



International Association on Social Quality
P.O. Box 29776
2502 LT The Hague
Ph:+ 31.70.4260.609
Email: iasq@iss.nl
RABO-bank 1427.67.107
IBAN NL 47 RABO 0142767107
KvK 41216943
www.socialquality.org

Working Paper Series nr. 12

Analyzing Societal Circumstances, Sustainability and Sustainable Urban Development: New Theoretical and Methodological Challenges for Social Quality Indicators

Laurent J.G. van der Maesen

20th April 2013

First published in International Journal of Social Quality Volume 3, issue 1, 2013 Berghahn Journals, www.journals.berghahnbooks.com/ijsq

Contents

<i>Abstract</i>	3
<i>Introduction: A New Point of Departure</i>	3
<i>The Start of Social Quality Work in Europe, East Asia and Australia</i>	3
<i>A New Horizon</i>	5
<i>Enhancing Social Quality Indicators for Analyzing Societal Circumstances</i>	6
<i>A Heuristic Distinction</i>	6
<i>Four Arguments for Upgrading the First European Sets of Indicators</i>	8
<i>The Asian and Australian Research of Societal Circumstances</i>	10
<i>A Comparison with “Social Development Indicators” in the World Bank Tradition</i>	11
<i>Development toward Sustainability and Social Quality Indicators</i>	15
<i>The Environmental Dimension and the Concept of Sustainability</i>	15
<i>A Comparison with European “Sustainable Development Indicators”</i>	17
<i>Some Characteristics of Sustainable Urban Development Discourses</i>	20
<i>Indicators Analyzing Cities’ Opportunities: The PricewaterhouseCoopers Example</i>	22
<i>Concluding Remarks</i>	24

Abstract

This article reviews the development of social quality indicators and the challenges ahead. First, through a review of recent Asian and Australian work carried out on social quality indicators, and the World Bank related work on “social development indicators,” the article argues that social quality indicators research should move beyond the empirical level of particular policy areas. Therefore, it should be guided by a clear methodological perspective regarding the role of indicators as part of a social quality theory (SQT) and their relation to the social quality approach (SQA). Second, the article opens a debate about the rationale behind distinguishing between three different functions of social quality indicators. Indicators should address the change in the conditional factors in daily life, as manifested in its economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions, in order to examine the consequences of general trends and contradictions in (1) societal circumstances, (2) the development (or lack of development) toward sustainability, and (3) the related issue of sustainable urban development. Before 2010 social quality scholars mainly concentrated on the first issue. Recently, however, they are approaching all three issues. It is essential to delve deeper into SQT and the SQA for understanding these three issues separately and integrally. This has implications for the nature of social quality indicators and their comparison to those of other mainstream approaches; the article introduces this agenda of work.

Keywords: social quality approach (SQA); social quality indicators; social quality theory (SQT); sustainability; sustainable urban development

Introduction: A New Point of Departure

The Start of Social Quality Work in Europe, East Asia and Australia

Based on deductive theoretical work and preliminary inductive-oriented explorations in fourteen European countries, European scholars of the social quality approach (SQA) have constructed a consistent set of ninety-five society-focused indicators. The deductive work concerned the conceptualization of “the social” and the recognition of three sets of factors to determine the change of the “quality of the social,” as demonstrated in Figure 1. The definitions of all concepts used in this architecture are derived from the conceptualization of “the social” as the outcome of the productive and reproductive relationships of people (van der Maesen and Walker 2012). Social quality indicators are instruments to understand the

changes in the four conditional factors. In 2005 the first results of the application of these indicators were presented in fourteen national reports, published on the socialquality.org website and summarized in a double issue of the *European Journal of Social Quality* (Gordon et al. 2005). As I will argue below recently a distinction has been made between three main issues of social quality thinking. These concern societal circumstances, overall sustainability and sustainable urban development. This distinction is crucial for the nature of social quality indicators. Social quality indicators research to explore societal circumstances started in East Asia and Australia with support from European scholars in the late 2000s. This led to the establishment of the Asian Consortium for Social Quality (EFSQ 2011). According to Phillips (2008), the collective emphasis in Asian ontology is indeed compatible with the notion of the social as being absolutely central to social quality, as opposed to the individualistic orientation of English-speaking countries. The question was raised whether social quality indicators are useful for analyzing trends and contradictions in societal circumstances worldwide.

Figure 1: The Social Quality Architecture

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

Do central values (assumptions and propositions) underlying these indicators differ between West and East? This article argues that social quality theory's (SQT) conceptual framework has a universal tendency by nature and that the measures are commensurable as a condition for international application and comparison. The recent Asian and Australian work has, it is argued here, only changed practical aspects of the social quality indicators, in order to address specific aspects of their societies more expressively (Mitchell and Temple 2007; Oishi 2007; Bureekul 2007; Wang et al. 2009; Yee and Chang 2009; Ward et al. 2011; Lin 2011). However, according to Giri (2011), the social quality discourse (like the human security discourse) does not sufficiently reflect the profound rethinking of both "the social" and "the human" in current social theorizing.

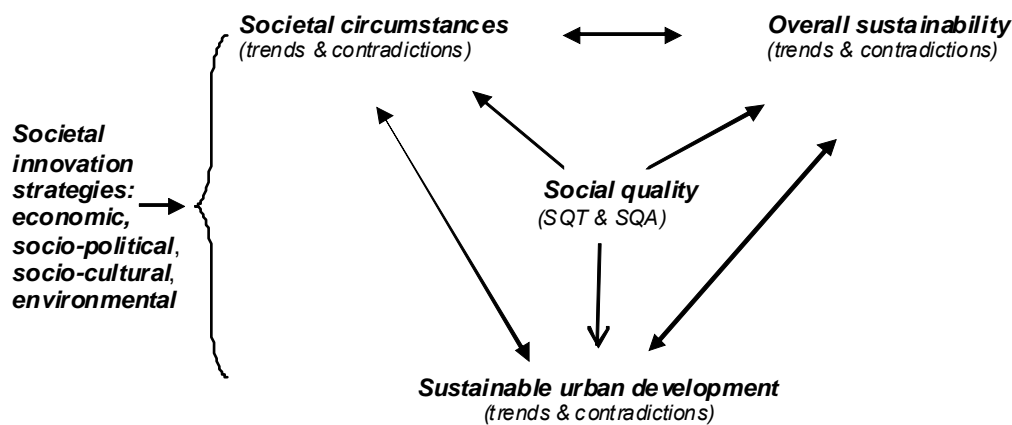
A New Horizon

Implicitly, the Asian and Australian scholars mentioned above presented an alternative to the European work on “social progress” done by, for example, Stiglitz and colleagues, who failed to deliver any understanding of the adjective “social” in the concept of “social progress” (Stiglitz et al. 2009). Their report remains within the dominant economic paradigm and was limited to ad hoc pragmatic-technocratic indicators (or monitoring devices) to understand societal circumstances (Herrmann 2012a). For instance, although the Asian societies demonstrate an impressive improvement in both economic growth (based on gross domestic product [GDP] variables) and political democratization, researchers find that people are often not satisfied with their daily life. Asian researchers found – by applying social quality indicators to analyse the survey data in seven Asian regions – that declines in trust formed a major barrier to enhancing social quality in these regions (Lin et al. 2012). In South Korea scholars also recognized a reduced trust in public institutions, which affects the quality of social cohesion and weakens structural empowerment, as understood in SQT (Yee and Chang 2011). 2

The extension of social quality work to two other continents – Asia and Australia – was a source of inspiration for transcending the attention restricted to the first issue, namely to analyse the effect of trends and contradictions in societal circumstances. Two essential issues were added by engaged scholars, namely, “overall sustainability” and “sustainable urban development.” A start for this extension was made especially due to the results of the work of a Dutch thinktank on sustainability and the recent social quality work in the Dutch city of The Hague (van der Maesen and Walker 2012). The question should be how to understand the interrelationships between both essential issues and the issue of societal circumstances. Which role can the SQT and the SQA (and its indicators, profiles and criteria) play to enhance this understanding. Therefore, a basic proposition of this article is that these three main issues need to be connected in order to understand the perspectives of human existence. The key challenge concerns a change in our thinking on the way of living and living together, rather than sticking to repair strategies. This implies a thorough understanding of “the social,” demanding a new conceptual and methodological framework to explore these interrelated issues. The final aim of the article is how to integrate processes concerning the three main issues in such a way that the four normative factors of social quality (see Figure 1) are respected in such a way that human existence remains within the boundaries of the resilience of the entire natural system of the planet. The role of SQT and

the SQA with regard to the three main issues is illustrated in Figure 2. This figure indicates my proposal of the main challenge of SQT and the SQA. In this article I will explore this challenge and a number of consequences for the coming work on social quality indicators further.

