

Asian Social Quality Indicators: What is Unique?

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This paper discusses the paradigm diffusion of social quality from Europe to Asia and our research findings in relation to the four conditional factors of social quality (socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion, and empowerment). The construction of Asian social quality (ASQ) indicators includes redefining Asian understanding of social quality and reaching a consensus to revise the indicators developed in Europe. The consensus was reached through meta-analysis and the Delphi approach. Study results reveal that the construction of ASQ indicators is not only the work of a collaborative, cross-national research team from South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand, it also constructs a new meaning, that is, economic growth is no longer the first and only priority of state and society in the greater Asian co-sphere, but rather, social quality now emerges as the key issue for concern among Asian citizens and academics. In the conclusion, some suggestions are presented on additional potential indicators that could be integrated into our current ASQ indicators as well as the uniqueness of constructing ASQ indicators.

Keywords: Asian Social Quality (ASQ) Indicators, Paradigm Diffusion, Social Quality, Four Conditional Factors, Uniqueness of Constructing ASQ Indicators, Social Quality of Asian Life

Introduction

Development of social indicators in Asia has been linked to a number of international or regional efforts. The OECD/Korea Policy Centre (2009) has developed social indicators for the Asian region using such dimensions as migration, employment and unemployment, poverty and inequality, gender wage gap, social and health care expenditure, prison population and drug usage, and work and life satisfaction. Estes (2007) used the “Index of Social Progress” (ISP) to report on Asia’s successes and challenges in social development for the 35-year period beginning in 1970. The ISP report includes data on 45 of the region’s most populous countries. Adema (2006) inquired into what needs to be addressed to identify the most appropriate social indicators for the countries in Asia. Chih-Chien (2008) addresses this question and informs us that Taiwanese society is changing at a rapid rate and that the Taiwanese social indicator system needs to be dynamic and adjustable to social changes. Chih-Chien (2008) relates to the “People’s Life Indicator (PLI) Compound Index” that reflects a Taiwanese perspective in developing social indicators.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the construction process of Asian social quality (ASQ) indicators since 2007, based on the European social quality (ESQ) indicators constructed in 2003, and the uniqueness of constructing such ASQ indicators. The social quality (SQ) indicators of the Asian and European versions are defined by four conditional factors: socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and social empowerment. The construction process of ASQ indicators has been undertaken via international cooperation between European and Asian scholars as well as within just Asian scholars. The social quality approach has been developing in Europe since 1997 and was implemented in Asia in 2007.

This study reveals that the construction of ASQ indicators is not only a collaborative work of a cross-national research team from South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and Thailand, it also constructs new meaning, i.e., economic growth is no longer the only and first priority of state and society in the greater Asian co-sphere but social quality emerges as the key issue about which Asian citizens and academics concerned these days. Construction of ASQ indicators encompasses redefining an Asian understanding of social quality and reaching consensus on revisions made to the indicators developed in Europe. Consensus was reached through meta-analysis and the Delphi method. All of the ASQ indicators have been constructed for specific concerns in socio-cultural, political, economic, and educational situations in Asia. The revised

indicators in each conditional factor are discussed in detail in this study.

Between 2001 and 2005, the European Foundation on Social Quality (EFSQ) constructed 95 indicators of social quality (named European Social Quality, ESQ) and had used these indicators to evaluate the social quality of citizens in 14 European countries. Before the transfer of social quality theory from Europe to Asia, the notion of quality of life has been the most popular approach in assessing citizens' well-being. The notion of quality of life has been defined in two contrasting ways: objective and subjective. The former focuses on objective conditions like material goods and services that secure people's lives, while the latter focuses on how people feel about those conditions. Over the last three decades, scholars have debated about whether or not the notion of quality of life should be grounded on objective conditions or subjective feelings (Prescott-Allen, 2001; Wright, 1972; Andrews and Withey, 1976; Campbell, Converse and Rodgers, 1976). Between these two approaches, the goal of the concept of social quality to combine both objective conditions and subjective feelings to develop a series of indicators that encompass both approaches.

Asian countries have experienced tremendous economic growth during the last three decades and lives of people in this generation differ greatly from previous generations. The path of economic development and citizens' welfare needs oftentimes received less attention from Asian governments than immediate economic success. In the same vein, citizens' well-being is usually measured by their access to material goods and services, and their perception of material conditions is seldom measured. The social quality approach provides a vision that would create a picture of a better future that ensures both material stability and emotional satisfaction, and social quality indicators are intended to measure citizens' current objective and subjective life conditions. Based on the results of these measurements, policy recommendations will be made.

Central themes of social quality are resources and social relations (Maesen v.d., 2004). Individuals are intertwined in various social relations, and some societies are more exclusive than inclusive regarding certain groups of people such as immigrants and disadvantaged groups. Therefore, the picture of the social should be composed of interrelated individuals who share resources and form a set of human relations. The theoretical basis for social quality is constituted by four dimensions: socio-economic security, social cohesion, social inclusion, and social empowerment, each of which has its theoretical focus and is dependent on each other. This paper will discuss the paradigm diffusion of social quality from the East to the West and our research findings in relation to the four conditional factors of social quality (socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion, and empowerment). Based on the social quality

paradigm, social indicators were developed. These indicators will be compared with those developed in the European context by using meta-analysis and the Delphi method to select indicators. Each indicator is verified carefully via three criteria: appropriateness, availability, and adequacy. In the conclusion section, some suggestions are made on additional potential indicators that could be integrated into our current ASQ indicators, and the uniqueness of constructing ASQ indicators is also presented in this study.

Conditional Factors of Social Quality

Birth of the social quality paradigm originated from the attempts of European scholars to counterbalance the social atmosphere which privileged economic development over social welfare (Bouget, 2001: 47). As Phillips (2007: 89) suggests, social quality differs from quality of life on the ground that the social quality approach does not equalize the quality of the social to the accumulation of life quality of each individual members. In other words, quality of life is not concerned with the tension between individuals (agency) and society (structure) or the conflict zones between the system (the state, institutions, etc.) and the life world (family, civil society, etc.) Four components in the social quality quadrant are socio-economic security in the upper-left sector, social cohesion in the upper-right sector, social inclusion in the lower-left sector, and social empowerment in the lower-right sector. According to Beck et al. (2001), each dimension of social quality has its own domain and sub-domains that could represent their fundamental values and indicators that could measure objective welfare conditions of a society and its citizens' subjective feelings about social quality.

Maesen v.d. (2004) and Therborn (2001) discusses the architecture of social quality. We will provide a brief description of the four conditional factors of social quality as reference points to the development of indicators presented below. The four conditional factors of social quality are social-economic security, social inclusion and social empowerment (Beck, Maesen v.d. and Walker, 1997).

Socio-economic security is the extent to which people have sufficient resources (material and immaterial) over time in the context of social relations. Macro-level domains for this component include financial resources, housing and environment, health and care, work, and education (Keizer, 2004).

Social inclusion is the extent to which people have access to institutions and social relations. It is associated with the principles of equality and equity and

structural causes of their existence. The domains identified for social inclusion include rights to citizenship, labor market, (public and private) services, and social networks (Walker and Wigfield, 2004).

Social cohesion is defined as the nature of social relations based on shared identities, values, and norms. This component is concerned with the processes that create, defend, or demolish social networks and the social infrastructures underpinning these networks. Its domains include trust, integrative norms and values, social networks, and identity (Berman and Phillips, 2004).

Social empowerment refers to the extent to which the personal capabilities of people and their ability to act are enhanced by social relations (networks and institutions). Domains of social empowerment include knowledge base, labor market, openness and supportiveness of institutions, public space, and personal relationships (Hermann, 2004).

