Sustainable urban development and comparing related
urban strategies from a 'social quality perspective'.
A proposal on request by the Aldo Della Rocca Foundation in Italy
on behalf of the UN–general Assembly in New York 31 October 2014

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1. Introduction

The Aldo Della Rocca Foundation has a long tradition in discussing the urban context globally and concludes that we can speak of a serious 'crisis of cities'. In 2012 it published a book as basis of the debate with regard to the city crisis and the rights of cities at a global level. As explained, "*in one year cities produce more than 15 million deaths and uncontrolled urbanization is the cause of at least 80% of premature deaths*".[1] Meetings and conferences following this publication resulted into proposals to be presented by the Italian Permanent Representative to a General Assembly Event on "the Crises of Cities" in New York on 31 October 2014. A forthcoming document on behalf of this UN-Event pays attention to the design of 'a Strategic Project' enabling a new form of comparison addressing the crisis of the city: "*it has therefore been a path focused on the topic of the crisis of the city and the complexity that this crisis has, by now, assumed, with the aim of contributing to the solution of the increasingly serious problems of the city in its social and territorial diversities. Encouraging the dialogue among these diversities, in order to respect the differences so that these ones don't produce conflicts but civil, ethical human and cultural resources, is the greatest challenge of the contemporary city*".[2]

One of the elements of the crisis refers to increasing forms of mental and physical disorders, from depression to aggression, from mortification to hatred, from tolerance to crime. For an

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[1] C. Beguinot (2012), '*Human rights and The City Crisis: for the Urban Future*', (Naples: Gianni: series of urban studies).
[2] C. Beguinot (2014), '*UN Event, October 31, 2014 New York: The contribution of the Della Rocca Foundation*', (Naples/Rome: Della Rocca Foundation), p.3.

increasing amount of people, the city produces despair, alienation, suffering and having lost all its meaning: "*The cry of alarm for the spreading of this status of citizens without citizenship can be read in the widespread abuse of the interest of the single individual – which generates the unnatural and immoral separation between rights and duties, which are instead united for destination of purpose. In Italy, as in many other countries the phenomenon is also tangible as a result of illegal immigration.*"[3] Supposed is that especially the UN should pave the way for stimulating urban strategies which will address these and related issues.

The Della Rocca Foundation supposes that the work by the IASQ with regard to (i) sustainable urban development and to (ii) urban comparisons may deliver important points of departure for such a significant 'UN-strategic project' of some metropoles/cities over the seven continents.[4] This paper informs on the IASQ's activities to elaborate both objectives addressing the so-called 'crisis of the cities'. Especially this comparison should take place in a '***specific way***', that is:

- To reach consensus on the urban outcomes and/or consequences of the crisis for daily circumstances of people, their rights or lack of rights,
- to articulate what may be defined as negative or positive outcomes of the urban context (to enhance our understanding of the nature of the crisis as well),
- To understand the elements leading to these results at national, continental and global level,
- To understand best practice examples to enable positive results in comparable cases.

In order to contribute to sustainable urban development and to apply this specific comparison we need an unequivocal conceptual framework to analyse all aspects of urban processes in the same way, to understand their interrelations and reciprocities globally. At global level different approaches exist alongside each other which are also coping with real and sometimes dangerous challenges, for example: quality of life, social capital, capability, human security, human development or social harmony. In the 1990s the social quality work was introduced as a new and innovative approach. It concerns a theory (SQT), a methodology (SQM) and the social quality policy application (SQA). For more than a decade this work has also been oriented on urban conditions determining the quality of daily

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[3] Beguinot, see note-2, p. 17.
[4] C. Beguinot, 'Letter to L.J.G. van der Maesen, IASQ',(Rome/Naples, Della Rocca Foundation), 1st September 2014

circumstances of people and their rights.[5] The background for this was the previous engagement of some social quality scholars.[6]

On request by the Della Rocca Foundation we will explain in this paper why this social quality approach may be able to contribute to politics and policies preparing for sustainable urban development and to the 'specific' comparison as indicated above. Therefore we will first briefly introduce this approach and following present the current IASQ plans concerning both topics, which apply an international strategy elaborating this specific comparison addressing 'the crisis of cities'. Starting point is the hypothesis that processes resulting into sustainable urban development will adequately address this crisis.

2. History of the social quality approach

2.1 Accent on policy areas and indicators: the first and second main book

The predecessor of the IASQ was the EFSQ (European Foundation on Social Quality). The EFSQ officially started at an international conference on social quality held during the Dutch Presidency of the European Union in Amsterdam 1997. It presented its **first main book** on social quality.[7] Afterwards it published the Amsterdam Declaration on Social Quality, signed by 1000 scholars in Europe and solemnly presented to the President of the European Parliament in October 1997. This is published in the **second main book** on social quality, including the results of new theoretical reflections and outcomes of its first tentative projects.[8] As the second book demonstrates, originally the EFSQ was oriented on the political, economic and cultural circumstances of the European Union and especially of the comparison of different policy areas of its Member States: citizenship, civil rights, public health, employment, ageing, urban circumstances in the strict sense of the word, and immigration. As a result of the second book it paved the way as a European network of universities for different related European projects, financed by the European Commission,

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[5] W.A. Beck (2001), '*Towards European Cities of Social Quality: a study on request by the Ministry of Welfare, Health, and Sports*', (Amsterdam: EFSQ). And: H.G.J. Nijhuis, L.J.G. van der Maesen and J. F. Westbroek (2009), '*A methodological Framework to identify Responsibilities and Research Questions for Sustainable Neighbourhood and Urban Development and International Comparative Research and cooperation: a study on request by the Municipality of The Hague*', (The Hague: EFSQ).

[6] The current director of the IASQ was engaged for two decades with the development of two 'urban suburbs' in the Netherlands, namely Amsterdam South-East and Almere. See for the first: L.J.G. van der Maesen (1970), '*Amsterdam South East; a Model for public Participation in processes developing its physical infrastructure and education, culture, health care and cure, well-being and welfare*", (The Hague: Dutch Ministry of Culture, Well-being and Social Work). See further: D. C. Kaasjager, H.G.J. Nijhuis and L.J.G. van der Maesen (1989), '*The New Public Health in an Urban Context: Paradoxes and Solutions (seen in an international perspective)*' , (Copenhagen: WHO Healthy cities Papers no.4).