Figure 2. Orientation on New Relationships



#

Enhancing Social Quality Indicators for Analyzing Societal Circumstances

A Heuristic Distinction

In order to enhance the significance of social quality indicators to understand changes of societal circumstances – the first main issue for social quality thinking –, it is important to distinguish between “policy-area-specific indicators,” or monitoring devices, and the social quality indicators themselves. The results of trends and policy areas can be monitored in quantitative terms. For example, GDP variables are functional for monitoring quantitative changes in the economic dimension of daily circumstances. In the same vein, we can measure outputs with monitoring devices for the socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of daily circumstances. Recent decades have brought a huge expansion of statistical data, essentially consisting of policy-area-specific indicators. However, this explosive growth has a paradoxical aspect. It tends to reinforce policy fragmentation, making it hard for us to see that these dimensions are connected and that, therefore, policy makers should tackle problems in a holistic way (Gasper et al. 2013).

Changes in the four conditional factors may be *demonstrated* by applying these sorts of specific indicators, but for their *explanation* social quality indicators are required. Thanks to the application of these indicators in the same way in each of the four elements or dimensions of societal circumstances – the economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental – we are able to compare processes in these dimensions, as part of their integrated (comprehensive) understanding.

The social quality indicators are not designed to monitor or measure in the traditional sense of the word. They aim to offer provisional instruments to grasp relationships on a more general and abstract level (Beck et al. 2001). In other words, there is a distinction between, first, indicators (or monitoring devices) as constructed by ad hoc “pragmatic” procedures (see, e.g., the indicators for quality of life, social capital, social development, human development), and, second, the social quality indicators that have been constructed on the basis of deductive and inductive forms of reasoning. The indicators created by ad hoc pragmatic procedures remain random and eclectic empirical descriptions. They may be effective for the demonstration of policy outcomes; however, to create a profound and integrated understanding of the effects of trends and contradictions in and between the four dimensions of societal circumstances, such indicators are not adequate.

A Three-Stage Construction of Social Quality Indicators

SQT suggests a theoretically grounded procedure for the elaboration of social quality indicators (van der Maesen 2009). This procedure is illustrated in Figure 3. The abstract explanation (see below) will be clarified in subsequent sections through a discussion of the applied procedures with regard to: (1) social development indicators, (2) sustainable development indicators, and (3) cities of opportunity indicators. The first element of Figure 3 concerns the particular subject matter of each conditional factor (their domains and sub-domains), intrinsically related to the subject matter of “the social.” The second is the conditional factor’s specificity or characteristic, or the manifestations of its subject matter, namely, the resources distinguished as necessary for human existence. The third element concerns the mutual relationship or empirically reliable complementarity of the four conditional factors (and their domains and sub-domains). Therefore, we should focus on this three-stage composition of the elements for all conditional factors to get a comprehensive understanding of the domains, sub-domains and their indicators (van der Maesen and Walker 2012: 94–116). For example, – see Figure 1 on the social quality architecture – the conditional factor of socio-economic security consists of five domains and twelve sub-domains (Gordon et al. 2005; Gordon 2012). See, similarly, Berman and Phillips (2012) for

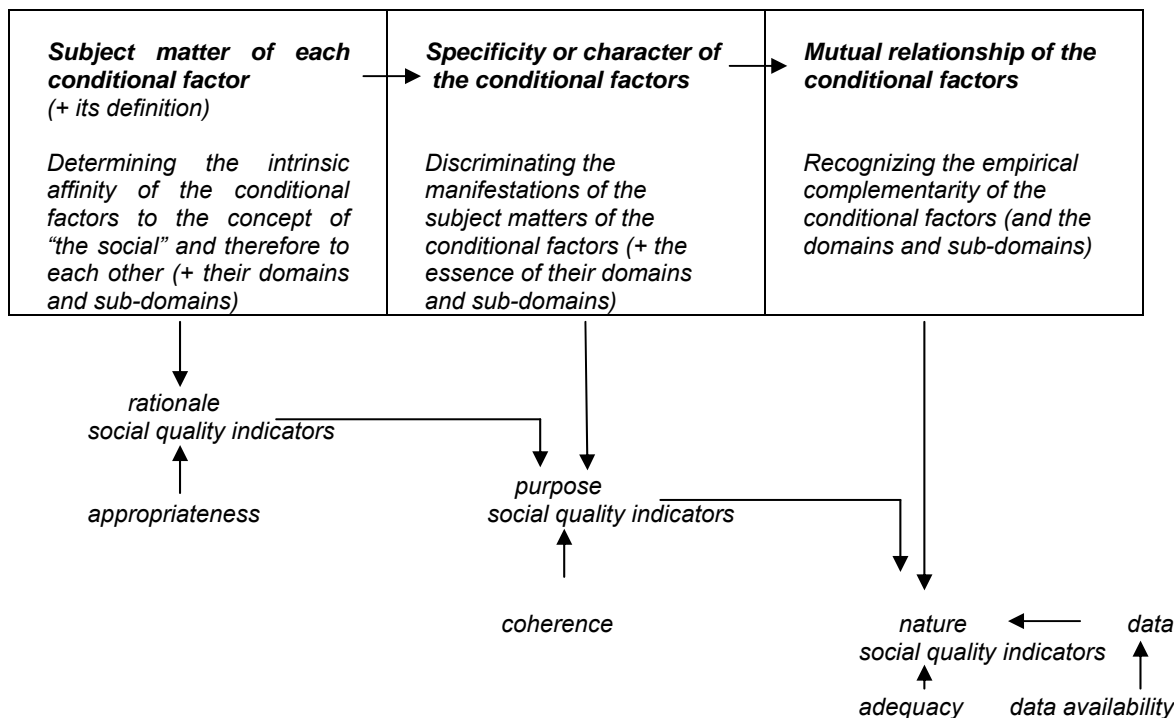
social cohesion, Walker and Walker (2012) for social inclusion, and Herrmann (2012b) for social empowerment, the other three conditional factors.

Constructing the domains and sub-domains of each conditional factor is not a linear matter. The theoretical affinity between “the social” and each conditional factor and, therefore, the theoretical affinity between each conditional factor, is clarified with the help of this tripartite or three-stage composition, as illustrated in Figure 3. At first, analyzing the tripartite composition of the conditional factors increases our understanding of the rationale, the purpose and the nature of indicators. It will also increase, second, our understanding of four questions formulated in the SQT, namely, the appropriateness, coherence and adequacy of the constructed social quality indicators, as well as the availability of “functional data.” The lack of data is especially recognized for indicators of the sub-domains of social empowerment. This demonstrates that we need to follow a methodological procedure when constructing social quality indicators that is based on the conceptual points of departure of social quality theory (SQT). Furthermore, Figure 3 illustrates that SQT presents guidelines for a critical interpretation of the chosen indicators: are they really appropriate, coherent and adequate, and do we have available data for their application? After the final determination of ninety-five indicators and their application in fourteen European countries, a first critical evaluation was made along this line of reasoning. This led to a number of changes of certain indicators and a search for new adequate data (van der Maesen 2009).

Four Arguments for Upgrading the First European Sets of Indicators

A number of Asian and Australian scholars have argued that social quality theory has not sufficiently been empirically tested yet, given the difficulty of developing a validated and reliable tool to “measure social quality.” No studies have been undertaken to develop and really evaluate such a tool (Meyer et al. 2010: 331). Asian and Australian universities have offered to fill this gap. However, this comment does not seem completely adequate. It is of interest that they implicitly make a distinction

Figure 3: Issues in the Three-Stage Construction of the Indicators



This distinction is important and has not been fully thought through; to do so is a priority. SQT paves the way – rightly or wrongly – for “social quality architecture,” with its distinction between the four constitutional factors (referring to the individual cognitive and emotional aspects), the four conditional factors (referring to the objective societal aspects) and the four normative factors (referring to the ethical aspects of human existence: see Figure 1). It is presented as a logical outcome of the theory’s central assumptions and should be tested according to existing scientific rules (van der Maesen and Walker 2012). Given its complexity we should apply an approach, namely, the SQA, for its scientifically acceptable confirmation. One of the elements of this SQA is the elucidation (or development) of (1) the conditional factors, (2) their domains, (3) their sub-domains and (4) their indicators. Both other elements concern the elaboration and elucidation of the profiles and criteria. See Figure 1.