Diffusion of Social Quality Theory from the East to the West

Given that Asian societies and welfare regimes differ institutionally and culturally from those of Europe. We can find out which conditional factors differ the most between the East and the West through applying this approach and using social quality indicators to measure social quality in both European and Asian contexts. As well, application of the social quality theory in the Asian context can potentially add more Asian input. Since these indicators are the measuring tool for each conditional factor, indicator transformation occurs when the Asian social quality indicator group identifies cultural differences or differences in institutional arrangements and welfare regimes.

Esping-Andersen (1990) has divided welfare regimes into three types: the social democratic, the corporatist, and the liberal, as can be represented by Sweden, Germany, and the U.S., respectively. However, scholars found that welfare regimes in East Asian countries do not fit neatly into these models and started to search for a distinctive East Asian welfare model. For example, scholars differentiate East Asian welfare model from the Western welfare model on the ground that the role of the family is essential in providing income security and that Confucius ideology is prevalent (Ku and Jones, 2007: 121).¹

¹ The concept of "Oikonomic welfare state" or "Confucian welfare state" is driven by Catherine Jones. In her research, Oikonomic welfare state is different from Esping-Anderson's three types. Oikonomic welfare state not only commits to social welfare but also emphasizes the fundamental importance of family and community-based social safety. This idea is derived from comparative studies of social policies in East Asia, especially focus on the four tigers plus Japan. These East Asian

Kwon (1998) has pointed out that Asian governments are welfare regulators rather than welfare providers. Additionally, the welfare system is fragmented rather than integrated.

Moreover, welfare systems in East Asia are less effective in terms of redistribution. Lee and Ku (2003) suggests that welfare regimes in East Asia are characterized by high welfare stratification, high family welfare responsibility, low-to-median social security expenditure, high individual welfare loading, and a low pension coverage rate (Lee and Ku, 2003). Despite these diverse conceptualizations of welfare regimes in East Asia, scholars have accepted that welfare regimes in East Asia differ from those in Europe and in the U.S., and thus, social qualities of Europe and Asia are expected to be different.

Therefore, the first difficulty we encounter would be: "How do we construct a set of indicators suitable for Asia so that the distinctiveness of its social quality is revealed?" Based on the differences in institutional arrangements and welfare regimes between the two regions, a number of socio-economic indicators developed in Europe are replaced, given that these indicators are derived from the European institutional arrangements and welfare regimes. Indicators of other conditional factors — social inclusion, social cohesion, and social empowerment — are added or replaced, partially due to the differences in institutional arrangements and welfare regimes and partially contributed by the cultural and political differences between the East and the West.

Ethnicity, religion, colonization history, and degrees of democracy have created a heterogeneous entity within Asian countries, and these are hard to measure by a unified standard. Hence, another challenge to the indicator transformation in Asia is to identify similar societal orientations and welfare provisions that could be integrated into a set of indicators (Wang, Yang and Wang, 2007)

countries are deeply influenced by Confucianism which considers family, community, and ethics as the basic pillars of state. However, many scholars criticize this cultural approach (Goodman, White, and Kwon, 1998).

Methodology

The Delphi Method

During a workshop held in National Taiwan University (Taipei) on April 12th and 13th, 2008, the social quality research team from Asia including 15 members from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, and Thailand made modifications to the existing indicators constructed by European academics through the Delphi approach. Each indicator was carefully measured against the following criteria: (1) content of an indicator, (2) availability of data, (3) adequacy, (4) appropriateness of data, and (5) the alternative. (1) Content of an indicator: if an indicator developed in Europe is found to be culturally invalid, it is deleted; on the contrary, if cultural differences or emerging social problems are perceived, new indicators are added. If indicators developed in Europe can be replaced by intrinsically similar, but more suitable, indicators for the Asian context, replacement is simply made. (2) Availability of data: although some indicators seem appropriate for Asian societies, government statistical dataset do not always support corresponding data. Thus, availability of data is the major determinant in keeping a specific indicator. (3-4) Adequacy and appropriateness of data: quality of data is also evaluated on comparability, and finally, 5) the alternative: to develop a new indicator based on the Asian social context.

The existing Asian indicators are defined by the European social quality indicators² through a questionnaire with a total of 95 indicators distributed to participants in a workshop. Every participant in the workshop is asked to make comments on the 95 indicators and to make suggestions for new culturally-based indicators for ASQ if thought necessary. At the later stage of the Delphi that followed, 10 members of the network of Asian Social Quality paid attention to the questionnaire and modified it by addressing all responses and suggested alternatives to all indicators through e-mails from April to October, 2008.

Secondary Data Verification

Because this research is primarily data-driven, the Delphi method is followed by secondary data analysis to verify the suggestions and comments on

² Please refer to European Foundation on Social Quality (<http://www.socialquality.org/>) to know the history of Europe history of Social Quality Indicator which was created from 14 countries in 1994 with 95 indicators.

the Delphi method. Secondary data analysis is commonly known as analysis of pre-existing data collected by government agencies and academic institutions. Although some government statistics do not satisfy the needs of researchers, researchers are still attracted by the cost effectiveness of exploiting existing data due to the fact that they wish to conduct comparative, longitudinal, or cross-sectional studies. Therefore, the next step of this research is to perform secondary data analysis in order to review government statistics of each Asian country and compare them with one another to evaluate the “social quality” of each Asian society,³ which will provide an overall picture of “the social quality” of each Asian society. An official datum must appropriately represent the indicator of social quality developed in Europe (and further modified by Asian scholars), or serve as an alternative datum for a certain indicator in order for an official datum to pass the criteria for being defined as “relevant.” As a result, a large proportion of time is devoted to surfing the government websites and datasets during this research.

Sources of Data

Data of this study come from various sources, ranging from government statistical datasets, international organizations, and academic institutions. Major government statistical websites include Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication. Important international organizations are Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Human Development Reports (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Transparency International. Social Science surveys from academic institutions include World Value Survey (WVS), Academic Sinica, Social Science Japan Data Archive, Institute for Social Development and Policy Research (ISDPR), King Prajadhikok’s Institute (KPI), and HKU POP Site.

³ Since social quality indicators of Asia are concerned with both objective and subjective dimensions, indicators reflecting citizens’ perception of social quality depend on surveys. In this study, two primary surveys of citizens’ perception of social quality are conducted in both Taiwan and South Korea by ISDPR (Institute for Social Development and Policy Research) and NTUSPRC (Social Policy Research Center at National Taiwan University) with the intent to supplement government surveys that lack focus on human beings’ subjective feelings toward social quality. ISDPR and NTUSPRC already finished 1,005 sample surveys in Korea and 1,607 sample surveys in Taiwan in 2008.

Study Results

Indicator Transformation and Development in Asia

In order to contextualize indicators developed in Europe, the social quality research team from Asia has made modifications to existing indicators. The following sections will describe and analyze the changes made by this research team. Decisions on adding, replacing, and deleting indicators are primarily data-driven.

Social-economic Security and its Indicators in Asia

Europe has developed 24 indicators for this conditional factor. 11 of them have been deleted, and 9 replaced, and another 5 added for Asia. In total, Asia has 27 indicators for this conditional factor (See Appendix).

1) Newly Added Indicators

Income inequality has been added as a new sub-domain and indicator for this conditional factor. According to OECD (2006a), the level of inequality in market income in 2006 has risen to levels above the OECD average. As suggested by OECD (2006b), the Gini coefficient of market income inequality for the total population rose by 9.4 percentage points between mid-1980 and 2000 in Japan, while the OECD average only rose by 4.3 points (OECD, 2006b: 7-8).

