 25 authors from all over Europe. It concerns a preliminary start of the comprehensive theory on social quality and a manifold of articles about aspects of the European unification, which delivered the inspiration for this start. The purpose was to present an alternative for the one-sidedness of the European unification and the lack of an adequate theory to address this state of affairs. The authors argued, that because the exclusive focus within the European Union on economic and monetary questions it is moving, *ceteris paribus*, to a policy deadlock. As the EU's *Comité des Sages* concluded at that time: this one-sidedness will not create a citizens' Europe. The call for a creative dialogue between economic policies and all other policies for shaping acceptable societal circumstances - the *sine qua non* for a citizens' Europe – will come to nothing without a clear focus and a realistic vision which sets aside the traditional divisions between economic and all other policies. These other policies remain in a handmaiden position of economic policies. This is also the basic lesson of the crisis of the European Monetary Union (EMU) since 2009; economic integration cannot without political integration and vice versa. A simple example may underpin this. The standardization and determination of 'bad loans' for all members of the EMU is especially a political challenge. Without this the banking systems, causing the recent financial crisis, cannot be really changed at all. This will also imply a change of the current dominant economic paradigm, which prevents such an interrelatedness.

The Amsterdam Declaration on Social Quality

On June 10th 1997 at a public ceremony in Amsterdam after the European conference a group of European scientists presented the *Amsterdam Declaration* on the social quality of the European Union and discussed this afterwards with a lively audience of scientists and policymakers. It was based on some essential aspects of this study. The intention behind this Declaration is to remind policy-makers and citizens about the unique nature of the Western European approach, which comprises both economic development (and acceptable forms of competitiveness) and equity and solidarity. But the current dominant emphasis on economic processes, based on neo-liberal (and also hedonistic) principles which do not recognise central values as human dignity or equal value, will lead to a downgrading of a comprehensive approach and, with it, a loss of legitimacy for the Union. More than 1000 scientists all over Europe have given their support to the Declaration. It is solemnly presented to the President of the European Parliament in October 1997. It says that: *"Respect for the fundamental human dignity of all citizens requires us to declare that we (...) cannot countenance a European with large numbers of unemployed, growing numbers of poor people and those who have only limited access to health care and social services. These and many other negative indicators demonstrate the current inadequacy of Europe to provide social quality for all its citizens"*. And currently, these negative signs leads for example in the USA to

extreme inequalities which (and see the New Herald Tribune; 2013, September 14-13, 9) are poisoning this society and its democratic institutions.

Résumé

In the previous sections we explained the 'what' and the 'why' of the start of social quality thinking. From the side of the European Commission, the Dutch Government, SISWO and many universities in Europe support is given to make an interpretation of policy processes which delivered arguments for new scientific orientation and herewith related scientific research (the 'how'). The outcomes of this 'pre-stage' are the increasing support by representatives of universities in the so-called Western European (including Northern and Southern countries) and Eastern European countries. The research and the final book affirmed a thorough fragmentation of scientific work which prevents a comprehensive understanding of the problematic outcomes of the European unification thus far. The 'outcomes' inspired the start of the first stage.

The EFSQ's first stage (1998-2001)

Theorizing 'the social'

In 2000, the EFSQ left SISWO and started as a independent 'legal body' a collaboration with the Felix Meritis Foundation, located in its Amsterdam Centre for Sciences and Culture (since the 18th Century). From here it has grown to become a large network committed to the social quality of the European Union. During the first stage, European scholars started with theorizing the concept of '**the social**' for reformulating an alternative point of departure concerning the utilitarian propositions as point of departure of the current dominant oriented economic paradigm. The EFSQ's first book and the European conference on social quality stimulated the organization of a manifold of workshops. This resulted into the assumption, that human people are essential 'social beings' and this demands a new understanding of 'the social' as noun and the 'social' as adjective. The theoretical work done during this stage referred to the non-sofist Aristotelian roots of thinking about human beings. The hereupon based arguments for this stage of social quality studies were threefold (see its first main book). First, the critic on the reduction of the European unification into economic integration as a technical project. This resulted into politics for stimulating economic growth - expressed with help of GDP-outcome variables - with which to reduce poverty and financing welfare provisions. But according to social quality advocates, the European Union should be primary a 'political project' for developing the European Union into a constructive world-player for increasing also social justice and solidarity. This is expressed in the Amsterdam Declaration (see above). Second, the critic on the European discourse to degrade all politics and policies into the handmaiden of specific (neo-liberal) economic politics and policies. This is of course a logical

consequence of the first. It will imply a Copernican changeover of the currently autonomous financial systems on European (and global) level. Third, the growing comment on comparable approaches (see below).

Comparing other approaches

The third, and at this stage rather implicit comment concerned the existing international oriented approaches as: quality of life, social capital, social and human development, human security and the capability approaches. All of them miss a conceptual based understanding of 'the social'. In these discourses, the adjective 'social' functions as an unclear metaphor for 'the good', and 'the acceptable' seen from existing theoretical work on 'social justice' which results, logically, into a tautology. All of them are also oriented to contribute to 'social progress' without delivering any understanding of this adjective of progress. 'The social' does not describe an independent identity nor is it an aggregate of individuals. It is an outcome of the interaction between people (constituted as actors) and their constructed and natural environment, summarized as the 'productive and reproductive interrelationships of people in everyday life'. Afterwards, these comments stimulated analyses of the manifold of quality of life approaches, and social development, as well as a constructive comparison of the human security approach and the social quality approach in the third stage; what do they offer each other? As will be argued further, this issue will play a central role in debate on social quality indicators in comparison with indicators, connected with other approaches.