[7] W.A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, A.C. Walker, eds (1997), '*The Social Quality of Europe*', (The Hague, London, Boston: Kluwer International).

[8] W.A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, F. Thomése and A.C. Walker, eds, (2001), '*Social Quality: A New Vision for Europe*', (The Hague, London, Boston": Kluwer Law International).

participating universities and in the beginning especially the Dutch Ministry of Welfare, Health and Sport. Following shortly the Kingston University of London took the initiative to start the *European Journal of Social Quality* with support by Berghahn Publishers in New York/Oxford[9]. A great deal of studies concerning these policy areas seen from the new social quality perspective was published in this journal. Also the position of citizens and the nature (or lack) of 'social empowerment' was placed on the agenda of this journal. In The Netherlands, the EFSQ strongly supported the Association of Dutch citizens for a Democratic Europe and took the initiative of a Dutch Journal '*EUforum, Journal for a Democratic Europe'.* [10]

2.2   The third main book: opening new horizons

The second main study led to the start of a European Network for developing social quality indicators, supported by the European Commission and participating universities. The objective was to elaborate the methodology (SQM) in order to apply the theory (SQT) to contribute to new policies (SQA). This work resulted in fourteen national reports about the state of affairs with the different policy areas in a comparative way. [11] This Network stimulated the extension of the collaboration with Asian-Pacific universities. The social quality's **third main book** among others is dedicated to the results of this methodological work on indicators, its application and the consequences for the original theoretical suppositions.[12] Its theoretical work was and is strongly based on the reciprocity of deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. This book proved to be a new stimulus to enhance its theory and methodology for understanding societal processes to relate social quality thinking to the debate on overall sustainability and to explain its attention for the issue of 'sustainable urban development'. Attention is dedicated as well to the conceptualization of 'the social' as the productive and reproductive relationships of people. This theme may be appreciated as a characteristic aspect of the social quality approach compared to all other approaches.

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[9] This journal published six volumes and twelve issues. It published thematic issues about employment, ageing, citizens and empowerment, social quality indicators.
[10] The EFSQ published in collaboration with the Association of Dutch citizens eight issues in the beginning of the past decade.
[11] The thematic double issue by the European Journal of Social Quality presented an overall view of the outcomes of the work by this Network: 'Indicators of Social Quality: Applications in fourteen European Countries', *EJSQ*, 5 (1&2), 2005, pp 1-300.
[12] L.J.G. van der Maesen and A.C. Walker, eds, (2012), ' *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators'*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

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

The Network for developing social quality indicators and the second book facilitated, secondly, collaboration with scholars in Asia and Australia. With a well-prepared first Asian conference in Japan collaboration started between scholars in Japan, mainland China, South-Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia. The scientific journey of European scholars to articulate the social quality theory, methodology and application was compared with the contributions by Asian scholars about human security and the different policies for enhancing welfare. The social quality conference in Japan was followed by conferences in Taiwan, Thailand, mainland China and South Korea, resulting a.o. into the construction of an Asian Consortium for Social Quality (ACSQ). One of the questions raised whether the social quality approach is useful for analysing trends and contradictions in societies worldwide. Do central values (assumptions and propositions) underlying these indicators, differ between the 'West' and 'East'? It is assumed 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 rather than the individualistic orientation of the English speaking countries. It was also assumed that its conceptual framework in tendency is universal in nature and will be commensurable. This is a condition for international application and comparison. The ACSQ paved the way for many surveys in seven Asian/Australian regions – financially supported by all engaged universities - with which to apply the adjusted indicators to circumstances in these regions[13]. As a result of the extension to Asia and Australia the Zhejiang University in mainland China took the initiative with the EFSQ to transform the European Journal into the *International Journal of Social Quality*, produced by Berghahn publishers as well (see www.journals.berghahnbooks.com/ijsq).

2.4   The social quality architecture

A third important outcome of the second main book was the start of the Project Employment - financed by the European Commission and the participating universities - to analyse changes recently taken place within this policy area of nine Member States[14]. Next to the extensive work for comparing the outcomes of flexicurity in employment relations in nine of these States, the participants also further theorized the distinction between three sets of factors relevant for empirical oriented social quality analyses. The nature of the conditional

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[13] See therefore the EFSQ's Annual Reports 2008, 2009/2010, 2011-.2012 (www.socialquality.org) as well as the first EFSQ/ACSQ-newsletter published in February 2011 (see Annual Reports).
[14] The thematic double issue by the European Journal of Social Quality presented an overall view of the outcomes of the work of this project: 'Flexibility and Security in Employment: A Social Quality Perspective', *EJSQ*, 4 (1&2), 2003, pp. 1-260.

factors - reflecting the objective conditions of daily life – is constituted by human beings. Therefore a distinction is also made between four constitutional factors, reflecting the cognitive and emotional aspects of human people as actors in societal circumstances. In other words it is important to accentuate that since then the theory strongly addresses two sides of the same coin, namely the subjective (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). This is further deepened in a third book, adding a reflection on the four normative factors. This resulted into the so-called 'social quality architecture', illustrated by figure-1:

Figure-1:   The Social Quality Architecture

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

This theory transcends the traditional Western discourse on the welfare state and the European Social Model in two ways. First because all twelve concepts of the architecture are, in an ontological sense, related to the conceptualisation of 'the social'. Therefore all these concepts are intrinsically related. Second the cognitive, objective and normative factors of human existence (daily life) are related in an epistemological sense. These three sets of factors may be appreciated as intellectual instruments to analyse the results of the above mentioned dialectic 'realised' in the interplay between **two basic tensions**: between societal and biographical developments and between systems/institutions and daily life in communities (see therefore below Figure-3). In the context of social quality thinking, **'human rights'** refers to the nature of social quality (or lack of social quality) as a result of linking the conditional and constitutional factors. This can be judged and determined by applying the normative factors.