The development and application of these indicators is not “a tool” but a specific methodology for the confirmation of the theory to adequately contribute to politics and policies. In this context Asian and Australian scholars made a plea for a more adequate

recognition of the sub-domains of the conditional factors which are relevant in this part of the world as well as for a better identification of more reliable and valid indicators of the subdomains and a new search for relevant data. It is important to realize that this concerns one aspect of the whole “social quality architecture.” Therefore, research on the constitutional and normative factors should follow soon. There are indeed at least four reasons for deepening our understanding of the social quality indicators of the conditional factors. First, the conclusions already formulated from the first application of the social quality indicators in fourteen European countries (van der Maesen 2009) propose many arguments for adjusting these indicators to the essence of what is illustrated in Figure 3. Second, the differences in societal circumstances in European, Asian and Australian regions are a motive to rethink the nature of the sub-domains of the conditional factors, and thus their indicators (see below). A third important reason is that until now the immense consequences of current “communication and information technologies” have not really been taken into account, neither in deductive considerations nor in inductive ones (Wallace 2012).¹ They will change the productive and reproductive human interrelationships, thus the nature of “the social”. The fourth reason is that great new challenges for SQT – concerning overall sustainability and sustainable urban development – demand a further enhancement of the nature and functions of social quality indicators.

The Asian and Australian Research of Societal Circumstances

The members of the different “social quality teams” in Asia and Australia have argued that the original social quality indicators presented by European scholars are not sufficient to understand and explain what take place in the sub-domains of the conditional factors in their countries. One of the central concerns in applying social quality indicators and interpreting the outcomes are the differences in approach to the relationship between the questionnaire and the indicators. Several questionnaire items were removed because they were not found to be consistent. Asian teams reported on the decision to closely approximate what is relevant for the indicators in their surveys – the information provided by the survey and the related indicators are not redundant but complement each other. Furthermore, the choice was made to break down the whole set of questions into multiple layers and modules. By layers the team members mean the distinction between core questions and optional questions. With this two layered system of questions every team raises all of the core questions, with optional questions at their disposal (Chang 2009). An advanced methodology

was used to empirically test this. According to the Australian study, “we need to have empirical data on the domains of social quality [referred to here as to the domains of the conditional factors], especially in relation to the groups who have lower social quality, to inform development of the current SQT” (Meyer et al. 2010: 355).

In other words, the Asian and Australian scholars are especially concerned with the appropriateness, coherence and adequacy of the indicators as well as the relevance of available data. SQT itself was not put in question, but rather the current suppositions of the nature of some sub-domains or the chosen indicators of some sub-domains of the conditional factors. For instance, Lin and colleagues (2012) demonstrates the overlap of indicators in several sub-domains and also questions the relation between some sub-domains of social inclusion and social empowerment. His survey outcomes show a weak correlation between these two sets of factors.

Often, conclusions are drawn on the nature of social quality (at a specific place at a specific time) on the basis of survey outcomes analyzing only conditional factors. However, the constitutional factors are essential for a final judgment – with the help of the normative factors – of the nature of social quality. This confusion derives from the lack of a sharp distinction between the more broad SQT (which considers three sets of factors) and the current restricted SQA (oriented to only one set of factors). The need for a broad SQT is demonstrated by the extension of its orientation to overall sustainability and sustainable urban development.

A Comparison with “Social Development Indicators” in the World Bank Tradition

In order to clarify the current SQA and its indicators for understanding changes in societal circumstances, it may be helpful to compare it with the different approaches that show affinity with the SQA. I will refer to a recent study on social development indicators, based on the Human Development Index. It is recently published at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS, The Hague) and supported by the World Bank and the OECD. It explores the relationship between development aid, civil society and development outcomes (van Staveren and Ebbink 2012). According the researchers, its rich and innovative database of multidimensional social development indicators is the key asset of this study. The study’s thesis is that information about informal institutions and social capital brought a relatively new dimension to development economics. It argued for an understanding of a “civil society” dimension in addition to the market and the state dimensions. The authors noticed that many

researchers adhere to shared social norms and pro-social values in a society, leading to social cohesion as the basis for both so-called informal institutions and social capital: “the strength of integrating civil society through information institutions and social capital variables is that indeed a missing link was found: the variables often, though not consistently, show statistically significant results with development outcomes” (van Staveren and Ebbink 2012: 15).

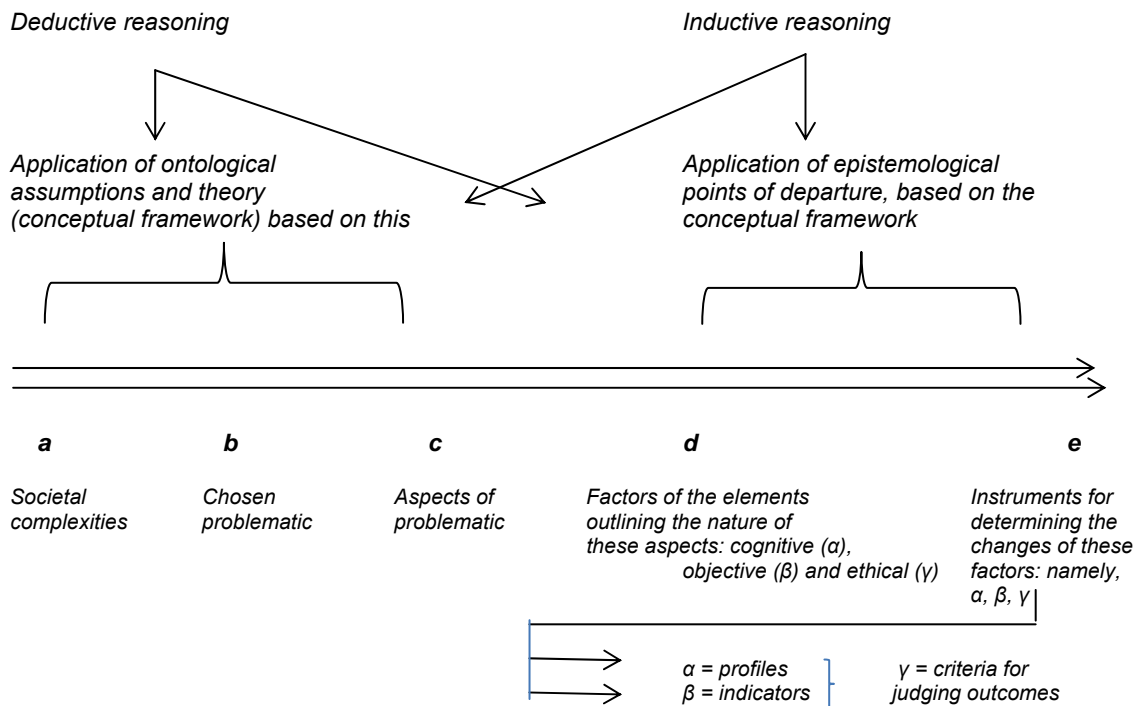
According to the authors, the concept of “social development” is crucial for this database. However, it remains unclear in their study what “social development” is and how to respond to serious comments on the lack of theoretical elaboration of this concept (Apthorpe 1997, 2008; Walker 2009). Therefore, the conceptual and methodological relationship between social development and the database of social development indices remains unclear. Furthermore, the theoretical relationship between this issue and the chosen problematic, which refers to the relationships of so-called informal organizations, social capital, social cohesion and civil society, is not discussed.

Finally, the focus is on the application of indicators, without explaining the relation between them and the aspects of the chosen problematic. The study aims to generate a set of coherent, broad-based indices of “civil society” for a large number of countries. It uses three indices from its database as measures of “civil society,” namely, civic activism, intergroup cohesion, and clubs and associations. The authors argue that hypotheses about these indices are suitable for testing (van Staveren and Ebbink 2012: 21).