The start of research projects

During the first stage, the EFSQ was (financially) supported by the Dutch government and especially its Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports, the European Commission and (in kind) by many universities in other Member States of the European Union for exploring changes of policy areas from the perspective of the preliminary social quality thinking. It concerned research projects on: public health, ageing, employment, the urban context, and the role of citizens (the issue of citizenship). The outcomes were communicated with universities all over Europe. Among other things this led to an invitation by the social democrats members of the ***European Parliament*** to contribute to its conference on 'the social quality of Europe' in March 2000. This evoked also the interest in some departments of DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission. Different meetings were organized in Brussels to explain the relevance for policy making of the new social quality thinking. With regard to public health, a start is already made during discussions between Canadian and Dutch public health experts in Canada in the 1990s, which resulted in the study about the philosophical foundation of 'modern public health' as related with social quality thinking. It is compared with 'traditional public health' (which is in fact epidemiology and biophysical oriented) and 'new public health' (based on the healthy cities' movement with its emphasis on

renewing individual lifestyles in line with the quality of life approach). The outcomes are applied later in the city of The Hague (see below).

The European Journal of Social Quality (EJSQ)

The theoretical work thus far and its application to different policy areas (see the research projects) stimulated the Kingston University in London and Berghahn Books in Oxford and New York to start the European Journal of Social Quality in order to publish the first outcomes of these explorations. From this side a lot of investments are made: in kind (editorial board) and financial. The purpose of this independent, peer-reviewed journal was to promote the discussion and analysis of contemporary societal issues in Europe. It should stimulate a European dialogue. Six volumes and twelve issues are published. All contributions have addressed in one way or another: (i) the on-side economic approach to develop the future of Europe; (ii) the current lack of conceptual coherence in the scientific world collaborating with and financed by the European Commission; (iii) the development of interdisciplinary approaches by the new social quality theory, trying to address this lack of coherence; (iv) the endeavours to apply the outcomes to different policy areas and (v) to stimulate a dialogue about the role of citizens in shaping the new identity of Europe. This latter point is of particular interest, since an appreciation of citizenship in the context of social quality plays a crucial role in the social quality theory: it delivers the foundation of identity in the societal based contract within a modern democracy, as well as the principle by which relationships between individuals and their communities are organised. During the first stage the following studies are published, fourth of them in the journal:

- About the philosophical foundations of modern **public health** (International Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, 54 (2),
- About the exploration of the social quality of Europe (thematic double issue), EJSQ, 1 (1&2),
- A European wide exploration of the question of **ageing** (thematic issue), EJSQ, 2 (1),
- First explorations of the policy area of **employment** (thematic issue), EJSQ, 2 (2),
- A study about **citizenship** and welfare protection (thematic double issue), EFSQ, 3 (1&2),
- A study about **urban development** processes from the perspective of the new social quality theory

Public debates in the Netherlands: finger exercises

At the same time, the European Commission as well as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the European Foundation to start analyses and public debates on the overall consequences of European policies, namely the Economic Monetary Union, the extension of the Union and the European Constitution. This took place in the framework of the project **'The Voice**

of Civil Europe', consisting of five Dutch NGO's, coordinated by the EFSQ. Its motive for the collaboration was to preliminary apply some essential aspects of the social quality theory to the side effects of the European policies at national level. As a result of this project a new Dutch journal was published by volunteers, called '**EUforum**', coordinated by the EFSQ as well. It published four volumes and eight issues about a scale of issues concerning the relation of The Netherlands with the European Union. Also with support by the EFSQ more than ten public debates were organized in the Felix Meritis building in Amsterdam. With regard to the introduction of the Euro a conference was organised in this building with support by the President of the Dutch Central Bank and a Dutch newspaper, which published hundred poems about the 'end of the gulden'. At the end of the day, these investments demonstrated on national level the lack of 'democratic quality' of the European Union thus far. This delivered a new inspiration for 'social quality thinking'. They also clarified the necessity for the EFSQ to operate on European level instead on the national level and to look for a collaboration with national based and oriented organizations. This paved the way for the argument later to leave Felix Meritis in Amsterdam (focussed on public debates) and to start a collaboration with the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in The Hague (focussed on scientific explorations and educations of students from all over the world, see third stage). The EFSQ should focus on scientific work with which to contribute to new politics and policies.

Résumé

Based on the 'pre-stage' the purpose was to elaborate a design of the social quality theory and approach, as well as to apply the preliminary outcomes on some policy areas with help of research-projects. From the beginning endeavours were made to develop the reciprocity between deductive forms (theorizing social quality) and inductive forms of explorations (analysing changes of policy areas). This should deepen the previous work for elaborating an alternative of the current utilitarian and individualistic orientations. This implied a rethinking of 'the social' as a new leitmotiv for a comprehensive understanding of economic, juridical, political and cultural processes. Herewith the aim was to go beyond traditional European discourses. As explained, advocates of social quality thinking were enabled to find some financial support on European and Dutch level as well as impressive support in kind by many universities in Europe for also organizing or participating in workshops and seminars in different Member States as well as producing articles. The accent on the above mentioned reciprocity stimulated the endeavours to clarify similarities and differences with other approaches (see below). The outcomes were a growing interest of policy makers on European level. As the President of the European Commission - Romano Prodi – explained in 2001, the great merit of this theory is that it promotes an approach that goes beyond production, economic growth, employment and social protection and gives self-fulfilment for individual citizens a major role to play in the formation of collective identities. The different research

projects affirmed the existing fragmentation between scientific disciplines (and sub-disciplines) and serious misunderstandings of (utilitarian oriented) suppositions about the empowerment of citizens. All of this legitimated the understanding of the European Union as a technical-economic project and, implicitly, its lack of democracy thus far.