2.5   The three sets of factors and human rights

To resume all three sets of factors play a crucial role in understanding the nature of 'sustainable urban development' and the way it will also contribute to overall sustainability.[15] Especially the normative factors deliver the point of departure to explore whether the nature of sustainable urban development (or lack of sustainable development) enhances human rights in cities and the status of citizenship for all residents. This concerns a highly complicated theme and should be elaborated further. Its elaboration is also of interest for comparing social quality thinking with mainstream theories about social justice, human dignity and solidarity in the context of cities and metropoles. Its supposition is that given the relationships between the three sets of factors its contribution adds new horizons for comparing cities in such a way that strategies can be designed to address the so-called crisis of cities by strengthening their 'sustainable urban development'.

In the case of social quality thinking, the normative factors are also derived from the ethical level as 'products' of the interference between (i) the constitutive interdependency *(α)* of processes of self-realisation of people' and the formation of collective identities and (ii) the interplay *(β)* between two main tensions, between systems/institutions and the daily life of people. In other words, these normative factors are derived from societal processes, which final goal should be the sustainability of human existence on earth. It is from this perception that 'socio-economic activities' as one of the aspects of sustainability – influencing the nature of the constitutional factors and the conditional factors, as well as the results of linking them – should be judged by these normative factors in relation to the final goal.
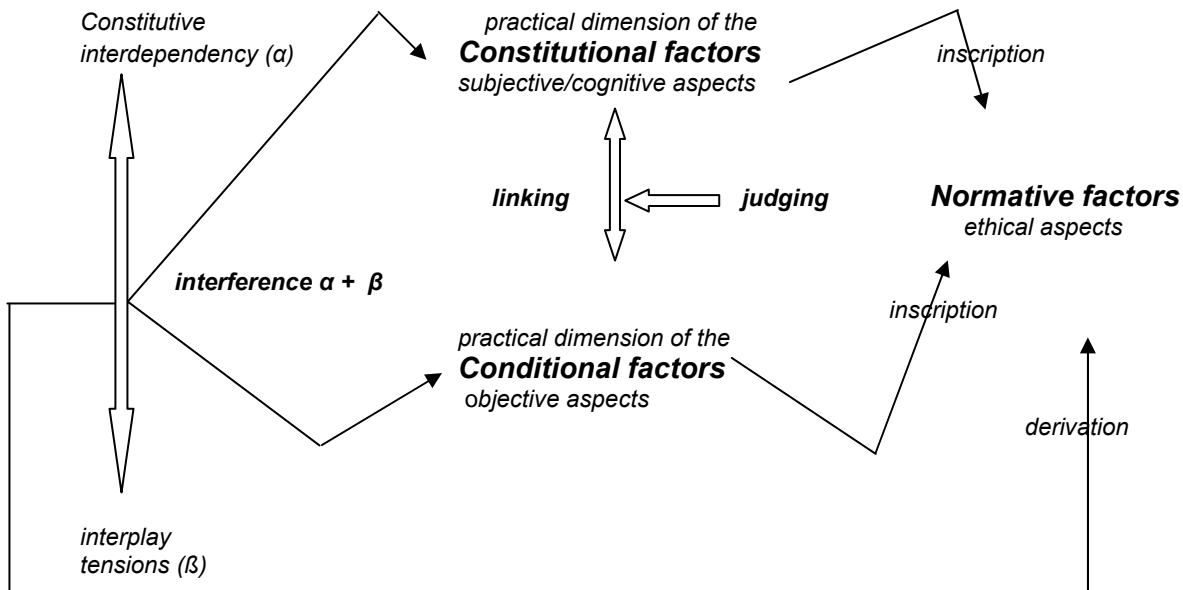
These socio-economic activities do not have a significance 'sui generis' as is supposed in the current socio-political and socio-cultural context. It is exactly the other way around. In the Western and Eastern hemisphere they are - for quite different reasons – legitimated thanks to this context.[16] The social quality approach is also suitable to connect analyses of the development toward sustainability with sustainable urban development. As a consequence of the lack of an adequate conceptual framework this link currently hardly ever is made in the global debate. Nevertheless, this connection is urgent since, in the near future, nearly 80% of the world's population will live in urban areas. Sustainability is impossible without effective

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[15] J. van Renswoude, L.J.G. van der Maesen, P. Herrmann (2012), '*Development toward Sustainability. The need for a comprehensive conceptual an methodological framework for new politics and policies: a social quality perspective'*, (The Hague/Amsterdam: IASQ, working paper series r.11, www.socialquality.org).
[16] L.J.G. van der Maesen and   J. van Renswoude (2011*), Draft background study 'Development toward Sustainability'*, (The Hague: EFSQ). This theme (and Figure -4) has not been elaborated yet. In order to determine what really 'sustainable urban development' is, the elaboration of this theme is a condition sine qua non.

politics and policies which foster sustainable urban development. It is here where the majority of the 'complexities of human activities' takes place. To illustrate the relationships between the three sets of factors and the challenge to elaborate these relationships, see Figure-2.

Figure-2.   The relationships between the three sets of factors

Constitutive
interdependency (α)

practical dimension of the
Constitutional factors
subjective/cognitive aspects

inscription

interference α + β

linking   judging   **Normative factors**
ethical aspects

practical dimension of the
Conditional factors
objective aspects

inscription

derivation

interplay
tensions (ß)

2.6   The urban demonstrationproject of the city of The Hague

Stimulated by the collaboration with the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and with support by the Municipality of the city of The Hague, members of the EFSQ board constructed the 'The Hague social quality team' to carry out research on urban issues in this city: how can the social quality theory, methodology and approach address these issues? The investments could be related to previous research about the policy areas of ageing, public health, migration, education, urban context, social housing, income, sport and employment. For a number of different reasons a choice was made to concentrate on the *'quarter of Laak'*, a part of the city with more than 50% migrant population and classified on the lowest rank of liveability (determined by traditional monitoring devices).[17] Following four series of interviews by the EFSQ – made on request by the Municipality - with different key-persons in this city, two projects were launched in 2009. First by the Municipality to start the

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[17] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2010), '*Justice, migration and sustainable urban development: the case of Laak (North), neighbourhood of the city of The Hague*' (Thee Hague/Amsterdam: EFSQ: *working paper series nr. 6, www.socialquality.org*).

