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**Introduction of the IASQ's second and third books, published by the Chinese Social Science Academic Press in Beijing**  
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**1. 社会质量：欧洲愿景 (*'Social Quality: A Vision for Europe', published by Kluwer Law International 2001; the second book*)**



The International Association on Social Quality's **second book** was a result of the European Conference in Amsterdam at the start of social quality thinking and application. The conference was held during the Dutch Presidency of the European Union in June 1997. It was organized by the Dutch Government and the European Commission in collaboration with the new European Foundation on Social Quality (the predecessor of the recent International Association). The participants of this conference discussed the first book '*Social Quality for Europe*', that was published before the conference as a new theory and methodology with applications to addressing the most important societal changes at that time in the European Union in a comprehensive and cross-disciplinary way.

The rationale for starting this work was the need for a better understanding of recent processes of societal transformations. Arguments included to emphasise the role of citizens in the creation of decent and fulfilled lives for everyone in the European Union and the role of social sciences (including economics and law) to assist them to address contemporary and upcoming challenges.

Most of the plenary lectures held during the 1997 European conference addressed current issues in relation to the first formulation of ideas about social quality and appear as chapters in this second book. They concerned: European identity, the European Model, the changes of the welfare state, gender and the quality of daily life, the urban transformations and the French debate, the role of the social market, the third sector and welfare dynamics, the quality of basic security systems, public health and social care approaches, democracy and social quality, elaboration of social quality theory and methodology, and the philosophical and ethical contents of the concept (see [www.socialquality.org/publications/books/](http://www.socialquality.org/publications/books/))

The second book stimulated new research. First, next to studies about public health, welfare provisions and urban transformations, came a European project analysing employment, flexicurity and social quality in nine European member states and another project for designing and testing social quality indicators, and applying them in fourteen member states. Both were financed by the European Commission and the participating universities. Secondly, the book and these projects led to the extension of collaboration with universities in Japan, mainland China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia and Australia. Several international conferences on social quality have been organized in these countries since 2007, financed by governments and the hosting universities. Finally, this work stimulated the start of the European Journal of Social Quality by Kingston University in London and published by Berghahn Journals in New York, mostly discussing changes in societal oriented policy areas from the social quality perspective, the empowerment of citizens and how to strengthen their social cohesion (see <http://journals.berghahnbooks.com/ijsq/>)

## 2. 社会质量：从理论到指标 (*'Social Quality: From theory to Indicators'*, published by Palgrave Macmillan, 2012; the third book)



The International Association on Social Quality's **third book** reflects on the outcomes of the work done since the publication of the second book, including the first results of collaborations of European and Asian-Pacific scholars since 2007. It argues first that European integration requires a new societal theory to facilitate progress, to prevent discrimination and exploitation, and to promote social justice, solidarity, the equal value of all human beings and their human dignity. Second, this should contribute as the basis for responding to and preventing the worst excesses of market-oriented globalisations worldwide. Third a key function of this new theory must also be to further overall sustainability as response to the enormous challenges posed by environmental changes.

This third book argues that the notion of the social – encompassing the socio-economic, socio-political, socio-cultural and socio-environmental dimensions of societal complexities as the central core of social quality - is more comparable with Asian ontologies than the predominant individualistic orientation of the English speaking countries. People are essentially social beings and 'the social' refers to a constantly evolving series of relationships between people. Following a deepening of the theoretical foundation of social quality research, the main focus of this book is on the **constitution of indicators** of the four conditional factors for social quality, namely socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion and social empowerment. The indicators are elaborated in connection with the general theoretical framework of social quality. This is an unusual but essential procedure. It underpins the first endeavour to construct measurement instruments for each of the four constituting dimensions of societal complexities. This should contribute towards understanding processes in these dimensions in an interrelated way.

From 2008 there has also been extensive work in the Asian-Pacific Region, especially on social quality indicators. Furthermore, Zhejiang University has engaged the IASQ in Chinese research on 'environmental protection' by citizens in Jiaxing city as model for other Chinese cities, financed by the Chinese Government and the European Commission. This university also developed with the IASQ the European Journal of Social Quality into the International Journal of Social Quality. Shanghai University has now translated the second and third IASQ books on social quality into the Chinese language. The European Foundation was replaced by the International Association on Social Quality. In the next stage the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences will support new steps concerning this research. A beginning has been made to both distinguish and connect social quality work with work from other approaches to the assessment of welfare and well-being such as 'quality of life', 'social capital', 'human security', and the 'capability approach', and the 'social harmony' and 'life quality' approaches in China. The combination of elaborate theoretical groundwork and a closely related constitution of indicators are important strengths of the social quality work.

The drafts of the third book paved the way for the application of social quality theory and methodology to the question of the overall sustainability, going beyond the traditional three-pillar approach differentiating economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability. In this three pillar presentation the adjective 'social' misses a heuristic meaning. The first outcomes were presented in a Working-paper for participants of the Rio+20 Conference in June 2012. The work since then resulted in a '**Manifesto on climate change**', discussing the one-side accent during the Paris conference on climate change in December 2015 on carbon emissions and the lack of attention to for example the increase of unmanageable mega-cities and their implications for development toward sustainability. This manifesto – signed by 270 scientists all over the world – has also been supported by the Executive Board of the ISSC (International Social Science Council, [www.socialquality.org/sustainability-manifesto/](http://www.socialquality.org/sustainability-manifesto/)).

Finally, representatives of Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, China and La Sapienza University in Rome, Italy started discussions on possible leading roles by their universities for developing and supporting social quality work in respectively the European Union and the Asian-pacific Region. Recently the Plekhanov University in Moscow, Russia, proposed to join this collaboration. The plans are to start with the constitution of the EU-Observatory, the Asian-Pacific Observatory and the Russian Observatory on Social Quality, connecting a manifold of universities for making news steps.