With the help of Figure 4, I will articulate two related problems. The horizontal double arrow in the figure indicates the procedure applied in SQT and used for the elaboration of the SQA. We should theoretically grasp the nature of societal complexities (a) to understand the nature of the chosen problematic (b) and its essential aspects (c). This is a deductive approach, based on previous inductive investigations. Then we should grasp empirical verifiable dimensions or elements that demonstrate the aspects of the problematic. They should be analyzed by its determining factors (d). Finally, instruments are needed to explore the changes to these factors (e). Figure 3 refers to the elaboration of (d) and (e). SQT distinguishes between the constitutional factors (cognitive-oriented), the conditional factors (objective-oriented) and the normative factors (ethically oriented). These factors should apply different instruments (see Figure 1). In the ISS study on social development indicators, this procedure was not applied. The already existing database of multidimensional social development indicators (e) was used. This took place independent of theorizing societal complexities, the related choice of the problematic and the related aspects of this problematic.

In addition, the authors do not seem to deliver a theoretical-conceptual framework to understand their suppositions, and therefore the methodological relationship between social development and the database of social development indices remains unclear. Furthermore, the theoretical relationship between this issue and the chosen problematic, which refers to the relationships of informal organizations, social capital, social cohesion and civil society, is not discussed. Finally – and see Figure 4 – focus is on the application of only one instrument (namely, indicators) and the sophisticated interpretation of the outcomes. However, the extension of instruments and how those instruments can be used to explore the changes in the four dimensions of daily life (economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental), resulting in a profound understanding of the aspects of the problematic, are lacking. This constitutes the first problem of the ISS study. There is also a second problem. The ISS study on social development indicators aims to explain and deepen our understanding of social capital and social cohesion. It is supposed to enable understanding of the civil society, next to the state and the market societies. However, analysts and policy makers promoting a “social capital” approach pay little attention to understanding the adjective “social” and suppose, instead, that the economic concept of “capital” can simply be connected with a convenient adjective (van der Maesen and Walker 2012: 115). According to Coole, the interest in social capital is best understood not as a theoretically responsible approach, but as a policy initiative designed to repair the ideological resources of the contemporary neo-liberal states: “its significance has altered as it is subordinated to strategies of governance and becomes integral to experiments that Western governments are undertaking to renew or reinvent the means of managing their populations as a project of civil renewal” (2009: 375). Therefore, it does not become clear why themes such as trust, values and norms are discussed under the heading of social capital, because they are also discussed under the heading of social cohesion, without explaining the ontological-conceptual aspects of both concepts. Social capital and social cohesion seem to be different sides of the same unknown coin. It follows logically then that the related concept “civil society” is hanging in the air. Do we have to make a distinction between the state society, the market society and the civil society? According to the authors, a distinction should be made between formal and informal organizations as well. However, theoretical underpinning of their difference and its heuristic meaning is lacking. Nor is it explained how to legitimate the relation between the existing indicators (of what) and this orientation.

Figure 4: From Concept to Indicators: A Deductive and Inductive Reciprocity



Due to these unresolved issues, the relation between the factors of the elements (d) and the instruments to be applied (e) on behalf of a profound understanding of the aspects of the problematic (c) remains unexplained. With this in mind, how can their conclusions have a practical significance for policy makers? The question is not the use of existing data as a result of widely used surveys. The point is which indicators are constructed for what (how to legitimate the indices) and how they are applied in using these data. In other words, this study is based on inductive forms of reasoning without confronting (or connecting) this with deductive forms of reasoning. We may conclude that these “social development indicators” – like the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi proposals – are based on an ad hoc and attempted commonsense understanding of “realities” or the “immediately given” and may be worthwhile as “dimension-specific indicators” or monitoring devices, as discussed earlier. When analyzing the effect of fundamental trends and contradictions, however, we should take an additional step, as proposed in the articles’ introduction, namely to focus on the issue of overall sustainability.

Development toward Sustainability and Social Quality Indicators

The Environmental Dimension and the Concept of Sustainability

The previous section refers to the theory-based construction of social quality indicators to explore the effect of general trends and contradictions (as well as of related politics and policies) in societal circumstances as the first function of these indicators. In this section suppositions concerning a second function in order to understand processes of development toward sustainability are discussed: the second main issue for social quality thinking. This too should be based on the theory behind the four previous figures as well. The framework of SQT is oriented to the analysis and understanding of the complexity of human activities. And as argued, it recognizes, next to the economic and environmental dimensions, two other dimensions: the socio-political dimension (authoritative allocation of resources for daily life) and the socio-cultural dimension (the cognitive and emotional aspects of daily life). This essentially differs from the “three dimensions of sustainability” (the economic, social and environmental dimensions) as presented in the famous Brundtland Report (UN 1987) and widely accepted since that time. These three dimensions are repeated in the report about social progress by Stiglitz and colleagues (Stiglitz et al. 2009). However, the “social dimension” remains a vague residual, comprising whatever is not economy and environmental; and operationally it remains a ragbag of disparate non-integrated concerns, as we saw in the formulations of social capital or social development (Gasper et al. 2013). This may change with the help of SQT.

With the help of SQT, a specific ontological interpretation can be made of these four (and not three) dimensions as a condition to construct a SQA. Based on the foregoing arguments a distinction can be made between policy-area-specific indicators (or devices to also monitor effects of interventions) and the more abstract social quality indicators for an integrated and (comprehensive) understanding of processes in and between these dimensions. With regard to overall sustainability, the most compelling challenge is to maintain the ecological equilibrium. Useful metrics for measuring this were being developed as early as 1987, the most well-known being “the environmental utilization space” (Opschoor 2010). Rockstrom and others called for identifying and quantifying planetary boundaries that must not be transgressed, to help prevent human activities from causing unacceptable environmental change. They coined the term “safe operating space for humanity” to describe the space contained within those (interlinked) planetary boundaries. Based on available data with regard to control variables, they conclude that three (out of nine so far identified) interlinked planetary boundaries have already been overstepped: with regard to climate change, the rate of biodiversity loss and the nitrogen cycle (Rockstrom 2012; Galaz et al. 2012a, 2012b;

Foley et al. 2010). In our terms these variables concern the “dimension-specific” indicators of the “environmental dimension.” Mankind today is severely challenging resilience, the long-term capacity of the natural system of the planet to deal with change and to continue to develop the entire natural system of the planet. Once that resilience is secured – and this refers to the environmental dimension – an important step has been made toward sustainability.

This may also be seriously frustrated if the complex of human activities is in imbalance (e.g., by war, suppression, human exploitation). These considerations lead to the following definition of sustainability: “a state of dynamic equilibrium between the entire interactive ensemble of non-living and living entities, functioning within the boundaries of a resilient system” (van Renswoude et al. 2012: 8). These living entities include the vast complex of human activities as expressed in the economic, socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions. Once both forms of equilibrium have been reached by “development toward sustainability,” further development can be called “sustainable development” if it does not undermine equilibrium and resilience. This awareness challenges the quintessence of the normative leading (Western) principle that the allocation of resources will be determined only by (the current dominant) economics, which can determine the principles upon which society is based, the decisive argument being profit.

While we notice an increase of economic studies about the significance of public goods, public bads and market failures, according to Gasper “it contains little discussion of the human meaning of these ‘failures’ including the likely resulting anger, conflict and desperation that will bring further layers of costs” (2013). With this in mind we may understand a report, recently published, supported by more than 350 European “economists and social scientists.” The authors argue that the current crisis lies in a massive overexpansion of the financial sector. This enforces income differences within countries and major imbalances between the prosperous countries of Northern Europe and the countries of the Eastern and Southern European periphery. They plead for “promoting large-scale investment programmes in socially and environmentally desirable projects that will re-establish full-employment” (EMG 2013). But how are “socially and environmentally desirable projects” defined? Based on a large number of examples, a study recently published about the “myth of the green economy” demonstrates that the predominant pattern is to formulate pleas for change, without a real will to change. Furthermore, the slogan “People Planet Profit” is, at the end of the day, oriented only toward making profit (Kenis and Lievens 2012). Instead of maximizing economic growth in the expectation that it will lead to an enhanced “quality of life” for individual people, we should try to maximize social quality and determine

which (and to what extent) economic activities, permissible within the physical boundaries (or within the “safe operating space”) are needed to help achieve this. This points to a radically different approach to achieving sustainability, in that a sizeable, immaterial (qualitative) dimension of human wellbeing is already incorporated from the very start and that economic activities should be at the services of enhancing social quality within the safe operating space. This also follows Ling’s argument in his study about the sustainability of cities (2005). However, for the integration of the effect of processes in all four dimensions of daily life– the economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental – the “social quality architecture” as intermediary should be extended (see Figure 1). A recently published Dutch report proposes to add the following (van Renswoude et al. 2012: 28–29):

- to the constitutional factors: the “eco-conscience”;
- to the conditional factors: the “eco-reality”;
- and to the normative factors: the “eco-equilibrium.”