'Project development Laak' with support by four organisations (for social-housing, intramural and extramural care deliveries, wellbeing facilities, and education) creating new urban perspectives in this quarter for their respective policy areas and interrelationships. Second – supported 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, called the Platform-Hacu.

The collaboration between the 'Project Development Laak' and the Platform-Hacu first resulted into a theoretical distinction between four 'worlds' which could be situated differently in the interplay of two basic societal tensions as mentioned in the previous section. Secondly it resulted into the start of an '**urban demonstrationproject'** of Laak in 2011, financed by the European Commission, the Municipality and five stakeholders (including the EFSQ). [18]

2.7   *The connection of four worlds as point of departure for sustainable urban development*
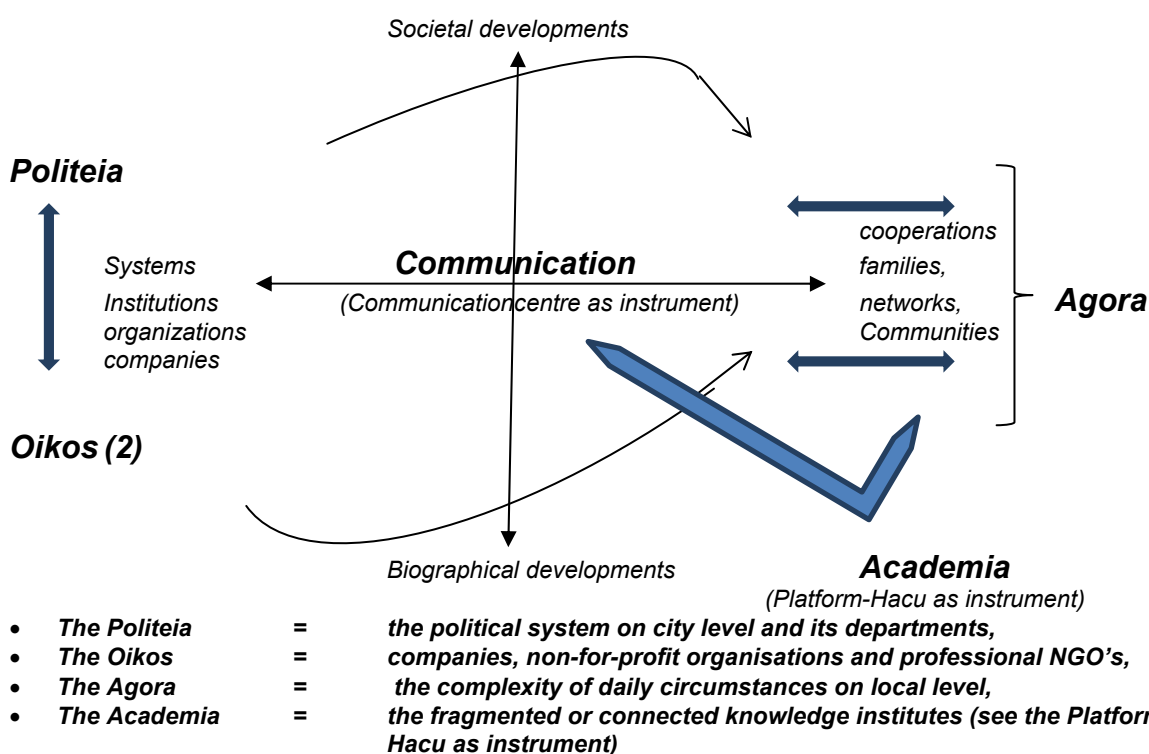
The 'demonstrationproject started' in September 2011 with six innovative projects which should pave the way for a 'sustainable urban development' of this quarter of The Hague. The challenge was (and is) to turn over the traditional oriented top-down approach (by the Politeia and Oikos) into a stronger bottom-up involvement of residents (the Agora) with the help of these projects, assisted by knowledge institutes (the Academia). Following theorizing a great deal of elements of the 'demonstrationproject', these different worlds could be situated in the interplay of the two basic tensions, referred to in section-2.5, see Figure-2:

- developing new indoor-sports facilities under the lead of residents of Laak,
- developing an extramural centre of cure and care in collaboration with community groups, schools, centres for cultural activities etc,
- designing a new form of care for elderly in the context of their communities, facilitated by caring institutions and the municipality,
- enabling constituting community groups (or cooperations of residents) to push new micro-economic activities, to organize a weekly market for selling and buying self—produced products, to influence policy-making by the municipality and institutions from their perspective of the nature of their daily circumstances, to stimulate environmental projects in this part of The Hague, etc.
- the develop the Platform-Hacu as a crystallisation point of knowledge institutes, functioning as instrument for assisting residents to realise their 'social empowerment' in order to play a responsible role, called participation or, involvement in decision-making processes (a plan by the EFSQ on behalf of the demonstrationproject),

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[18] L.J.G. van der Maesen, P. Herrmann, H. Verkleij (2012), *'Welfare arrangements, sustainable urban development and new forms of governance: the recent 'demonstrationproject' of the City of The Hague'*, (The Hague/Amsterdam: EFQ, working paper series nr.8, www.socialquality.org).

- to start a Communicationcentre as instrument for connecting the representatives of the different worlds in such a way, they will play a role in the 'sustainable urban development' of Laak (a plan by the EFSQ on behalf of the demonstrationproject).

Figure-3 The four worlds seen from a social quality perspective

- ***The Politeia   =   *** *the political system on city level and its departments,*
- ***The Oikos   =   *** *companies, non-for-profit organisations and professional NGO's,*
- ***The Agora   =   *** *the complexity of daily circumstances on local level,*
- ***The Academia =   *** *the fragmented or connected knowledge institutes (see the Platform-Hacu as instrument)*

The Communicationcentre as instrument should connect representatives of the different worlds, and convey their interests, cognitive orientation and languages. The Platform-Hacu should assist the work of this centre as well.[19]

A specific objective of the EFSQ as partner of the demonstrationproject was and is to analyse and to evaluate the results of their innovative projects and of their interrelationships and to see whether they contribute to the sustainable urban development of the quarter Laak (see below). The evaluation is forthcoming when the demonstrationproject has finished, October 2014. Especially the constitution and operationalization of both instruments – the Communicationcentre and the Platform-Hacu – are essential in the urban processes of this quarter and of interest for comparing urban strategies with other cities. Therefore it is supposed that the principles of this demonstrationproject may function as an interesting frame of reference for the 'specific comparison' of cities and metropoles.

