

EFSQ AND ACSQ NEWSLETTER

on International Social Quality Research



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Introduction by the EFSQ and the ACSQ

The start of this newsletter

On the occasion of the fourth international conference on social quality in Asia in Bangkok (December 2009) a number of universities in Asia and Australia officially established the Asian Consortium for Social Quality. The founding universities and institutions were Chiba University, Seoul National University, Zhejiang University, National Taiwan University, City University of Hong Kong, NIDA, King Prajadhipok's Institute, Chulalongkorn University and Flinders University. The ACSQ can be seen as a successor of the 'Asian Steering Committee on Social Quality'. It initiates, coordinates and supports social quality research activities in Asia and the Pacific region, also in partnership with the European Foundation on Social Quality (EFSQ). In this alliance ACSQ and EFSQ have agreed to produce this shared newsletter concerning world-wide SQ research and activities.

The launch of International Journal of Social Quality

As a successor of the previous European Journal of Social Quality, the biannual International Journal of Social Quality will be published in collaboration with Zhejiang University and the European Foundation on Social Quality by Berghahn Journals in New York and Oxford. The primary focus of the journal is on social quality, but it also refers to a wide range of other disciplines, including social policy, economics, sociology, law and legal studies, philosophy, political science, geography, health sciences and public administration, so it interprets the subject in a broad sense. The journal seeks to create a forum for scientists, researchers, policy makers and practitioners to discuss issues related to social quality based on qualitative and quantitative methods, normative debate and action-oriented case studies. It is interested in a theoretical, methodological and political comparison to other approaches discussed on a global scale: quality of life, social capital, human security, the capability approach, the human development or social harmony approach. Special attention is given to global sustainability challenges addressed from the social quality and the human security approach.

ACSQ activities

Four International Conferences on Social Quality in Asia

Japan 2006

The first Asian social quality conference on 27th and 28th March 2006 was organised by Chiba University. The main focus was 'sustainable welfare societies', namely "Human Welfare and Public Policy under Social Justice, Equity and Democratic based Relationships: Asian Challenges for Establishing Sustainable Welfare Society". The main organiser was the Research Centre on Public Affairs for Sustainable Welfare Society in Chiba University, with co-organisers EFSQ, The Oxford University's China Programme and Society for the Study of Social Policy, The Japan Association for Asian Studies, the Taiwan Social Policy Association and the Hong Kong Association of Gerontology. The conference discussed EU and Asian social policies in a comparative perspective, and argued that the diversity and emergence of the new civil society may carry important implications for policies in Asia, and opportunities towards the supposed 'Sustainable Welfare Society'.

Taiwan 2007

The second Asian social quality conference from 28-29 March, 2007 titled "Social Quality and Sustainable Welfare Societies", was organised by the Social Policy Research Institute of National Taiwan University. Co-organisers include the Research Centre on Public Affairs of Chiba University, EFSQ, Genesis Social Welfare Foundation, the Research Dept. of Social Welfare of Taipei City Government, The Taiwanese Association of Social Policy, Department of Social Work of National Taiwan University, and Taiwan's Development, and Evaluation Commission and Ministry of Interior. The conference explored the concept of sustainable welfare

societies for Asian countries, compared to the traditional welfare state approaches in Europe. It also referred to a discussion on indicators of social quality in Japan, South Korea, mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India and Australia.

Mainland China 2008

The third Asian social quality conference took place at Nanjing University on October 24-26 2008 and addressed "Social Quality in Asia and Europe: Searching for the Ways to Promote Social Cohesion and Social Empowerment". It was organized by the Center of Social Policy of Nanjing University and Jiangsu International Cultural Exchange Center. The co-organisers of this event included EFSQ, Nanjing Amity Foundation, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Social Policy Research Centre of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The main issue of this conference was social quality and related social policy issues, in reference to society-building processes and promoting an active civil society. It also engaged a discussion on issues of NGOs and social empowerment.