For the “eco-reality” we should make a distinction between its domains and subdomains in order to construct its social quality indicators. This invites social quality scholars to include “eco-centric” aspects to analyze the whole complex of interventions to stimulate sustainability. By applying this procedure to all four dimensions at the same time, we will be able to connect “social quality indicators” to all sub-domains of the conditional factors, including those of the “eco-reality” on a more abstract level. As we will see later in this article this differs essentially from the comparison PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) made of twenty-seven “leading” metropolises in the world (PWC 2012). Their comparison remains stuck in an empirical descriptive approach (and dimension-specific indicators). The consequence is a lack of understanding of how applied strategies for sustainable urban development may contribute to development toward sustainability.

A Comparison with European “Sustainable Development Indicators”

In order to develop social quality indicators that can also contribute to the debate on the “development toward sustainability,” it is instructive to introduce European studies on “sustainable development indicators” here. The ad hoc “pragmatic” procedure applied in these studies to understand development toward sustainability has a lot of affinity with our first example, namely, “social development indicators” to understand changes in societal circumstances. This procedure adopted by the European Council in Gothenburg in June 2001 – to monitor the implementation of related policies – is mainly inductive (European Commission 2001). The European Commission prepared a set of indicators to monitor this,

called “sustainable development indicators” (SDI). In our terms, the original European ambition was to construct a set of policy-area-specific indicators or devices for monitoring quantifiable effects of policies for development toward sustainability. European studies at that time made reference to the interpretation of sustainability presented in the famous Brundtland Report, including the “social dimension” as a black box (UN 1987).

Therefore, the European documents lack an explication of how to relate or integrate these dimensions; as a logical consequence, a clear conceptualization of sustainability is missing (Bernard et al. 2009). Thus, it also remains unclear what “the object” of their indicators is: what they are indicators of. A major European conference on sustainability did not address this essential question either (Lucas and Rosetti 2009). Like the authors of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi report discussed above, the experts within the SDI Task Force were compelled – due to the lack of a theoretical conceptual framework – to restrict themselves to be as pragmatic as possible. The SDI experts elaborated on the conclusions of the European Council held in Barcelona (European Commission 2002) and the Declaration of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (European Commission 2003). Together with the European Commission, they were aware of the need for an adequate framework to elaborate this, but at the same time, they argued that any framework on its own would be an imperfect tool for expressing complexities and interrelationships of the three dimensions, as concluded in a United Nations (UN) report (UN 2001).

Ten (or in fact twelve) policy areas for “dimension-specific indicators” were chosen: economic development, production and consumption patterns, transport/distribution, poverty and social exclusion, aging society, public health, good governance, global partnership, climate change and energy, and management of natural resources (European Commission 2005). Other policy areas may also be taken into account where there is some overlap. And indeed, the European Commission recognizes overlap without reflecting on the consequences (European Commission 2005: 5). What are the deductive and inductive arguments for this choice of twelve policy areas, however (see Figure 3 and Figure 4)? How is the choice intrinsically connected with an acceptable understanding of the concept of “sustainability”? As argued in the SQA, to integrate the four relevant dimensions of sustainability – the economic, sociopolitical, socio-cultural, environmental – as well as societal circumstances and sustainable urban development, we should transcend policy-area-specific indicators or monitoring devices. This step is necessary in order to understand comprehensive processes in these four dimensions as the effect of trends, contradictions, mechanisms and politics affecting sustainable conditions.

We may conclude that these “sustainable development indicators” are based only on a casual common sense and eclectic understanding of “realities.” In this case, they are based only on inductive and not on deductive forms of reasoning. In other words, we discover the same ad hoc pragmatism used for developing and applying the “social development indicators” discussed above. The European Commission demonstrates a fundamental ambiguity. On the one hand, a plea is made for strengthening the competitiveness of the member states of the European Union on the basis of the dominant economic paradigm with the help of innovative strategies, such as the Lisbon Strategy (European Council 2000) and the European Commission’s Flagship Initiative Innovation Union (European Commission 2010). On the other hand, a strong appeal is made for a bold change in favor of sustainability in order to prevent a global disaster (European Commission 2011). However, to enable this bold change we need to separate the construction and application of dimension-specific (or policyarea-specific) indicators (or devices for monitoring) and (real) indicators for sustainability. The construction and application of the traditional purely empiricist procedure resulting in the first type of indicators is insufficient for understanding sustainability.

In a recent report on “measuring progress toward sustainability” by the Secretariat by the International Human Dimension Programme on Global Environmental Change (UNU/IHDP 2012), we may notice the same problem as expressed in the work of the SDI Task Force. It repeats the supposed universal truth of the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – which puts a stop to their integration. It explains that neither GDP variables nor the Human Development Index reflect the state of the natural environment. According to the report, we therefore need new guidance on how to quantify progress. It explains that “the inclusive wealth framework we propose is based on social welfare theory, and considers the multiple issues that [socially] sustainable development attempts to address” (UNU/IHDP 2012: 3). In accepting this “universal truth,” the report accentuates the necessity to analyse not only the environmental dimension but the other dimensions too. But again, the attention is dedicated to isolated inductive forms of reasoning without clarifying the issues discussed with reference to Figure 2 and Figure 3.

What does the “social dimension,” “socially sustainable development” and “sustainability” in this UNU-IHDP report actually mean? And which levels of “wellbeing” are sustainable, and what does “well-being” mean in the context of the inconceivable “social dimension”? Notwithstanding this, their indicators are important for our questions, although their approach does not address the lack of a real development toward sustainability. This is also the

conclusion of the recently published article by Brundtland. She notes a fundamental global stagnation due to the refusal of policy makers to enable fundamental changes (Brundtland 2012). This stagnation, however, can be explained by the lack of consensus on how to approach “development toward sustainability,” and it can also be demonstrated by referring to the results of the Rio+20 conference in June 2012. Those results list 283 important issues without any suggestion of how to connect them. They do not present a definition of sustainability, or ideas for how to change the focus on (economic) growth toward a more environmentally friendly one (UN 2012). With these eclectic results in mind, what can policy makers do?

Social Quality Indicators and Sustainable Urban Development

Some Characteristics of Sustainable Urban Development Discourses

There are two arguments to focus on sustainable urban development as the main third issue. First, changes of societal circumstances (the first main issue) are “realized” especially in the urban context, because in the near future more than 70 percent of human beings will be living in this context (UN-Habitat 2009a). Second, in order to implement adequate politics and policies for development toward sustainability (the second main issue), we should know the nature of the urban contexts people live in and what should be changed in order to contribute to this development (Ling 2005; Zghao et al. 2010). The UN-Habitat summarizes the connection of both by saying that the first decade of the twenty-first century has been marked by overwhelming challenges (or trends) including a food crisis, an energy crisis, a financial crisis and growing realization of the consequences of climate change: Thousands of organisations are developing tools and offering policy options to meet these challenges. But these activities are 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 rested in unsustainable forms of production and consumption (UN-Habitat 2009b). In other words, development toward sustainability implies actual “sustainable urban development.” Seen from the social quality perspective, this adjective refers to the integration of the economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of the urban context in such a way that (1) outcomes will remain within the boundaries of a resilient system and (2) the four normative factors of social quality are respected.

Past European-wide research in sixty cities demonstrated the lack of consensus of what sustainable urban development is and which urban methodological framework should be applied to support it. Often, local professionals of urban development feel a trade-off

between sustainable infrastructures and achieving more sustainable societies (van Dijken et al. 2008). Tension between the two may arise when infrastructural projects are designed to meet certain environmental protection or resource efficiency criteria without, however, sufficiently taking into account societal criteria, both in terms of how these projects may affect the lives of individuals, groups and communities, and in terms of the needs and behavior of the people using related services (van Dijken et al. 2008). This has been underlined by the Expert Group Meeting convened by UN-Habitat in early February 2011. Its target was to explore the linkages between the “green economy” agenda and the UN-Habitat’s traditional “urban agenda.” It concluded that the notion of a “low carbon economy” or “green economy” is really the ideological manifestation of this attempt to de-couple growth from a dependence on abundant cheap resources. How this kind of de-coupling relates to urban infrastructure investments is what connects the “low carbon” and “green economy” agenda to the “sustainable urban development” agenda. According to this group, in a largely urbanized world, the global economy’s production and consumption systems are dependent on the urban infrastructures of the cities for conducting the most important resource flows (energy, water, sanitation, solid waste, mobility, food). How these urban infrastructures are configured determines how these resources are deployed, used and re-used. However, the urban infrastructures in many (mainly developing country) cities are totally inadequate or (as is the case in many developed country cities) inappropriately configured from a sustainable resource use perspective (UN Expert Group Meeting 2011). According to the Della Rocca Foundation associated with the UN-Habitat, we may therefore recognize a deepening of the crises of cities worldwide (Beguinot 2011).