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[19] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2013), '*Annual Report of the European Foundation on Social Quality: 2011 and 2012*', (The Hague/Amsterdam: IASQ, www.socialquality.org).

New for the social quality work (SQT, SQM and SQA) is that – as a result of the the Hague demonstrationproject work - these four worlds could be located in the interplay of both two main societal tensions (between societal and biographical developments and between systems and life world). This concerns one of the essential points of departure of social quality thinking. The three sets of factors (see Figure-1) can be applied to analyse the outcomes of the role of the Politeia, Oikos, Agora and Academia in daily circumstances as outcomes of this interplay. For example, do they increase the socio-economic security of residents, the social cohesion, the social inclusion and their social empowerment? This location of the four worlds also implies the development and application of different methodologies related to each world as well as processes of communication, together constituting the urban methodological framework. This theme is elaborated in a recent study concerning the interrelationships between societal trends, overall sustainability and sustainable urban development (see below Figure-3).[20]

3 Sustainable Urban Development

3.1 sustainability and sustainable urban development

From the side of the IASQ (as successor of the EFSQ) a serious comment is made on the global debate about the development toward sustainability. It is based on the work of a Dutch think-tank of experts in 2010 and 2011. These experts sent their outcomes to the Rio+20 conference in June 2012. Discussed is, among others, the lack of analyses on the role of cities and metropoles with regard to the development (or decrease) of overall sustainability**.** [21] In order to fully understand sustainable urban development we should have a basic understanding of processes resulting into the development of overall sustainability. Since this overall sustainability concerns the main global challenge, the social quality approach should be made functional for this sustainability. It makes no sense to increase the nature of social quality at a specific place and time if this will not contribute to overall sustainability at the same time. Given the expectation that in the near future circa 80 percent of the world population will live in urban circumstances, overall sustainability should be realised in an urban context and this implies 'sustainable urban development'.

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[20] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2013), 'Analysing Societal Circumstances, Sustainability and Sustainable Urban Development: New Theoretical and Methodological Challenges for Social Quality Indicators', *International Journal of Social Quality*, 3 (1), pp. 82-105. Most important background information of this study is the social quality's third main book (note-12) and the working paper on behalf of the Rio+ conference in June 2012 (see note-15).
[21] Van Renswoude et al, see note-15.

Inspired by this new approach, we are able – and see the work of the dutch think-tank - to present a **preliminary definition** of sustainability as: '*a state of dynamic equilibrium between the entire interactive ensemble of non-living and living entities, functioning within the boundaries of a resilient system'.* These living entities include the complexities of human actions. These complexities can cause either sustainable or unsustainable societal relationships as well as sustainable or unsustainable conditions concerning the resilience boundaries. The key point for increasing sustainability concerns how to cope with the immediate effects of the complexities of our world (including those of human actions), because these complexities may cause serious societal conflicts and/or the crossing of the boundaries of the resilient system.[22] To deal with these conflicts and stick to the boundaries of the resilience system implies new forms of governance at local, national, regional and global levels as well.[23] With this in mind 'sustainable urban development' refers to such a development of the urban context that it contributes to the state of dynamic equilibrium between societal complexities within the boundaries of the resilient system.

3.2   The UN Habitat about the urgent need for new urban strategies

Since the last decade many European cities aim at enabling sustainable urban development. European wide research demonstrates a lack of consensus about an underlying framework as well as a lack of consensus about the adjective 'sustainable'. Addressing this is one of the main challenges of the HACU-Platform. The rationale is to reverse the subordinated position of the Agora which cannot suffice with only representative democratic rules in the face of severe societal challenges. This theme has been elaborated in an Annual Report 2011-2012 functioning as a study report on both new instruments to underline sustainable urban development in the context of all other social quality work in this period.[24]

The need for new strategies has already been explained by the UN Habitat. It strongly criticized the lack of attention for metropoles and cities in the debate on sustainability. It concludes that the first decade of the twenty-first century has been marked by overwhelming challenges including a food crisis, an energy crisis, a financial crisis, and a growing realization of the consequences of climate change: *'thousands of organizations are developing tools and offering policy options to meet these challenges. But these activities are*

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[22] The related relationships and interactions existed before. However, today we are more aware and knowledgeable of the new consequences. Due to the increased density (urbanisation, amount of emissions etc) they are much more pressing, see note-15.
[23] See for example the new study: T. Cadman (2011*) Quality and Legitimacy of Global Governance: Case Lessons from Forestry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan). See further: T. Cadman (2012), 'Evaluating the Quality and Legitimacy of Global Governance: a theoretical and analytical Approach', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 4-24.
[24] Van der Maesen, see note-19.

disparate and tend to ignore an equally unprecedented mega trend: that the world is undergoing an irreversible process of rapid urbanization. Failure to accommodate this mega trend has resulted in unsustainable forms of production and consumption, poverty and social exclusion, and pollution'.[25] It also says, that for creating positive conditions in the near future, attention should be dedicated to 'sustainable development' of the interconnected urban or societal spaces in all continents. Also from the side of the Municipality of Hangzhou and Zhejiang University, an understanding of the role of the urban context supposes comparable research at global level, which would imply a consistent globally accepted conceptual framework.[26] .