Thailand 2009

The fourth conference of social quality "Social Development and Human Security: The Social Quality Perspective and Asia Conditions" took place in the National Institution of Development Administration (NIDA) on Dec. 9-10, 2009 in Thailand. The conference was co-organised by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and Chulalongkorn University. The conference discussed the theoretical and methodological issues of social quality research and Asian social quality

conditions. A group of experts on human security also presented their work, comparing the work of social quality and human security.

Related conferences, workshops and seminars in Asia

International Workshop on Standard Questionnaire for Social Quality

In March 2009 the ISDPR organized an International Workshop on the design of a Standard Questionnaire for Social Quality. The conference featured a wide array of researchers from Japan, mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia, and United Kingdom. Also, working together with the Korean Social Science Data Archive, ISDPR organized a conference on Korean Social Trend and Quality of Life in relation to the development of an annual report on Korean social trends for their Statistical Research Institute.

International Workshop on Asian Social Quality Indicators

On March 10-11, 2010, Tetsuo Ogawa and Akiko S. Oishi organized a workshop at Chiba University to discuss the progress of Social Quality surveys and the preliminary analysis of the survey data. The purpose of these discussions was to fill the gap between theory-led approach and data-driven approach, and to examine the ways that represent the theory of social quality to fit into social reality in Asia and the Pacific. Since various SQ teams of ACSQ had gone through their first stage of social quality surveys, methods to ensure data compatibility between surveys were also explored at the workshop. Twenty-four scholars from Asia and the Pacific participated in this workshop.

The 6th International Symposium and Lectures on Social Policy

The 6th International Symposium on Social Policy took place on August 27-28 in Zhejiang University, co-organized by the Special Committee of Social Policy, the Chinese Sociological Association, Zhejiang University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing Normal University, the Worldwide University Network, the University of Hong Kong, the Zhejiang Association of Social Welfare, and the Zhejiang Association of Public Administration. Over 360 scholars participated in this event. The theme of this conference was “Social Policy Innovation in the Era of Social Transformation”, with an international workshop on social quality and social policy innovation. The conference discussed issues of social policy and social security, social construction and social administration, social service and social work, with a special focus on social policy innovation.

Social Quality and the Quality of Thai Democracy

A conference on “Social Quality and the Quality of Thai Democracy” was organised by King Prajadhipok Institute in Bangkok on Nov. 4-6 2010 in the UN conference hall of this city. It was co-organized by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, the National Institute of Development Administration, Chulalongkorn University, the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board and the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, as well as the Asian Consortium for Social Quality. The conference explored relations between social quality and democracy, exchanged knowledge and comparative perspectives

about relevant issues, and also provided suggestions on creating sustainable peace in Thailand.

The 2010 Life & Development International Forum of Hangzhou.

Co-organized by the Center of European Studies of Zhejiang University and Hangzhou Municipal Government, the Hangzhou Life & Development International Forum took place on November 6-9, 2010. A number of SQ scholars from EFSQ, UNRISD, Indonesia, Malaysia and Zhejiang University attended this meeting. In the conference, the Hangzhou life

quality research center presented the Hangzhou experience of improving 'democracy', 'livelihood' and promoting 'harmonic business modes', which were evaluated by participants in terms of people-oriented and life quality-oriented development. The conference set up a panel on "lifestyle, social development and life quality assessment", in which SQ scholars presented their research relating the life quality theory to the social quality theory. In this context scholars explored a wide range of theoretical and practical issues concerning life quality, social quality and social development.

Related conferences, workshops and seminars in Asia

The progress of Asian Social Quality survey projects

The ACSQ has engaged in designing a questionnaire of social quality surveys and also in conducting the survey in 2009-2010. This social quality questionnaire was formulated throughout 2009 by interaction between SQ scholars in Japan, South Korea, mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, and Australia. In 2010, various teams basically completed these surveys with a scale of more than 1,000 samples: a team of Chiba University (Tetsuo Ogawa and Akiko S. Oishi), ISDPR of Seoul National University (Chinsung Chung, Yee Jaeyeol, Chang Dukjin), Zhejiang University (Ka Lin for a pilot survey), ISPRC of National Taiwan University (Lillian Wang), City University of Hong Kong (Raymond Chen), KPI of Thailand (Thawilwadee Bureekul) and Flinders University in Australia (Paul Ward). The KOSSDA team (Hearan Koo) invested a great deal of time to integrate these data for statistic usage.