Eliciting public support and legitimacy for public policy poses a considerable challenge for the effective implementation of initiatives developed in the name of sustainability. It suggests the need for careful attention to be paid to the issue of user needs and behavior in the design of sustainable projects, and the consideration of incentives and policies to elicit a positive public response and commitment to policy targets (van der Maesen 2010). A main problem is the restriction of the “non-defined” idea of sustainability to environmental issues only (eco-centric approach), separated from an implicit idea of sustainability as caused by complexities of human actions (anthropocentric approach). An important European conference on sustainability concluded that urban research and policy are still highly sectoral and not adapted to handle the complexity of urban sustainability, and that we need “more creative management of the cultural heritage of cities [and] a better engagement of citizens in local governance” (Lucas and Rosetti 2009: 26). The European Commission argues that new methods are needed to analyse the complex dynamics of societal change within our societies and, notably, the cities (European Commission 2007).

The lack of consensus about these topics and especially about a methodological framework to address them at the urban level is clearly demonstrated in the research on “liveable cities and towns” done on request for Eurocities. It concerns a comparison of nine cities in the European Union (Creedy et al. 2007). As the authors put it, “liveable cities” are characterized by a high standard of “quality of life,” covering all aspects that affect the quality of the environment such as noise, soil, air, and odor pollution and external safety. In this study the concept of “quality of life” was not explained but taken for granted, and likewise the concept of “liveability.” To analyse the results of their various suggestions for increasing the sustainability of cities, indicators are needed. How to derive them if we have empty concepts as points of departure? Furthermore, how to reflect upon the urban space as a comprehensive totality on the basis of the implicit individualistic orientation? Also lacking is a theoretical interrelation of their ideas about the economic, socio-political, sociocultural and environmental dimensions of societal circumstances, overall sustainability and sustainable urban development (see Figure 2).

Indicators Analyzing Cities’ Opportunities: The PricewaterhouseCoopers Example

The fifth edition of the report on “the world’s leading cities” by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) is entitled *Cities of Opportunity*. Their analysis shows, in their terms, that each of the leading cities represents “an economic ecosystem in its own right, built around mutually supportive economic and social strengths as well as an intertwined fabric of jobs” (PWC 2012: 1). Attention for the PWC’s analysis is of interest in order to clarify the differences with the SQT and SQA. However, in this report no attention is dedicated to the interrelatedness of the four dimensions (economic, socio-political, socio-cultural, environmental) discussed above. This fifth edition is inspired by ideas of Edward Wilson, who concludes that cities are becoming more and more necessary for high productivity in technologically advanced societies. Furthermore, we have to make cities more liveable, which means “consistent with the fundamental emotional needs, the instinctive needs of human beings” (PWC 2012: 25). However, this argument is absent in the elaboration of their concept of sustainability as a point of departure for the comparison of these cities, and of what the idea of liveability based upon this can contribute to our understanding of strategies resulting in sustainable urban development.

The PWC approach is similar in several ways to the elaboration of “sustainable development indicators” (with regard to development toward sustainability) and “social development

indicators” (with regard to understanding the change in societal circumstances) as discussed above. A choice was made for ten sub-domains or policy areas (called indicators): intellectual capital and innovation; technology readiness; transportation and infrastructure; health, safety and security; sustainability and the natural environment; economic clout; ease of doing business; cost; demographics and liveability; and city gateway (PWC 2012: 11). Their argument for this choice is to examine what might occur if different city characteristics “prove more or less important in attracting investment and driving growth, and how cities will be affected if the work economy changes course” (PWC 2012: 9). This comparison does not aim to understand the integrated approach of the four essential dimensions of daily life. It implicitly starts with the dominant economic paradigm, which needs dynamics and growth. It is based on utilitarian propositions that supposedly explain whether the needs of people are addressed. This may explain the immense difference from the judgments of the current state of affairs within cities by the Italian Della Rocca Foundation (Beguinot 2011) and also by the European Social Polis Platform, which concludes that we totally miss integrating mechanism in cities to adjust urban life to modern circumstances (Moulart et al. 2011). These topics have not been addressed in the PWC report.

Each domain (or, in PWC’s terms, indicator) is distinguished in terms of different variables (or, in our terms, indicators of the sub-domains). For example, the variables of “demographics and liveability” are: cultural vibrancy; quality of living; working-age population; and traffic congestion (PWC 2012: 67). This comparison of twenty-seven “leading cities” is based on dimension and/or domain-specific indicators, or monitoring devices. The procedure as illustrated in Figure 4 is not applied. Again we find ourselves confronted with an ad hoc eclectic choice of domains (called indicators) and indicators (called variables), without following the step-by-step development as proposed in Figure 3. The report does state that there has to be a “balance over time between economic, social and environmental sustainability [of the urban context]...you want to look holistically at all three of those elements of sustainability” (PWC 2012: 48), but it does not elaborate this essential point at all. Nevertheless, the amount of information collected – as classified in line with PWC’s methodology – can deliver highly interesting points of departure for the SQA. With the help of social quality surveys, a start can be made to *interpret* changes *demonstrated* with this information on a more abstract level in the four (and not three) dimensions of daily life within the urban context. This implies a methodological framework applicable at a global level to start comparative work in such a way that interpretations of the effect of sustainable urban development strategies may be functional for both other issues. With this in mind, the Della

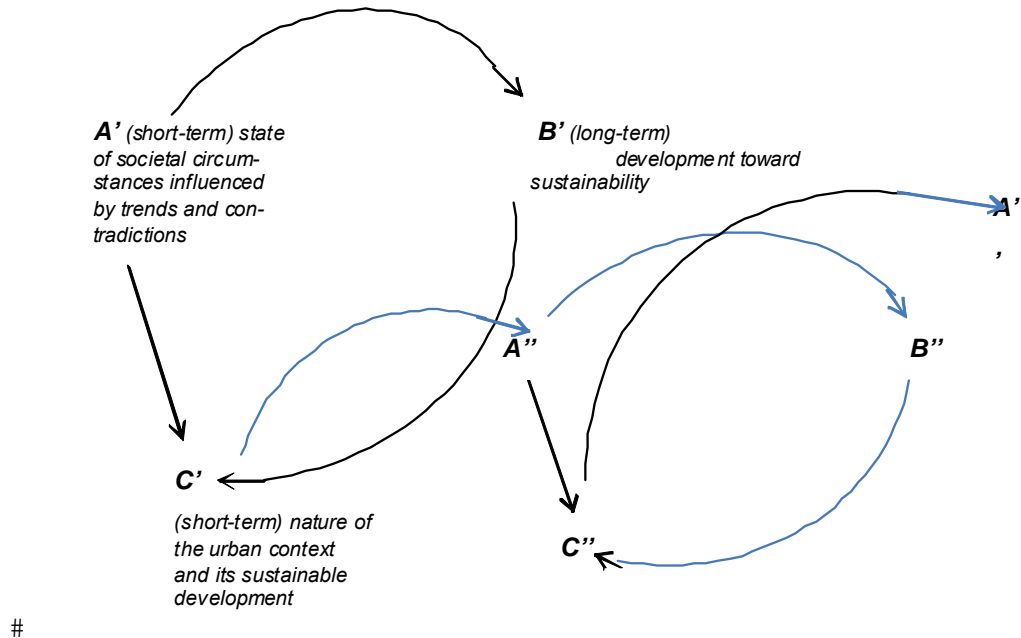
Rocca Foundation appeals for the construction “of a new indicator of social quality in the multi-ethnic urban space” all over the world (Christaldi 2012).