3.3   The UNDP china about the urgent need for new urban strategies

A recently published impressive UNDP China study on sustainable cities in this country is in line with the previously mentioned UN Habitat's conclusions. It claims that the battle against climate change, the fight against inequalities, and the response to a rapidly ageing population will depend on measures taken within the context of China's burgeoning cities. In other words China's major objectives and endeavours will thus be won or lost in its cities. Explicitly, the different central dimensions of the urban context are focused on. [27] The reason for strengthening the attention to the 'urban question' in China are the consequences of the massive internal migration. In 2011, the migrating population reached 260 million. During the next two decades, nearly 310 million more people are expected to migrate from rural to urban areas. [28] The politics and policies thus far should be changed urgently: *"the current performance evaluation system for local governance is focused mainly on economic growth, with little attention to resource conservation, environmental protection and social development, and there are no incentives for sustainable planning and development. The current system of organizations and regulations has given the government great discretionary power, and failed to establish checks and balances, and systems of monitoring and supervision. This often leads to the 'principal agent problem' for state-owned assets".* [29] It is of interest to compare the study about the application of social quality indicators*[30]* with the UNDP's proposals about monitoring, which are embedded in the traditional non-theorised

[25] UN (Habitat) (2009), *For a better Urban Future* (Paris: UN).
[26] K. Lin (2011), The Prototype of Social Quality Theory and its Applicability to Asian Societies, *International Journal of Social Quality,* 1 (1) , 57-71
[27] UNDP China (2013), '*China National Human Development Report: Sustainable and Liveable Cities: Toward Ecological Civilization'*, (Beijing: China Publishing Group Corporation).
[28] UNDP China, see note-27, p. i.
[29] UNDP China, see note-27, p. 59
[30] Van der Maesen et al,see note-12, Van der Maesen, see note-205.

distinction of dimensions according the traditional debate on sustainability. It argues for example that: "*it is important to have indicators that best reflect local conditions that could measure current issues, and factor in long-term economic, environmental and social goals, that support sustainable development".[31]* However, at this stage it is already important to notice that the UNDP Report underlines the arguments for the orchestration of activities of citizens to cope with environmental questions of daily circumstances in metropoles and cities. In spite of this important conclusion, the Report does not theorise the nature of indicators. This is not surprising because it implies the application of a general conceptual framework which seems to be lacking. Creating such a framework is an intriguing and interesting challenge.

3.3   The start of the European and Chinese collaboration analysing urban contexts

Some years ago the collaboration of the Zhejiang University (as an important partner of the Asian Consortium for Social Quality) and the IASQ resulted into comparative work on urban strategies and their results in different continents. Among other things it led to an IASQ-study on urban strategies of the Municipality of Hangzhou of the Zhejiang Province in comparison with those of the city of The Hague.[32] The Zhejiang University and the Municipality of Hangzhou published a study on social innovation and local governance including a comparison with urban strategies applied in The Hague.[33] Both activities stimulated a partnership of the IASQ in the project of the EU-China Environmental Governance Programme (called EGP-project), strongly supported by the Zhejiang University. Its objective is 'Public Participation of Environmental Governance in the Jiaxing City Model and its Applicability in the Zhejiang Province'.[34] The objective of this partnership is explained and elaborated in a discussion-paper.[35] The IASQ was invited to participate in this EGP-project following its recent work how to increase 'social empowerment' of residents in the urban context for contributing to the development of overall sustainability.

One the IASQ's activities as partner of the EGP-project concerned a first tentative empirical exploration of the role of community groups and citizens in the city of Jiaxing of the Zhejiang

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[31] UNDP China, see note-27, p. 91,

[32] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2012), ' *The Orientation, strategies and model (or experiences) of the city of Hangzhou from a comparative perspective*', (The Hague/Amsterdam: EFSQ, working paper series nr. 9, www.socialquality.org).

[33] Y. Li, Y.Sun, K. Lin (2012), 'Social Innovation, Local Governance and Social Quality: The Case of Intersectoral Collaboration in Hangzhou City', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 56-74.

[34] *Center of Environmental Education and Communications of Zhejiang Province (CEECZJ), 'EU-China Environmental Governance programme (EGP)'*, Europe Aid/132-0055/I/ACT/CN.

[35] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2013), *'Discussion-paper: Proposal for the exploration of citizen's experience with environmental issues of the city of Jiaxing: the Jiaxing Model'*, (The Hague/Amsterdam: IASQ).

Province in China compared to those groups and citizens of the Dutch city of The Hague.[36] The objective is to contribute to policy advice on behalf of the authorities of the Zhejiang Province with the help of European input as well. This study pays attention to related theoretical considerations enhancing comparative work in order to enable this advice. Referred is to scientific oriented debates on topics, which are relevant for understanding what takes place in Jiaxing and The Hague. The frame of reference concerns the social quality theory. In comparison to many Western examples we recognise a strong orchestration of politics and policies in and around Chinese cities and metropoles to stimulate environmental protection. According the authorities of the Zhejiang Province especially the example of the Jiaxing city may function as example for eight other metropoles in this Province. The results of the EGP-project with regard to this example may deliver the points of departure for implementation in these other cities and they are also of interest for cities and metropoles in other parts of the world. This will be discussed extensively in a forthcoming study which may be appreciated as a cornerstone for the proposal to the UN, October 2014.[37] In forthcoming issues of the *International Journal of Social Quality* this EGP-project will also be discussed.[38]

3.4 *Going beyond classical urban research strategies; a proposal to the UN conference of October 2014.*