Factors contributing to this inequality come from the bubble economy, its resulting rise in unemployment rate and aging population (OECD, 2006b: 7). Other factors widening Japan's income inequality result from technological changes: the demand for skilled and educated workers has increased, while employment opportunities for the unskilled are threatened. The case of Hong Kong also suggests that its rapid economic growth since the 1950s has not equally distributed the fruits of success to all. Scholars have argued that Hong Kong's economic restructuring under the process of globalization helped retain its high growth in per capita GDP, but it also has had some negative effects on the lives of low-skilled workers, and Chinese immigrants have also contributed to the increase in income inequality (Zhao, Zhang and Sit, 2004: 443). In 2007, the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2007: special chap.) has highlighted the issue of inequality in Asia. ADB suggests that inequality in Asia is multi-dimensional, ranging from income inequality to unequal access to education

and health care services. The driving forces behind these inequalities are caused by the unevenness in growth across regions and inadequate social policies to deal with inequalities (ADB, 2007: 7-14). As a result, income inequality as an indicator has been added.

Other added indicators include proportion of inpatient treatment fee paid by the patient/government, proportion of workforce covered by unemployment insurance, unemployment rate, and the age when compulsory education ends. Unemployment rate has become an alarming issue in Asia in these times. Take Japan for example; unemployment rate has reached 4.10 in 2009 (Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare, 2009). In Korea and Taiwan, unemployment rate is 3.6 and 5.31, respectively, in 2009 (KOSIS, 2009). Rising unemployment rate is partially due to economic recession and partially caused by the mismatch between academia and the labor market. Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea all have at least nine years of compulsory education, which leads to a high college attendance rate. Continuing with education and delaying entrance into the labor market does not guarantee employment. In many East Asian countries, over-education has become a major problem of unemployment, especially youth unemployment. As a result, quality of education should be carefully considered from a social quality approach. Compulsory education is a prerequisite for acquiring knowledge and a basis for socio-economic security; however, in Asian countries, getting a bachelor's or master's degree is oftentimes value-laden, rather than under pragmatic considerations, which potentially leads to wasting educational resources and squandering human resources in the long run.

2) Replaced/Deleted Indicators

For this conditional factor, we replaced two indicators, subjective perception of income inadequacy and objective indicator of income sufficiency, in the sub-domain of income sufficiency for "the part of household income spent on health, clothing, food, and housing" because not all governments have the data. Also, income replacement ratio is substituted for the indicator developed in Europe (proportion of people who have certainty of keeping their homes) in the sub-domain of income security, because this indicator is identified in the European national reports as difficult to measure (Phillips, 2008: 45).

Another indicator replaced in this conditional factor is home ownership and housing affordability. According to Lee, Forrest and Tam (2003) rise in home ownership in East Asia and South East Asia is relatively recent, except that the Singapore government started to promote home ownership in the 1960s

(Lee, Forrest and Tam, 2003: 20). There are some cultural explanations for the increasing rate of home ownership, and some social policies contribute toward it. For example, in Japan, home ownership is considered a symbol of prosperity and a testament to young people's intention toward establishing a household. In addition, the Japanese law on inheritance and gift taxes is more favorable to land than financial assets while rent control is strict (Toshiaki, 2005: 131-132). Combining cultural factors, policies, and laws, it is clear that house ownership in Asia is an important issue.

Additionally, we have noted that there are frequent natural disasters in Asia which are perceived by Asian people as a threat to the stability of their lives. Therefore, the Asia SQ team has replaced the sub-domain of "environmental conditions" for "social and environmental risks" and changed the European indicator of "proportion of people living in households that are situated in neighborhoods with above-average pollution rate" to three indicators related to environmental and social risks. These three indicators are: number of deaths due to disasters per 1 million people, subjective perception of threats from environmental risks/natural disasters, subjective perception of political stability, armed conflicts, and terrorist attacks.

In the domain of health and care, "proportion of people with access to free health services" has been replaced by "proportion of people covered by "compulsory/voluntary health insurance." The Taiwanese and Korean governments extended their National Health Insurance in 1995 and 1989, respectively, to achieve universal health care coverage (Chen and Kwon, 2008: 230). And for Taiwan, the National Health Insurance is the first mandatory welfare system for all citizens based on citizenship (Lin, 2003: 3; Chen and Kwon, 2008: 232). Based on the aforementioned reasons, the divide between compulsory and voluntary health insurance is found to be not so straightforward for both Taiwan and Korea.

3) Indicators congruent with ESQ indicators

Majority of the indicators in the domain of financial resources, housing, and social and environmental risks (originally environmental conditions) are replaced as mentioned in the former section, while majority of the indicators in the domain of health and care, and work and education remain the same, including: "number of square meters per household member," "proportion of population living in houses without basic amenities" in the sub-domain of housing conditions; "number of medical doctors/nurses per 10,000 inhabitants," "average distance to a hospital," "average response time of an ambulance" in the sub-domain of health services; "length of notice before

termination of a labor contract,” “proportion of employed workforce with a temporary and non-permanent job contract,” and “proportion of illegal workforce” in the sub-domain of employment security; “number of accidents at work per 100,000 employees,” “number of hours a full-time employee typically works per week” in the sub-domain of working conditions; “proportion of pupils leaving education without finishing compulsory education” in the sub-domain of education security and “proportion of students who, within a year of leaving school with or without a certificate, are able to find employment” in the sub-domain of quality of education.

4) Data availability and appropriateness of indicators

Data availability and appropriateness of indicators for this conditional factor (domain) is briefly discussed as follows:

High data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 2 (“objective income sufficiency”) can be measured by a survey on household expenditure of each country, which covers questions regarding proportion of income spent on food, clothing, medical care, transportation, communication, and recreation. Indicators 4 (income equality) and 5 (home ownership) have concrete, objective data and is comparable across countries. Indicator 7 (square meters per household member) is a comparable indicator across countries. Indicator 9 (“people affected by criminal offences per 10,000 inhabitants”) is a comparable indicator, but this data needs to be divided into different crime categories. Indicator 10 (number of deaths due to disasters per 100,000 people) is standardized and comparable data is available. Objective data for Indicator 14 (number of medical doctors/nurses per 10,000 inhabitants) is available and is in comparable format. Indicator 19 (proportion of employed workforce with temporary and non-permanent job contract) is a good indicator because it has high data comparability. Indicators 21 (proportion of workforce covered by unemployment insurance), 22 (unemployment rate), 23 (number of accidents, fatal/non-fatal, at work per 100,000 employees), 24 (number of hours a full-time employee typically works per week), 25 (proportion of pupils leaving education without finishing compulsory education), and 26 (age of termination of compulsory education) have high data comparability across countries and are good indicators.

Low data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 1 (“subjective income sufficiency”) is an important and clear indicator, but relevant surveys need to be conducted in a comparable format so that citizens’ subjective income sufficiency in each country can be compared under the framework of social quality. Indicator 11 (subjective perception of threats from

environmental risks/natural disasters) and Indicator 12 (subjective perception of political stability, armed conflicts, and terrorist attacks) are important and appropriate indicators but only when standardized surveys are conducted in each country and comparable data produced. Indicator 17 (proportion of inpatient treatment fee paid by patients/government) is a clear indicator and has comparable data across countries. Indicator 18 (length of notice before termination of labor contract) is comparable, but caution should be used in that this indicator shows only legal regulations and not real social conditions.