The EFSQ's second stage (2001-2006)

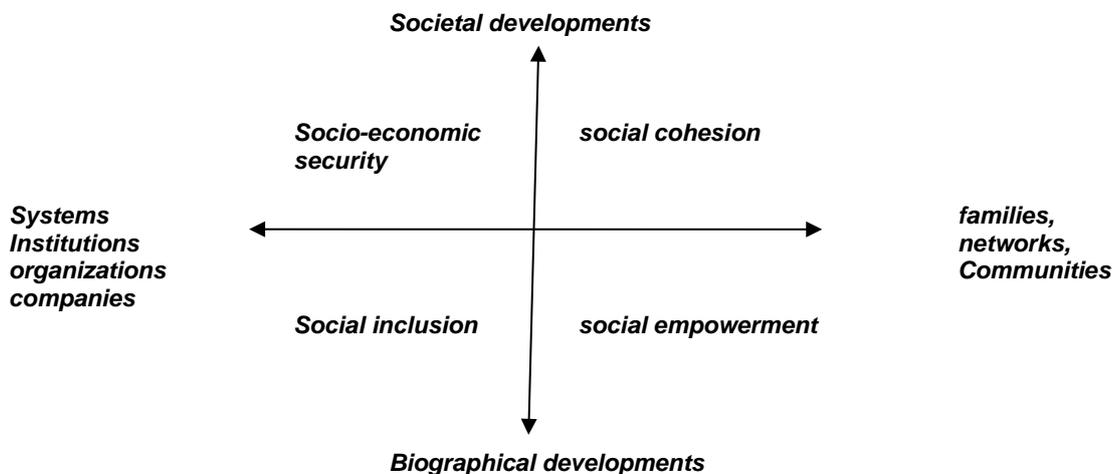
The EFSQ's second main book

This first stage concluded with the preparation and production of the EFSQ's second main study, ***Social Quality: A new Vision for Europe*** (Kluwer Law International, 2001). The purpose was to reflect the outcomes of the first European conference on social quality in 1997, the first main book, the conference of the social democrats of the European Parliament, and to integrate this reflection with the new theoretical work and outcomes of recent research projects (see above). This integration resulted into a more explicit **design** of the social quality theory. Twenty scientist from all over Europe contributed to this book: with the first book as frame of reference they published studies about the European Union (the economic, juridical and political aspects of the unification); the current welfare state theory and practices; the role of the 'third sector'; the empirical and policy relevance of social quality; urban transformation processes; and about the social-philosophical, the theoretical, political and practical meaning of the interpretation of 'the social'. Anna Diamantopoulou – member of the European Commission at that time – wrote in the Foreword, that *'the first book has widely welcomed by European policy makers as well as scientists across Europe. It played an influential role in the development of the new Social Policy Agenda [of the European Commission] (...). This [second] book extends and deepens our understanding of social quality and, therefore, will be an invaluable resource in both the implementation of the new Social Policy Agenda and in the modernization of the European social model'*. Of interest is to remark that the issue of the 'European social model' will be discussed further during the third stage (see below).

A new theoretical point of departure

Among other things, the second book elaborated the idea of the interplay of two basic tensions which deliver the context within which the main dialectic, resulting into 'the social', will be realized. It means the dialectic between processes of self-realization of human beings and the formation of collective identities. The consequences of the interference of the interplay of both tensions (the horizontal and the vertical one, see Figure 1) and this dialectic will be demonstrated in the change of four conditional factors, namely socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment:

Figure 1: Two basic tensions and the conditional factors



The theory about the working of two basic tensions goes beyond the theory about the relation between the world of systems and the life world (daily life). The four conditional factors are situated in four quadrants respectively. Their position refers to their main tendency. All these factors can be distinguished in domains, and these domains in sub-domains. With help of social quality indicators we can explore the changes of these sub-domains.

The policy area of employment: a project concerning nine Member States

Thanks to the previous studies on employment (see above) and its second main book, the EFSQ was rewarded by DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission in 2001. It commissioned the Project Employment of universities of nine Member States to apply the first design of the social quality theory on ideas of the European Commission with regard to the policy area of employment. The main thrust of the research concerned the meaning of the 'adaptability-pillar' of European employment policies. The objective was to elaborate and apply the concept of adaptability to Europe's labour markets and especially to assess the tension between flexibility in working time and employment security. It referred to the conditional factors of social inclusion, and socio-economic security.

The Project chose the area of flexicurity as its core focus. It involves the lifelong combination of secure and flexible employment and lies at the heart of the partnership for a new work organization. Ultimately, secure employment comes down to employability, to a worker's employability throughout her/his career, whether she/he works for only one employer or for more than one. The challenge was to recognise or to determine functional indicators of flexicurity as a **domain of adaptability** and to link them to the social quality approach. The procedure was to distinguish between its sub-domains and to choose the indicators to explore the changes of these

sub-domains. By applying these functional indicators (or monitoring devices) the participants found a rise in flexibility (in terms of contracts and employment conditions and of the rise of temporary work) which is not, or not systematically, tied to an updating of the conditions of security (socio-economic security). Furthermore they found that in the post-war era women's growing participation in the labour market has put increasing strains on the performance of care work (which is in general sense not taken on board by men). This has highlighted an inherent fundamental inequity and prevents the inclusion of women in other aspects of society (social inclusion). It is society's collective responsibility to alter the imbalance in traditional societal arrangements and to organise the sharing out of care work, as well as its adequate remuneration and fiscal and societal recognition.

