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Four IASQ research-projects proposals
as elaboration of the Protocol signed by
La Sapienza University in Rome and Zhejiang University in Hangzhou
in preparation of the EU and the Asian-Pacific Observatories on Social Quality

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The development toward overall sustainability is globally accepted as the main challenge for human mankind. The 'social quality project' has adopted the thesis that stimulating social quality of daily circumstances should at the same time imply a contribution to the development toward overall sustainability. This is a challenge transcending the ecological or environmental dimension, as it also concerns the effects of transformations of societal complexities, especially taking place in urban circumstances. To address this challenge we would like to propose four research projects coordinated by the International Association on Social Quality in the framework of the operationalisation of the *Agreement* and *Protocol* signed between *La Sapienza University* and *Zhejiang University:*

- concerning the *nature of the discourse* on overall sustainability,
- concerning a *comparison of strategies* aiming at sustainable urban development,
- dedicated to the (potential) *role of the trade unions* as an aspect of the transformation of societal complexities,
- concerning the elaboration of a *conceptual and analytical framework* to understand the interdependencies of strategies aiming at urban sustainable development, overall sustainability and the transformation of societal complexities.

Theoretical background in a nutshell

The social quality project distinguishes *between four dimensions*, namely: socio-political/legal, socio-cultural/welfare, socio-economic and socio-environmental dimensions. These are relevant in each field. This differs from the traditional and dominant approach to distinguish between three dimensions, namely the economic, the social and the environmental dimension. With the help of social quality indicators we are able to analyse results of changes in these four dimensions in each field and, therefore we are able to interrelate the results in all fields. The challenges concern: (i) to enhance an understanding of the effects of trends (see for instance the explosion of communication technologies and social media) and contradictions in societal complexities, (ii) to reflect on politics and policies leading to the 'development toward sustainability' and (iii) to contribute to strategies which enable sustainable urban development as context of the majority of the population.

If the social quality project succeeds in creating an understanding of the interrelationships in all fields it can function as an 'integrating conceptual framework', which differs from other approaches. This should be verified by comparing it with other existing approaches, to create a sound basis for the global debate on the development towards overall sustainability.

First research project: Contribution to the global debate on sustainability

Achieving a transition towards sustainable development is one of the most important challenges of modern society. The famous Brundtlandt report implicitly assumes a connection between economic growth and sustainable use of environmental resources, thereby not escaping the existing logic of the dominant economic paradigm. With climate change well under way, loss of biodiversity, global deforestation and a doubling of world economy and thus the Global Ecological Footprint leading to growing inequalities, business as usual will not do the trick. This builds on the work of the former Dutch think-tank of experts proposing a new approach to the discourse on overall sustainability based on the social quality thinking, presented to participants of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainability in June 2012. This think-tank defines sustainability as *a state of dynamic equilibrium between the entire interactive ensemble of non-living and living entities (as aspects of societal complexities), functioning within the boundaries of a resilient system'.* Also taking into account Rifkin's approach claiming that internet technology and renewable energy are creating a powerful third industrial revolution, a contribution to the debate on sustainability needs an adequate conceptual and analytical framework.

The aim of the project group

Proposed in collaboration with la Sapienza University in Rome, ENEL, the Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, Eurispes in Rome, the CASS in Beijing, and the ISS in the Hague, the IPTC in Bristol, the IASQ will form a new project-group of experts (a think-tank) is to:

- to collect and analyse relevant publications concerning the development toward overall sustainability,
- to build a new perspective how to reach an adequate development toward overall sustainability,
- to start an 'academic movement' to contribute to this debate and to prepare a new leading discussion paper to be presented to the Paris conference on sustainability in December 2015, as well as in international and social media.

Second Research project: urban comparative research

There a strong need for a profound analysis of the role of cities and metropoles with regard to the development of overall sustainability, underlined by UN Habitat and UNDP China. To fully understand sustainable urban development we should have basic knowledge of processes leading toward overall sustainability. Given the expectation that in the near future 80 percent of the world population will live in urban circumstances, overall sustainability should be realised in an urban context, implying 'sustainable urban development'. The noun 'sustainability' should be conceptually related with the adjective 'sustainable' of sustainable urban development. The social quality project can play an intermediary role in this. The work carried out by the IASQ in a deprived area (Laak) of the Dutch city The Hague the so-called urban Demonstration project can serve as frame of reference for this urban research project. The challenge with this project in the Hague was to turn over the traditional oriented top-down approach by the political system and business groups into a stronger bottom-up involvement of residents with the help of a number of innovative projects. The IASQ's role was to analyse and evaluate the results of these project and their relationships to see whether they contribute to the sustainable urban development of the quarter Laak. The urban research project can also build on the work carried out in an EU-China project on public participation in environmental governance, with regard to the Jiaxing Model.

The aim of the project group

An interdisciplinary project group with participants from La Sapienza, Zhejiang university and the Hague demonstration project in collaboration with the Aldo Rocca Foundation, the Region of Rome, the metropoles Hangzhou, Xiamen, Athens, Lissabon, Bangkok and Seoul lead by the IASQ will create a **'community of experts'** to make a general exploration of applied strategies in a number of cities. These will identify interesting quarters in each city that apply 'sustainable urban development' strategies, and compare these strategies with the help of the social quality conceptual and analytical framework. This will be guided by the applied principles of the demonstrationproject in Laak's quarter of the Hague. Second, the daily circumstances of one of the quarters of these metropoles will be analysed as reference point to prepare collaboration with their *'community based powers'.* This will facilitate an analysis of the real features of daily circumstances and of the nature of its sustainable development. Third, to connect the results with a global understanding of 'sustainable urban development' to examine the applied strategies, and to prepare a fundamental research project based on these explorations stimulating global debate on sustainable urban development.

The third research project: jobs, careers and the role of the unions

With reference to the four conditional factors of social quality we notice that the levels of socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment are decreasing. To address this we suggest that all policy areas of societal complexities should be re-embedded in to one guiding principle, oriented on 'the social'. The objective conditions of making use of the potentials will allow to translate social justice (equity), solidarity, equal value and human dignity, the normative factors presented in the framework of social quality, into significant guidelines for an analytical tool and an instrument to systematically develop alternatives. This approach differs from the well-known thinking about the 'European Social Model' or the 'Social Models' in different Member States of the European Union.

A new theoretical framework is needed to address the challenges of the globalizing society and to eradicate extreme poverty in megacities. This requires a socio-cultural transition and a socio-political transition, as a condition for new human relations and modes of production. This may take generations, so there is also a need for drastic short term policy measures, to address the huge unemployment in Europe and transition in labour market.

This research-project dedicates attention to a change of focus from jobs to careers as a new role of the trade unions. When asking what unions *should* do in this era of transformation (huge unemployment in Europe, increase of labor supply all over the world, the consequences of the ICT-revolution), we should start by changing the emphasis *from* jobs *to* careers. In this view this implies a long-term vision and an organization of the supply of labor compatible with that long-term vision. There are four basic *propositions* for what unions 'should' do. *Proposition 1* is that unions should aim to supply labor, i.e. to influence the *conditions* of the very supply of labor. *Proposition 2* is that anyone performing *socially validated work* (which is work performed and recognized as a *duty* to somebody else) is a member of *the occupational population.* Next, *proposition 3* is that unions *should* organize the whole of this occupational population, not only the wage-earners. Finally, *proposition 4* is that the criterion for rewarding socially validated work is the *Hicksian income.*

The aim of the project group

In collaboration with La Sapienza, ETUI, Sindnova the IASQ will form a group of experts to explore and analyse current ideas on the role of the unions and the changes of labour conditions from a social quality perspective. The aim is to design strategies for policy makers to address changing labour relations and growing unemployment levels in a fresh way.

Fourth research project: theory, methodology and application & SQ summer schools

It is important to understand the current main problems and challenges of the EU and its Member States as well of all other continents. In line with this, is the reference to e.g. the 'European Social Model' still valid? Furthermore, are models, approaches and guidelines emerging within the EU and its Member States (and other continents) adequate to address these problems and challenges? These three questions are relevant for understanding the current discourse on 'Social Europe', as well to review the ongoing debate on the use of indicators. The hypothesis is that especially the theoretically grounded social quality indicators – as aspects of the complete social quality architecture, thus in connection with the other instruments of profiles and criteria - enable us to connect the changes in these dimensions from each field (societal complexities, sustainable urban development and overall sustainability) and will enable a comprehensive understanding of their transformation.

The aim of the project group

Lead by a Coordination committee and the board of IASQ this theoretical project-group will:

- to publish an accessible study book for students & policy makers,
- assist the interdisciplinary groups (IDG's) of La Sapienza and Zhejiang University,
- prepare the summer schools of students in collaboration with IDG's,
- assist all expert-groups connected with the Observatories in Europe and Asian-Pacific Region.
- assist the project-groups discussed in this document.

The theoretical project-group will also compare the social quality approach with other relevant approaches (quality of life, human security, capability etc.) to create a profound understanding of its significance. With the application of the social quality architecture:

- The results of changes in the different policy areas of societal complexities can be made comparable,
- These can also be made comparable with those of changes in the urban context,
- Both can be made comparable with changes in the domains of sustainability,
- Our knowledge about the consequences will deliver guidelines – as a result of the understanding of the boundaries of the resilient natural systems - to review the acceptability of the changes in societal complexities,
- this knowledge will deliver a fundamental orientation for the nature of the changes in the urban context; are they enhancing overall sustainability?

1. Preface: arguments, content and the preparatory work

As decisively argued in the context of the United Nations, the development toward overall sustainability is globally accepted as the main challenge for human mankind. From the side of the 'social quality project' the thesis is accepted that stimulating social quality of daily circumstances should at the same time imply a contribution to the development toward overall sustainability. This is addressed in a working paper, sent to many participants of the Rio+ Conference on sustainability in June 2012.[1]

This challenge goes beyond the ecological or environmental dimension. It also concerns the outcomes of transformations of societal complexities as 'realised' in especially urban circumstances, in the near future the daily context for nearly 80 per cent of mankind. This also relates to a recently published report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which *"includes a forecast of worsening global unemployment levels and explains the factors behind it, such as continuing inequality and failing wage shares. The report looks at (…) the risk of social unrest, especially in areas of elevated youth unemployment. It also addresses structural factors shaping the world of work including an aging population and shifts in the skills sought by employers".*[2] This ILO-report also demonstrates the concrete reality of interdependencies of - in our terms (see below) – the three fields. Three of the research-projects proposed in this paper concern essential aspects of each field. The fourth project is dedicated to their interrelation:

- The first research-project concerns the **nature and consequences of the discourse** on overall sustainability as field,
- The second research-project concerns a start of **a comparison of strategies** aiming at sustainable urban development as field,
- The third research-project will be dedicated to the (potential) **role of the trade unions** as an aspect of the transformation of societal complexities as field,
- The fourth research-project concerns the elaboration of the **conceptual and analytical framework** for understanding the interdependencies of the three fields and therefore for enhancing the second stage of the three research-projects as well.

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[1] J. van Renswoude, L.J.G. van der Maesen, P. Herrmann (2012), '*Development toward sustainability: The need for a Comprehensive Conceptual and Methodological Framework for new Politics and Policies: A Social Quality Perspective'*, (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, working Paper Series nr. 11, www.socialquality.org).
[2] International Labour Organization (2015), '*World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2015'*, (Genève: ILO, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/ group/public.

Meetings about the desirability of these four projects already started in the late 2013's and were further elaborated afterwards at e.g. an expert-meeting in the beginning of 2014 organised by Eurispes in Rome and at the Social Quality Conference on the European Social Model in October 2014, organized by Eurispes, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and the IASQ. This preparatory work also incorporated the Business-plan to prepare the operationalisation of the recent Protocol for the collaboration of La Sapienza University and Zhejiang University (see section-2). In particular the preliminary work concerned:

- The IASQ's encounters with regard to the first research project (1) in an expert- meeting about the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference, (2) with staff members of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and following that (3) during an expert-meeting organized by Eurispes in the beginning of 2014. The results were discussed (4) at the Social Quality Conference of October 2014. Then, (5) a first contact with ENEL – Italy's largest power company and the second largest utility listed in Europe - was made.

- With regard to the second research-project debates took place (1) at the expert-meeting on social quality in Vienna, February 2014, organized by the Aberdeen University, (2) in a workshop with e.g. representatives of the Region of Rome and Eurispes in 2014, (3) with representatives of the Urban Research Centre of Hangzhou during the Hangzhou Urban Forum in 2010, 2012 and 2014. Finally, meetings (4) took place with representatives of the city of The Hague, and the universities of Sheffield and Lisbon.

- With regard to the third research-project the IASQ (1) sent a first proposal to Sindnova (Institute for Innovation related with trade unions and located in Rome) and (2) discussed preliminary ideas during the conference in Rome of October 2014.

- Ideas about the fourth research-project were prepared and presented in (1) the June 2014 conference in Hangzhou and (2) the October 2014 conference in Rome.

An implicit support for the start of these interrelated projects is delivered in a recent book, published by the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) about the current problematique of the European Union. In the first chapter Steffen Lehndorff remarks, that "*Europe remains locked into boosting 'competitiveness' by institutionalised competition between states and the new economic policy governance, which in the current global economy and in the face of the environmental challenges does not promise a greener future. Even the political 'crop damage' is clearly discernible: 'Europe' is coming to be perceived by more and more people as rather a threat than a promise and democratic rights are progressively being curtailed.*"[3]

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[3] S. Lehndorff (eds) (2015), '*Divisive integration. The triumph of failed ideas in Europe – revisited*', (Brussels: ETUI).