Mainland China

On December 2009, the Chinese mainland SQ team was formed in a conference called "Social Quality and Social

Policy" organised by the Social Security Research Center of Zhejiang University. The first group members of this team consisted of scholars from Zhejiang University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Renmin University of China, Shanghai University, Qingdao University, Zhejiang University of Technology and other research institutes.

South Korea

ISDPR conducted a National survey on risk, safety, energy, mad cow disease, and human rights under the social quality framework from September 2008 to August 2009. This project was organised in cooperation with the Energy Safety Research Institute in Joongang University, and its results were published as "Perceptions on Energy Safety Technology: with a special focus on risk society and energy safety".

Malaysia

Rugayah Hashim and her colleagues in Universiti Teknologi MARA conducted a small size survey on the sub-urban residential area in Selangor. The purpose was to examine the dimension of social inclusion through neighbourhood

networking. The study discloses the impacts of ICT (information and communication technology) development on community communication and networking. The implication for social inclusion policies was evaluated.

Indonesia

Nugroho Abikusno carried out a survey project in relation to social quality conditions of elderly in Indonesia. This project was carried out in South Cipete village, south Jakarta, where 210 older respondents were interviewed. The study shows that those participating

in elderly clubs had significantly better scores than elderly living in the community. Meanwhile, Sutanto & N. Abikusno also conducted another survey project on the Social Quality of Households and Dengue Larva Status in Jati Padang village, south Jakarta. With these two projects, they testified the suitability of 95 indicators to measure social quality, as developed by the European Network on Indicators of Social Quality in a European context and argued that among them only 50 were considered appropriate for developing countries such as Indonesia.

Publications and public lectures

South Korea

The ISDPR participated in the 3rd OECD World Forum, which took place in Pusan from 27-30 October, 2009. OECD and Statistics Korea co-hosted the World Forum under the title of "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy." A paper by Jaeyeol Yee and Dukjin Chang titled "Social Quality as a Measure for Social Progress" received the Best Operational Initiative Award from this conference.

Also a monograph based on national survey on risk, safety, energy, mad cow disease, and human rights was published by Seoul National University, namely Risk Society and Risk Politics. This book provides insights on Korean society based on the social quality model and the concept of risk society. In addition, the ISDPR-produced journal *Development and Society* dedicated a special issue to the theme of social quality (Vol. 38/2, 2009).

Mainland China

A book titled "Social Quality and Social Development" was published by Zhejiang University Press in May 2010, containing a collection of papers of a conference on "Social Quality and Social Policy" which was organised by the Social Security Research Center of Zhejiang Province, College of Public Administration and School of Social

Sciences of Zhejiang University in December 2009. Ka Lin also gave a public lecture on the social quality theory at "Lingnan Forum" at Guangzhou which aroused a wide attention of Chinese scholars. Subsequently the newspaper "China Society" published three successive articles by Ka Lin about the social quality theory and an interview with him.

Hong Kong

Raymond Chan delivered a guest lecture at Kibi International University, Bitchu-Takahashi, Okayama, Japan on 30 June, 2010 on risk and social development. He related the social development agenda to the social quality perspective, emphasizing issues of social inclusion, cohesion and empowerment. In the 2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development: The Agenda, Hong Kong, 10-14 June, 2010, Cheung, J.C.K., Chan, R.K.H. & Ho, W.C. presented a paper on Personal and Social Quality Evolving from Affiliation with Associations in Hong Kong.