Low data availability and low appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 3 (income replacement ratio) is not easy to calculate, and its coverage of all social insurances across countries is hard to compare. Indicator 6 (housing affordability) is not clearly defined. For example, the ratio of monthly rent to household income or income spent on mortgage should be differentiated. Indicator 8 (proportion of population living in houses without basic functioning amenities) is also a problematic indicator because different functioning items are measured across countries. Indicator 13 (proportion of people with access to free health services) is a problematic indicator, and the definition of the term “free” should be more clearly defined. Indicator 15 (average distance to hospital) and Indicator 16 (average response time of ambulance) are measured in minutes; these two are problematic indicators and should be framed into different questions because not every country has relevant data. Indicator 20 (proportion of illegal workforce) is not a sufficient indicator because illegality is associated with invisibility and, therefore, hard to calculate. Indicator 27 (proportion of students who, within a year of leaving school with or without a certificate, are able to find employment) is not a sufficient indicator because there is data inconsistency across countries and there is no direct information on the average time a college graduate typically spends on job hunting.

Social Inclusion and its Indicators in Asia

There are 27 indicators which were developed in Europe for this conditional factor, among which 10 indicators were deleted, 4 replaced, and 1 added. A total of 21 indicators exist for this conditional factor (see appendix).

1) New added indicators

Because suicide has become a mental health issue in Asian countries and suicide rate has steadily increased over the past ten years (Korea National Statistical Office, 2008; DGBAS, 2008), the Asian social quality indicator group

has decided to include suicide as a new domain and suicide rate as an indicator. However, deciding on which conditional factor this new domain belongs in and on its corresponding indicators requires an investigation into the cultural context behind this issue. If suicide is considered as an issue of social security, it should belong to the conditional factor of socio-economic security; on the contrary, if suicide is proposed to be an issue of social isolation and status integration, social inclusion seems an appropriate conditional factor for suicide. Therefore, the Asian social quality indicator group is faced with the task of determining which theory best explains the increased suicide rate in the Asian context.

The history of industrialization and urbanization are shorter in Asia in comparison to European countries. In other words, individuals in Asian countries might be experiencing social disorganization and anomie caused by industrialization. Major social changes in Asia include increasing female labor participation, changing family structure, and aging population. Although old cultural values might persist, structures reinforcing these values are now eroding, generating feelings of “normlessness,” a state of anomie. Theories on suicide have studied suicide from the viewpoint of anomie, social isolation, social disorganization, industrialization, and status integration (Stack, 1978: 644). These theories have proposed that suicide is associated with society, stressing that suicide is not a sporadic event.

According to Durkheim, the nature of integration correlates with the strength of the individual's ties to his/her society (Gibbs and Martin, 1957: 141). Gibbs and Martin (1957) have noted that the most important type of social relation is the individual's status, which maintains his/her rights in the society; consequently, the role of that status defines his/her duty, which is usually associated with norms, values, and cultural expectations. However, since an individual might occupy more than one status, role conflict sometimes appears when different role expectations are not fulfilled (Gibbs and Martin, 1957: 141). Scholars have categorized the psychological orientation of Asians as “collectivism” and Westerners as “individualism.” (Dion and Dion, 1997: 53-55). Chinese psychologists have also stressed that familial collectivism is one of the important societal orientations of the Chinese, which encourages subordination of the personal to the familial (Yang, 1993: 84). Therefore, it is assumed that although industrialization causes marital dissolution and disruption in familial relations both in Europe and Asia, the strain experienced by Asians are especially high due to their familial collectivism. For example, filial piety has been conceived as a virtue and brings women prestige in her society, but job demands today limit women's time and energy to care for other family

members, thereby inducing social blame on women. As a result, unable to reconcile work and family, both men and women experience role conflicts in their domestic life and become a greater risk of social exclusion. Because many of the domains and sub-domains of this conditional factor are rights-based that are associated with status, a decision was made to locate suicide in this conditional factor from the viewpoint of status integration.

2) Replaced/deleted indicators

Apart from adding suicide as a new domain and suicide rate as an indicator, some indicators inappropriate for Asian countries have been deleted and some Asian-specific indicators substituted. For example, we have omitted indicators related to homelessness because the issue of invisibility makes it hard to calculate the actual proportion of the homeless, which greatly undermines the quality of data. This indicator also seems inadequate based on the national reports from European countries, because reasons for homelessness are not included (Phillips, 2008: 50, Appendix 1). Additionally, “average waiting time for social housing” has been excluded from the sub-domain of housing, because not all Asian governments provide social housing.

Other deletions made are: the sub-domain of health services. In the domain of services includes “proportion of ethnic minority groups elected or appointed to the parliament, boards of private companies, and foundations” and in the sub-domain of economic and political networks, “proportion entitled to and using public primary health care”. Further, in the domain socio-economic security, the sub-domains financial services and transport with their indicators was deleted. The “informal assistance received by different types of family members” in the sub-domain of family life was also deleted.

With respect to modification of indicators, some original indicators are slightly rephrased: “average waiting time for care services” is rephrased as “average waiting time for elderly institutional care services and child-care services” because elderly care has become an important issue in relation to the aging population and public spending on childcare is less than in European countries (OECD, 2003: 74, Figure 7).⁴ For the domain of social networks, the phrase “frequency of contact” has been replaced with “proportion in regular contact with” and “duration of contact” because the concept of “regular contact” varies by country and is more likely to be a cultural construct. It is clearer to use frequency, and secondary data shows that structured questionnaires in surveys often measure frequency by asking respondents the

⁴ For another table, please see OECD, 2003: 62, Table 3.

number of frequency of contact with friends or relatives within a week or a month rather than the duration of contact. This modification in wording will make this indicator more consistent with available data.⁵

3) Indicators congruent with ESQ indicators

For this conditional factor, there is a high level of congruence between social quality indicators of Europe and Asia. Despite the existence of cultural differences, the majority of indicators developed in Europe are still valid in Asia. This conditional factor is also the one with the least modifications. Indicators that have not been changed include: “proportion of residents with citizenship” and “proportion having the right to vote in local elections and proportion exercising it” in the sub-domain of constitutional/political rights; “proportion with the right to a public pension” and “women’s pay in proportion to men’s” in the sub-domain of social rights; “proportion with the right to free legal advice” and “proportion experiencing discrimination” in the sub-domain of civil rights; “proportion of women elected or appointed to parliament, boards of private companies, and foundations” in the sub-domain of economic and political networks; “long-term unemployment” and “involuntary part-time or temporary employment” in the sub-domain of access to paid employment; “school participation rate and higher education participation rate” in the sub-domain of education; “number of public sports facilities per 10,000 inhabitants” and “number of public/private civic and cultural facilities per 10,000 inhabitants” in the sub-domain of civic/cultural services.

4) Data availability

Data availability and appropriateness of indicators for this domain are briefly discussed as below:

High data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 4 (women’s income in proportion to men’s) is an adequate indicator due to its comparability and availability of data. Indicator 8 (long-term unemployment rate) is an appropriate indicator and has comparable data across countries. Indicator 9 (part-time and temporary employment) is an adequate indicator, but attention must be paid to the fact that definition of temporary employment vary by country. Indicator 10 (rate of participation in secondary school) and Indicator 11 (rate of participation in higher education) are appropriate indicators and are comparable in format. Indicator 14 (number of public sports

⁵ World Value Survey has conducted a series of survey related to the frequency of contact with friends and relatives in different countries.

facilities per 10,000 people) and Indicator 15 (number of public civic & cultural facilities per 10,000 people) are also appropriate indicators and comparable in format. Indicator 16 (frequency of contact with neighbors), Indicator 17 (frequency of contact with friends), and Indicator 19 (frequency of contact with relatives) are adequate indicators. But some countries measure these indicators in terms of the duration of contact while some measure in terms of frequency.