These studies and research prepared a theoretical distinction between three crucial domains of human existence (societal circumstances, sustainability and sustainable urban development) and four central dimensions of each domain (socio-political/legal, socio-cultural/welfare, socio-economic and socio-environmental). Hypothesized is that with the help of social quality indicators we are able to analyse outcomes of these four dimensions in each domain and, therefore we are able to interrelate the outcomes in each domain. The challenges concern: (i) to assist the understanding of the outcomes of trends (see explosion of communication technologies) and contradictions in societies, (ii) to reflect on politics and policies to underpin processes leading to the 'development toward sustainability' of human existence on earth and (iii) to contribute to strategies which pave the way for sustainable urban development as context of the majority of human people. With this in mind three central functions of social quality indicators are identified: to recognise the consequences of trends, politics and contradictions in societies; to explore and indicate their overall results for
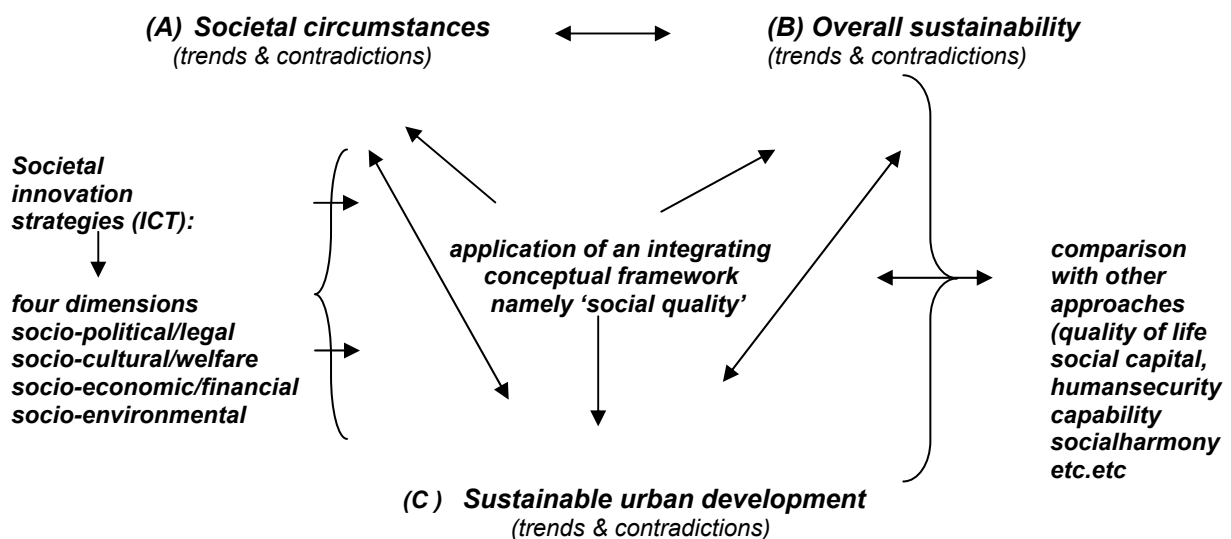
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[36] K. Wang and L.J.G. van der Maesen (2014), '*Jiaxing Model and the Polder Model: comparative study on public Participation in environmental governance in Jiaxing and The Hague*', (The Hague/Amsterdam: IASQ).
[37] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2014), '*Environmental issues from the perspective of citizens: a contribution to the Chinese and European comparison based on reflections of the Jiaxing-model in the context of the EGP-project*', (The Hague/Amsterdam: IASQ), forthcoming.
[38] Editors (2014), 'Editorial: public Participation addressing environmental Challenges', *International Journal of Social Quality*, 4 (1), forthcoming.

development toward sustainability; to articulate specific results of politics and policies in the manifold of relevant areas of the urban context delivering brick stones for their sustainable development. [39] In other words, supposed is that the conceptual framework of social quality is suitable (disposes of a heuristic meaning) to analyse each of the three domains as well as their interrelationships. This is a condition for comparative work of metropoles and cities in a 'specific way', as explained in section-1. For example to stimulate the transformation of forms of (top-down) governmental practices into 'new forms of governance' and – in line with this – to enhance the 'social empowerment' of citizens to be enabled to play a responsible role in their daily circumstances (increasing social quality as well as the development toward sustainability) - we should understand (and see Figure-3) the significance (position etc) of the socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions, since issues as government, governance and social empowerment concern both dimensions.

Figure-3:   Interrelationships of the three central domains

This interrelationship should be understood in the context of the domain of sustainable urban development (ad-C), since these issues occur exactly in urban circumstances. However, in order to fully grasp the significance of what happens in this domain we should also be focussed on both other domains (ad-A and ad-B). In other words, 'social quality thinking' (SQT, SQM and SQA) can function as an 'integrating conceptual framework'. This should be verified by comparing this approach with other existing approaches. This comparison may stimulate an extensive involvement with scholars and universities, engaged with other

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[39] Van der Maesen, see note-20

approaches as well. At the same time it will deliver a better theoretical foundation for the global debate on the development towards overall sustainability. With its classical distinction between the economic, the social and the environmental dimensions, it causes – and see the famous Brundtland Report[40] - a serious stagnation because the 'social dimension' remains a black box, containing the left overs of all that is not identified as economic or environmental.[41]

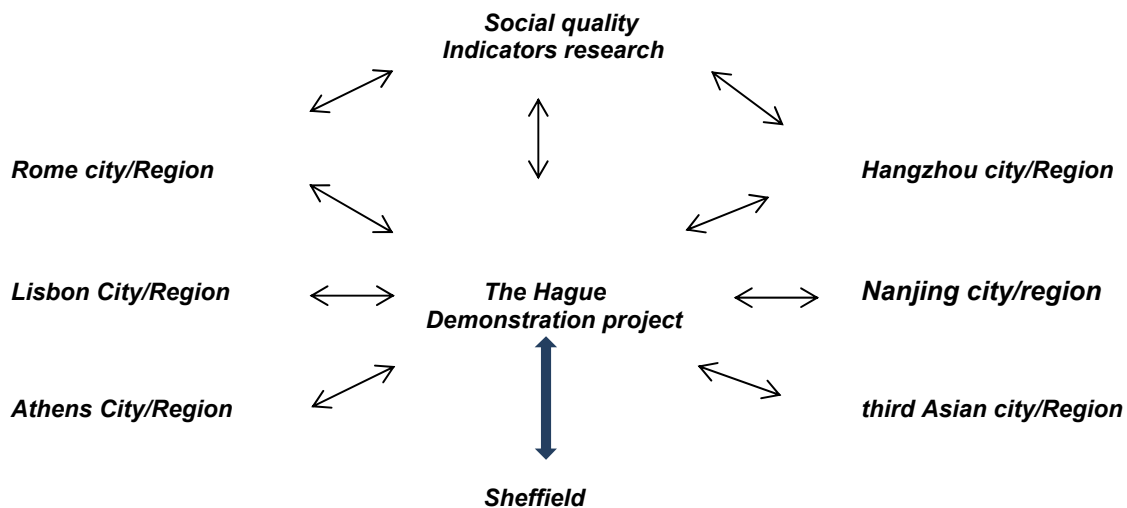### 3.5   *A turnover of the original approach and the plan as start*

At the Vienna conference on social quality and urban development, February 2014, an agreement was made to start comparative work between European cities/metropoles and Chinese cities/metropoles. Implicitly an important turnover of the original social quality approach was made. Originally it focused on the analyses of policy areas for understanding the changes, caused by politics and policies and general trends. Due to the current orientation on overall sustainability and therefore on sustainable urban development, the policy areas (citizenship, public health, employment, housing, education, health care and cure, sport, cultural activities, ageing, migration, civil rights, etc.) should be understood as aspects of the urban context. This is the context of these policy areas where changes will occur. As a result of the attention for the overall urban context we can make an interrelated analyses of the changes in these policy areas in order to understand the consequences for the overall urban context and to see whether its development is sustainable. That implies remaining within the boundaries of the resilient system.