2. *Collaboration of La Sapienza University and the Zhejiang University*

This section outlines the new context of the social quality project and also of the four proposed research-projects as visualized by Figure-1. The International Association on Social Quality *(IASQ)* [previously European Foundation on Social Quality *(EFSQ)*] transformed into (a) a small legal body located in Amsterdam and (b) an Observatory on Social Quality as an open network of universities and institutes, located in Rome with support by Eurispes.[4] The objectives of this Observatory are the promotion of the social quality project in Europe (the European Union, Russia etc). The Asian Consortium for Social Quality was already functioning as such an open Observatory for the Asia-Pacific Region and in fact served as an example for the EU Observatory. The EU Observatory will be strongly supported by La Sapienza University in Rome. The Asian-Pacific Observatory will be strongly supported by the Zhejiang University in Hangzhou. Both universities already signed an *Agreement* in the past to pave the way for their collaboration and in 2014 a *Protocol* for a specific operationalization dedicated to the social quality project. As explained in the third book on social quality (*Social Quality; From Theory to Indicators)* this project differs e.g. from the 'quality of life', the 'social capital', the 'human security' and the 'capability' approaches.[5]

This document focusing on four research-projects especially concerns the IASQ as coordinator of the projects (see Figure-1). It follows directly from a Business plan, aimed at operationalising the ideas presented in the Protocol.[6] In the near future the Observatories will develop their own projects, targeting respectively the European and the Asia-Pacific Region. Given the international focus of the four projects, La Sapienza University and Zhejiang University should play a constituting role in these projects, coordinated by the IASQ. Forthcoming at short notice is IASQ Working Paper Series nr. 16 on the current state of affairs with regard to the theory, methodology and policy application of the social quality project. This may function as background information for the operationalization of the four research-projects.[7]
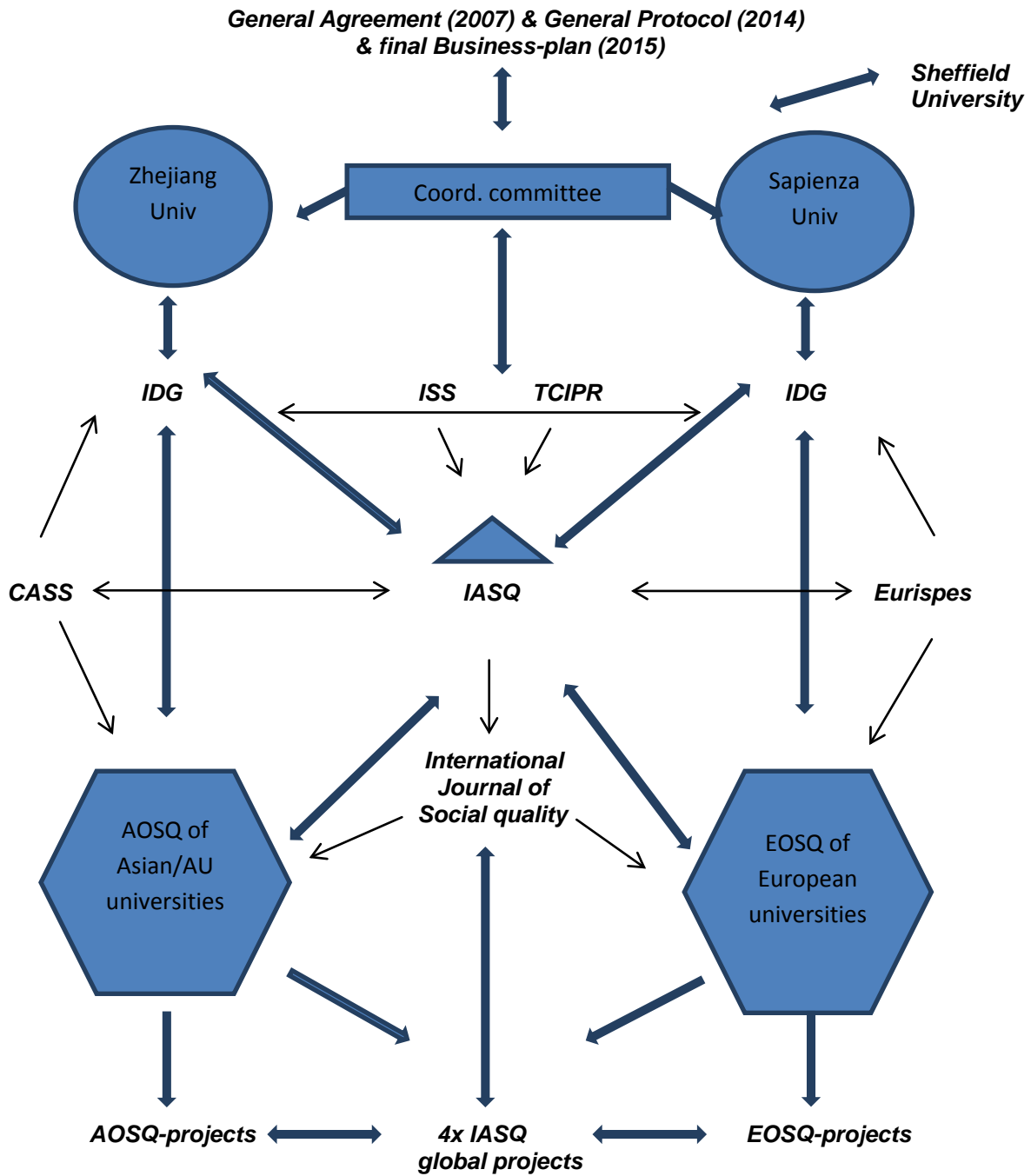
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[4] The new IASQ signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurispes in 2013, in order to stimulate the social quality project in Europe and beyond. The EFSQ signed already in 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), located in The Hague. Both – Eurispes and the ISS – are placed in Figure-1. Very soon a Memorandum will follow with the Townsend Centre for International Poverty Research in Bristol (TCIPR).

[5] L.J.G. van der Maesen and A.C. Walker (2012), '*Social Quality: From Theory to Indicators*', (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

[6] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2015), *'Fifth Version of the Business-plan for renewing the infrastructure of the social quality project (its theory, methodology and application) with support by the official collaboration of the Zhejiang University in Hangzhou (mainland China) and the La Sapienza University in Rome (Italy)',* (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ).

[7] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2015*), The current rationale and characteristics of the social quality project: are they adequate to contribute to endeavours for coping with main challenges? A compilations of five presentation*', (Amsterdam/The Hague; IASQ), (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, Working Paper Series nr. 16, www.socialquality.org, forthcoming)

Figure-1:   The relationships of involved 'actors'

General Agreement (2007) & General Protocol (2014) & final Business-plan (2015)

Sheffield University

Zhejiang Univ — Coord. committee — Sapienza Univ

IDG — ISS — TCIPR — IDG

CASS — IASQ — Eurispes

International Journal of Social quality

AOSQ of Asian/AU universities — EOSQ of European universities

AOSQ-projects — *4x IASQ global projects* — EOSQ-projects

IDG   = Interdisciplinary group of experts
TCIPR   = Townsend Centre for Int. Poverty Research
IASQ   = International Association on SQ
ISS   = International Institute of Social Studies
Eurispes= Italian Institute for Economic, Political and
                Social research

EOSQ = EU Observatory on SQ
AOSQ = Asian-Pacific Observatory on SQ
CASS = Chinese Academy of Social
              (economic) Sciences

3. Specific analyses of the fields, dimensions and the subjects of the four research projects and implicit support recently received

3.1 Three fields and four dimensions

This proposal concerns four research-projects, resulting from the Business-plan to operationalise the collaboration of La Sapienza University and Zhejiang University (see note-6). The challenge of this collaboration is to stimulate a specific approach of main challenges in Europe, Asia, Australia and beyond based on the application of the conceptual and analytical framework of the social quality project. A choice is made of relevant aspects for each of the **three fields** respectively and their interrelationships (see Figure-2), namely:

- Changes and contradictions in the field of societal complexities,
- The development toward overall sustainability,
- Processes resulting in sustainable urban development.

In recent publications about the social quality project a distinction is made **between four dimensions**, namely: socio-political/legal, socio-cultural/welfare, socio-economic and socio-environmental dimensions. These are relevant in each field. This differs from the traditional and dominant approach to distinguish between three dimensions, namely the economic, the social and the environmental dimension. We will come back to this point in
Section-3.2. Hypothesized is that with the help of social quality indicators we are able to analyse outcomes of these four dimensions in each field and, therefore that we are able to interrelate the outcomes in all fields. The challenges concern: (i) to enhance an understanding of the outcomes of trends (see explosion of communication technologies) and contradictions in societal complexities, (ii) to reflect on politics and policies to underpin processes leading to the 'development toward sustainability' and (iii) to contribute to strategies which enable sustainable urban development as context of the majority of the population. With this in mind three central functions of social quality indicators may be identified (see Figure-2). Especially research for contributing to the development toward overall sustainability will deliver the guidelines for normative orientations in both other fields. [8]

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[8] See furthermore, Van der Maesen, see note-7. This paper is based on (a) the document on behalf of the Della Rocca Foundation (see note-10), (b) a presentation for the Rome conference on social quality in October 2014, (c) a presentation for the Chinese Academy for Social (and Economic) Sciences in November 2014, (d) a presentation for the panel-discussion of the Hangzhou Forum on Urban development in November 2014, (e) a Chinese-Dutch expert-meeting on environmental protection and the role of cities and citizens in January 2015, and (f) the forthcoming contribution for the conference of the Plekhanov Russian University of Economics in Moscow.

This accent on the four dimensions of the three fields unconditionally follows the arguments of the **Aldo Della Rocca Foundation** and its focal point of the current crisis of cities. It concludes that *"in one year cities produce more than 15 million deaths and uncontrolled urbanization is the cause of at least 80% of premature deaths"*.[9] Processes in all three fields are mentioned in a condensed form in the IASQ's recent proposal for a collaboration with the Della Roca Foundation. The objective is to contribute to the targets of the UN-general Assembly in New York of 31 October 2014 to defend human rights in the urban context of metropoles and mega cities. Argued is that with the help of the specific orientation the social quality project may support the objectives of the Della Rocca Foundation to address this crisis.[10] This proposal may also be appreciated as preparatory work for the research-project 'sustainable urban development', see section-5. As argued in the IASQ's proposal, this specific orientation may assist to reach:

- consensus on the urban outcomes and/or consequences of the crisis for daily circumstances of people, their rights or lack of rights,
- an articulation of 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),
- an understanding of the elements leading to these results at national, and global level,
- an understanding of the best practices to enable positive results in comparable cases.

3.2 The interrelationships of fields and dimensions

In a general sense supposed is (hypothesis) that the social quality's framework is suitable (disposes of a heuristic significance) to analyse each of the three fields as well as their interrelationships, as a result of the understanding of the change of their four dimensions. The classical threefold distinction between the economic, the social and the environmental dimensions, caused – and see the famous Brundtland Report [11] - a stagnation because the 'social dimension' remains a black box, containing the leftovers of all that is not identified as economic or environmental. For the first time, this issue is discussed in the Working Paper Series nr. 11 (see note-1). It is further discussed in a study about the new challenges for the

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[9] C. Beguinot (2012), *'Human Rights and The City Crisis: for the Urban Future'*, (Naples/Rome: Gianni: series of urban studies).
[10] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2014), '*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'*, (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, www.socialquality.org).
[11] UN (1987), 'Commission *for Sustainable Development: the Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future'*, (New York: UN).

social quality indicators' application.[12] For instance 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 (resulting into an increase of social quality as well as the development toward sustainability) - we should understand the significance of the socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions. The reason is that government, governance and social empowerment concern both dimensions.

These interrelationships (see Figure-2) should especially be understood in the context of the field of sustainable urban development (ad-C), because their 'realisation' exactly occur in urban circumstances. However, in order to fully grasp the significance of what happens in this field we should also be focussed on both other fields (ad-A and ad-B). If the social quality project is successful in understanding their interrelationships it can function as an 'integrating conceptual framework', which differs from other approaches. This should be verified by comparing it with other existing approaches, which may also deliver a better theoretical foundation for the global debate on the development towards overall sustainability.

Figure-1:   Interrelationships of the three central fields

(A) Societal complexities
(trends & contradictions)

(B) Overall sustainability
(trends & contradictions)

Societal innovation strategies (ICT):

four dimensions
socio-economic/financial
socio-political/legal
socio-cultural/welfare
socio-environmental

application of an integrating conceptual and analytical framework of social quality

comparison with other approaches (quality of life, social capital, capability, hum.developm soc. harmony et cetera

indicators[13]
profiles
criteria

(C) Sustainable urban development
(trends & contradiction

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[12] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2013), '*Analyzing Societal Circumstances, Sustainability and Sustainable Urban Development: New Theoretical and Methodological Challenges for Social Quality Indicators*' (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, Working Paper Series nr. 12). See also: *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol 3 (1), pp. 82-105.
[13] These three concepts (instruments for measurement/indication) refer to the 'social quality architecture', see Figure-5.

3.3   The subjects of the four research proposals

The subjects of the four research-projects concern a particular aspect of each field:

- A project aimed at analysing the current discourse on global level on overall sustainability with the help of this framework for contributing in a specific way to the sustainability conference in Paris 2015 (with particular support by ENEL, ISS, IPTC, La Sapienza University, Zhejiang University, CASS et cetera),

- A project for analysing urban strategies in metropoles in Europe and Asia with the help of this framework in order to determine whether they contribute to politics strengthening sustainable urban development, as a pillar of overall sustainability (with particular support by the Region of Rome, Aldo Della Rocca Foundation, the Urban Research centre of Hangzhou, of Xiamen, of Seoul, of Lisbon, of Athens et cetera),

- A project analysing the manifold of endeavours to change the (economic) production systems and the multiple attempts to create jobs and careers by especially the unions as their future challenges with the underlying framework in mind (with support by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, International Trade Union Confederation, Eurispes, the European Trade Union Institute, TNO, the Erasmus University et cetera).

- A project enhancing the conceptual and analytical frame of reference of the social quality project in relation with the three projects mentioned above and to stimulate its effectiveness for policymakers. Furthermore, to also deliver points of departure for the yearly summer schools on social quality for students in respectively Rome and Hangzhou (with particular support by La Sapienza University, Zhejiang University, Sheffield University, ISS, Eurispes, IPTC, Cass, EOSQ, AOSQ (see Figure-1).

These four research-projects are the results of the new infrastructure as illustrated in the previous figure. Each field will be followed by many other projects, this will be discussed in section-7 with regard to the fourth proposed research-project. For instance concerning the transformation of societal complexities – on the basis of previous social quality studies between 1995 and 2015 – new projects will be organised: with regard to ageing, public health, education, social housing, migration, income security, employment, et cetera.

3.4   Implicit support

Femke Groothuis, collaborating with four international operating financial consultancies, refers in her recently published report to the idea of a 'circular economy' which has gained more and more attention as a new systematic solution to steer our production and

consumption patterns in the right direction. According the report, a fundamental shift in taxes from labour to the use of natural resources is needed. This supposition is connected in the report with main global challenges and especially their consequences for the European Union, that also concern other continents and sometimes with more severe effects, for example:

- Increasing mass unemployment also because an explosion of labour supply in the near future. In the European Union already 24,6 million men and women are unemployed,

- The current European import dependency on non-renewables which is really unsustainable in the sense of 'not- durable',

- On global level seven million people died as a result of air pollution exposure,

- The increase of fresh water scarcity and the associated food supply risks are among the main problems of this century,

- Referred is to the latest report from the IPCC (see also section-4) that 'business as usual' will lead to a global average temperature rise beyond 2°C,

- That resource scarcity and the accelerating rate of climate change act as catalysts for global political conflicts.

- Added should be the fact that at this stage enough food is produced worldwide, however millions of people live with hunger, as distribution mechanisms seem to be failing for political reasons.

With this in mind the report argues that *"in general, modern European tax systems apply a high rate to employment while leaving the use of natural resources relatively tax-free or even subsidized. The environment and social megatrends underline the need for European Member states to move to an inclusive circular economy, as taxes play such an important role in steering the economy, it is common sense to start here. (…) The Ex'tax Project is a think tank on the tax system of the 21st century, inspired by the vision of (the late) Eckart Wintzen. Since the early 1990s, Wintzen promoted the shift of taxation from labour to natural resource use. (…) [this] will be challenging to reduce water consumption and carbon footprints. (…) amongst others, the concept appears in the 'Annual Growth Survey', the 'Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe', the 'Europe 2020 Strategy' and the '2013 Country Specific Recommendations'. International institutions – including the OECD, ILO, IMF and WBCSD – also support the principle".*[14] This proposal directly refers implicitly (not explicitly) to the need to understand the interrelationships as illustrated in Figure-2. It is an aspect of necessary transformations in all dimensions and fields alike.