Especially this final conclusion based on inductive forms of reasoning – the question of this fundamental inequity - paved the way for a ***new (and methodologically oriented) theoretical step***, proposed by the participants of the Project. Firstly we have to make a distinction between functional indicators for exploring policy areas (see the Project's indicators) and indicators for analysing the changes of the conditional factors in societies. Second, the latter indicators (thus social quality indicators) are necessary but not sufficient to determine (in quantitative sense) the

nature of social quality in communities. Profiles for a qualitative based exploration of cognitive and emotional aspects – the so-called constitutional factors - are even important as well. Furthermore we need ethical standards – or normative factors - to judge the outcomes of the linking of the quantitative and qualitative oriented explorations with help of criteria. This new step should enhance the theory of social quality in a decisive way.

Studies on the policy area of employment

The participants of the EU's Employment Project published the following studies:

- the study about 'Flexicurity of Employment in the European Union', as published as the project's Final Report (www.socialquality.org)
- nine National Reports about 'Flexicurity of Employment' (www.socialquality.org),
- the study about 'Flexicurity and Security in Employment' (thematic double issue), EJSQ, 4 (1&2).
- The 'Proposal for Developing Indicators, Profiles and Indicators' for analysing the nature of social quality in societies'.

Application Indicators of Social Quality in fourteen Member States

In the following major European project 'Network Indicators of Social Quality' - financed by DG Research of the European Commission (FP5) and fourteen participating university institutes in Europe and two international NGO's – a start is made with the elaboration and application of social quality indicators of the four conditional factors (their domains and sub-domains), see Figure 1. It has provided the basis for a holistic and theoretically grounded approach to the 'social quality' of daily circumstances of citizens in all Member States of the EU. The participants of the Network constructed on the basis of deductive and inductive forms of reasoning a set of 95 indicators with which to analyse changes of the sub-domains in fourteen European societies. The rationale is to compare the outcomes of trends and contradictions in the context of global, regional and national levels on societal structures, collective practices and conventions and the consequences for daily circumstances of people. In general sense policy-makers lack instruments to recognise and answer concerns raised in everyday life as consequences of these trends and contradictions. Even more they are not really assisted to acknowledge the real meaning – and the underlying propositions – of other approaches as 'quality of live', 'social capital', 'capability' etc. This is undermining any systematic and holistic policy development because its technical-reductional nature. Governance and evidence-based or indicator-oriented political practices [indicators as monitoring devices] are then very much an issue of helplessly dealing with existing and recognized complexities. They propose a misleading understanding of indicators as measurement instruments per se. This Network took on board the first aspect of the new step of the Project Employment for developing an alternative. It developed a theory of social quality indicators and focussed on the difference between functional indicators or monitoring devices and social quality indicators.

An outcome of one of the national reports in 2006: the Greek society

In the indicators' study demonstrated is already the highly problematic state of affairs in e.g. the Greek society in the midst of the 2000s. With help of social quality indicators explained is that Greece has little tradition of contractual relations, collective solidarity and universal values as fundament for their society. Instead 'statism' and 'clientelism' - extensive intervention of the state in the economy and widely observed process of creation and distribution of revenue through political, rather than market criteria – have been prevalent for a long time. For example with regard to health care, missing is a systematic public health policy, inefficient operation of public hospitals, unlawful practices (e.g. under table payments to hospital doctors) fragmentation and deep inequality of health insurance etc. Incomprehensible is the (supposed) astonishment of European finance ministers about this state of affairs in 2012. It was already clear for years and also demonstrated with help of the application of social quality indicators. The ostentatious refusal to interpret socio-political circumstances paved the way for the Greece economic disaster in the

second decade of this century. More or less comparable problems are recognized in Italy, Spain and Portugal. In other words, this astonishment is a logical outcome of the severe separation of economic politics and processes and socio-political politics and processes.

The first publications about social quality indicators

The outcomes of the work of the EFSQ's network were published as follows:

- in the Network's Final Report about 'Social Quality Indicators for Europe' (www.socialquality.org)
- in fourteen National Reports, presenting the outcomes of the application of social quality indicators (www.socialquality.org),
- in the Report by the 'European Anti-Poverty Network' and the Report by the 'International Council on Social Welfare' (www.socialquality.org)
- and in the study 'Indicators of social quality: applications in fourteen European Countries' (thematic double issue), EJSQ, 5 (1&2).

The editorial conclusion of the double issue was, that it is clear that any project for producing internationally comparable operational measures of social quality faces huge intellectual and practical difficulties. However the papers in this double issue show that a great progress has been made by the network and that an empirical framework for social quality research has now been successfully established. And indeed, very soon this work paved the way for the extension of social quality work in the Asia-Pacific (see third stage).