Concluding Remarks

This article may be appreciated as a start of the debate on the interrelationship of the three main issues (changes in societal circumstances, development toward sustainability and sustainable urban development) and the heuristic meaning of social quality indicators oriented toward the conditional factors that explore the four dimensions of daily life (economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental), paving the way for a profound understanding of important aspects of this interrelationship. (In addition, analyses of the nature and changes of the constitutional and normative factors should follow soon.) This interrelationship will change over time, as is illustrated in Figure 5. It demonstrates, first, that the three issues are interdependent.

Trends, influencing societal circumstances (A'), directly influence daily life in the urban context (C'). Since “the social” – as a result of the productive and reproductive human relationships – will be realized in the urban context, this outcome influences possibilities for the development toward sustainability (B'). Outcomes of politics and policies contributing to the development toward sustainability will also influence the urban context (C') for reasons other than politics coping with societal change (A'). This interdependency (short-term outcomes of A' and short-term outcomes of B' affecting C') will cause a change of societal circumstances over time (A''). This new situation will influence the urban context over time (C'').

Figure 5: The Interconnection of the Three Main Issues



Thanks to the collaboration between the European Foundation on Social Quality, one of the departments of the municipality of the Dutch city The Hague and a group of local “players,” a “demonstration project” started in 2011 to prepare for “sustainable urban development” of one of its quarters, Laak (van der Maesen 2012). Preparatory work has been carried out since 2000. This work – and all related difficulties – clarified the effects of trends, the successes and failures of politics and policies coping with the outcomes, the lack of a real understanding of how to understand “sustainable urban development” in its eco-centric and anthropocentric forms, and how to contribute to development toward sustainability step-by-step in collaboration with citizens. Figure 5 provides points of departure from which to unravel these complex processes.

Especially during the preparatory work for the demonstration project – financed by the European Commission– a new consciousness arose of the interdependency of the three main issues and related complex processes. This preparatory work challenged scholars of

SQT and the SQA to reflect on this “problematic,” as indicated in Figure 4 (van der Maesen 2013a). One of the results was the start of a Dutch think tank for contributing to the Rio+20 conference in June 2012 (van Renswoude et al. 2012), the construction of the demonstration project and the start of comparative work analysing the differences and similarities of urban strategies in the Netherlands, mainland China and the United Kingdom (van der Maesen 2013b). Especially from the Chinese side it is argued that for this comparison we should analyze the productive or unproductive role of “societal innovation strategies” to address the threefold interdependency illustrated in Figure 2 (Li et al. 2012).

The plea here is to make (1) a distinction between and (2) a linking of the issues of A', B' and C' (see Figure 5). As I tried to demonstrate, this is not done in approaches for constructing “social development indicators” (on behalf of A'), “sustainable development indicators” (on behalf of B') and “indicators for cities of opportunity” (on behalf of C'). This could not be done, because these indicators are in fact “monitoring devices,” unable to interpret complex societal processes. Furthermore, I argue that these three issues can be analyzed separately but not interpreted in isolation.

Figure 5 offers the possibility of separate analytical exercises of these issues as well as the analysis of their interdependency. In order to understand this interdependency, the separate issues should be explored in such a way that pathways will be explicitly designed to reach a conception of this interdependency. A preliminary understanding of this interdependency is a condition for an adequate analytical exploration of the issues separately. In all three main issues the four dimensions of daily life (economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and environmental) will be changed by trends, contradictions, implicit and explicit politics, hidden and open interests, and natural upheavals. These changes can be explored and explained by analysing the changes of its conditional factors with the help of social quality indicators. These indicators are heuristic tools for the interpretation of the changes in A', B' and C' separately, as well for analyzing those changes in A', B' and C' in a comprehensive (holistically oriented) way. Thanks to this, SQT and the SQA will make Figure 2 realistic and may give an answer to worldwide questions on how to construct a heuristic framework to address the most important challenge for human beings in the future.

Laurent J.G. van der Maesen is director of the European Foundation on Social Quality, recently transformed into the International Association on Social Quality. He coordinated the European Network on Indicators of Social Quality project supported by the fifth framework program of the European Union. He previously worked as head of the department health, social care and well-being of SISWO, a Dutch social science coordinating institute.

Notes

1. The prime minister of Malaysia, Najib Razak, remarks that in the “Muslim world” too many young people lack opportunities (conditional factors), which feeds pessimism (an aspect of constitutional factors), leading to disengagement. Due to the coming “youth bulge” in these areas, we risk losing a generation of young Muslims to apathy and extremism (undermining normative factors). In addition, young people are using tremendous new forms of communication. According to Razak, we should respond to technological change, and our starting point must be the recognition of the fundamental principle of the internet, namely, its autonomy (Razak 2012).

2. The Third OECD Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy recognized these new advances made in understanding and mapping “social progress” by recognizing a Korean paper arguing along these lines as the third Forum’s best paper (Yee and Chang 2011).

References

- Apthorpe, R. 1997. “Human Development Reporting and Social Anthropology.” *Social Anthropology* 5(1): 21–34.
- Apthorpe, R. 2008. *The “Human” and the “Social”: Paper for the Human Development and Capability Association Conference in Delhi*. Canberra: Australian National University.
- Beck, W.A., F. Thomese, L.J.G. van der Maesen and A. Walker, eds. 2001. *Social Quality: A Vision for Europe*. The Hague, London, and Boston, MA: Kluwer Law International.
- Beguilot, C. 2011. *The City Crisis: The Priority of the XX1 Century*. Naples: Aldo Della Rocca Foundation.
- Berman, Y. and D. Phillips. 2012. “Social Cohesion.” pp. 149–173 in *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*, ed. L.J.G. van der Maesen and A. Walker. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bernard, M., K. Darkoh and M. Khayesu. 2009. “Spatializing Development and Environmental Discourses: The Case of Sustainable Development and Globalization.” pp. 179–192 in *Climate Change and Sustainable Development: New Challenges for Poverty Reduction*, ed. M.A. Salih. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

- Brundtland, G.H. 2012. "Earth Agonistes: Our Generation Is the First to Understand the Risks Facing Humanity: We Must Act Decisively." *New Herald Tribune*, June 19, 8.
- Bureekul, T. 2007. *Social Quality Indicators for Thailand*. Bangkok: The King's Institute for Policy Studies.
- Chang, D. 2009. *A Paper about a Set of Social Quality Questionnaires the Korean SQ-Team Has Developed*. Seoul: Seoul National University.
- Christaldi, F. 2012. "Towards a New Indicator of Social Quality in the Multi-ethnic Urban Space." pp. 69–75 in *Human Rights and the City Crisis*, ed. C. Beguinot. Naples: Della Rocca Foundation.
- Coole, D. 2009. "Repairing Civil Society and Experimenting with Power: A Genealogy of Social Capital." *Political Studies* 57(2): 374–396.
- Creedy, A., C. Zuidema, G. Porter and G. de Roo. (2007). *Towards Liveable Cities and Towns: Guidance for Sustainable Urban Management*. Brussels: Eurocities.
- European Commission. 2001. *A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Strategy for Sustainable Development*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities: COM 264. Final.
- European Commission. 2002. *Towards a Global Partnership for Sustainable Development*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- European Commission. 2003. *The World Summit on Sustainable Development One Year On: Implementing our Commitments*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities: COM 829. Final.
- European Commission. 2005. *Sustainable Development Indicators to Monitor the Implementation of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities: SEC 161. Final.
- European Commission. 2007. *Opportunities, Access and Solidarity: Towards a New Social Vision for the 21st Century Europe*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities: COM 726. Final.
- European Commission. 2010. *Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- European Commission. 2011. *Global Europe 2050*. Brussels: Commission of the European Communities.
- European Council. 2000. *Presidency Conclusions*. Lisbon: Release SN 100/100, March.
- EMG. 2013. *Euro Memorandum: The Deepening Crisis in the European Union: The Need for a Fundamental Change*. Brussels: Euro Memorandum Group. <http://www.euromemorandum>