Low data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 1 (proportion of population with the right to vote in elections), Indicator 2 (proportion of population exercising the right to vote in elections), and Indicator 3 (proportion of eligible population actually covered by public pension) are appropriate indicators in terms of their comparability across countries, but all data should be in the format of proportions, not actual numbers. Also, indicator 3 is more suitable for Japan, Korea, and Taiwan than Hong King and Thailand in institutional similarities.

Low data availability and low appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 5 (proportion of residents, or citizens, with the right to free legal advice) is faced with the issue of data unavailability, and thus, alternative data or indicator should be proposed. Indicator 6 (proportion of population experiencing discrimination) turns out to be a problematic indicator because it is subjective in nature and is unclear by definition; equally problematic is the unavailability of data. Indicator 7 (proportion of women elected or appointed to parliament, boards of private companies, and foundations) is a problematic indicator as well because women's political participation seems less relevant for measuring economic and political networks. Indicators 12 (average waiting time for institutional elderly services) and 13 (average waiting time for childcare services) are inadequate indicators because data on waiting time is harder to obtain than accessibility of care institutions. Indicator 18 (level of feeling lonely/alienated) is a problematic indicator because of its subjective nature and unavailability of data. Indicator 19 (perceived quantity, or adequacy, of entitlement transfer received from family) is a problematic indicator as well, because family support includes both monetary support and care; in addition, this indicator has no comparable data across countries.

Social Cohesion and its Indicators in Asia

For this conditional factor, the EFSQ developed 20 indicators. Two indicators have been deleted, one replaced, and one added. In total, we have 20 indicators in this domain (see Appendix).

Table 1. Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

Rank	Country	2008 CPI Score	Survey Used
1	Denmark	9.3	6
1	New Zealand	9.3	6
1	Sweden	9.3	6
4	Singapore	9.2	9
5	Finland	9	6
5	Switzerland	9	6
7	Iceland	8.9	5
12	Hong Kong	8.1	8
14	Germany	7.9	6
14	Norway	7.9	6
16	United Kingdom	7.7	6
18	Belgium	7.3	6
18	Japan	7.3	8
39	Taiwan	5.7	9
40	South Korea	5.6	9

Source: Transparency International, 2008.

1) New added indicators

For this conditional factor, the Asian social indicator group has decided to include corruption as a new sub-domain; the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and the Bribery Payers Index (BPI) as corruption indicators are also added. The following table will show the reason corruption has emerged as an important issue in Asian countries:

This table suggests that CPI scores are lower in Asian countries. Based on the Report on the Global Corruption Barometer in 2007, reported bribery has increased in some regions such as Asia-Pacific and Southeast Europe (Transparency International, 2007: 2). Issues on corruption and the need for government accountability and transparency have been on the spotlight since 1997 due to the financial crises in Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, and Indonesia (Quah, 1999: 483).

Furthermore, another index, the BPI, is used to measure the propensity of companies to offer bribes abroad (Transparency International, 2006: 11). It is interesting to note that companies from a country with a good ranking on CPI are not necessarily less likely to use bribes abroad. For example, based on the BPI in 2006, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan performed worse than in the 2005 CPI, meaning that companies from these countries are more likely to bribe

when they operate overseas than when they are in their own countries.

According to Quah (1999), Asian countries have realized that anti-corruption strategies are necessary, but they are not always effective due to political leadership's weak commitment to combat corruption or inadequate anti-corruption measures (Quah, 1999: 487-488). Due to the fact that public skepticism of government's efforts to fight corruption will influence citizens' trust in government, the legal system, and even the media, indicators of corruption are important to investigate social cohesion in Asian countries.

2) Replaced/Deleted Indicators

As with social inclusion, only slight modifications are made to this conditional factor. The two minor changes are: deletion of "the number of cases referring to the European Court of Law" in the sub-domain of specific trust, which is clearly culturally inappropriate for Asia, and deletion of the indicator concerning division of household tasks between men and women. This indicator, according to Phillips (2008), has been identified as highly problematic (Phillips, 2008: 48, Appendix 1). Because the indicator on division of household tasks between genders is located in the sub-domain of social contract, it implicitly assumes that household arrangement is based on an agreement between men and women who have equal power and are free to give their consent to certain arrangements. However, this indicator is very much influenced by cultural values rather than the agreement and consensus on distribution of housework between genders.

3) Indicators Congruent with ESQ Indicators

Another important sub-domain of social cohesion for Asian countries is acceptance of immigrants. According to the International Migration Outlook of Korea, migration inflow has increased during the past five years (OECD, 2008: 257). In Taiwan, the number of marriages between immigrants and migrant workers has increased during the past ten years (DGBAS, 2008), which has highlighted the issue of social cohesion.⁶ According to Hsia (2000), transnational marriages could potentially reinforce stereotypes and increase discrimination of the socially dominant group against racial minorities, which is contrary to the public belief that interracial marriages minimize prejudice and antagonism between different ethnic groups (Hsia, 2000: 86-87). Ethnic essentialism and the emphasis on ethnic self-help, albeit helpful within the

⁶ Migration inflow can also be an issue of social inclusion when civil rights of marriage immigrants and migrant workers are taken into consideration.

ethnic group, might threaten social cohesion because it potentially causes group competition within a nation.

Take Taiwan for example. Because of the history of Japanese colonization and the settlement of Chinese soldiers in Taiwan, ethnic identity had an impact on the formation of national identity. Additionally, ethnic identity also led to different political affinities, which caused ethnic conflicts from time to time during election periods. According to Wu (2002), social assimilation and political tension best characterize current ethnic relations in Taiwan, which is a legacy of historical experiences and cultural transmission (Wu, 2002: 108).

Due to the fact that many Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea have been colonized by other countries, their racial make-up has become more heterogeneous and their ethnic relations more complex. In this vein, national identity seems to be an appropriate domain for the Asian context. However, because Asian countries do not have a union as do European countries, it is interesting to find out if Asians identify themselves strongly as Asian.

Since acceptance of immigration is a major issue in Asian countries, the Asian social quality indicator group has retained this sub-domain and its corresponding indicators. Other sub-domains or indicators were not added other than corruption. In contrast to other conditional factors, only slight modifications were made for this conditional factor because most of the indicators are appropriate for Asian countries, albeit the trend in migration and issues on national identity are different in Europe and in Asia. Different patterns of social cohesion may be suggested by national reports from Asian countries in the future, but this does not invalidate indicators developed in the European context.

Other indicators that remain unchanged include those in the sub-domains of generalized trust and specific trust, altruism and social contract, networks, regional/community/local identity, and interpersonal identity. These indicators are more universal and less affected by government welfare, although indicators related to trust, values, norms, and identity can vary greatly across different cultures.