Further theoretical work

In the meantime some social quality scholars elaborated the second aspect of the new step, made by the Project Employment (see above). Its participants made a distinction between three sets of factors instead of one set, see following figure about the 'social quality architecture':

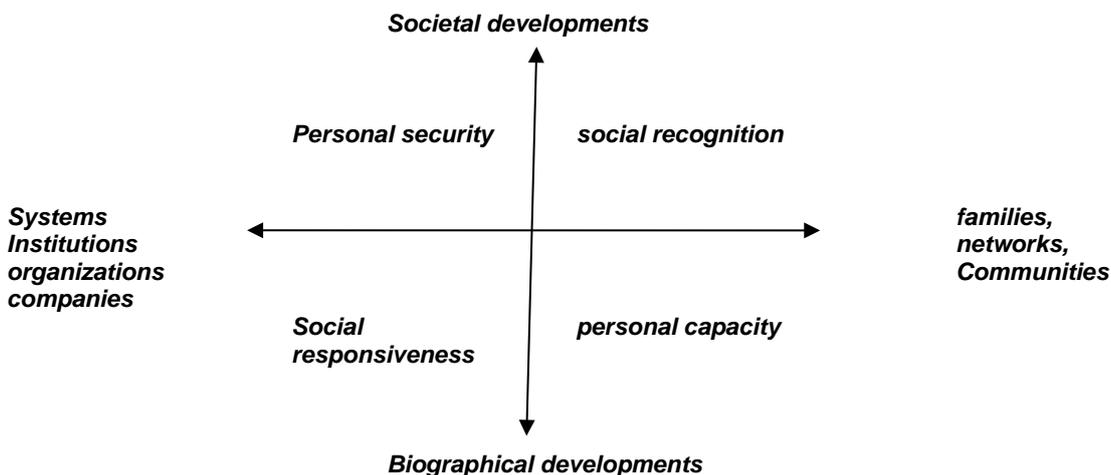
Figure 2. The Social Quality Architecture

constitutional factors (processes)	conditional factors (opportunities + contingencies)	normative factors (orientation)
personal (human) security social recognition social responsiveness personal (human) capacity profiles for the qualification of their nature and changes	socio-economic security social cohesion social inclusion social empowerment indicators for analysing trends and changes	social justice (equity) solidarity equal value human dignity criteria to judge the outcomes of the linking of constitutional and conditional factors

The nature of the conditional factors - reflecting the objective conditions of daily circumstances – are constituted by human beings. Therefore a distinction is made between also four constitutional factors. In other words it is important to accentuate since then the theory strongly recognizes two sides of the same coin, namely the cognitive and emotional (constitutional) side and the objective (conditional) side. It is based on the supposition of the role of the central dialectic between the processes of self-realisation (the first side) and the formation of collective identities (the second side). The outcomes of the linking of the changes of the conditional and constitutional factors will be judged by applying the normative factors.

Herewith the theory transcends the traditional Western discourse (concerning the welfare state and the European Social Model) in two ways. First because all twelve concepts of the architecture are in ontological sense related with the conceptualisation of 'the social'. Therefore all these concepts are intrinsically related with each other. Second - and thanks to the first – the cognitive, objective and normative factors of human existence (daily circumstances) are related with each other in epistemological sense. These three sets of factors may be appreciated as intellectual instruments to analyse the outcomes of the interference of the above mentioned dialectic and the interplay between two basic tensions. The constitutional factors add a new aspect to social quality explorations as illustrated in the following figure:

Figure 3: Two basic tensions and the constitutional factors



Résumé

In the previous sections we explained the 'what', the 'why' and the 'how' of the work done during the second stage. Thanks to the manifold of workshops, expert-meetings and participating in conferences social quality scholars realised many outcomes. The European project on employment deepened, first, a specific knowledge about this policy area and, second, it also

functioned as a lever of the theory. This resulted schematically into, third, the social quality quadrant a a new methodologically perspective. All of this stimulated the recognition of the difference between indicators as monitoring devices oriented on produced facts in societies or communities and the nature of social quality indicators oriented on consequences of societal processes. The conceptualisation and application of social quality indicators for analysing the change of the four conditional factors in daily circumstances concerned a decisive step for the elaboration of the social quality approach. These new steps should present later new arguments for analysing the policy area of employment and all other policy areas from a substantial new perspective (see four stage). These arguments should be explained in the EFSQ's third book, to be published in the beginning of the fourth stage. This work paved the way for the collaboration with the Italian Institute for Economic, Political, and Social Research, namely Eurispes. In its conferences the question was raised what social quality thinking could say about discourses on the 'European Social Model'. Finally, the work done is used as argument to start with a manifold of so-called 'stake-holders' of the Dutch City of The Hague for analysing the current urban conditions and to contribute to its urban sustainable development. In other words, the Dutch 'social quality team' made a begin with the confrontation of the theory and its methodology with the daily praxis; could both be made functional for this development?

The EFSQ's third stage (2006-2012)

Extension to Asia and Australia: the Asian Consortium for Social Quality

This second stage of the EFSQ opened especially the way for collaboration with scholars in Asia and Australia. The initiative was taken by the Chiba University in Japan. Pre-work was done thanks to the connection of the University of Sheffield and the Hong Kong Baptist University as a spring-board in the past decades. With a well-prepared first Asian conference in Japan the start was made for the collaboration of scholars in Japan, mainland China, South-Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia. Explained are the outcomes of the scientific journey of European scholars for articulating the social ,quality theory, methodology and application. This was compared with the contributions by Asian scholars about the human security approach and the manifold of different Asian policies for increasing welfare in daily circumstances. This social quality conference in Japan was followed by conferences in Taiwan, Thailand, mainland China and South Korea. It resulted into the construction of Asian Consortium for Social Quality (ACSQ) as instrument for stimulating social quality research in the Asia-Pacific. One of the questions was raised if social quality indicators – as an outcome of the second stage - are useful for analysing trends and contradictions in societies worldwide. Do central values (assumptions and propositions) underlying these indicators, differ between 'West' and 'East'? Assumed is, that the

collective emphasis in Asian ontology is indeed compatible with the notion of the social as being absolutely central to and the sine qua non of social quality than the individualistic orientation of English speaking countries. Supposed is also that its conceptual framework is in tendency universal in nature and will be commensurable. This is a condition for international application and comparison.