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[14] F. Groothuis (2014), '*New era. New plan Fiscal reforms for an inclusive, circular economy. Case study the Netherlands with support by Deloitte, EY, KPMG Meijburg, The Ex'tax project',* (Austerlitz: Ex'tax project, www.ex-tax.com).

4. The first research project: contribution to global debate on sustainability

4.1 Preparatory work

This section may be seen as a result of the work of the former Dutch think-tank of experts proposing a new approach to the discourse on overall sustainability. This approach, based on social quality thinking, was presented to participants of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainability in June 2012 (see note-1). The outcomes of the Rio+ conference are discussed in a Dutch expert-meeting in November 2012. Argued is that "*the main challenge of 'development toward sustainability' does not concern individual injustices and arbitrary personal irrationalities of behaviour, but a closer and integrated understanding of 'the social' as developed in the theory of social quality. It does not describe an independent entity nor is it an aggregate of individuals. It is an outcome of the interaction between people (constituted as actors) and their constructed and natural environment. Current challenges do not concern direct answers to crises of different kind as such. The key challenge is far more profound: not reformist repairing strategies but a change in the way of living and living together, which implies a thorough understanding of 'the social' (see third book on social quality, note-5).*[15]

This 2012 paper presents a first proposal to start an 'international academic network' for preparing a new contribution to the global discourse on overall sustainability. The second input resulted from the discussion with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On request by Minister Frans Timmermans (currently vice-President of the European Commission) the IASQ prepared a paper to elaborate the above mentioned plans[16], which was discussed with staff members of this Ministry.[17] A third important input is derived from the participation of the IASQ in the European-Chinese project to explore the significance of the model of Jiaxing city for environmental protection with support by its population. This exploration took place in comparison to European experiences as well. This part of the IASQ's preparatory work will also be discussed in section-5. [18]

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[15] L.J.G. van der Maesen, J.W. Westbroek (2012), *'Paper on behalf of the discussion about the rationale and purposes of the 'international academic network development toward sustainability',* (Amsterdam/The Hague: EFSQ).

[16] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2013), '*A discussion paper for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning the start of an international academic network contributing to the development toward sustainability'* , (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, September)

[17] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2013), '*An overview of the discussion at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 8 October 2013 concerning the proposals by the 'think tank sustainability' of the IASQ as presented in a document of 23 September 2013'*, (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, October).

[18] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2015), *'The position of citizens with regard to environmental protection: a contribution to a Chinese and European comparison based on reflections on the applied model by the Chinese city Jiaxing'*, (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, Working Paper Series nr. 14, www.socialquality.org).

4.2 Exploration of aspects of the current problematic

Over a span of 40 years different successes have been booked:

- Sustainable development is now permanently on the agenda of international (multilateral) organizations like the U.N. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, of national and regional governments, and the private sector.

- There is an urgent sense that climate change needs to be tackled as evidenced by the tenacious efforts to establish binding, international agreements on the limitation of greenhouse gas emissions,

- The implementation of a number of international agreements (e.g., Agenda 21 and the U.N. Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, REDD) seems to be making headway,

- To a certain extent national and local governments do implement sustainable development programs and in the case of the European Union its Commission stimulates related politics and policies.

In one of the most all-encompassing European Union conferences on sustainable development organized by the European Commission in 2009 it was argued that achieving a transition towards sustainable development is one of the most important challenges of modern society. Finding solutions requires not only a shift in technology, but also a shift in behavior (socio-cultural dimension) and a transition to a decision-making process (socio-political dimension) where choices for action are made in a different way.[19] With this in mind it is of interest to reflect - from a social quality point of view - on some theses as formulated by Ulrich Beck: "*First thesis: Climate change is the embodiment of the mistakes of a whole epoch of industrial capitalism (…) Second thesis: Sociologically and politically, the key is to distinguish risk from catastrophe (…) Third thesis: The second modernity of world risk society breaks with the models of the reproduction of social and political order (…) Fourth thesis: the main source of climate pessimism, which underlies the present dominance of apocalyptic imaginaries, lies in a generalized incapacity to rethink the fundamental questions of social and political order (….) Fifth thesis: Realistically, it might be impossible to achieve a positive consensus in world risk society, but it is most likely to achieve a negative consensus on what, under all conditions, has to be avoided*".[20] At the end of the day this not at all very positive.

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[19] N. Lucas and D. Rosetti di Valdalbero (2009), '*People, the Economy and Our Planet: Sustainable Development Insights from Socio-Economic Sciences and Humanities*', (Brussels: DG for Research of the European Commission).
[20] U. Beck (2014), 'How climate Change might Save the World', *Development and Society*, Vol. 43 (2), pp. 169-185.

Important for analyzing the nature and consequences of such and other discourses on sustainability (including climate change as an aspect of the environmental dimension) is to notice that - and see Bernard et al - the concept remains vague, partly because of the need to use the concept for different purposes and within different situations.[21] With this in mind the Dutch think-tank presented a following **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'.* [22] These living entities include the human societal complexities. These complexities can cause either sustainable or unsustainable societal relationships in especially the urban context, as well as sustainable or unsustainable conditions concerning the boundaries of the resilient system. The key point for increasing sustainability concerns how to address the immediate effects of these complexities, because they may either cause serious societal conflicts or the crossing of the boundaries of the resilient system. To deal with these conflicts and to 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.

The famous Brundtland Report[24] as well as most other documents published later on 'sustainable development' implicitly assume a connection between economic growth and the sustainable use of environmental resources. The ideology of economic growth as a 'technical product' of the logic of capitalism guides decisions regarding the use of scarce resources and denies the quality of the physical environment.[25] With regard to the socio-economic dimension, only a shift in technology – because of the revolutionary new possibilities by the application of ICT – may maintain the existing logic of the dominant economic paradigm. An adequate conceptualization is a condition sine qua non for an effective orchestration of national and international politics and policies. It is not surprising that given the lack of this adequacy, thus an effective orchestration, we notice changes since 1972 which are

[21] M. Bernard, K. Darkoh and M. Khayesi (2009),' Spatializing Development and Environmental Discourses: The Case of sustainable Development and Globalization, in: M. a. Mohammed Salih, '*Climate Change and Sustainable Development. New Challenges for Poverty Reduction*', (Cheltenham UK: Edward Elgar), pp. 179-92.

[22] Van Resnwoude et al, see note-1. This definition refers especially to the work by Röckstrom cs, discussed in this Working Paper: Stockholm Research Center, htpp://stockholmresilience.org/21/research-programme/planetary.

[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] Brundtland et al, see note-11.

[25] (1) D. Gasper (2012), 'Climate Change: the Need for a Human Rights Agenda within a Framework of shared Human Security', *Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences,* Vol 79 (4), pp. 983-1014, (2) D. Gasper (2014), 'Human Security Analysis as a Framework for Value-Oriented Governance: The Climate Change as Case', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 4 (2), pp.6-25.

damaging human existence on earth seriously. From a slight different perspective this was also concluded at the EC's conference on sustainable development: "*the existing model of the knowledge economy in common thinking leads to an undervaluation of the environment, which is composed largely of public goods, and an overvaluation of ideas, which are often in private monopoly ownership. The consequent economic distortions and excessive use of environmental assets are devastating for global sustainability*" [26]

4.3 A referral to current issues

It has become all but clear that anthropogenic climate change is under way as evidenced by rising, average global temperature and increased frequency and severity of droughts and floodings, melting of polar ice sheets, retreat of glaciers, etc. The loss of biodiversity is progressing, and an increasing scarcity of clean water is threatening the lives of hundreds of millions of people and other living beings. Furthermore, (at least on average) global deforestation continues, and marine ecosystems are on the decline. These issues should be related with the fact, that over the last (almost) two decades, the world economy, in terms of real GDP, has more than doubled[27], and the fact that the global, total Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions per year has increased by more than 40%. [28] And as argued, notwithstanding this growth the inequalities between the rich and the poor all over the world increased drastically. Also as a consequence of socio-cultural changes, the Global Ecological Footprint (a measure for human demand on the biosphere) will have increased by 40%, to more than 60% over the world bio-capacity.[29] And if the worldwide unacceptable inequalities will be reduced, this again implies, ceteris paribus, a tremendous increase of the global Ecological Footprint. Furthermore, the level of production and consumption will go up because the world population will increase by some 1.6 billion people (from approximately 5.4 billion in 1992 to approximately 7 billion in 2012). [30] More importantly, none of these phenomena and numbers show a significant tendency to go in a different direction. The only conclusion can be that the four relevant dimensions of societal complexities - as well as the urban context as transformation space - will change in such a way the future of human existence will be seriously threatened. There is a need for a deep, systemic change in the

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[26] Lucas et al, see note -19.
[27] According to IMF data and projections, see note-1.
[28] DOE/EIA data, with minor extrapolations, see note-1.
[29] Data from the Global Footprint Network, 2010, plus small extrapolation, see note-1.
[30] http://esa.un.org/UNPP. Just to get an impression of what this means: it translates into 47 people per square km of total land surface and into approx. 500 people per square km of arable land. In 2009, the total number of cattle and buffalo, sheep and goats, and pigs and chickens was estimated by the FAO as 4.5 billion, see note-1.

way we behave with regard to each other and the natural world of which our habitat is part.

Gro Harlem Brundtland already commented seriously on governments all over the world on the eve of the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 because of the current depressive outcomes of policymaking: "*governments are currently [also] refusing to make the transformative changes needed to resolve the global sustainability crisis.*"[31] The 2014 Report of the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) is quite clear about the current environmental state of affairs as a consequence of this 'refusal'. The warming of the climate system continues. Each of the last three decades has successively been warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850. Ocean warming dominates the increase in energy stored in the climate system. Over the last two decades, the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets have been losing mass[32], and glaciers have continued to shrink almost worldwide. The rate of sea-level rise since the mid-19th century has been larger than the mean rate during the previous two millennia: "*anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by economic and population growth and are now higher than ever. This has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800.000 years*".[33] According this Report, the collected risks of climate change are so profound they could stall or even reverse generations of progress related to eradicating poverty and hunger if greenhouse gas emissions continue at a runaway pace. The Report also claims that "*less than 400 billion dollar a year is being spent around the world to reduce emissions or otherwise cope with climate change. That sum is smaller than the revenue of a single American oil company, Exxon Mobil*"[34]

Recently, at a meeting of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in November 2014, USA President Obama and China's President Xi announced that the USA will reduce the emission of Co2 with 27% in 2025 compared to 2005; China will cap his output by 2030 or earlier if possible and it will increase the sun and wind energy production until 20% in 2030 compared to 6% in 2014, which implies a huge extra reduction of emissions. The EU will reduce emissions with 40% in 2030 compared to 1990.[35] However, experts doubt that these plans are enough to really address the dangerous effects of climate change. According to the International Friends of the Earth, the good news is that China is taking the fight against climate change. But the cuts pledged by President Obama are nowhere near what the USA

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[31] G.H. Brundtland (2012), ' Earth agonistes' , *International Herald Tribune*, June 19, 8.
[32] B. Clark Howard (2014), *National Geographical Daily News*, May 14. http://www.google#q-geographical-Research-Letters.
[33] IPCC (2014), *'Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report', (www.ipcc.ch,* 5 November).
[34] UN Report (2014), *International New York Times*, 3 November, p. 1.
[35] L. Taylor and T. Branigan (2014), '*US and China strike deal on Carbon Cuts*', *The Guardian Weekly*', 21-27 November, Vol. 191, nr. 24, p.6.

needs to cut if it will prevent a runaway climate change: "*Disgracefully, today's announcement ignores the fact that developing countries urgently need finance and technology to transform their energy system and adapt to climate change*".[36] The world has to do more than this. Not only the greenhouse gas emissions are problematic. For instance, the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network demonstrates that coral reefs – the well-springs of Ocean life – are threatened also by 'localized effects of overfishing, run off pollution from the land and the destruction of habitats from costal development.[37] This also refers to human actions, responsible for the nature of such permissible socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions of societal life. Such a permissibility also concerns the 5 million metric tons of waste dumped in rivers and thus the oceans yearly, causing an increase of 30x the current plastic soup in 2025, totally poisoning ocean life. [38] The other good news is that the city of New York collected more than 28.000 tons of expanded polystyrene in the year ending in June 2014: *More disturbing when it gets into the water, it floats forever. Plastics are a curse of the world's oceans (…) New York has wisely decided not to keep adding to it".* [39]

It would be interesting to take Jeremy Rifkin's approach on board to fully understand these issues. He claims, internet technology and renewable energy are merging to create a powerful third industrial revolution. Thanks to cheap solar panels hundreds of millions of people will produce their own green energy in their homes, offices and factories and they will start sharing it in an 'energy internet'. This revolution will *"usher in a fundamental reordering of human relationships, from hierarchical to lateral power, that will impact the way we conduct commerce, govern society, educate our children and engage in civic life*".[40] Of interest is to know whether this revolution will go beyond the restricted and at the same time dominant question of energy production and will have a positive effect on the average of biocapacity per capita. This will have also a great impact on the current capitalist form of production and reproduction. According to Rifkin, the "*upshot is a surge in creativity that is at least equal to the great innovative thrusts experienced by the capitalist market economy in the twentieth century. The democratization of innovation and creativity [thanks to the ICT revolution] on the emerging Collaborative commons is spawning a new kind of incentive, based less on the expectation of financial reward and more on the desire to advance the social well-being of humanity. And it's succeeding. While the capitalist market is not likely to disappear, it will no*

[36] S. Shaw (2014), Friends of the Earth International Climate Justice and energy Coordinator, www. foei.org/news/us-climate-pledges-just-a-drop-in-the-ocean.
[37] J. Jackson and A.E. Johnson (2014), How to save Caribbean Coral Reefs?", *International New York Times*, 18 September, p. 8
[38] J. Jambeck (2015), '*Plastic Input into the Ocean*', (Georgia: University of Georgia, Environmental Engineering, http://jambeck.engr.uga.edu/plastic-input-into-the-ocena-release-day.
[39] Editorial (2015), 'A Welcome Ban on Forever Foam', *International New York Times*, 10 January, p.8.
[40] J. Rifkin (2011), '*The Third Industrial Revolution*', (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) and further: http://www.foet.org/books/html.

longer exclusively define the economic agenda for civilization. There will still be goods and services whose marginal costs are high enough to warrant their exchange in markets and sufficient profit to ensure a return on investment. But in a world in which more things are potentially nearly free [thanks to the ICT revolution] social capital is going to play a far more significant role than financial capital and economic life is increasingly going to take place on a Collaborative commons". [41] In the same vain as Ulrich Beck, Rifkin refers to a whole set of interesting suppositions and at the same time to a range of unclear concepts. Their popularity inspires to establish a strong conceptual and analytical framework to fully understand what really happens and what the possibilities are to address the most important challenge for human life in the future. The accent on such a framework is specific for the social quality project. It is at the same time a condition for comparative research on global and national levels.