EFSQ work and activities

Research activities and projects

Theoretical studies on social quality

A collaboration of the University of Sheffield (UK), the University of Bristol (UK) the University of Cork (Ireland), the ISS of the Erasmus University (The Netherlands) and the staff of the EFSQ has made serious progress with the elaboration of the theoretical aspects of the social quality theory in 2009, resulting in different chapters of a forthcoming third main study of the EFSQ. It concerned the construction of the so-called ‘social quality architecture’ delivering instruments to analyse societal trends, their contradictions and challenges: objective aspects (conditional factors), cognitive aspects (constitutional factors) and ethical aspects (normative factors).

The methodological studies on social quality

The EFSQ completed two studies on the methodological aspects of the social quality theory to elaborate the first set of social quality indicators as applied in fourteen European countries in 2005. This delivered the points of departure for a critical reflection on these indicators, published on the website in working paper series nr. 3, March 2009. It is the result of a collaboration between the University of Cork, the University of Sheffield, the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna and the EFSQ. It is argued that social quality indicators are not measurement tools as such but they are tools to analyse trends of developments of societal wholes and people as main actors. By orienting these indicators on societal processes they essentially differ from for example quality of life indicators.

Sustainable urban development; a Dutch laboratory?

Since the past three years the EFSQ started an in-depth investment in urban processes of the Dutch city of The

Hague to operationalise the social quality approach and related indicators. This investment is supported by the ISS (international Institute of Social Studies) and the Hague municipality. In June 2009 the EFSQ published on the first outcomes in working paper series nr. 2. As a result of this work two decisions were taken in 2009. The municipality decided to choose its quarter Laak (North) as a laboratory to develop new policies for sustainable urban development, transcending traditional forms of fragmentation. The second decision was to start a coalition of ‘knowledge institutes’ in and around this city (three universities as well as other high schools and private research institutes) to support processes for sustainable urban development of this quarter as an example for the whole city. This collation – called the Hacu – is lead by the EFSQ and supported by the ISS and the municipality. In October 2010 the EFSQ published the first methodological results of the work by the Hacu in working paper series nr. 6.

A study proposal on sustainable cohesiveness of middle sized cities

Inspired by new investments in the Dutch city of The Hague as ‘frame of reference’, the EFSQ decided to collaborate with the University of Genoa in Italy in order to prepare a new study-proposal for the European Commission. It was based on the 2009 preparatory study on ‘sustainable global cities’. The specific orientation was the development of cohesiveness of societal relations at local level in middle sized cities. The purpose was to apply and to elaborate social quality indicators in these cities as new instruments for research on ‘sustainable urban development’. The participation came from the universities of Sheffield (UK), Georg-August University Göttingen (Germany), Genoa (Italy), Democritus

University of Thrace (Greece), Alicante (Spain), Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study, Cesis - Centre for the Study of Democracy (Portugal), the Centre for the Study of Democracy, Warsaw School (Poland) and Social Research Institute Tarki (Hungary). The results have been published in working paper series nr. 5.

A Study on behalf of the Hangzhou conference

In an Hangzhou conference of November 2010, the EFSQ presented two papers on social quality issues. The first study concerned an actual summary of the conceptual framework of the social quality approach (as compared to the more individualistic quality of life approaches) and the second concerned new starting-points for the development of an urban methodological framework based on the laboratory work in the Dutch City of The Hague. In both studies many elements were used of the study-proposals on global cities in 2009 and on middle size cities (working paper series nr.5). Afterwards, the EFSQ made an interpretation of the Hangzhou conference (in order to reflect upon the policies of its municipality to contribute to the Life Quality of this metropolis) based on the Chinese input and the EFSQ's papers on new strategies on sustainable urban development.

The start of a study group sustainability

As a result of the increasing collaboration with Asian scientists the orientation of European scientists related with the EFSQ changed in the past years. Originally the orientation was towards specific European issues, policies and the complex of related concepts. This implied attention for European ambitions claiming to present the best 'social model' and the highest knowledge based competitiveness. Recently however, the EFSQ also orientated itself to the Asian focus on human security, welfare societies and sustainability discourses going beyond the restricted welfare state issues. Since urban space has a growing importance as living condition for people, the theme of overall sustainability cannot be approached without the sustainable urban development issue. To understand the latter it should be more precisely defined what sustainability exactly means. The EFSQ and the ISS (of the Erasmus University Rotterdam) - in collaboration with the Centre for Earth and Sustainability (UCAD) of the University of Utrecht - took the initiative to start a Dutch think-tank with high qualified experts on different sustainability aspects. First explorations are made on how the complementarity of social quality and human security addresses the 'overall sustainability issue'.