The project collaboration with the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague

In 2007 the EFSQ changed its working place from Amsterdam to The Hague. It finished the collaboration with Felix Meritis and was enabled to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with which to start the collaboration with the International Institute for Social Studies in The Hague (ISS). It is the institute for political, economic and cultural research in so-called 'developing countries' and the education for postgraduate students from Asia, Africa and South America. Of special interest is its attention for human security approaches and the theme of sustainability. This collaboration underpinned the following activities: (i) to start research of daily circumstances of the City of The Hague, also seen from an international perspective, (ii) to elaborate the comparison between human security and social quality, (iii) to support the start of a new international journal, and (iv) to start the attention on the problematique of sustainability. This change of focus compared to the 'Felix Meritis orientation' (see above) became to function as an intellectual support for deepening and enhancing the collaboration with Asian and Australian universities. The ISS stimulated implicitly to broaden the original European focus to global interrelationships and changes. This demanded an exploration of European transformation processes from a global point of view. It also implied an inversion of the implicit Euro-centric orientation. The project collaboration delivered possibilities for coproduction with staff-members, invited social quality scholars to present their ideas in seminars and workshops and resulted into facilities for the EFSQ's office and meetings. The outcomes will be demonstrated in following sub-sections.

The focus on politics and policies of the city of The Hague: the quarter of Laak

Stimulated by the collaboration with the ISS and with support by the Municipality of this city, members of the EFSQ board constructed the 'The Hague social quality team' with which to invest in urban questions of this city: what has the social quality theory, methodology and approach to say for addressing these questions? A start was made with this productive triumvirate. These investments could be related with past research during the first and second stage about the policy areas of ageing, public health, migrants, urban context and employment. In the meantime - because the finish of the European indicators' project - the EFSQ staff was halved. For different reasons a choice is made for the concentration on the 'quarter of Laak', a part of the city with more

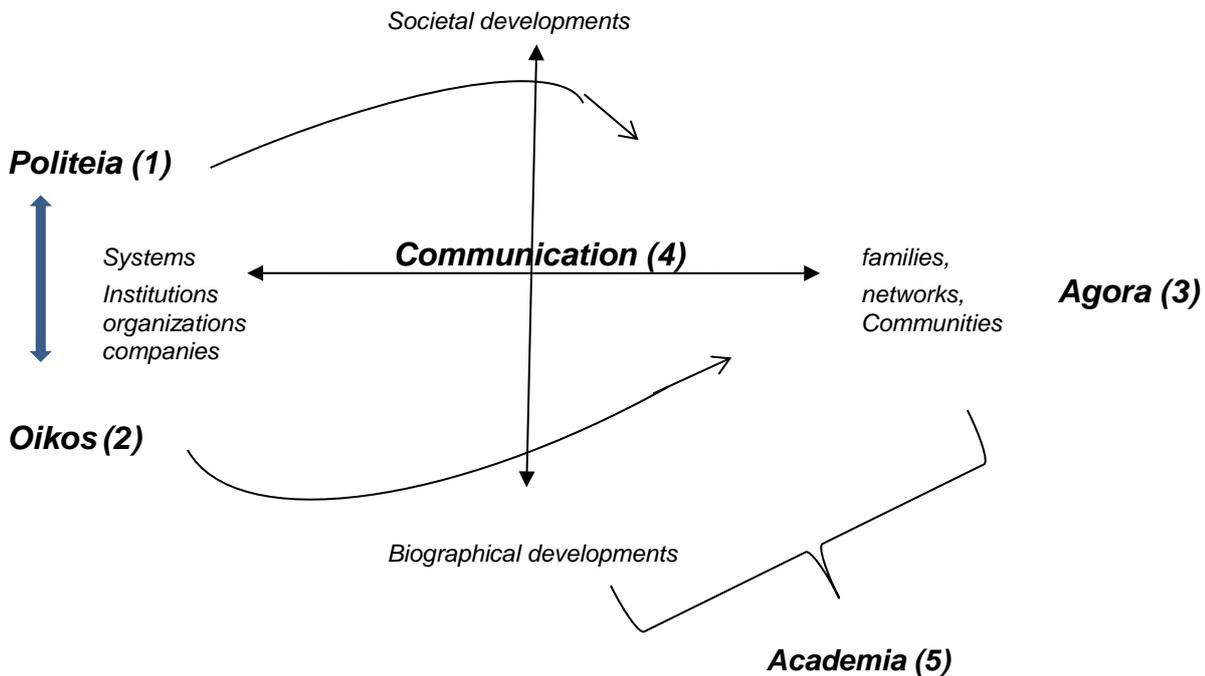
than 50% migrants and classified on the lowest rank of liveability (determined by traditional monitoring devices). Thanks to outcomes of four series of interviews by the EFSQ – made on request and financed by the Municipality - with different oriented key-persons in this city, two decisions were made in 2009. First by the Municipality to start the 'Project development Laak' with support by four organisations (for social-housing, intramural and extramural care deliveries, wellbeing facilities, and education) for creating new urban perspectives in this quarter for their respective policy areas and their interrelationships. Second - with support by the ISS, the Municipality and these organisations - the start of 'The Hague Academic Coalition for Sustainable Urban Development' under the lead of the EFSQ. It was called the Hacu. It should connect (for the first time in The Netherlands) university departments and other knowledge institutes for an orchestrated support of a suburban territory, in this case the 'Development of Laak'.