4.4 The contours of the research-project 'overall sustainability'.

4.4.1 A project-group of the research project

In collaboration with la Sapienza University in Rome, ENEL, the Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, Eurispes in Rome, the CASS in Beijing, and the ISS in the Hague, the IPTC in Bristol, the IASQ will form a new project-group of experts (a think-tank):

- Representatives of these partners,
- Representatives of universities, already connected or well-known with the specific approach (referring to the conceptual and analytical framework of the social quality project) in Europe, Asia, Australia and other continents.

4.4.2 Objectives of the project-group

First, to collect and analyse relevant publications concerning the development toward overall sustainability and to build a new perspective how to reach an adequate development toward overall sustainability, with the help of the work already carried out by the ISS, La Sapienza University, Zhejiang University, IPTC and other expert institutes. Therefore the conceptual and analytical framework of the social quality theory and methodology may be helpful.

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[41] J. Rifkin (2014), '*The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet of Things, the Collaborative Commons, and the Eclipse of Capitalism*', (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 21.

Second, to start a systemic communication with a broad range of universities in different continents, in order to stimulate an 'academic movement' to deepen the outcomes of the first objective for contributing to the development of the overall sustainability, also in the context of processes concerning sustainable urban development and acceptable changes of societal complexities. This implies to approach this issue as an aspect of the interrelatedness with both other fields.

Third, to prepare (a) a new leading and convincing working paper, to be presented to participants of the Paris conference on sustainability in December 2015, (b) to publish a summary of this working paper in e.g. the International New York Times, (c) to inform a manifold of academic institutes all over the world, using social media and the like.

Fourth, to prepare with help of the outcomes (application of this specific conceptual and analytical framework) a more fundamental research project in collaboration with university participants from all continents.

4.4.3   *Organization*

This project-group will be coordinated by the IASQ and (hopefully) also financially supported (= proposal) by ENEL, in order to appoint a coordinator and a small efficient infrastructure for starting and elaborating the research project, gathering and analysing information on global and national level etc. .

5. The second research project: start of urban comparison

5.1 Preparatory work

This section is a result of several types of recently carried out work. First, the manifold of investments also by the IASQ to assist processes in the city of The Hague (and its quarter Laak) preparing strategies oriented on sustainable urban development. This work resulted in the 'demonstrationproject Laak', financed by the European Commission, the Municipality and participants (including the IASQ). *[42]* Second, the participation in three international oriented conferences organized by the Municipality of Hangzhou, the so-called Hangzhou Forum discussing urban strategies and outcomes of this metropole.[43] These conferences took place in 2010, 2012 and 2014. These also resulted in a Chinese study to prepare further collaboration[44] Third, this paved the way for a **Memorandum of Understanding** between the Zhejiang University, the University of Sheffield and the IASQ to start the comparison of urban strategies as condition for understanding which strategies contribute to a sustainable urban development. In fact this MoU may be seen as the starting point of this research project. Fourth, the arguments are further discussed in the Vienna expert-meeting on social quality in February 2014, organized by the University of Aberdeen and financed by the European Science Foundation.[45] Fifth, this is followed by two meetings in Rome in the beginning of 2014 for discussing the possibilities for the Region of Rome to join this comparison and afterwards of Lisbon. This resulted into a preliminary proposal in June 2014.[46]

A sixth aspect of the preparatory work refers to the IASQ's recent work on sustainability (see previous section) and the collaboration with regard to studies about Hangzhou city, which resulted in an invitation to participate in a Euro-China project, financed by the European Commission and the Chinese Government. The objective was the exploration of the outcomes of the Jiaxing city model (of the Zhejiang Province) for the development of the

[42] Outcomes of this work are presented in the Working Paper Series nr. 2, nr. 5, nr. 6 (www.socialquality.org) as well as in the Annual Reports of the EFSQ, 2009 and 2010, as well as 2011 and 2012 (www.socialquality.org).
[43] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2012), '*Orientation, strategies and model (or experience) of the City of Hangzhou (Zhejiang province of mainland China) from a comparative perspective', (Amsterdam/The Hague: EFSQ, working Paper Series nr. 9, www.socialquality.org*)..
[44] Y. Li, 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*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 56-74.
[45] (1) C. Wallage (2014), *European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop on Social Quality in Europe: Vienna 19-21 February 2014'*, (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen), (2) C. Wallage 92014), '*European Science Foundation Exploratory Workshop on Social Quality: Scientific Report'*, (Aberdeen: university of Aberdeen), (3) L.J.G. van der Maesen (2014), '*Discussion-paper on behalf of the Vienna-meeting 19-21 February on development and application of social quality indicators in European Countries* ' (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ).
[46] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2014), '*A preliminary proposal for a collaboration with the 'Region of Rome' to start a comparison of (sustainable) Urban Development in Europe and Asia'* (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ).

environmental protection of this city in an international perspective. This resulted – with regard to the IASQ – in a comparison of environmental strategies of the Jiaxing city and the city of The Hague.[47] This comparative work was enabled as a result of the work carried out in the context of three Hangzhou Forum Conferences (see above) and the work carried out in the city of The Hague (see above). This also resulted in a general IASQ study about environmental issues, urban strategies, and the role of local governments, NGOs and community groups, also based on the outcomes of the Jiaxing model for environmental protection (see note-18).

5.2   *Exploration of the current problematic*

As outlined in section-4, the IASQ commented on the global debate about the development toward sustainability. 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 (see note-1). In order to fully understand sustainable urban development we should have a basic understanding of processes resulting into the development toward overall sustainability (see previous project). 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'. In other words the noun 'sustainability' should be conceptually related with the adjective 'sustainable' of sustainable urban development. This is not the case (see below). The social quality project can play an intermediary role for constituting the conceptual relationships.

And indeed, according a European-wide study, consensus about a conceptual framework to steer processes in all four main dimensions, also of urban circumstances is totally lacking. The different elements of sustainable development are often ill-balanced or integrated for a whole city or an important district, suburb, quarter of a city. Concluded is that often local professionals of urban development feel a trade-off between sustainable infrastructures and achieving more sustainable societies. 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 behaviour of the people using related services.[48] A main problem

[47] K. Wang (2014), '*Jiaxing Model and the Polder Model: Comparative Study on Public Participation in environmental Governance in Jiaxing and The Hague*' (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ).
[48] K. van Dijken, M. Grisel and W.Hafkamp (2008), '*Levers of Public Action for the Development of sustainable Cities: A European Study on Request by the French Government*', (The Hague: NICIS).

is the restriction of the 'non-defined' idea of sustainability to environmental issues only (ecocentric approach), separated from an implicit idea of sustainability as caused by complexities of human actions (anthropocentric approach).[49]

The need for new strategies has already been explained by the **UN Habitat**. It strongly criticizes 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 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'.*[50] It also says, that in order to create positive conditions in the near future, attention should be dedicated to 'sustainable development' of the interconnected urban or societal spaces in all continents.

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.[51] The reasons behind the increased attention on 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.[52] 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*

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[49] L.J.G. van der Maesen and H. Verkleij (2013), '*Annual Report 2011 and 2012 of the European Foundation on Social Quality*' (Amsterdam/The Hague: EFSQ, www.socialquality.org).
[50] UN (Habitat) (2009), *For a better Urban Future* (Paris: UN).
[51] UNDP China (2013), '*China National Human Development Report: Sustainable and Liveable Cities: Toward Ecological Civilization*', (Beijing: China Publishing Group Corporation).
[52] UNDP China, see note-51, p. i.

to establish checks and balances, and systems of monitoring and supervision. This often leads to the 'principal agent problem' for state-owned assets". [53]

It is of interest to compare the study about the application of social quality indicators[54] with the UNDP's proposals about monitoring, which are embedded in the traditional non-theorised 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".*[55] 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 would imply the application of a general conceptual framework which seems to be lacking. Creating such a framework is an intriguing and interesting challenge.

5.3 The demonstrationproject of the Dutch city of The Hague as frame of reference

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 social quality project 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 policy application address these issues? The investments could be related to previous research by social quality scholars concerning the policy areas of ageing, public health, migration, education, urban context, social housing, income, sport and employment, most of them published in the former **European Journal of Social Quality**. Also for methodological reasons the decision was made to concentrate on urban processes in a quarter of The Hague in order to pave the way for recognizing differences with other quarters and the city as a whole. Chosen is 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).[56] Based on the interpretations of four series of interviews by members of the social quality project with different key-persons in this city – made on request by the Municipality - two projects were

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[53] UNDP China, see note-51, p. 59
[54] Van der Maesen et al, see note-5, Van der Maesen, see note-12.
[55] UNDP China, see note-51, p. 91,
[56] 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).

launched on behalf of this quarter in 2009 to build up a difference with other quarters. First by the Municipality to start the 'Project Development Laak North' supported 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' for analysing processes in this quarter, coordinated by the EFSQ, called the Platform-Hacu.

The collaboration between the 'Project Development Laak North' and the 'Platform-Hacu' first resulted into a theoretical distinction between 'five worlds' which could be situated differently in the interplay of two basic societal tensions as illustrated in Figure-3.[57] Secondly it resulted into the start of an '***urban demonstrationproject'*** of Laak in 2011 to develop six innovative sub-projects to enable 'sustainable urban development' of this quarter of The Hague, with this theory in mind. [58] The objectives were:
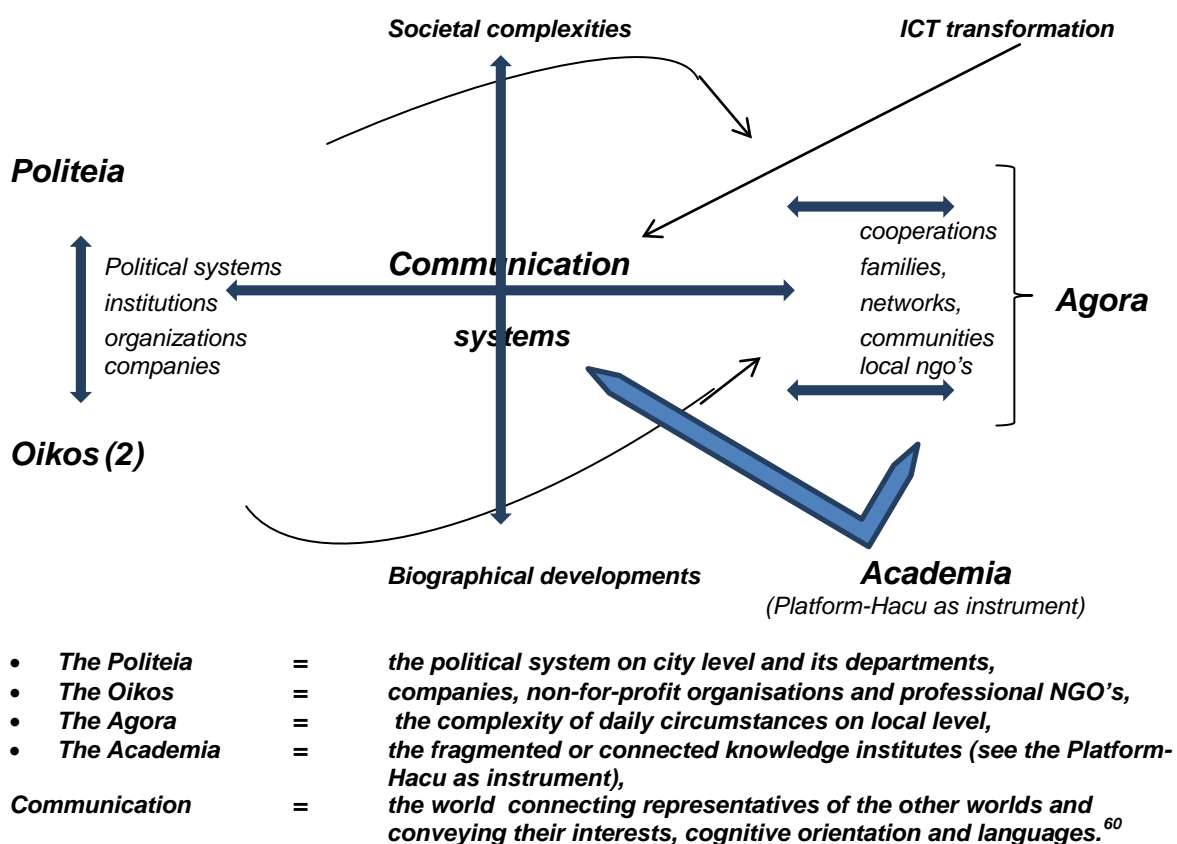
- To design a new form of care for elderly, steered by cooperatives of their communities, facilitated by caring institutions and the municipality,

- To develop new indoor-sports facilities for all ages under the lead of residents of Laak,

- To enable the constitution of community groups (or cooperations of residents) to push new micro-economic and cultural activities, to stimulate a new use of the public space, to involve community groups in modernizing education systems, 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, .

- to develop the Platform-Hacu as a crystallisation point of knowledge institutes, functioning as instrument to enhance 'social empowerment' of citizens in order to play a responsible role, called participation or, involvement in decision-making processes (an initiative from the side of the members of the social quality project on behalf of the demonstrationproject),

- to start of a Communicationcentre as instrument for connecting the representatives of the five worlds in such a way, they will play an equal and constuctive role in the 'sustainable urban development' of Laak (also initiated by members of the social quality project on behalf of the demonstrationproject).

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[57] This theme will be explained in the IASQ's Working Paper Series nr.16, see note-7.
[58] 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).

The challenge was (and is) to turn over the traditional oriented top-down approach by the political system (Politeia) and business groups (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 five worlds could be situated in the interplay of the ***two basic tensions*** as explained by the theory of social quality: between systems and communities and between societal developments and biographical developments (see note-5 and 6). This concerns an important addition of the theory of social quality, accomplished in this project (see Figure-3). The theory about the position of the four worlds and especially the role of the Agora as context of daily circumstances of citizens and the way a manifold of different interests influence the nature of the Agora has to be further enhanced. A crucial argument presents the ICT change, causing the 'third industrial revolution'.[59] This will provide an alternative for theories about governance, the civil society and the supposed role of the state and the market, well-known ideas in the context of the World Bank, also promoting the social capital.

Figure-3:   The five 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),*
- ***Communication***   =   *the world connecting representatives of the other worlds and conveying their interests, cognitive orientation and languages.[60]*

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[59] Rifkin, see note-40. See further: C. Wallage (2012), 'Can Information and communication Technology enhance Social quality'?', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 98-116.
[60] Van der Maesen et al, see note-49.

A specific objective of the social quality project (thus the IASQ) 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 final evaluation is forthcoming. Especially the constitution and operationalization of both instruments – the Communicationcentre and the Platform-Hacu – are essential in 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.