Conferences, workshops and seminars

8th Annual Conference Public Administration in Moscow in 2010

The University of Cork represented the Foundation and presented aspects of the Social Quality approach at a Moscow conference. It is argued in this presentation that utilising the social quality approach in building up social administration faces two challenges. The first is directed to the administrative process itself by integrating the demands from different sectors of society in order to deal with social quality issues. The second challenge is to develop and secure a social quality perspective to understand urban space processes as main object for

social administration. As a result of this participation the EFSQ will extend its contacts especially with Lomonosov University in Moscow for the introduction of the social quality approach in Russia.

An International Conference on Social Precarity in Turkey in 2010

As a result of a collaboration with the Free University in Berlin (Germany), the Italian National Institute Eurispes, and the University of Cork, the EFSQ is engaged in a series of conferences and studies on new forms of precarity in Western societies. In January 2008 it

published its working paper series nr. 1 on precarity and social quality. The Middle East Technical University, one of the most prestigious universities of Turkey, organised an International Conference on Social Precarity in November 2010. The key note presentation from the University of Cork was a strong plea for social quality by emphasizing the need, particularly in the context of the current and lasting economic crisis, to look for a different overall approach to policy making. Argued was that social policy cannot be maintained as add-on, but should be redefined as social quality. As such it can be made a central point to guide economic policy and economic development. It appeals for a change of the dominant economic paradigm and related GDP-measurement as instruments to determine 'social progress'.

Going beyond the GDP: a workshop of Eurispes in Italy

In 2007 the European Commission launched an initiative under the title 'Going beyond GDP'. It is surely an important step since using GDP-growth as standard for measuring is limited - both in quantitative and qualitative terms. However, these discussions are very much restricted by two factors. The first is that it is lacking a clear framework and presents a more or less eclectic compilation of different initiatives on various topics. Second, the various topics looked at are in actual fact rather limited, being hugely oriented on issues of sustainability under the heading of ecology. In a December 2010 workshop the National Italian Institute Eurispes decided to foster international cooperation in this area. The concept of social quality is seen as a promising alternative.

Three expert-meetings social quality and human security

The ISS of the Erasmus University in The Netherlands and the EFSQ started with a series of expert-meetings to further elaborate the complementary of the social quality approach and the human security discourses in

2009. They were organised by the 'project group social quality/human security'. Starting point was a common study published by the ISS in its working paper series nr. 462 in November 2008. The first focus concerned the difference in both approaches in how to deal with the concept of 'the social'. The results of these reflections (supplemented by the University of Sheffield and Bath in the UK, Chiba University, and Osaka University in Japan) were discussed in the 2008 Delhi Conference of the Human Development and Capability Association. The second was an analysis of the complementarity of both approaches to the current 'sustainability' issue from an economic, socio-political and environmental point of view, related to the dominant economic paradigm which hinders their integration. The third focus was addressed by the input of Madras University, namely a critical reflection of Western biased approaches of 'the social' on the basis of current Indian ontological considerations.

International Workshop on Sustainable Urban Development.

In October 2010 the 15th International Metropolis Conference focussed on justice and migration was organized in The Hague. The EFSQ was invited to organise a workshop on the results of the investments made in the urban space of Laak North of The Hague. In this workshop the new methodology of community development as an aspect of an overall urban methodological framework based on the social quality approach was presented. A second theme was the new methodology of practice as applied by some organisations to transcend the traditional fragmented approaches. A third theme was a new initiative to start a 'communication centre' in this urban context in order to connect the different worlds (the municipality, companies, non-for-profit organisations, knowledge institutes, community groups, and families) which play a role in the development. The results will be published on the EFSQ's website.



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