Theorizing urban circumstances

Among other things the reciprocity between the 'Project development Laak' and the Hacu resulted into the distinction between five 'worlds' which could be situated differently in the interplay of the two basic societal tensions (see Figure 1 and 3). The reflection of these situations and herewith related societal functions concerned the first theoretical work by the 'The Hague social quality team'. Supposed is that this involves different methodologies, together resulting into the 'urban methodological framework':

- Politeia, namely the political system on city level and its departments,
- The Oikos, namely companies, non-for-profit organisations and professional NGO's,
- The Agora, or the complexity of daily circumstances on local level and its actors,
- The communication as condition for connecting representatives of the different worlds, and understanding their interests, cognitive orientation and hereupon based languages,
- The academia or the fragmented or connected knowledge institutes.

Figure 4: Application of two basic tensions to urban conditions



On behalf of the quarter Laak of The Hague, the Hacu started to function as the point of crystallisation of the Academia. In the meantime – and thanks to the input by the EFSQ - the new plan was made to develop a ‘Communicationcentre’ with which to create possibilities for understanding the nature and consequences of politics and policies by the Politeia and Oikos and as a condition for developing initiatives in the Agora in order to enable their actors (cooperations of citizens) to cope with these politics and policies from their perspective of daily circumstances. As well as the Hacu (=Academia) as the Communicationcentre are central instruments for the empowerment of these actors of the Agora; in terms of social quality both instruments will enhance and strengthen ‘social [societal] empowerment’ in the quarter of Laak. This implies the development and application of five different methodologies, constituting the ‘urban methodological framework’. Since the past decade many European cities aim to start a sustainable urban development. European wide research demonstrates a lack of consensus about this framework as well as a lack of consensus about the adjective ‘sustainable’. To address this question may be appreciated as a main challenge of the Hacu. The rationale is to reverse the subordinated position of the Agora which can not suffice with representative democratic rules under modern circumstances. About these interventions two working-papers are published (see below) for explaining their nature and first outcomes.

The International Journal of Social Quality

At the end of the second stage the European Journal of Social Quality was stopped. The decisive argument was the change of perspective as referred to above, namely from the European point of view to a global point of view. Especially from the side of the Asian Consortium for Social Quality (ACSQ) a strong support was given to produce a global oriented journal. The Zhejiang University of mainland China decided to take the initiative and to deliver the conditions in collaboration with the EFSQ for the financing and production of the new International Journal of Social Quality. Also in this case Berghahn Journals in New York/Oxford is the publisher. It will be a multidisciplinary journal dedicated to promote research on social quality. It will publish papers that address crucial problems encountered by societies of the contemporary world. The Journal will be also a platform for addressing interconnected issues concerning, for example, health care, education, migration, urban development, employment, ageing and pensions, and citizenship. It will also be a forum for dialogue between social quality thinking and other approaches. Very soon the editorial board added the issue of sustainability to its list of aims. The reasons for starting this international journal work are at least threefold. First, for interpreting the transition to global based interrelationships needed are also journals which transcend a national or continental scope and which should contribute to a common understanding of societal processes which are commensurable. This concerns one of the most important challenges of the scientific world, to transcend the differences in understanding of our world. Second, to publish outcomes of societal processes thanks to applied strategies of the so-called developed and developing countries in a comparable way. Do they deliver arguments for deepening or changing also the social quality theory in order to better underpin politics and policies? Third, to dispose of an extra instrument for stimulating and publishing social quality studies. The journal can extend the connections within the scientific world. Examples of these studies are:

- About social quality and welfare system and welfare society sustainability, IJSQ, 1 (1),
- About social quality and the question of modern forms of citizenship, ISJQ, 1 (1),
- About the prototype of social quality and its applicability to Asian societies, ISJQ, 1 (1),
- About the comparison between the human security and social quality, IJSQ, 1 (1),
- About social quality and the social innovation discourses and strategies, IJSQ, 1 (2)

Asian social quality indicators' research causing a turn over

Seven international conferences on social quality in Asia are organized by participants of the Asian Consortium of Social Quality: in Japan(1x), Taiwan (1x), Thailand (2x), mainland China (2x), Hong Kong (1x). From the side of partners of the EFSQ, intellectual contributions (lectures) and strategic

contributions are made (for developing the dissemination of social quality thinking). One of the side effects were the start of surveys which are carried out and financed by universities in seven countries in order to apply and to test social quality indicators. They were based on the European list but amended to fit the different cultural context. The outcomes will pave the way for a second wave of these surveys. Especially the academics at Seoul National University coordinated in methodologically sense this amendment. The first wave of surveys are oriented on different societal issues. For example in Australia trust as an indicator of social cohesion is found to be low. Mistrusting relationships may result in conflict and subsequently lead to inequalities in health. In Taiwan the difference of social inclusion between typical and atypical workers leads to insufficient social protection for the last ones. The huge amount of Asian and Australian work demands for an interpretation and comparison on global level. What are the similarities and differences with the European outcomes of the application of social quality indicators? How to proceed in Asia-Pacific and Europe in order to analyse with these indicators outcomes of societal trends in a comparable way, and what can we learn from the recent Asia-Pacific surveys? With this in mind the discussion is started about new strategies for developing further the theory, its methodology and application.