5..4   A European and Chinese collaboration: the application of the frame of reference

Some years ago the collaboration of 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.[61] 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.[62] Both activities - and the work carried out by the IASQ with regard to the field of overall sustainability - stimulated a partnership of the IASQ in the project of the EU-China Environmental Governance Programme (called EGP-project), strongly supported by Zhejiang University. Its objective is 'Public Participation of Environmental Governance in the Jiaxing City Model and its Applicability in the Zhejiang Province',[63] explained and elaborated in a discussion-paper.[64] The IASQ was invited to participate in this EGP-project following its recent work on sustainability and urban sustainable development. This was also the case for the University of Glasgow in the UK.[65] and the University of Leeds in the UK. [66]

The IASQ published two empirical studies in this project, one related to Jiaxing and one

[61] Van der Maesen, see note-43.
[62] Li et al, see note-44.
[63] *Center of Environmental Education and Communications of Zhejiang Province (CEECZJ), 'EU-China Environmental Governance programme (EGP)'*, Europe Aid/132-0055/I/ACT/CN.
[64] 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).
[65] N. Munro (2013), 'the Socio-political Bases of Willingness to Join Environmental NGOs in China: A Study in Social Cohesion', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol 3 (1), pp.57-82, p.59.
[66] H. Voss (2014), 'Environmental Public Participation in the UK', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol 4 (1), pp. 26-41, p.38.

related to The Hague. These explorations took place respectively at the end of 2013[67] and in the beginning of 2014[68] and were made to pave the way for a general comparison between Chinese and European approaches. In Jiaxing key residents, engaged with the Jiaxing model, were asked about (i) the supposed main characteristics of the model, (ii) who in their view are the key-persons and key-institutions playing a role in this model, (iii) what the structure is these people are acting in and the reason of this structure, (iv) and how the respondents describe the nature of the Jiaxing model. In order to really answer these questions it is important to know the view of the respondents on environmental challenges and problems of the city. What are the supposed main causes of the problems? Which instruments or tools are necessary for citizens to play an effective role for coping with these challenges and problems? Seen in the context of the Jiaxing model, are these tools or only part of these tools accessible and what are the consequences e.g. for the significance of this model for developing 'democratic processes' to change the environmental conditions of Jiaxing? More or less in the same vain these questions are discussed with representatives of environmental community groups and NGOs in the city of the Hague. [69]

The outcomes of this IASQ's involvement resulted in a study about general tendencies concerning overall sustainability and the relation with sustainable urban development, based on a better understanding of the applied strategies in Jiaxing city and three conferences about the outcomes of these strategies.[70] 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.[71] With this in mind it is of interest to publish the IASQ's policy-advice to the Province of Zhejiang on the base of its participation in the EGP-project:

"*Further enhancing the comparison with European experiences may be helpful to elaborate the Jiaxing model for environmental protection and its applicability for eight other cities/metropoles in the Zhejiang Province and other Asian and European cities as well. With Figure-3 and its explanation in mind, in order to elaborate this model and to implement it in other cities, the previous sections may deliver points of departure for the following policy advice.*

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[67] K. Wang (2014), 'Exploring *Jiaxing Model: Report of the Empirical Research on Public Participation in Environmental Governance in Jiaxing City.*' (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, working paper series).
[68] K. Wang (2014), '*Exploration of The Hague: Report about the Empirical Research on Public Participation in Environmental Governance in the city of The Hague'*, (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ, working paper series)
[69] Wang, see note- 47.
[70] Van der Maesen, see note-18.
[71] K. Lin (2011), The Prototype of Social Quality Theory and its Applicability to Asian Societies, *International Journal of Social Quality,* 1 (1), pp. 57-71

*First, it is worthwhile, to enhance the role of the **Academia** for:*

a.   *paving the way for a specific connection of universities with each of the eight cities and to organise an **intercity-platform** of these universities for creating points of departure to learn from each other. This is also important for debating the outcomes in comparison to those of other cities in Asia, Europe, et cetera.*

b.   *developing an equivocal conceptual framework to better understand the significance of applied concepts for analysing processes, strengthening the environmental protection of all these cities in the Province of Zhejiang and as an instrument for the comparison with other cities (ad-a).*

c.   *developing a better understanding of the work on behalf of the environmental protection as an aspect of 'sustainable urban development' to contribute to overall sustainability with the help of a more founded conceptual framework (ad-b). This will pave the way for connecting Jiaxing experiences with the Asian and the global debate on development toward sustainability. This connection is a condition for enhancing the work carried out in the Zhejiang Province and mainland China.*

Such an advice is recommended on international level since concepts as participation, governance, community development, information disclosure, democracy, sustainable development et cetera are – seen from a global perspective – understood in a confusing way. The Zhejiang Province in collaboration with Chinese universities can help to transcend this confusion. This proposal is implicitly subscribed by the Chinese UNDP in 2013.[72]

*Second, it is worthwhile to dedicate attention to the **Agora** in order:*

a. *to strengthen the position of main actors in the **Agora**, namely community based organisations, local ngo's and individuals. Implicitly this is one of the main conclusions of the last Hangzhou Forum of November 2014.[73] In terms of many of its participants 'social organizations on local level' should play a more responsible role in the elaboration of daily circumstances and also with regard to environmental protection. They need facilities to play this role as citizens in their own terms.*

b. *To develop relationships between these main actors and representatives of the Academia to have an adequate access to information, that may be comparable with the information presented by the local government (see **Politeia**) for establishing 'checks and balances'. This is important for (1) collaborating with the government and its departments and (2) with companies **(Oikos)** in order to cope with cities on environmental issues together.*

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[72] UNDP China, see note-51, p.59.
[73] Hangzhou Forum (2014), '*2014 Life & Development Forum: Assembly of Cases on Urban Governance'*, (Hangzhou: Hangzhou Municipality).

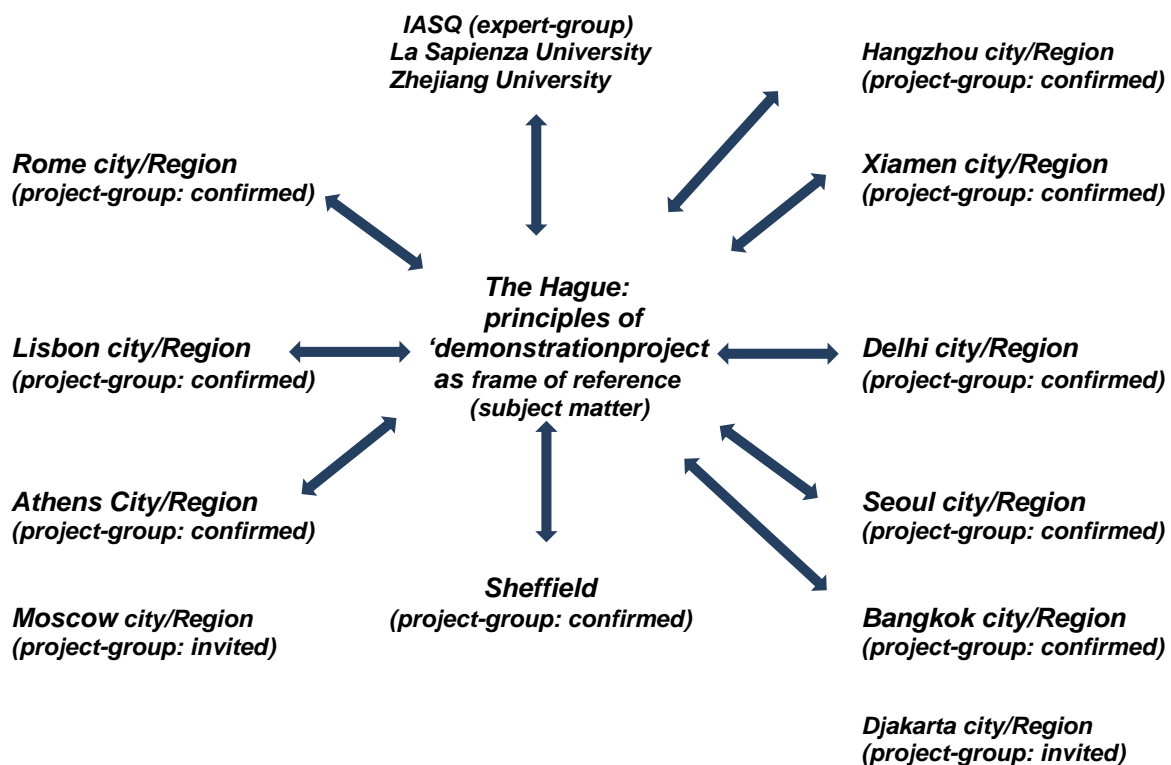*Third, it is important to elaborate a **modern system of communication** for:*

a. *The operationalization of the first and second advice,*

b. *connecting the different worlds of the political systems, companies, community groups and academics in an equal way.*

5.5   The contours of the research project 'sustainable urban development'

5.5.1   The collaboration of the partners

The preliminary ideas about the first partners of the first exploration of processes concerning 'sustainable urban development' are:

Figure-4:   ***The partners of the global urban project***

IASQ (expert-group)
La Sapienza University
Zhejiang University

Hangzhou city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Rome city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Xiamen city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

The Hague:
principles of
'demonstrationproject
as frame of reference
(subject matter)

Lisbon city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Delhi city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Athens City/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Seoul city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Moscow city/Region
(project-group: invited)

Sheffield
(project-group: confirmed)

Bangkok city/Region
(project-group: confirmed)

Djakarta city/Region
(project-group: invited)

5.5.2   A project-group of the research project

The proposal at this stage is, that each participating city/region forms a project-group with representatives of (1) university, (2) Research Department of the city, (3) other engaged institutes in each city/metropole/region. Therefore one of the partners will deliver a 'project-coordinator'. The IASQ, La Sapienza and the Zhejiang University also form an expert-group from different disciplines, to be coordinated by the IASQ. The different groups will create a ***'community of experts'***. The 'The Hague social quality group' will be invited to join this

'community of experts' in order to present the principles of the 'demonstrationproject' of the city of The Hague (applied in its quarter Laak).

5.5.3   Objectives of the 'community of experts'

First, to start with a general exploration of applied strategies in all those cities and to identify interesting quarters in each city/metropole, applying strategies which are either implicitly or explicitly connected with aspects of 'sustainable urban development', and to compare these strategies with the help of the social quality conceptual and analytical framework and the applied principles of the demonstrationproject in the quarter of Laak of the city of the Hague.

Second, to especially analyse the activities by representatives of the Agora concerning the chosen quarter as point of reference in order to prepare collaboration with their *'community based powers'.* This will facilitate an analysis of the real features of daily circumstances and to judge the nature of its sustainable development with the help of the applied framework. This implies the application of modern forms of communication.[74]

Third, to connect these outcomes with a global oriented understanding of 'sustainable urban development' in order to create global oriented points of departure as 'community of experts' to comment on the applied strategies and outcomes thus far, and to prepare a fundamental research project based on these exploration to further stimulate a global debate on sustainable urban development of other metropoles.

5.5.4   Organization

This project-group will be coordinated by the IASQ and (hopefully) also financially supported (= proposal) with the help of an application made in collaboration with the authorities of the **Region of Rome** in order to start with this project. As explained in section-4, the IASQ is – with support by Eurispes in Rome – in contact with the **Aldo Della Rocca Foundation** in order to connect this research project with explorations about the 'crisis of cities' in the context of the United Nations (see notes 9 and 10).

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[74] In this context of interest is the recent social quality study: S. Corbett (2014), '*A Critical Qualitative Study of the Relationship between Social Empowerment and Participatory Democracy in the UK*', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 4 (1), pp. 7-26.

6. The third research project about jobs, careers and the role of the unions

6.1. Preparatory work

The EFSQ (as predecessor the IASQ) paid a great deal of attention to employment issues as an important aspect of the socio-economic dimension. First, in 2001 the European Commission financed a project about 'employment and social quality', with academic partners from nine Member States. This resulted in nine national reports, a common report and an extensive publication.[75] Second, afterwards Eurispes in Rome as well as many associated universities including the EFSQ, dedicated attention to the issue of the 'European Social Model'[76] and – as its contra point – the issue of increasing Precarity.[77] This also resulted in meetings with Sindnova in Rome, the Institute for Innovation in the world of the Trade Unions.[78] Third, this section is also inspired by three recent studies, produced recently for presenting outcomes of experiments about work innovation and general forms of innovation to create jobs and career.[79] This project should take on board this work and connect it with main transformations in especially the socio-economic dimension of to-day. The consciousness that these aspects of societal complexities should be related with general issues referring to the debate on overall sustainability and sustainable urban development is increasing. This is also demonstrated by the German Council on Sustainable Development, which says, that "*Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals on a national scale will require the National Sustainable Strategy to use systematic and integrative mechanisms that would contribute to effective delivering against global goals and to an effectively balance the economic social and environmental dimensions under each goa*l".[80] It is interesting to notice that this Council also applies this traditional threefold distinction, referred to in section-4. It is important to analyse what the differences are between this threefold and the IASQ's proposed fourfold distinction with regard to the subject matter of this third research project. Of interest is the referral in the German Council's report to three types of integration: "(1) *a systemic, holistic, systems-based approach to frameworks for sustainable development*

[75] F. Nectoux, L .J.G. van der Maesen and T. Korver (eds) (2003), 'Flexibility and Security in Employment: A Social Quality Perspective', *The European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 4 (1&2), pp. 1-260.

[76] See three conferences organised by Eurispes and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung about the European Social Model in Rome recently, see Van der Maesen et al, note-5, Chapter-11.

[77] P. Herrmann and L.J.G. van der Maesen (2008), *'Precarity: Approaching New Patterns of Societal (Dis)Integration*, (Amsterdam/The Hague: EFSQ, Working Paper Series nr. 1, www.socialquality.org).

[78] L.J.G. van der Maesen, P. Herrmann (2014), 'A *proposal on behalf of Sindnova for starting the exploration of the role of trade unions in the era of far reaching transformations',* (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ).

[79] (1) P.R.A. Oeij, D. Dhondt, T. Korver (2011), 'Workplace Innovation, Social Innovation, and Social Quality', *International Journal of Social Quality,* Vol. 1 (2), pp. 31-50. (2) T. Korver (2014), 'From Entitlements to Provisions – and Back', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 4 (2), pp. 69-86. (3) P. Oeij, E. de Vroome, A. Bolland, R. Grundemann and L. van Teeffelen (2014), 'Investing In Workplace Innovation Pays Off for SMEs: A Regional Innovation Initiative from the Netherlands', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 4 (2), pp. 86-100.

[80] A. Cutter (2014), '*Sustainable Development Goals and Integration; Achieving a better balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions'*, (German Council of Sustainable Development, https://www.globalreporting.org.network/

where crosscutting, horizontal themes are used over an approach based on traditional vertical siloes. A systems-based approach reflects the true complexity of the interconnected world in which we live, (2) the balancing of the three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) within goals, target sets and individual targets, (3) the use of explicit interlinkages between themes to highlight and reinforce the interconnections between themes and breakdown vertical siloes". [81] Fourth, a main part of this section is based on a draft paper by Ton Korver, dedicated to the role of the unions for playing a new and adequate role to answer the ongoing transformation of societal complexities. [82] It concerns an essential aspect of the economic dimension and should be approached according to also the proposals in the German Council's report.