4) Data availability

Data availability and appropriateness of indicators in this domain are briefly discussed as follows:

High data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 1 (extent to which “most people can be trusted”) and Indicator 2 (trust in the government, civil servants, elected representatives, political parties, armed

forces, the legal system, the police, the media, trade unions, religious institutions, and economic transactions) are subjective indicators but comparable and standardized data is available across countries, thus making these two indicators good indicators. Indicator 3 (importance of family, friends, leisure, politics, and respect for parents) is an important indicator for Asian societies, especially parents' duty to children, and most countries have relevant and comparable data. Indicator 4 (corruption) is a good indicator and can be measured by CPI. Indicator 5 (number of hours per week) and Indicator 6 (percentage of people involved in volunteer activities) are appropriate indicators with comparable data across countries. Indicator 7 (percentage of population donating blood voluntarily) is an adequate indicator, but a standardized data format across countries is necessary. Indicator 10 (beliefs of causes of poverty, whether individual or structural) is an appropriate subjective indicator because of data availability and straightforward definition. Indicator 11 (willingness to pay more taxes if it would improve the situation of the poor) and Indicator 13 (willingness to actually do something practical for the people in the community/neighborhood) are appropriate subjective indicators with sufficient relevant data despite the possibility of these indicators being framed into other related questions. Indicator 14 (membership — active or inactive — in political, voluntary, charitable organizations, or sport clubs) is an appropriate data given its clear definition and comparable data across countries. Indicators 16 (frequency of contact with friends and colleagues) and 17 (sense of national pride) are appropriate indicators with comparable data.

Low data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 8 (acceptance of immigrants and multiculturalism) and Indicator 9 (acceptance of other people's beliefs, behavior, and lifestyle preferences) are good subjective indicators, but data availability is only slightly beyond the acceptable level. Indicator 12 (willingness to pay 1 percent more tax in order to improve the situation of elderly people in the country) is a straightforward indicator but faces the issue of data unavailability. Indicator, 18 (identity as Asian) is an appropriate indicator for Asian societies, but data availability is unsatisfactory. Indicator 20 (sense of belonging to family and kinship network) is an important indicator for Asian societies, but data availability is unsatisfactory.

Low data availability and low appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 15 (support received from family, friends, and neighbors) is a problematic indicator because frequency of support and satisfaction of support are not clearly distinguished here. Data availability is also an issue. Indicator 19 (sense of local identity) is an unclear indicator, because this concept can be measured divergently by being proud of, feeling passion about, and being part of the

community.

Social Empowerment and its Indicators in Asia

For this conditional factor, 11 indicators are deleted, one indicator replaced, and one indicator added out of the 24 indicators developed by the EFSQ. In total, there are 13 indicators in this conditional factor (see Appendix).

1) New added indicators

The added indicator is the “right to access public information.” According to Roberts (2002), “A right of access to information held within government institutions is usually justified as an instrument for promoting political participation” (Roberts, 2002: 9) The availability of public information helps in increasing civic literacy and participation in a civil society, which is related to political empowerment. Additionally, the degree of democracy is associated with knowledgeable citizens who have access to a range of information, which will decrease the possibilities of corruption and illegal activities in society. Although literacy rate and availability of free media in Asian countries are high, citizens do not always know how important transparency of public information is and do not believe that civic participation can influence officials and civil servants. Since the history of democracy is relatively short in Asia, we find it important to include the “right to access public information” as a new indicator.

2) Replaced/deleted indicators

This conditional factor has the highest deletion rate. A lot of indicators and domains developed in Europe are deleted because they are found to be problematic and have no available data (Phillips, 2008: 52, Appendix 1). Deleted domains and sub-domains include “openness and supportiveness of institutions,” “support for collective action,” and “personal relationships.” Other suitable domains may be found later to replace these deleted ones, but a decision was made to reduce this conditional factor by minimizing its indicators.

3) Indicators congruent with ESQ indicators

Indicators remaining the same include: “literacy rate,” “availability of free media,” and “access to the internet” in the sub-domain of availability of information; “provision of information in multiple languages,” “availability of free advocacy, advice and guidance centers” in the sub-domain of user-friendliness of information; “trade union membership as a percentage of the labor force” and “percent of labor force covered by a collective agreement” in the

sub-domain of control over employment contract; “percent of labor force accessing publicly provided training” in the sub-domain of prospects of job mobility; “percent of organizations operating work-life balance policies” and “percent of employed labor force actually making use of work/life balance measures” in the sub-domain of reconciliation of work and family life; “proportion of local and national budget allocated to all cultural activities” and “number of self-organized cultural groups” in the sub-domain of cultural enrichment.

4) Data availability

Data availability and appropriateness of indicators in this domain are briefly discussed as follows:

High data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 1 (literacy rate) is a direct and objective indicator, which has comparable data across countries. Indicator 3 (access to the internet or internet access rate per household) is a direct and objective indicator, and thus, comparable data is available from each government. Indicator 7 (percent of labor force as member of a trade union), Indicator 8 (percent of labor force covered by a collective agreement), and Indicator 9 (percent of labor force accessing publicly provided training) are appropriate objective indicators and data are comparable in format.

Low data availability and high appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 4 (provision of social services information in multiple languages) and Indicator 5 (right to access public information) are clear indicators, but data availability is unsatisfactory. Indicator 10 (percent of organizations operating work-life balance policy) and 11 (percent of employed labor force actually making use of work/life balance measures) are appropriate indicators, but both data availability and quality of data are not satisfactory. Indicator 12 (proportion of local and national budget allocated to all cultural activities) and 13 (number of self-organized cultural groups and events) are appropriate objective indicators and have relevant data, but the level of data availability and comparability is only slightly satisfactory.

Low data availability and low appropriateness of indicators: Indicator 2 (availability of free media) is a problematic indicator because its definition is unclear and all the data are from informal surveys such as TV or newspapers surveys. Caution must be taken with the quality of these data. Indicator 6 (availability of free advocacy, advice, and guidance centers) is a problematic indicator and needs to be defined more clearly. Data availability is unsatisfactory as well.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study presents the construction process of Asian social quality (ASQ) indicators since 2007. It is argued that the uniqueness of constructing ASQ indicators lies on the fact that for the first time such indicators were constructed cross-nationally through the collaboration of academics by refuting the assumption that economic growth is always the first priority. Whether in the spheres of state or society, and that the social quality of Asian life is hardly concerned. The construction of ASQ indicators is a good beginning to examine the social quality of human life in Asia and to practically measure social quality of Asia. The ASQ research team and the academics are also required to fully integrate this theoretical framework and arguments to the analysis of ASQ indicators and survey data.

Because this is the initial stage of constructing social quality indicators in Asia, we have omitted many indicators that are deemed problematic or without available data. This does not suggest that these indicators are not important or that they have no potential as strong indicators. For example, European national reports have found that indicators on the division of labor between men and women are problematic, because the issue of unequal distribution of domestic burden between men and women is intricate and not measurable by a small number of indicators.

Another important issue confronting Asia is eldercare despite the fact that current indicators only include social care as sub-domains. In Asian countries, women are also responsible for eldercare, which is an issue associated with privatization of eldercare. Nevertheless, current social quality indicators seem to overlook this issue and only include institutionalized eldercare, such as the average time of wait for institutional care services, as indicators. In the future, family care (which is different from social support) may be considered for the domain of social inclusion. However, this would be an interesting indicator because receiving care from family members is associated with social inclusion for the elderly while isolation in the private sphere could cause social exclusion for women who provide eldercare. Due to the fact that Asian culture strongly emphasizes filial piety — although it is now less expected — more culturally-specific social quality indicators should be able to illuminate the eldercare situation in Asia. For example, adult sons and daughters in Asia sometimes rotate eldercare so that an elder can be taken care of by both his/her family members and domestic workers. In order to measure the social quality of aging persons, these indicators should be able to evaluate the quality of elderly life. A

good set of social quality indicators should be both sensitive to young adults and aged persons. In this vein, a more age-specific set of indicators should be developed and, if possible, subjective indicators such as the perceived eldercare from family members and self-assessed health condition should be included in the future.