- Foley, J.A., N. Ramankutty, K.A. Brauman and J. Rockstrom. 2010. "Solutions for a Cultivated Planet." *Nature* 478: 337–342.
- Galaz, V. et al. 2012a. "'Planetary Boundaries' – Exploring the Challenges for Global Environmental Governance." *Current Opinions Environmental Sustainability* 4(1): 80–87. doi: 10.1061/j.cosust.2012.01.006
- Galaz, V., S. Cornell, J. Rockstrom and A. Person. 2012b. "Environment: Planetary Boundaries Concept Is Valuable." *Nature* 486: 191.
- Gasper, D. 2013. "Climate Change and the Language of Human Security." *Ethics, Policy and Environment* 16(1).
- Gasper, D., L.J.G. van der Maesen, T.-D. Truong and A. Walker. 2013. "Connecting 'Human' and 'Social' Discourses: The Human Development, Human Security and Social Quality Approaches." pp. 13–39 in *Enhancing Capabilities: The Role of Social Institutions*, ed. H.-U. Otto and H. Ziegler. Opladen and Farmington Hills, MI: Barbara Budrich Publishers.
- Giri, A.K. 2011. "Rethinking the Human and the Social: Towards a Multiverse of Transformations." *International Journal of Social Quality* 1(1): 109–120.
- Gordon, D. 2012. "Socio-Economic Security." pp. 116–149 in *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*, ed. L.J.G. van der Maesen and A. Walker. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gordon, D., L.J.G. van der Maesen and H. Verkleij, eds. 2005. "Indicators of Social Quality: Application in Fourteen European Countries: Double Issue." *European Journal of Social Quality* 5(1–2): 1–300.
- Herrmann, P. 2012a. "Economic Performance, Social Progress and Social Quality." *International Journal of Social Quality* 2(1): 41–56.
- Herrmann, P. 2012b. "Social Empowerment." pp. 198–224 in *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*, ed. L.J.G. van der Maesen and A. Walker. Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan.
- Kenis, A. and M. Lievens. 2012. *De Mythe van de Groene Economie* [The myth of the green economy]. Antwerp: EPO.
- Li, Y., Y. Sun and K. Lin. 2012. "Social Innovation, Local Governance and Social Quality: The Case of Intersectoral Collaboration in Hangzhou City." *International Journal of Social Quality* 2(1): 56–74.
- Lin, K. 2011. "The Prototype of Social Quality Theory and its Applicability to Asian Societies." *International Journal of Social Quality* 1(1): 57–71.
- Lin, K., Y. Xu, T. Huang and J. Zhang. 2012. "Social Exclusion and Its Causes in East Asian Societies: Evidences from Social Quality Survey Questionnaires Survey Data." *Social Indicators Research* (July). doi: 10.1007/s112065-012-0074-0.

- Ling, O. G. 2005. *Sustainability and Cities: Concept and Assessment*. Singapore: Institute of Policy Studies.
- Lucas, N. and D. Rosetti di Valdalbero. 2009. *People, the Economy and Our Planet: Sustainable Development: Insights from Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities*. Brussels: DG Research of the European Commission.
- Meyer, S.B., T.C.N. Luong, P.R. Ward and G. Tsourtos. 2010. "Operationalising the Theory of Social Quality: Analysis of the Reliability of an Instrument to Measure Social Quality." *Development and Society* 39(2): 329–358.
- Mitchell, D. and J. Temple. 2007. *Australian Measures of Social Quality*. Australia: Australian National University.
- EFSQ (European Foundation on Social Quality). 2011. "A Shared Newsletter of the European Foundation on Social Quality and the Asian Consortium for Social Quality." www.socialquality.org
- Moulart, F. et al. 2011. *European Agenda for Research on Cities and Social Cohesion: Aimed at International, National and Local Research Funds, Researchers and Other Interested Groups*. Brussels: DG Research of the EC.
- Oishi, A.S. 2007. *Indicators of Social Quality for Japan*. Chiba: Chiba University.
- Opschoor, H. 2010. "Sustainable Development and a Dwindling Carbon Space." *Environment Resource Economy* 45: 2–23.
- PWC. 2012. *Cities of Opportunity*. New York, NY: PricewaterhouseCoopers. www.pwc.com/www.pfnyc.org
- Phillips, D. 2008. *Social Quality: Indicators from Europe and their Implications for Asia: A Paper Presented at National Taiwan University "Workshop on Social Quality."* Sheffield: University of Sheffield.
- Razak, N. 2012. "The Challenge of Muslim Youth." *New Herald Tribune*, 15–16 December, 8.
- Rockstrom, J. 2012. See the Stockholm Resilience Center: <http://stockholmresilience.org/21/research-programme/planetary>
- Stiglitz, J., A. Sen and J.-P. Fitoussi. 2009. *Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress*. www.stiglitz-sen-fitoussi.fr-05/11/2009 UN.
1987. *Commission for Sustainable Development: The Brundtland Report*. New York: UN.
- UN. 2001. *Indicators of Sustainable Development: Guidelines and Methodologies*. New York, NY: UN Division for Sustainable Development.
- UN. 2012. *The Future We Want*. New York, NY: UN. www.uncsd2012.org
- UN Expert Group Meeting. 2011. *What Does the Green Economy Mean for Sustainable Urban Development?* <http://www.unhabitat.org/prmss/listitemDetails.aspx/publicationD-3096>

- UN-Habitat. 2009a. *For a Better Urban Future*. Paris: UN.
- UN-Habitat. 2009b. *Global Report on Human Settlements 2009: Planning Sustainable Cities*. New York, NY: UN-Habitat.
- UNU-IHDP. 2012. *Inclusive Wealth Report 2012: Measuring Progress toward Sustainability*. Bonn: United Nations Campus (Secretariat of the International Human Dimension Programme on Global Environmental Change).
- van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2009. *Reflections on the First Set of Social Quality Indicators from the European Network Social Quality Indicators (ENIQ)*. Working Paper Series 3. The Hague: EFSQ. www.socialquality.org
- van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2010. *Justice, Migration and Sustainable Urban Development: The Case of Laak (North), Neighbourhood of the City of The Hague*. Working Paper Series 6. The Hague: EFSQ. www.socialquality.org
- van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2012. *Welfare Arrangements, Sustainable Urban Development and New Forms of Governance: The Recent "Demonstration Project Laak North" of the City of The Hague*. Working Paper Series 8. The Hague: EFSQ. www.socialquality.org
- van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2013a. *Elaboration of a Lecture on the Orientation, Strategies and Model (or experiences) of the City of Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province of mainland China) from a Comparative Perspective*. Working Paper Series 10. The Hague: EFSQ. www.socialquality.org
- van der Maesen, L.J.G. 2013b. *The Start of the "Demonstration Project Laak North"(Molenwijk) of the South-East Quarter of the City of The Hague Presented in an International Perspective: A Project to Pave the Way for the Sustainable Urban Development of this Quarter*. Working Paper Series 11. The Hague: EFSQ. www.socialquality.org
- van der Maesen, L.J.G. and A. Walker, eds. 2012. *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Dijken, K. et al. 2008. *Levers of Public Action for the Development of Sustainable Cities*. The Hague: NICIS.
- van Renswoude, J., L.J.G. van der Maesen and P. Herrmann. 2012. *Development toward Sustainability: The Need for a Comprehensive Conceptual and Methodological Framework for New Politics and Policies: A Social Quality Perspective*. Working Paper Series 9. The Hague: EFSQ. www.socialquality.org
- van Staveren, I. and R. Ebbink. 2012. *Civil Society, Aid, and Development: A Cross-country Analysis*. The Hague: ISS/Erasmus University.
- Walker, A. 2009. *Social Development and Social Quality: Lecture for the Fourth Asian Conference on Social Quality Held in Bangkok*. Sheffield: University of Sheffield.

- Walker, A. and C. Walker. 2012. "Social Inclusion." pp. 173–198 in *Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*, ed. L.J.G. van der Maesen and A. Walker. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wallace, C. 2012. "Can Information and Communications Technology Enhance Social Quality?" *International Journal of Social Quality* 2(2): 98–117.
- Wang, L.-R. et al. 2009. *Asian Social Quality Indicators: What Is Unique?* Taipei: National Taiwan University.
- Ward, P., S. Meyer, F. Verity, T.K. Gill and T.C.N. Luong. 2011. "Complex Problems Require Complex Solutions: The Utility of Social Quality Theory for Addressing the Social Determinants of Health." *BMC Public Health* 11: 630. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/11/630>
- Yee, J. and D. Chang. 2009. "Transparency, a Key Factor to improve Social Cohesion: A Review of the Korean Experience in the Context of Social Quality Research." *Development and Society* 38(2): 259–277.
- Yee, J. and D. Chang. 2011. "Social Quality as a Measure for Social Progress." *Development and Society* 40(2): 153–173.
- Zghao, J., T. Dai and L. Tang. (2010). "Rapid Urbanisation, Ecological Effects and Sustainability City Construction in Xiamen." *Sustainable Development and World Ecology* 17(4): 271–273.