6.2   Exploration of the problematic in general sense

In a document by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung the question is raised 'how to produce socially just, sustainable and green dynamic growth for a good society'?[83] Interesting is in fact that this question is an expression of the necessity to understand the interrelatedness of the three fields (see Figure-2). The economic dimension plays a huge role. The dominant powers created a 'casino capitalism': "*the root cause of the sovereign debt crisis lies in the financial crisis, In fact, it was the Ponzi schemes of hedge funds and investment banks that drove the global economy over the cliff. In the frenzy of the US real estate bubble, banks and investors over-leveraged themselves to a degree that even a slight down-turn could wipe out their entire stock. Unable to assess risk properly. Wall Street financial wizards based their schemes on the unrealistic assumption that interest rates could never go up, and real estate process could never fall. When they did, the casino came to a crashing halt and the financial system went into cardiac arrest.*" [84]

Peter Herrmann presented some interpretations of essential aspects of changes, caused by the uncontrolled strategies and interests playing the main role in the economic dimension in the Social Quality conference of 31 October 2014 – organized by Eurispes and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.[85] Leaving a structural analysis aside, the European Union has not been able to address the crisis, and actually it can be seen as part of a global political arena, leading

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[81] Cutter, see note-80, p.3
[82] T. Korver (2015), '*What should unions do? A new manifesto for labor' (Amsterdam)*
[83] M. Saxer (2013), 'The Economy of Tomorrow: How to produce socially just, sustainable and green dynamic growth for a Good Society', (Friedrich –Ebert-Stiftung/Economy of tomorrow: http://www.fesasorg/pages/shaping-the-economy-of-tomorrow- in-a-sustainable-way/publications.php.
[84] Saxer, see note-83, p.2.
[85] P. Herrmann (2014), 'Strengthening *the European Social Model by Going Beyond: A contribution to the Conference on the European Social Model and Social Quali*ty, October 2014', (Rome: Eurispes).

straight into it, deepening and accelerating it. In actual fact we find major challenges today, most of them well-known and often discussed. A major reason for the failing of the debates and analysis was and is that the societal complexities and interdependencies within these complexities and with both other fields (Figure-2) has not sufficiently been considered: a matter of power, interest and each running his own way, even if they may have – or claim to have – the same vision. Proposals for alternatives were made from different sides, too often limited to models and dreams, simply based on abstract values. However, the reality needs to go beyond this. According to Herrmann, one of the major steps was shown in November 2013, coming from an angle that was perhaps unexpected by many, Pope Francis, writing about an economy that kills. More important than this statement was another part of that paragraph, asking: "*How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market losses two points. This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized, without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.*"[86]

According to Peter Herrmann we may notice, while referring to the four conditional factors of social quality - and see Figure-5 about the Social Quality Architecture - an exorbitant growth of capital and productive potentials, that is going hand in hand with

- A decreasing GDP and an increasing inequality instead of **socio-economic security** for all,
- A growth that is translated into production of waste, speculation and privatisation of public goods - which translates into 'values' equal 'consumables' instead of providing a foundation for **social cohesion,**
- An employment which is losing its productive dimension – and also its function of 'making a living'. Precarity is the norm instead of suggesting a new take on socially meaningful activities and cooperation that secures **social inclusion**.
- That migration is not a problem – though it is made being a problem as long as it is an answer to which individuals are forced by the externalisation of costs of production instead of seeing the major potential for **social empowerment.**

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[86] Pope Francis (2013), "*Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, consecrated persons and the Lay Faithful on the proclamation of the gospel in today's world'*, (Citta dels Vaticano: libreria Editrice Vaticana (http//w2.vatican.va/content/franscesco/en/apost exhortations/documents/papa francesco esortazione-ap 20131124, evangelii-guadium.html-28 October).

Figure-5:   The Social Quality Architecture [87]

constitutional factors (processes)	**conditional factors** (opportunities and 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*
instruments of **profiles** *for the qualification of the changes of the constitutional factors*	*instruments of* **indicators** *for understanding the changes of the conditional factors*	*instruments of* **criteria** *to judge the outcomes of the linking of the changes of the conditional and the constitutional factors*
cognitive/ emotional aspects	objective aspects	ethical aspects

All answers will remain a torso as long as we do not manage to re-embed all policy areas of societal complexities into one guiding principle, which is oriented on 'the social' as an outcome of the interaction between people (constituted as actors) and their constructed and natural environment. Its subject matter refers to people's interrelated productive and reproductive relationships.[88] The objective conditions of making use of the potentials will allow to translate social justice (equity), solidarity, equal value and human dignity, namely the normative factors presented in the framework of social quality, into meaningful parameters of an analytical tool and an instrument to systematically develop alternatives. This approach differs from the well-known thinking about the 'European Social Model' or the 'Social Models' in different Member States of the European Union. [89] See Herrmann's implicit answer.[90] This issue should be taken on board in this research project.

A general new theoretical framework is needed (see Figure-2). As we argued in section-4 also a new approach for developing the sustainability of cities needs to be fundamental, integral and systemic. This is also a consequence – and see the studies by Rifkin – that due to ICT developments we find ourselves living more and more in a global space. Yet our existing modes of consciousness are structured for earlier eras of history, while these are fading away. He argues, *"humanity finds itself on the cusp of its greatest experiment to date: refashioning human consciousness, so that human beings can mutually live and flourish in*

[87] Van der Maesen et al, see note-5, p.66.
[88] Van der Maesen et al, see note-5, Chapter 111 and 1V.
[89] See for example the approach by the European Trade Union Institute in Brussels: P. Pochet (2015*), 'The Nordic Model is No Longer a Holy Grail'*, (Brussels: Etui: http:www.socialeurope.eu/author/Phillippe-pochet).
[90] Herrmann, see note- 85.

the new globalizing society." [91] This requires a socio-cultural transition. Added should be the question how to eradicate extreme poverty in mega- and hyper cities as aspects of the so-called 'globalizing society'? This refers to power relations, thus the socio-political argument. The transition of the socio-cultural and socio-political dimensions as a condition for new human relations and modes of production may take generations instead of a couple of decades, especially in the developing world. This also implies the need for drastic short term policy measures in order to address the unavoidable challenges.

6.3   *Orientation on the role of the unions; the subject matter of this project* [92]

6.3.1   *The change from jobs to careers*

This research-project dedicates attention to a change of focus from jobs to careers. When asking what unions *should* do in this era of transformation (huge unemployment in Europe, increase of labor supply all over the world, the consequences of the ICT-revolution), according to Korver we should start by changing the emphasis *from* jobs *to* careers. In his view this implies a long-term vision and an organization of the supply of labor compatible with that long-term vision. [93] There are four basic *propositions* for what unions 'should' do. *Proposition 1* is that unions should aim to supply labor, i.e. to influence the *conditions* of the very supply of labor. *Proposition 2* is that anyone performing *socially validated work* (which is work performed and recognized as a *duty* to somebody else) is a member of *the occupational population.* Next, *proposition 3* is that unions *should* organize the whole of this occupational population, not only the wage-earners. Finally, *proposition 4* is that the criterion for rewarding socially validated work is the *Hicksian income.*

6.3.2. First proposition

The *first proposition* entails that if the supply of labor is unlimited unions stand no chance. This is, in itself, no more than a restatement of the classic Lewis-thesis on labor supply (Lewis, 1954; also: Kindleberger 1967; Temin 2002). Given an infinitely elastic labor supply wages are depressed, capital gains ('savings' in the original Lewis model) are up, and labor

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Resistance is at a low. Today, with an effectively worldwide supply of labor, given expanding technological possibilities and given a politically permissive environment, a 'globalized' labor force has come to the fore. That is, the supply of labor has become 'unlimited' indeed.[94] In our view, there is a direct and causal link between the era of globalization since the eighties and the concomitant weakening of the position of unions. We emphasize 'global', not 'international'. Due to a failing political regulation of the supply of labor we prefer the term 'global' instead of 'international'. Both money and labor have become global today – not international.[95]

6.3.3   Second proposition

What is 'socially validated' work (*proposition 2*)? The description we follow is that work is the performing of a recognized duty to someone else. If so, the work deserves remuneration, i.e. social validation, in terms of money and 'social drawing rights' (Supiot, 2001, 2010, and 2013). However innocuous this may sound, its ramifications are vast. *First*, there is no mention of an employer. There is someone who benefits and there are benefits. It may be the case that the persons do not appreciate the benefits (the prison guard is an obvious instance) but the criterion in the end is not 'persons', the criterion is 'benefits'. Usually they will come and go together but whenever and wherever they collide, it is the benefits that win. That is, if the benefits are deemed socially acceptable we have work. *Second,* it means that the category of work is greatly widened, when compared with the actual situation. The worlds of volunteer activities and of informal care are part and parcel of 'socially validated work' – and badly need to be treated accordingly. And *third*, there is no legal hierarchy in the whole edifice of the occupational population: all are entitled to payment and all are, employer or no employer, entitled to social insurance, to 'social drawing rights'. Finally, and *fourth*, the social drawing rights are not limited to what one did today and yesterday, they are geared to one's occupational lifecycle, to one's career.

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[94] Unlimited in the systemic sense of the word: any system that lacks the capacity to close itself before and as a condition of opening up to its environments is a system beyond limits, is an 'allopoeitic' system, a system driven by powers it cannot influence. By the same token such a system cannot influence the *conditions* under which it is put into action. Conditions limit the supply, they are constraints on the use of the (components of the) system of labor supply. Among such conditions unions figure, as does protective legislation. The latter is no longer protective or, more precisely, it is only protective to the degree that it enhances competitiveness. Protection, in the EU at least, has become a by-product of competition (Supiot 2010).

[95] From Polanyi (1944) and De Brunhoff (1976) we borrow the insight that money and labor power are 'fictitious commodities', never completely in the market, never completely beyond the state (we should add that for Polanyi land is a fictitious commodity as well). Luhmann (1988) retains the emphasis on money and skips the emphasis on labor power; Korver (1990) expands on labor power and is practically silent on money. One way of putting the Polanyi/De Brunhoff insight in perspective is to say that money and labor power are *promises* (the John Commons dictum of the 'promise to obey commands' for labor, the I Owe You for money) to deliver, not yet the delivery as such. During the past thirty years we see a widening of the realm of markets and a shrinking of the realm of the state. If the ideas of Polanyi and De Brunhoff are still valid today we may typify the crisis of 2008 and on as a crisis in the regulatory capacity of the state, or, rather, as a *political* crisis. That is why we resort to 'global' and not to 'international' – global as the marker of political failure.

6.3.4   Third proposition

When we now turn to the *third proposition* we cannot but conclude that what unions do is a far cry from the demand of organizing the whole of the occupational population. Unions as we know them have protected wage earners, by influencing their relationship with the employer. They did so through organizing countervailing power (Galbraith 1952), relative to the power of the employer and, historically quite often, the power of the state. Though all unions by definition aim at a redress in power balances, the unions have been far less militant in challenging the authority of the employer to organize the workplace and decide on the allocation of the labor power the employer had hired. The latter are within the authority of the employer; it is the employer who assigns and monitors the tasks to be performed. By the same token, unions focus on the job and its conditions, not on careers and their conditions. The rule of job-bound authority extends into the rule of social security, which has consequently been organized along the same lines (the employment relationship taken as an authority relation). In our view, these are not union strongholds, they are union brakes – and the brakes of the employment relationship should be loosened. Shifting the weight of organizing from wage labor to the occupational population is a step in that direction.

6.3.5   Fourth proposition

The *fourth proposition* entails that the rewards of work have to cover the loss of working power due to work and that social drawing rights should cover the costs incurred when – if the present activity does not allow for this – one shifts from one type of activity to the next, the costs of *transition.* It is not 'wages' which are determining for the adequacy of rewards, it is the upkeep of the strength of one's physical (bodily fatigue, rest and recuperation time), psychological (stress and control) and intellectual (cognition and cognitive diversity) powers which are determining the adequacy of rewards ('it would seem that we ought to define a man's income as the maximum value which he can consume during a week, and still expect to be as well off at the end of the week as he was at the beginning'. Hicks 1968[2]: 172). That is, we need an income concept that separates stocks ('capital', 'labor power') from flows ('incomes'). Hicks calls this the 'central meaning' of income, whether emanating from wages or other sources, and whether measured per week, per day, per month or per year. For capital we recognize, if only for taxing purposes, depreciation, the sum of which is deducted from the total flow of income of a company – in order to safeguard the value of the company's capital. Oddly enough, such a practice does not exist for labor. In a Hicksian perspective, however, depreciation allowances for labor are exactly the type of provision needed. It might,

for the first time as far as we know, finally make sense of the habit of depicting labor power as a type of capital, human 'capital'.

6.3.6   Change from employment (job) to career

Income can be positive in terms of flow (even a lousy job pays something), yet may become negative once we allow for the loss of value of one's labor power during work or, as the case may be, during periods of unemployment when one's capacities are unused and therewith run the danger of drying up. The time frame for labor power, that is, is the career, not the job, and spells of unemployment, although usually a threat to one's career can actually be used to ease and facilitate career transitions instead of hampering, delaying and even arresting one's career options. We find the present arrangements for unemployment peculiarly unresponsive to the needs of the career. They are geared to the short-term perspective of labor demand, not to the long-term need of careers. They are geared to the sphere of *functionings* rather than to the sphere of *capabilities* (Sen 1987a, 1987b, 1999). Essential is a change in direction, a change that we summarize as the *transition* (in the vein of Günther Schmid, see Schmid 2006; Korver and Oeij 2004) from employment (a 'job') to career. Such a transition is implied by the Hicksian income criterion – there is no way of having the one without the other. A *transition* to a career (as distinct from a job) perspective is inevitable, considering that the nominal employment rate must be higher than the effective rate (therewith opening up the possibility of dealing with unemployment, not as an inadvertent event of job loss but as an advertent opportunity to prepare for and actually execute a career *transition*) and considering as well that no one enterprise or business is large and diversified enough to offer sufficient and sufficiently diverse career options and opportunities.

6.3.7   A model based on the theory of social quality (social Quality Architecture)

We propose to insert the variables outlined above into a model, derived from the theory of social quality (hereafter: SQT). As a very shorthand introduction in SQT, the major operative distinction there is between 'constitutional' and 'conditional' factors in the distribution of life chances (see Figure-5). *Constitutional* factors, factors on ability and agency, determining the 'power to', are: personal *security* – i.e. rights and acceptable rules; social *recognition*; social *responsiveness* – i.e. openness of groups, communities and systems; personal *capacity* – i.e. the possibilities to relate to other people. Constitutional factors denote the inevitable tension between the demands of one's biography on the one hand, and the social constraints in its realization on the other hand. *Conditional* factors, the factors which influence the

opportunities and resources for social action, the 'power over', are: socio-economic *security* – i.e. ownership of resources over time; social *cohesion* – i.e. collectively accepted values and norms; social *inclusion* – i.e. accessibility of the institutional and structural context, a condition to act as a responsible citizen; social *empowerment* –i.e. social enhancement of the capability to interact in daily life.

For our purposes SQT is useful in that it enables us to create a model, highlighting the present-day shift in emphasis from the enhancement of constitutional factors first and conditional factors second, to an emphasis on conditional factors first and constitutional factors second, a shift, that is, from emphasizing the power to as a condition for the power over to an emphasis on the power over as a condition of the power to. The idea in the model of the 'shift' is that policies enhancing the power *to* support the integrity, the autonomy of the person (*softening* the tension between opportunities/contingencies on the one hand, and social constraints on the other), while policies with the power *over* in first place tend to constrain personal autonomy (*sharpening* the tension between the life world, the 'community' of persons, on the one hand, and the formally organized world of rule-making and distribution, the 'society' of citizens, on the other).