Besides age-specific indicators, current social quality indicators have not yet reached the point of gender mainstreaming. For example, care work in the family has a major effect on women's paid labor and caring for the elderly sometimes takes a toll on women's physical and mental health in Asian countries. In addition to care work issues associated with women, indicators related to gender discrimination should also be included as paid labor. According to Budig and England (2001), a wage penalty might result from motherhood because working mothers can experience loss of job during child-bearing years, become less productive at work because of childcare, switch to mother-friendly jobs while giving up higher wages, or are discriminated against by employers (Budig and England, 2001: 206-209). Therefore, in order to construct social quality indicators from the gender perspective, indicators should be able to reflect women's stress in paid labor.

Aside from age and gender, minority-related social quality indicators should be included because immigration has become an important social issue in Asia. For example, indicators should differentiate discrimination in the labor market, school, media, and the public sphere. Subjective indicators of discrimination should be addressed in the future because discrimination is both a matter of law and subjective reaction.

More indicators of social empowerment should be added. Due to the fact that social inclusion and social empowerment are sometimes intertwined, it may be a good idea to increase the indicators on social empowerment so that these two concepts can be investigated together. For example, social inclusion is largely concerned with rights such as political rights. And yet, it is not known as to whether individuals exercising citizen rights are empowered. Unless the degree of civic participation is added as indicators of social empowerment, the relation between rights and empowerment will not be known. According to Lin and Chen (2003), civic participation could lead to empowerment of civic literacy (Lin and Chen, 2003: 110). As a result, more indicators related to civic participation should be considered as a way of measuring the degree of empowerment of citizens in Asian countries.

Because the concept of empowerment and its indicators are much less developed than other conditional factors, future research should devote more attention to this conditional factor. Social quality indicators should be well-

balanced because the concept of social quality focuses equally on socio-economic security, social inclusion, social cohesion, and social empowerment. However, current indicators seem to suggest that some conditional factors are more dominant than others due to the nature of data availability. Also, objective indicators seem to be more reliable source of data because they are made by various governments, while subjective indicators come from academic research or surveys conducted by private institutions most of which are indirect data. Because the social quality approach focuses on both objective and subjective aspects, more subjective indicators should be added in the future and a data-collecting division of labor between government and academic institutions is encouraged: governments should be responsible for collecting data for objective indicators while academic institutions are to be responsible for conducting surveys.

To sum up, future research on social quality indicators should have a gender perspective and focus more on issues related to aging, because aging population has been a major concern of Asian countries. Also, the development of each conditional factor should be more well-balanced. Social empowerment is a conditional factor worth studying and developing. Last but not least, more subjective indicators should be established in the future, because the social quality approach focuses equally on objective indicators as well as subjective indicators.

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Appendix: Social Quality Indicators between Europe and Asia

Domains	Europe		Asia			
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators		
Socio-economic security						
Financial resources	Income sufficiency	1	Household income spent on health, clothing, food, and housing (in the lower and median income households)	Income sufficiency	1 Subjective perception of income inadequacy 2 Objective indicator of income sufficiency	
	Income security	2	How certain biographical events affect the risk of poverty at the household level	Income security	3 Income replacement ratio	
		3	Proportion of total population living in households receiving entitlement transfers (means-tested, cash and in-kind transfers) that allow them to live above EU poverty level	Income inequality	4 Income inequality	
Housing and environment	Housing security	4	Proportion of people who are certain of keeping their home	Housing security	5 Percentage of home ownership	
		5	Proportion of hidden families (i.e., several families within the same household)		6 Housing affordability	
	Housing conditions	6	Number of square meters per household member	Housing conditions	7	Number of square meters per household member
		7	Proportion of population living in houses without basic amenities (water, sanitation, and electricity)		8	Proportion of population living in houses without basic amenities (water, sanitation, and electricity)
Environmental conditions	8	People affected by criminal offences per 10,000 inhabitants	Crime and safety	9	People affected by criminal offences per 10,000 inhabitants	
	9	Proportion of house-	Social and	10	No. of deaths due to	

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
		holds in neighborhoods with above-average pollution rate (water, air, and noise)	environmental risks	disasters per 100,000 people 11 Subjective perception of threats from environmental risks/natural disasters 12 Subjective perception of political stability, armed conflicts, and terrorist attacks
Health and care	Security of health provisions	10 Proportion of people covered by compulsory/voluntary health insurance (including qualitative exploration of what is and what is not covered by insurance)	Security of health provisions	13 Proportion of people with access to free health services
	Health services	11 Number of medical doctors per 10,000 inhabitants	Health services	14 Number of medical doctors/nurses [significant paramedics] per 10,000 inhabitants
		12 Average distance to a hospital, measured in minutes, not in meters		15 Average distance to a hospital, measured in minutes, not in meters
		13 Average response time of ambulance		16 Average response time of ambulance 17 Proportion of in-patient treatment fee paid by patients/government
	Care services	14 Average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid care		
Work	Employment security	15 Length of notice before employer can change terms and conditions of labor relation/contract	Employment Security	18 Length of notice before labor contract termination
		16 Length of notice before labor contract termination		19 Proportion employed workforce with temporary and non-

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
		17		permanent job contract 20 Proportion of illegal workforce
		18		21 Proportion of workforce covered by unemployment insurance
				22 Unemployment rate
	Working conditions	19	Working conditions	23 Number of accidents (fatal/non-fatal) at work per 100,000 employees (if possible, per sector)
		20		24 Number of hours a full-time employee typically works per week
		21		
Education	Security of education	22	Security of education	25 Proportion of pupils quitting school without finishing compulsory education (early school leavers)
		23		26 Age of completion of compulsory education
	Quality of education	24	Quality of education	27 Proportion of students who, within a year of leaving school with or without certificate, are

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
		able to find employment		able to find employment
Social cohesion				
Trust	General trust	25 Extent to which “most people can be trusted”	General trust	28 Extent to which “most people can be trusted”
	Specific trust	26 Trust in the government, elected representatives, political parties, armed forces, legal system, the media, trade unions, police, religious institutions, civil service, and economic transactions.	Specific trust	29 Trust in the government, civil servants, elected representatives, political parties, armed forces, legal system, police, the media, trade unions, religious institutions, economic transactions
		27 Number of cases being referred to European court of law		30 Importance of family, friends, leisure, parents, politics, respecting Parents’ duty to children
		28 Importance of family, friends, leisure, politics, respecting parents. Parents’ duty to children	Corruption	31 Corruption
Other integrative norms and values	Altruism	29 Volunteering: number of hours per week	Altruism	32 Volunteering: number of hours per week
		30 % of population voluntarily donating blood		33 Percentage of people involved in volunteer activities
	Tolerance	31 Views on immigration, pluralism, and multiculturalism	Acceptance	35 Acceptance of immigrants and multiculturalism
32 Tolerance of other people’s self-identity, beliefs, behavior, and lifestyle preferences			36 Acceptance of other people’s self-identity, beliefs, behavior, and lifestyle preferences	
	Social contract	33 Beliefs in causes of poverty: individual or structural	Social contract	37 Beliefs in causes of poverty: individual or structural
		34 Willingness to pay more tax if it would		38 Willingness to pay more tax if it would