Also if interest is to refer to explorations why people in Southern Korea are not satisfied with their daily circumstances although this society demonstrates an impressive improvement in both economic growth (based on GDP-variables) and political democratization. By applying the social quality indicators of social cohesion researchers recognised a growing distrust between different societal classes and the weakening of structural empowerment. Furthermore, they also recognized, that trust in public institutions has declined over the last decade. Concluded is that: political parties are the least trusted, followed by the government and the judiciary system. The problem is that trust in these institutions is getting worse. This study received an OECD-award for their contribution to ideas about 'social progress' as connected with the interpretation of 'the social'. Debates in the Asian conferences on social quality stimulated also a change of orientation. First of all, the original Eurocentric orientation prevents a real comparison of processes globally. Second, it is highly important to understand the nature of complementarity of the (well-known) human security and social quality approaches. Third, important issues of global processes refer to the question of sustainability; they should be taken on board in social quality studies. For addressing this question we have, fourth, to orient ourselves on the issue of sustainable urban development because 'sustainability' will be (or not) realised in the urban context where very soon more than 80% of mankind will live. All this stimulated the final change (in the fourth stage) of the EFSQ into the International Association on Social Quality (IASQ).

The compatibility of human security and social quality

With regard to the supposed complementarity between the human security and social quality approaches, the conference of the Human Development and Capability Association in Delhi dedicated two sessions to this issue in 2008. This association promotes research on poverty, justice and well-being, building from ideas in the capability approach and the related human development approach (seen in the annual Human Development Reports from UNDP and some national and local authorities). Those ideas include a central concern with the life opportunities that are in reality open to individual persons opportunities to do and be things that the persons or their representatives have reason to value. The human development perspective has been extended into 'human security' thinking, which has spread quite widely outside the UN system. The two sessions considered: (1) The treatment of 'the social' in work on human development, well-being and quality of life; (2) Whether the human development approach, including as extended in human security thinking, and the social quality approach have significant potential complementarity. Contributions to this conference were, in one or the other way, prepared during expert-meetings at the ISS in The Hague. It may be appreciated as the first endeavour to compare deeply the nature of the human security and social quality approaches. Compared to other existing approaches both seem to have the most affinity (see publications below)

Theoretical work and publications

Thanks to the outcomes of the second stage and highly inspired by social quality work in Asia-Pacific, a German, Dutch and UK-group of scholars started the preparation of the EFSQ's third main book (to be published in the beginning of the fourth stage). They were permanently in contact and their work inspired to participate in seminars and workshops all over Europe and to publish in working papers and articles about relevant issues connected with social quality thinking. In this context Routledge published a book about Quality of life with an inspiring chapter about social quality in 2006. Important to mention is the development of collaboration with the Italian Institute for Political, Economic and Social Research, Eurispes. It delivered a platform during its conferences to discuss ideas about the European Social Model from the social quality perspective, questioning the nature of 'the Model' and its lack of clairvoyance of the adjective 'social'. In the meantime the EFSQ started with a new instrument, namely the publication of working papers on its website. In the third main book referred is to all these studies. Some examples are:

- About the complementarity of human security and social quality (ISS Working paper nr.264),
- About the differences and similarities of social quality, quality of life, and human development (UK Working paper),

- About social quality indicators and their implications for Asia (UK Working paper),
- A study about precarity and the policy area of employment (Working paper nr.1, EFSQ),
- A first study about social quality work on behalf of the quarter Laak of the city of The Hague (Working paper nr.2, EFSQ),
- A study about the evaluation of the European Project on social quality indicators (Working paper nr.3, EFSQ),
- About Social Cohesion and the Sustainable Welfare Society (UK Working paper),
- Different studies about migration, identities and social quality (UK Working papers),
- About urban development, sustainability, welfare and social quality (Working paper nr.5, EFSQ),
- A second study about social quality work on behalf of the quarter Laak of the city of The Hague (Working paper, nr.6, EFSQ).

Evolution of the theory including issues of sustainability

The preparation of the EFSQ's third main book (see above) stimulated a new question '**social quality for what?**' Seen from a particularistic perspective, a determined extent of social quality in local or national circumstances can be highly attractive for the people concerned. But from a regional or global perspective we have to apply standards, which concern human mankind. Why to accept only high living standards for a large part of the USA and Canadian population or the population of the European Union? But if the same standards will be made accessible for the poor population in these regions and the poor in other continents in the near future - with help of a tremendous GDP-determined economic growth - all people on earth will make the same 'ecological footprint' (in global hectares per capita). In that case - from an ecological point of view and under the same circumstances - this globe will be exhausted if these standards will be realized everywhere. But these circumstances will change as well. The European Commission summarized scenario's which connected the effects of the equalization of standards and the new changes. The global population as such will increase explosive. At the same time expected is a strong ageing of the population world-wide and an increase of migration processes for political-economic reasons. Therefore global energy demand will increase by around 40% with the vast majority of the growth coming from non-OECD countries such as China, India etc. In absolute terms, the biggest increases in energy demand will be met by coal-based power generation. Furthermore, the growth in consumption of many of the world's main metals is also on the rise. By 2025 two-third of the world's population are expected to be living in water-stressed regions. Its conclusion in 2011 is *"incremental changes, small adjustments to the current policy framework will not do the job. In order to avoid catastrophic declines, bold ambitious and coordinated policy actions are required,*

and must formulated in such a way that they speak directly to citizens, in order to stimulate the emergence of a fully-fledged European [and global] mind and identity” .

At the end of the third stage – and also stimulated by theoretical work on ‘sustainable urban development’ of the Dutch project in Laak (city of The Hague) - the EFSQ in collaboration with the ISS took the initiative for starting a Dutch group of experts in order to analyse the global debate on sustainability and discussing the question what social quality thinking has to add? The purpose was to present participants of the Rio+ Conference in June 2012 a report with the elaboration of this answer. The EFSQ received financial support from different funds for taking on board this challenge. It concerned the opening of a new horizon with which to open the fourth stage of social quality thinking.