As far as constitutional factors go, it is clear that the Hicksian income criterion is a necessary prerequisite of it, and that the present-day tendency of stripping that criterion of essential features does indeed threaten the viability of our constitutional factors. Personal security (rights and acceptable rules) is under siege in our unruly world of work, employment and assignment. Social recognition (being accepted as and for what you are) has been curtailed: those without jobs and/or incomes lose in terms of social recognition. Social responsiveness (openness to the world beyond you), in its turn, is becoming contingent upon more or less closed 'networks' on the one, upon an array of 'credentials' on the other hand. And personal capacity (the options to connect) is transformed from a developmental opening into a developmental form of closure. Why? We venture to suggest that the answer is in the changes, the deep transformations, in the makeup of the conditional factors of social quality, in the changes in the arena of the struggle over the distribution of the 'power over', the power over resources and the access/closure of opportunities to realize one's life plans, projects, programs.

We can be short on conditions. We live in a world where 'precariousness' has become a household word, and whatever that may entail, socio-economic security does not belong in it. And what exactly is represented by social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment

in a world where working people - dispersed over the globe in vast logistically designed chains of producing, distributing, transporting and delivering – no longer meet, talk, deliberate and interact while working and where the communication of work, employment and assignments is the privilege of those who issue the orders, not of those who perform the tasks?

So, what should unions do? Even a cursory glance at the state of the unions today shows retreat, defense, a reduced scale and scope, a playing field where principals and employers hold the advantage over agents and employees. In order to counter these developments we do not propose to return to the old slogans of '*international* solidarity and cooperation'. Instead, we propose a *general* baseline to which all unions and their functional equivalents can, as we believe they can, adhere to. The baseline consists of the four basic propositions, outlined above. The mechanism to realize them is, in our view, the rollback of the emphasis on 'power over' and the re-instatement and completion of the emphasis on 'power to'. A first approximation to that effect is the broadening of the recruitment of union members: from employees to the occupational population.

6.3.8   The Occupational Population

No union ever formally employed the Hicks criterion, but many of their strivings were, indeed, in its spirit. Many unions indeed did fight for and did succeed in the attainment of some aspects of the Hicksian income – most notably by introducing minimum-wage clauses and age-related elements of rewards (reflecting age-related wear and tear of capacities) in collective bargaining agreements and/or in employment legislation. Other aspects have been tackled, albeit with less success, in particular in the sphere of working conditions. Quality of Working Life (QWL) initiatives have a long and rich history but it is a restricted history, even more restricted than the reservation of the benefits of organizing to wage-labor only. Where QWL was most needed it was largely invisible, be it then in the shape of compensation for accidents, irreparable injuries and work-related diseases, a type of compensation that is always too little and too late. Labor legislation is by now a part of labor economics – when it pays it is upheld, when it does not it is circumvented.

Even in the best of cases a decent wage does not cover the costs of retraining, of additional education, of bridging the sometimes prolonged periods of unemployment or of part-time employment due to the combination of work and care. Most wages, moreover, are not even 'decent' and there is a growing number of workers who do not work for a wage but for an,

unregulated, fee. Amazon's 'mechanical Turk' is undoubtedly not yet the final station on the track of separating 'jobs' and careers. Unions try to re-integrate this type of shoddy work into the employment relationship – they had better focus on social drawing rights, on the field of social insurance and social security, of social security legislation, on a partial basic income and transition of facilities and rights.

So far, the career has been, if at all, no more than a by-product of the job, as in lifetime employment relationships and – more as a matter of course, or rather, as a co-incidence – in occupational and professional labor markets. The past thirty years, lifetime employment relations disappeared and, even more tellingly, the employment relationship itself has imploded. The supply of labor is effectively world-wide and it can be tapped at many locations and beyond any formal employment relationship. The workforce of the world is dispersed and more often than not the employer is untraceable. The employer has left the scene, to make place for the 'principal'. The employee as well is getting outflanked by a whole series of 'agents'. The employer/employee relationship (the employment relationship) is losing ground to the principal/agent relationship. Most unions seem to deny this unmistakable development, acting as if it is no more than a temporary setback. The union expectations, borne out by the demands unions make, is that the regular employment relationship is still the prevailing norm. By the same token all other relationships are the exception, are deviations from the norm.

The actual situation of unions reflects more than a long-term trend of a weakening of the organized effort of workers. Unions have lost their grip on the institutions of the welfare state as well, as evidenced in the growing number of other-imposed constraints for unemployed and other-employed, and for those on welfare. Social security has, paradoxically, become a major source of uncertainty. The workfare state is the obvious and apt illustration. The workfare state is, whatever else it may be, no boon for the unions. The workfare state can be purely public and it can be a public/private endeavor but unions do not figure in either the public or the private arm of workfare. As an organizer of the supply of labor, the core traditional function of the unions, the unions do not find any recognition, and unions without a function are not unions but adjuncts of policies designed elsewhere. In the EU their function has become, in particular since the introduction of the euro, to adapt to movements in the business cycle – a cycle they hardly influence, let alone control.

6.4   The contours of the research project 'the role of the unions'

6.4.1 The project-group of the research project

In collaboration with la Sapienza University in Rome, the Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and institutes as e.g. the ETUI (European Trade Union Institute in Brussels), Sindnova in Rome, the IASQ will form a new project group of experts:

- with representatives of these partners,
- representatives of universities in European and the Asia-Pacific Region which are interested to apply the social quality perspective on the fundamental changes of the economic dimension on global, regional and nation level.

6.4.2 The objectives of the project-group

First to explore current ideas about the role of the unions and the changes of labour conditions - also due to the consequences of the ICT revolution - from a social quality perspective. Therefore it is important to analyse current ideas within the circles of trade unions about these changes and conditions, as well as ideas of comparable institutions in other Member States, the ILO in Genève and comparable institutes in the Asia-Pacific Region,

Second, that the outcomes of the first and second investments will be connected with the current stage of social quality thinking (theory, methodology and approach), in order to design strategies for policy makers on this basis how to address related problems in a new way. It is important to compare the outcomes with the current discourse in Europe about 'Social Europe', as presented in the 'Social Europe 2019 project' that is run in cooperation with the Hans Böckler Stiftung and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. [96] This may result into a more fundamental research-plan.

6.4.3 Organization

This project-group will be coordinated by the IASQ and (hopefully) also financial supported (= proposal) to start this research project by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and e.g. Etui in Brussels.

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[96] Social Europe (http://www.socialeurope.eu) and email: info@socialeurope.eu

7. The fourth research project on the theory, methodology and application; a condition for the proposed summer schools on social quality

7.1   Preparatory work

Important preparatory work was carried out, first, between 1995 and 2003. This especially concerned explorations of policy areas as public health, ageing, employment, urban development and the development of the theory on social quality. Two main books were published, the first for the introduction of the theory, referring to interpretations of the state of affairs of these policy areas[97] and the second to present a first design of the social quality theory based on a more thorough analysis of different policy areas.[98] This paved the way, third, for a manifold of projects co-financed by the European Commission about, for example, employment (see previous section) and with regard to the development of social quality indicators. These were applied in fourteen Member States of the European Union.[99] This again enabled collaboration with universities in the Asian-Pacific Region, the outcomes of which were discussed in seven Asian-Pacific conferences on social quality. This stimulated the second wave of the application of social quality indicators, namely in seven Asian-pacific regions. Working Paper Series nr. 13 on the history of the social quality project presents an overview of this work until 2015.[100] In particular, this section is based, fourth, on the third book on social quality, presenting the theoretical and empirical work until 2012.[101] This section also refers to two related studies to prepare a new step at theoretical and methodological level, namely with regard to the comments on the Stiglitz, Sen and Fitoussi-Report[102] and the comments on the indicators' approach by the World Bank and the UNDP, equalizing these indicators with 'monitoring devices'.[103] The preparatory work refers fifth to the initiatives undertaken by the University of Aberdeen: the organisation of an expert-meeting in March 2013 in order to pave the way for a second stage of social quality indicators' research in Europe.[104] The work carried out on behalf of the conference on the European Social Model and Social Quality, organized by Eurispes and the Friedrich-Ebert-

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[97] W.A. Beck, L.J.G. van der Maesen, A.C. Walker (eds) (1998), '*The Social Quality of Europe'*, (The Hague/London/ Boston: Kluwer Law International); in paperback Bristol: Policy Press, 1999.

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

[99] D. Gordon, L.J.G. van der Maesen, H. Verkleij (eds) (2005), 'Indicators of Social quality: Applications in fourteen European countries', *The European Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 5 (1&2), pp. 1-301.

[100] L.J.G. van der Maesen, and A.C. Walker (2014), 'T*he Start and Development of the Social Quality Approach Between 1994 en 2015*', (Amsterdam/The Hague: IASQ), Working Paper Series nr. 13, www.socialquality.org).

[101] Van der Maesen et al, see note-5.

[102] P. Herrmann (2012) 'Economic Performance, Social Progress and Social Quality: The Stiglitz, Sen, Fitoussi Report', *International Journal on Social Quality,* Vol. 2 (1), pp. 41-56.

[103] Van der Maesen, see note-13.

[104] See letter about the outcomes: L.J.G. van der Maesen' 'Developing social quality indicators': outcomes of the Aberdeen meeting', IASQ, Amsterdam/The Hague, 24 December 2013. This meeting paved the way for the Vienna expert-meeting, see note-45.

Stiftung in October 2014 concerned the sixth aspect.[105] A seventh aspect of the preparatory work refers to the IASQ's operationalisation of the Protocol about the collaboration of La Sapienza University in Rome and the Zhejiang University in Hangzhou (see Figure-1), namely many discussion papers and some versions of the Business-plan (see note-6) which may be appreciated as a guideline for this and the three other research projects. Seventh, the production of Working Paper Series nr. 16 will function as theoretical background information for all four research projects.[106] It is based on different lectures, presented since the October 2014 conference in Rome.[107] With this research-proposal we will pave the way for the preparation of summer schools on social quality by respectively the La Sapienza University and the Zhejiang University. Therefore this proposal should also function as a support for the proposed Interdisciplinary Groups of experts of both universities (**the IDG's**), responsible for these summer schools (see Figure-1).

7.2   Which conceptual and analytical framework is used?

Especially from the documents referred to above we can derive the arguments that the social quality project should address essential aspects of the three fields (see Figure-2) as well as thus to connect the outcomes of related analyses. In other words, the challenge is to also prepare a connection of the work of the three project-groups as presented in the previous sections in order to develop a comprehensive approach. Given the global character of these four projects plans are made to change the infrastructure of the social quality project. This is illustrated in Figure-1. The IASQ as intermediary is in particular oriented on global projects (see the four research-projects) as support for the IDG's, the Observatories, their summer schools and general conferences and workshops.

An interesting point of reference for the fourth research project delivers the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union, published in 2007. Among all other important issues it was solemnly declared that all Member States aim to develop overall sustainability and an effective consistency of the European system. This implies a contribution to the empowerment of EU-citizens, and to strengthen human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law. Referred is also to the idea of a common 'European Social Model' as a translation of central European values into politics to realize maintenance of these values in daily circumstances. Given the Union's aim at sustainable development it needs a balanced economic growth and

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[105] L.J.G. van der Maesen (2014), *'Background Information on behalf of the conference on the European Social Model and Social Quality in October 2014: Going beyond the European Social Model, a presentation from the IASQ'*, (Rome: Eurispes).
[106] Van der Maesen, see note-7.
[107] See note-8

price stability. It will strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among EU Member States.[108] A main focus of the Rome conference on social quality in October 2014 was what this project (its theory, methodology and application) can offer to the European Union and whether it delivers arguments to go beyond the existing ideas of a 'European Social Model' and the dissemination of this model.

This model is welcomed by certain Russian academic circles in Moscow. In the English summary of their book we read: "*to develop successfully any society needs a model which it chooses into line with its requirements, traditions, values and norms. As to Europe this kind of model has been created there and named the 'European Social Model' (ESM). The so-called 'social core', special treatment of people, defence of his political, democratic and social rights is its characteristic feature. The principles laid down in the ESM are following: social solidarity and cohesion, social justice, the creation of a competitive economy based on knowledge, careful treatment of the environment*".[109] With this in mind and also reflecting on current political problems the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung took the initiative to stimulate debate between Russian and EU scientists about four scenarios for deepening the relations between both parts of Europe. The most positive one is to focus again "*on shared interests from 2020 onwards. A new trade agreement also integrates the Eastern Partnership countries, who are no longer forced to decide for or against either side*".[110] This also implies to analyse and discuss the main challenges, presented in the previous sections.

Recently the European Commission articulated serious critic on the 'business-as-usual' attitude with regard to the challenges faced today. Its conclusions in 2011 were that "*incremental changes, small adjustments to the current policy framework will not do the job. In order to avoid catastrophic declines, bold ambitious and coordinated policy actions are required, and must be formulated in such a way that they speak directly to citizens, in order to stimulate the emergence of a fully-fledged European [and global] mind and identity.*"[111] This also relates to the European Commission's launch of 'the *Innovation Union*' as one of its seven flagship initiatives in the context of the European 2020 Strategy. The goal of the Innovation Union is to make Europe a top-of-the-bill science performer. It aims at "*smart, sustainable, inclusive growth. The Innovation Union will present a broad concept of innovation, one that is not only technological. Social innovation will be a major theme as well:*

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[108] http://eur-lex-Europa-Eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/|?uri.uriser:OJ.C_2007.306.01.00
[109] info@vesmirbooks.ru; http://www.vesmirbooks.ru, p. 522.
[110] Scenario Group EU + East 2030 (2014), *'The EU and the East in 2030: Four Scenarios for Relations between the EU, The Russian Federation, and the Common Neighbourhood'*, (Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, http:/www.fes.de/moe).
[111] European Commission (2011), 'Gobal *Europe 2050'*, (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities).

examples include citizen participation in public budget decisions, social networks to provide community-based support to the elderly, and ethically sound financial projects".[112] However, the problems as referred to in the text of the Lisbon Treaty from 2007 (see above) are not addressed. This is also the case in the interesting European URBACT program as instrument for exchanging information about new practices in the urban context, where the same problem arises. It especially concerns 'social innovation' in cities, which according the URBACT-program implies the use of new talents and facilities supported by new structures of governance, in order to stimulate collaboration and empowerment of stakeholders and the use of new ICT instruments.[113] These concepts are used without clarifying the applied conceptual and analytical framework and the consequences for the content of these applied concepts.

7.3   Exploring the problematic and the concept of 'the social'

It is important to understand the current main problems and challenges of the EU and its Member States as well in all other continents. In line with this, is the reference to e.g. the 'European Social Model' still valid? Furthermore, are models, approaches and guidelines emerging within the EU and its Member States (and other continents) adequate to deal with these problems and challenges? These three questions are also relevant for understanding the current discourse on 'Social Europe'.[114] In the following two sub-sections we refer to the theory on 'the social' as presented in the social quality theory and we will discuss first an example of a traditional referral to the way how to understand processes in the three fields. Second, we discuss an example of traditional suppositions about indicators and also a actual problem with the interpretation of social quality indicators which are supposed to play an essential role in the understanding of the interrelatedness of the three fields.