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
		improve the situation of the poor		improve the situation of the poor
		35 Intergenerational: willingness to pay 1 percent more tax in order to improve the situation of elderly people in the country	39 Intergenerational: willingness to pay 1 percent more tax in order to improve the situation of elderly people in the country	
		36 Willingness to actually do something practical for the people in the community/neighborhood like picking up litter, doing some shopping for the elderly/disabled/sick people in the neighborhood, assisting neighbors/community members fill out (tax/municipal/etc.) forms, cleaning the street/porch/doorway	40 Willingness to actually do something practical for the people in the community/neighborhood like picking up litter, doing some shopping for people in need [elderly/disabled/sick people] in the neighborhood, assisting neighbors/community members fill out (tax/municipal/etc.) forms, cleaning public areas such as street/porch/doorway	
		37 Division of household tasks between men and women: Do you have an understanding with your husband/spouse about the division of household tasks, raising children, and earning household income?		
Social networks	Networks	38 Membership (active or inactive) in political, voluntary, charitable organizations, or sport clubs	41 Membership (active or inactive) in political, voluntary, charitable organizations or sport clubs	
		39 Support received from family, neighbors, and friends	42 Support received from family, friends, neighbors	
		40 Frequency of contact with friends and	43 Frequency of contact with friends and	

Domains	Europe		Asia			
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators		
		colleagues		colleagues		
Identity	National/ European identity	41	Sense of national pride	National/ Asian identity	44	Sense of national pride
		42	Identification with national symbols and European symbols		45	Identity as Asian
	Regional/ community/ local identity	43	Sense of regional/ community/local identity	Regional/ community/ local identity	46	Sense of local identity
	Interpersonal identity	44	Sense of belonging to family and kinship network	Interpersonal identity	47	Sense of belonging to family and kinship network
Social inclusion						
Citizen- ship rights	Constitutional/ political right	45	Proportion of residents with citizenship	Political right	48	Proportion of population with the right to vote in elections
		46	Proportion having the right to vote and exercising it in local elections		49	Proportion of population exercising the right to vote in elections
	Social rights	47	Proportion with the right to a public pension (i.e., a pension organized or regulated by the government)	Social rights	50	Proportion of eligible population actually covered by public pension
		48	Women's pay in proportion to men's pay		51	Women's income in proportion to men's pay
Civil rights	49	Proportion with the right to free legal advice	Civil rights	52	Proportion of residents (or citizens) with the right to free legal advice	
		50		Proportion experiencing discrimination	53	Proportion of population experiencing discrimination [age, racial, gender]
	Economic and political network	51	Proportion of ethnic minority groups elected or appointed to parliament, boards of	Economic and political network	54	Proportion of women elected or appointed to parliament, boards of private companies and

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
		private companies and foundations		foundations
		52 Proportion of women elected or appointed to parliament, boards of private companies and foundations		
Labor market	Access to paid employment	53 Long-term unemployment (12+ months)	Access to paid employment	55 % of long-term unemployment (i.e., 12+ months) of total unemployment
		54 Involuntary part-time or temporary employment		56 % of involuntary casual [i.e., part-time and temporary] employment
Services	Health services	55 Proportion entitled to and using public primary health care	Education	57 Secondary school participation [enrolment] rate
	Housing	56 Proportion homeless, sleeping rough		58 Higher education participation [enrolment] rate. Average waiting time for elderly institutional care services. Secondary school participation [enrolment] rate
		57 Average waiting time for social housing		
	Education	58 School participation rate and higher education participation rate		
	Social care	59 Proportion of people in need of receiving care services	Social care	59 Higher education participation [enrolment] rate
		60 Average waiting time for care services (including childcare)		60 Average waiting time for elderly institutional care services
	Financial services	61 Proportion denied credit, differentiated by income groups	Civic/cultural services	61 Number of public sport facilities per 10,000 people
		62 Access to financial assistance/advice in case of need		

Domains	Europe		Asia			
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators		
	Transport	63	Proportion of people with access to the public transport system	62	Number of public and private civic & cultural facilities (e.g., cinema, theater, concert halls, museum) per 10,000 people. Frequency of contact with neighbors. Frequency of contact with friends. Level of feeling lonely/alienated	
		64	Density of public transport system and road density			
	Civic/cultural services	65	Number of public sport facilities per 10,000 inhabitants			
		66	Number of public and private civic & cultural facilities (e.g., cinema, theater, concerts) per 10,000 inhabitants			
Social network	Neighborhood participation	67	Proportion in regular contact with neighbors	Neighborhood participation	63	Frequency of contact with relatives
	Friendship	68	Proportion in regular contact with friends	Friendship	64	Perceived quantity [or <i>adequacy</i>] of entitlement transfer received from family
	Family life	69	Proportion feeling lonely/alienated	Family life	65	Number of public sport facilities per 10,000 people
		70	Duration of contact with relatives (cohabiting and non-cohabiting)		66	Number of public civic & cultural facilities (e.g., theatre, concert halls, museum) per 10,000 people
		71	Informal (non-monetary) assistance received by different types of family		67	Frequency of contact with neighbors
	Social empowerment					
Knowledge-base	Application of knowledge	72	Extent to which social mobility is knowledge-based (formal qualifications)	Availability of information	68	Literacy rate
	Availability of information	73	Percent of literate and numerate population		69	Availability of free media
74		Availability of free	70		Access to the internet	

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
		media		[internet user, or % of internet user] or internet access rate per household
		75 Access to the internet	User-friendliness of information	71 Provision of social services information in multiple languages
	User-friendliness of information	76 Provision of social services information in multiple languages		71* Right to access public information
		77 Availability of free advocacy, advice, and guidance centers		72 Availability of free advocacy, advice, and guidance centers
Labor market	Control over employment	78 Percent of labor force as member of a trade union (differentiated into public and private employees)	Control over employment contract	73 Percent of labor force as member of a trade union (public and private employees)
		79 Percent of labor force covered by a collective agreement (distinguished into public and private employees)		74 Percent of labor force covered by a collective agreement (public and private employees)
	Prospects of job mobility	80 Percent of employed labor force receiving work-based training	Prospects of job mobility	75 Percent of labor force accessing publicly provided training
		81 Percent of labor force accessing publicly provided training (not only skills-based). (Please outline cost of such training, if any)		
	Reconciliation of work and family life (work/life balance)	83 Percent of organizations operating a work-life balance policy	Reconciliation of work and family life (work/life balance)	76 Percent of organizations operating a work-life balance policy
		84 Percent of employed labor force actually making use of work/life balance measures (see indicator above)		
Openness and supportiveness	Openness and supportiveness	85 Existence of processes of consultation and		77 Percent of employed labor force actually

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
portiveness of institu- tions	of political system	direct democracy (e.g., referenda)		making use of work/ life balance measures
	Openness of economic system	86 Number of instances of public involvement in major economic decision-making (e.g., public hearings about company relocation, inward investment, and plant closure)		
	Openness of organizations	87 Percent of organiza- tions/institutions with work councils		
Public space	Support for collective action	88 Percent of the national and local public budget reserved for voluntary, not-for-profit citizen- ship initiatives	Cultural enrichment	78 Proportion of local and national budget allocated to all cultural activities
		89 Marches and demon- strations banned in the past 12 months in proportion to total marches and demon- strations (held and banned)		79 Number of self- organized cultural groups and events
	Cultural enrichment	90 Proportion of local and national budget allocated to all cultural activities		
		91 Number of self- organized cultural groups and events		
		92 Proportion of people experiencing different forms of personal enrichment on a regular basis		
Personal relation- ships	Services supporting physical and social independence	93 Percentage of national and local budgets devoted to disabled people (physical and mental)		

Domains	Europe		Asia	
	Sub-domains	No. Indicators	Sub-domains	No. Indicators
	Personal support services	94	Level of pre- and post-school childcare	
	Support for social interaction	95	Extent of inclusiveness of housing and environmental design (e.g., meeting places, lighting, layout)	