With this in mind, this plan was concretized at the Rome social quality meeting in April 2014. A first choice was made for a comparison of European and Chinese urban contexts. Both middle-size cities – The Hague (and its demonstrationproject) and Sheffield - may function as a frame of reference for comparing European metropoles (regions) with Chinese metropoles (regions). The new idea can be presented as follows:

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[40] UN (1987), '*Commission for Sustainable Development: the Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future'*, (New York: UN).
[41] P. Herrmann (2012), 'Economic Performance, social Progress and Social Quality (a comment on the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report)',
International Journal of Social Quality, 2 (1), pp. 41-56.

Figure-5:   Scheme of proposed relations/comparisons

Since that time, from the side of the social quality work, steps have been made *(a)* to analyse the nature and potentiality of 'sustainable urban circumstances' in the city of The Hague (see its demonstrationproject) as a frame of reference. Its significance can be determined with the help of a comparison with urban strategies of the city of Sheffield. Recently much work has been carried out *(b)* to prepare a comparison between applied strategies in The Hague and Hangzhou. Furthermore, many scholars were dedicated to the construction and application of *(c)* 'social quality indicators' (which should be made functional for urban studies), in Europe and Asia. The idea of a Scottish investment to take these results on board to upgrade the proposed urban analyses was discussed at the Vienna meeting. Finally, the Zhejiang University (Hangzhou) and the IASQ (The Hague) are engaged in *(d)* the empirical exploration of the role of citizens in Jiaxing (compared to those of the Hague) in environmental issues and related new forms of 'governance'. This fourfold work can deliver the starting for the elaboration and extension of this scheme and it prepared discussions with representatives of the city of Rome and Lisbon.

3. 6   New conditions for the operationalization of the plan

3. 6.1 The Hangzhou Declaration on social quality complementing the Della Rocca
Foundation's orientation

On the occasion of an international social quality meeting in Hangzhou, June 2014, the Hangzhou Declaration on Social Quality was presented and signed by all participants. In a condensed form this Declaration presents the issues to be addressed by social quality work in a related manner. This may stimulate Asian collaboration with regard to the plan for comparative work on metropoles in a 'specific way', by applying the 'social quality architecture' of the three sets of factors (see Figure-2), referred to in the Declaration. The content can be linked to the interpretations by the Della Rocca Foundation on the nature of cities. It claims:

"We, participants of the new Observatory on Social Quality among universities in Asia, declare that new forms of collaboration of governments, citizens' groups and organisations, institutes, companies and international agencies are needed to increase the social quality of daily circumstance of people in Asia in such a way that this will also contribute to the global development towards a cohesive and sustainable human societies.

*Therefore we declare, **first,** that the first priority for action should be to enhance the **objective conditions of daily life**, including the socio-economic conditions people are living in, the social cohesion and social inclusion they experience in their communities, their civil rights, and the extent of their social empowerment to enable them play responsible roles in society and in the processes of societal change. Following this, the academic world should contribute to ideas about how to ensure, for all citizens, acceptable forms of housing; create modern human oriented employment; achieve sufficient income; ensure access to effective education; design the necessary individual and community health care; strongly stimulate facilities for cultural events and participation to enhance the quality of societal life.*

*We **secondly** declare that along with the improvement in the objective life conditions we need to enhance the degrees of personal security and social recognition. This also implies to stimulate people's feelings of social responsibility and personal (human) capacities. These are the **subjective conditions of life**, which are necessary to combat forms of alienation, exploitation, discrimination and degradation.*

*We declare **thirdly**, that new forms of collaboration on global, regional, national and local levels are required to assist in the achievement of these objective and subjective conditions in such a way, that they will enable social justice and equity; solidarity at community, national*

*and international levels; to promote the equal value of all people and to defend and enhance their human dignity. These are the **normative conditions** which are essential ingredients in the vision for social quality. This implies a fundamental redistribution of resources world-wide and especially between the Western and the Eastern hemispheres.*

*We declare **fourthly** that the common main challenge is to enhance and defend these three condition for social quality in such a way that it will underpin the **development toward overall sustainably** as a dynamic equilibrium between humans the whole eco-system. This implies that international and national agencies should collaborate to contribute to the transformation of cities and metropoles to create urban centres which function as pillars for both sustainability and social quality. This implies a '**sustainable urban development**' that encompasses all citizens and which tackles the present gross inequality between them.*

*We declare **fifthly** that these agencies have the duty to reorient themselves on how to address the main dimensions of societal life and to overcome their present fragmentation, for example in terms of socio-political/legal, the social-cultural/welfare, the socio-economic/financial and the socio-environmental dimensions. The traditional relationships between actors in these different sectors should be transformed to recognise their essential interrelationships in the realisation of everyday social quality.*

*There is a global absence of a vision for this necessary transformation. Therefore we call upon the academic world in Asia to seek **new ways** in which to stimulate national and international agencies and, also at a local level to develop this vision. We also call upon governments to take on board this new thinking and to support the academic world to contribute to the work of citizens' groups, organisations and institutes aimed at realising both sustainability and social quality."*

3.6.2   A new infrastructure as start of the plan

At the Rome conference in April 2014 and the Hangzhou conference in June 2014 it was decided to present the authorities of the La Sapienza University and the Zhejiang University a proposal for such a collaboration to contribute to, respectively;

- A European Observatory on Social Quality of universities in this continent (EOSQ),
- An Asian Observatory on Social Quality of universities in this continent (AOSQ).

The IASQ – in project collaboration with the International Institute of Social Studies – functions as the instrument supported by both universities. This proposal may function as an

imposing infrastructure for the operationalization of the implementation of the Strategic Project as proposed by the Della Rocca Foundation to the UN by applying a comparison of metropoles in a 'specific way'.

Figure-6:   ***A condition for comparing metropoles: new forms of collaboration***