For deepening our understanding of both issues (see above) it is worthwhile to take a thematic issue of the International Journal of Social Quality on board on the search of the 'social'. Lutz (not 'the social'). Leisering remarks that this special issue *"assembles contributions from the global North and South to inquire into the future of the 'social' from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing on sociality, political science and law. What does 'social' mean, and do social policy and the welfare state have a future in global age? The issue is published on the occasion of the eightieth birthday of Frans-Xaver Kaufmann (…) [he*

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[112] Oeij et al, see note-79, p. 33. See further: European Commission (2010), 'A *Rationale for Action. Accompanying Document to 'Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union*', (Brussels: European Commission).
[113] http://urbact.eu/who-we-are/
[114] Pochet, see note-89.

emphasizes that] national state traditions and notions of society and culture, contrasts with the dominating approaches to social policy, which are either normative, descriptive or policy studies. Although there is a vast literature on social policy and the welfare state, surprisingly few scholars have investigated the societal and cultural dimensions of social policy and the welfare state in depth".[115] This thematic issue refers to the **'social'** and the social quality theory refers to **'the social'**. Is there a difference in heuristic meaning? Notwithstanding this, the thematic issue functions as an inspiring frame of reference to deepen the theory of social quality.

7.3.1   A first issue for deepening the exploration: the Stiglitz et al report

Herrmann's comment on the report by the Nobel laureates Stiglitz and Sen – produced in collaboration with Fitoussi and on request by the French President at that time [116] - is that *"it fails to go beyond GDP and similar traditional measures. In this context [their ideas of] 'social life' remain in a bin liner of all aspects of society outside of the economic and ecological realms that are artificially separated. On the other hand, the implicit based notion of 'the social' is applied very much in an individualistic sense. This is clearly problematic as demonstrated in the theory of Quality of Life. We can observe such combination of the economic understanding of society and the individualistic understanding about people's life on the website of the third OECD World Forum measuring the progress of societies."*[117] Herrmann concludes that they did not deliver an integrated understanding of the three dimensions - namely the economic (performance), social (quality of life) and environmental dimension - but cause their fragmentation instead. The reasons behind this traditional threefold distinction were not explained either. Herrmann follows with noticing, that also "*the SQA [= social quality work] made some attempts of overcoming the limitations but was nevertheless caught in the methodological cage of focusing on a traditional understanding of society, namely carving a 'specific social' out of the wider array of living and practicing together (…) indicators are often used as the instruments to reflect the conditional factors without reflecting their interdependencies with the constitutional and normative factors [see Figure-5]. But we should realise that this 'one-sidedness' of indicator use could easily evolve*

[115] L. Leisering (2014), 'Special issue: In Search of the 'Social': European and Global Perspectives on the Idea of the Welfare State', International Journal of Social Quality, Vol. 3 (2), pp. 1-144. With contributions by: Lutz Leisering, Fr. X. Kaufmann, U. Davy, M. Seeleib-Kaiser, P. Manow K.W. Sub, S.J. Shi, E. Rieger
[116] J.A.Stiglitz, A. Sen, J-P. Fitoussi (2009), '*The Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress Revisited: Reflections and Overview',* (http://www.stiglitz-sen-fitourssi.fr/docments/overview-eng.pdf (accessed 01 February 2011).
[117] P. Herrmann (2012), 'Economic Performance, Social Progress and Social Quality: a Comment on the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Report', *International Journal of Social Quality*, Vol. 2 (1), pp. 41-56, p. 49..

into a replication of a mechanical understanding of the relationship between base and superstructure."[118]

7.3.2. A second issue for deepening the elaboration: the question of indicators

Taking on board the comments outlined above, social quality indicators – related with analyses of the constitutional and normative factors – may dispose of an important heuristic significance to interrelate the three fields (Figure-2). This is in contradistinction with common indicators' approaches, because usually they do not transcend - with regard to overall sustainability, societal complexities, and sustainable urban development - an eclectic choice of their domains, and ad random monitoring devices to analyse changes of these domains. Van der Maesen's study gives examples with regard to European Commission debates on sustainability, the social development indicators for analysing changes of societal complexities by e.g. the World Bank or indicators applied by PricewaterhouseCoopers for analysing changes of metropoles. Also important is that these three fields can be analysed separately but not interpreted in isolation: "*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 [thus fields] 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.*"[119]

7.3.3 The function of social quality indicators

The hypothesis is that especially the theoretically grounded social quality indicators – as aspects of the complete social quality architecture (see Figure-5), thus in connection with the other instruments of profiles and criteria - enable us to connect the changes in these dimensions in each field and will enable us therefore to pave the way for a comprehensive understanding of the transformation of these fields. This form of reasoning may be illustrated in Figure-6. It presents an elaboration of Figure-2. The underlying ideas are that we need the application of a consistent and coherent conceptual and analytical framework to analyse changes in the four dimensions according the same basic assumptions, in order (1) to be enabled to compare the changes in these dimensions in an unequivocal way and, therefore,

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[118] Herrmann, see note-117, p. 53.
[119] Van der Maesen, see note-12, p. 101.

(2) to deliver the points of departure for understanding the interrelatedness of the three fields as brick stones for a comprehensive approach of these fields. For example Des Gaspers argues, that influential scientists as Stiglitz[120] and Stern[121] do not indicate how to integrate the economic dimension and the environmental dimension of sustainability. They lack a socio-political understanding of public goods and a socio-cultural understanding of values, conventions, attitudes and actions.[122] The interrelationships as illustrated in Figure-6 did not and do not play a role in the general discourse the interrelatedness of sustainability, sustainable urban development and transformations of societal complexities.

Figure-6: **Analysing the three fields and their interrelationships[123]**

systems of productive and reproductive
relationships resulting into 'the social'
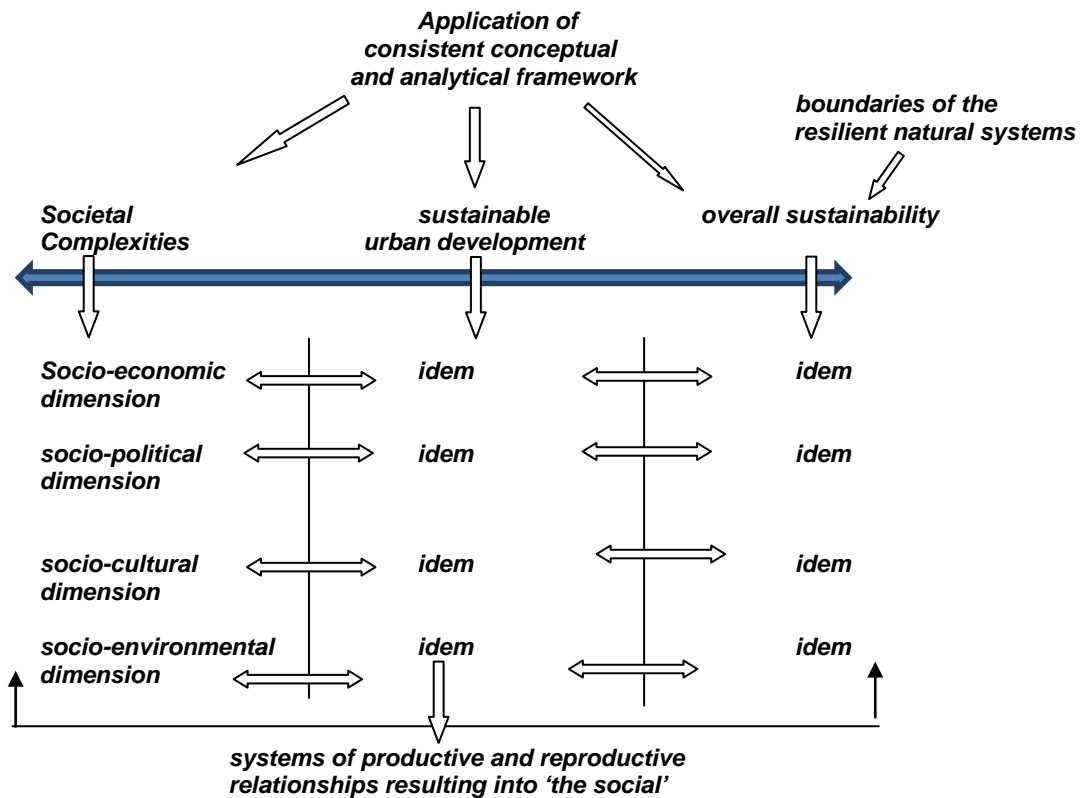
This logical incapability to integrate the economic and environmental dimension is also demonstrated in the Stiglitz et al report, referred to above. Progress – they call it 'social progress' - remains embedded in the dominant economic paradigm and because of their use of the concept and ideas about quality of life (as the equivalent of the 'social dimension' thus as a black box) failed to function as mediator between both dimensions. This prevents a clear

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[120] J. Stiglitz (2007), *'Making Globalization work'* (New York: W.W. Norton. Paperback edition).

[121] N. Stern (2010), '*A Blueprint for a Safer Planet: How We Can Save the World and Create Prosperity'*, (London: Vintage Books).

[122] D. Gasper (2010a), '*Climate Change and the Language of Human Security'*, (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies/Erasmus University).

[123] This will be further elaborated in Working Paper Series nr. 16, see note-7.

conceptualisation of sustainability. This may explain why not only Stiglitz et al and Stern but also Friedman[124] and Giddens[125] are committed to endlessly ongoing economic growth as welfare provider and as condition for sustainability.[126] Another paradigm, suitable to **apply in all** dimensions is needed in order to connect outcomes of analyses of all of these dimensions. According to Gasper, "*often, economic growth is presented as an essential part of modern identity: The source of hope, meaning and self-profiling, at the level of individuals. And especially of nations. It becomes the token of national strength, virility and vitality, 'the symbol of life itself'*."[127] Related politics and policies – applied in the field of societal complexities - became more and more dislocated from both other fields.

7.4 The contours of the fourth project oriented on the social quality theory

7.4.1 The project-group of the research project

Working Papers Series nr. 16 is forthcoming shortly especially to enhance this fourth research project. Furthermore, plans are made for writing an accessible fourth book on social quality for tutors, students, and policy makers. All this should take place under the lead of the 'Coordination Committee' (see Fig.-1) and the IASQ board. They will pave the way for a 'theoretical project-group' with which:

- To produce the mentioned working paper and study book,
- To assist the interdisciplinary groups (IDG's) of La Sapienza and Zhejiang University,
- To prepare – in collaboration with three IDGs for the summer schools of students,
- To assist all expert-groups connected with the European and Asian-Pacific Observatories
- To assist the project-groups discussed in this document.

7.4.2 Theoretical objectives (a very tentative presentation)

The main theoretical challenges for the social quality project are related with issues presented in the previous section-7.3. By addressing these issues the theoretical project-group will also deliver essential points of departure for comparing the social quality project with other relevant approaches (quality of life, human security, capability etc.). In this way the

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[124] T.L. Friedman (2009), 'Hot, *Flat and Crowded –Release 2*°', (New York: Picador).
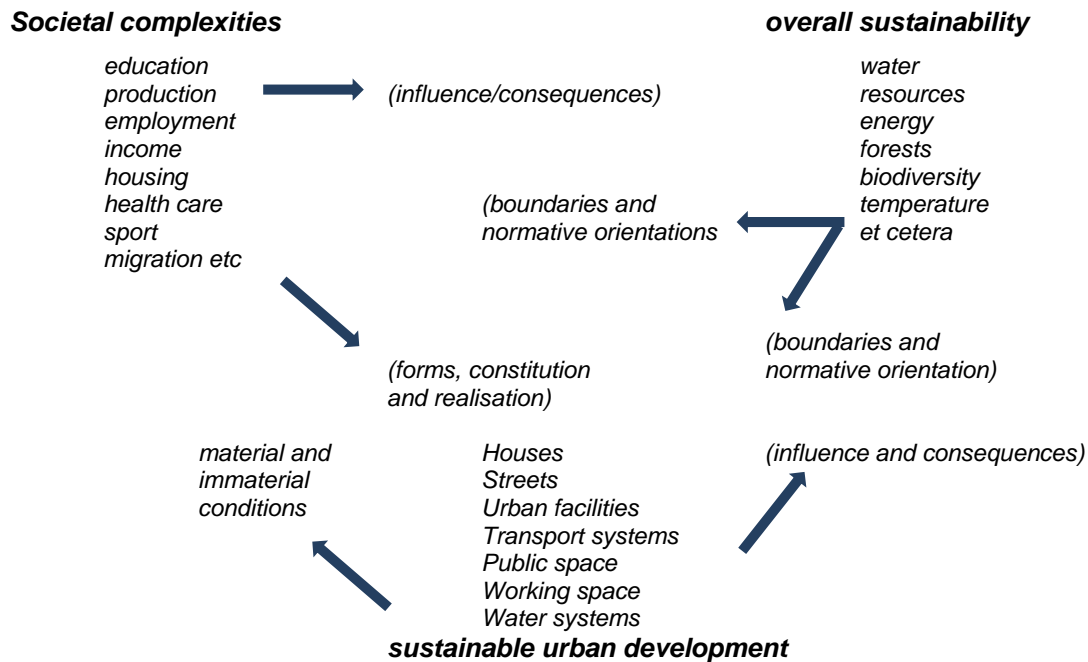[125] A. Giddens (2009), '*The Politics of Climate Change*', (Cambridge: Polity Press).
[126] Van der Maesen et al, see note-5, p. 271.
[127] D. Gasper (2010b), '*Influencing the Climate Explorations in Interpretive and Value-critical Analysis'*, (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies/ Erasmus University),

project-group will create a new understanding of the significance of the social quality project to contribute to solutions for the main challenges related with the three fields and especially with the interrelatedness of these three fields. This may be illustrated in the following way:

Figure-7:   Analysing the interdependencies

Societal complexities   **overall sustainability**

education	*water*
production (influence/consequences)	*resources*
employment	*energy*
income	*forests*
housing	*biodiversity*
health care (boundaries and	*temperature*
sport normative orientations	*et cetera*
migration etc	

(boundaries and
normative orientation)

(forms, constitution
and realisation)

material and   *Houses*   *(influence and consequences)*
immaterial   *Streets*
conditions   *Urban facilities*
         Transport systems
         Public space
         Working space
         Water systems
sustainable urban development

The supposition thus far is that with the application of the social quality architecture:
- The outcomes of changes in the different policy areas of societal complexities can be made comparable,
- These outcomes can also be made comparable with those of changes in the urban context,
- That both can be made comparable with changes in the domains of sustainability,
- That our knowledge about the consequences will deliver guidelines – as a result of the understanding of the boundaries of the resilient natural systems - to review the acceptability of the changes in societal complexities,
- And that this knowledge will deliver a fundamental orientation for the nature of the changes in the urban context; are they strengthening overall sustainability?

The social quality architecture may enable us to transcend the differentiation of the manifold of empirical manifestations in order to create a comprehensive understanding of their consequences. The main theoretical challenge is to deepen and to enhance the theory and methodology with regard to the way of reasoning as illustrated in Figures 2 - 7.