AUTHOR(S): SPICKER, P.

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Cohesion, exclusion and social quality

Abstract. *The concept of social quality has been operationalised in terms of four component dimensions: social inclusion, social cohesion, socio-economic security and social empowerment. This paper argues that inclusion and cohesion are aspects of the same underlying social construct. Societies are cohesive to the extent that they are bound by relationships of solidarity; people are included when they are part of solidaristic social networks. Where there is cohesion, there is solidarity, and where there is solidarity, there is inclusion. It follows that the attempt to define social quality in terms of a formal distinction between inclusion and cohesion is doomed to failure. They cannot be treated as distinct elements, and the attempt to distinguish them has led to double-counting.*

The idea of 'social quality' has been operationalised in terms of four component dimensions: social inclusion, social cohesion, socio-economic security and social empowerment. All of those dimensions are complex and potentially ambiguous, but in this paper I want to focus on two in particular: inclusion and cohesion. These are two facets of the same underlying social construct, and I shall argue that they cannot be treated as distinct elements in the examination of social quality.

In conceptual terms, the ideas of both inclusion and cohesion have their origins in a common core: the model of solidarity that has become dominant in much of Europe. The idea of solidarity refers in part to a principle of mutual responsibility - that people have obligations to each other - and in part to a sense of shared identity and commitment. So, solidarity is defined in Catholic social teaching as a recognition of interdependence:

> A firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is ... the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for each other (Pope John-Paul II, 1987, para 38).

Although the term 'solidarity' has not itself consistently been part of Catholic teaching, the principle has: Aquinas used the idea of the 'communio vitae' to refer to marriage, but it was subsequently extended by Christian communitarians to refer to the solidarities of the Christian community and from there to society (e.g. Vives, 1525).

The origins of the idea of solidarity can be traced back in legal relationships, but the language of solidarity has been current in political discourse since at least the early nineteenth century. In the first sense, that of mutual responsibility, it appears in the 1835 dictionary of the Académie Française. They noted that the term

> sometimes refers, in ordinary language, to mutual responsibility which is established between two or several people. Solidarity binds us together. (cited Zoll, 1998, p 2)

This idea was popularised in the 1840s by Hippolyte Renaud, who used it as the basis for an ideal model of society (Renaud, 1845). Hayward attributes its influence in France partly to the strength of Roman Catholic 'social theologists', but by the 1890s, "it had become almost a truism and a tautology to stress the need for social solidarity: to champion social legislation and government intervention; to promote voluntary associations." (Hayward, 1959, p 258) (The idea of solidarity is often attributed by sociologists to Durkheim, but this is the context in which Durkheim's work should be understood - *De la division du travail social* was published in 1893, more than fifty years after the sources I have cited). Léon Bourgeois argued for 'solidarism' as a political movement, based on the development of mutual responsibility. (Bourgeois, 1906) The principle has remained central to French political discourse; the idea of solidarity occupies the role that in the UK is taken by the idea of the 'welfare state'.

The other sense of solidarity was part of the discourse of radical politics. Fourier used the term in the 1820s to refer to help for others and a sense of community (cited Sternjø, 2005, p 22). Pierre Leroux, who probably invented the word 'socialism', used the idea of solidarity to refer to common humanity. (Leroux, 1840) In the Marxist sense, the idea of solidarity as a sense of identity and commitment emerges only after Marx - Stjernø attributes its origins to Kautsky, Bernstein, Lukacs and Gramsci (Stjernø, 2005, ch 2). The extensive use of the term in Marxist writing meant that the Polish freedom movement, *Solidarnosc*, was able to combine a term that both harked to communist principles and to social Catholicism.

The idea of solidarity has been widely used and disseminated, and as part of this process it has acquired further shades of meaning. For much of its development, the expression of solidarity was often associated with social insurance, either because solidaristic groups shared risks, or because the sharing of risks was itself a form of solidarity. Bourgeois's idea of solidarism was heavily dependent on mutual insurance (Bourgeois, 1906); Marcel Mauss argued that social insurance was an example of the same sort of solidarity through gift-exchange that he had identified in anthropological studies (Mauss, 1925, pp 65-66). When the French *Code de la Sécurité Sociale,* the legislative framework for social insurance, was written in 1945, the first article based it in "the principle of national solidarity". Pierre Laroque, the founder of the post-war system in France, explained:

> Every country, after the war, had the same preoccupations but each responded to them according to its history, and on the basis of the institutions which then existed. We wanted to remain faithful to the French tradition of syndicalism and mutuality. At the same time, we wanted to put in place a unified system, applying to every worker, beginning with all salaried workers, by contrast with social insurance schemes. That corresponded, too, to the movement of solidarity one felt at that time. (Laroque, 1985, p 35)

The association of solidarity with social insurance was gradually reinterpreted in later years, as the term increasingly became identified with those elements of risk pooling that could not simply be explained in terms of insurance - including redistribution of the burden of risk (van Praag, Konijn, 1983), the elements of generalised exchange in solidaristic pensions (Wilson, 1974), or 'solidarity funds' designed to balance risks between institutions. Subsequently, the application of the principle has shifted more fundamentally: solidarity has come to mean something much broader, often related to a principle of humanitarian redistribution, sometimes to equality. For the Swedish Social Democratic Party, solidarity implies equality as well as support (Swedish Social Democratic Party, 2007). For Peter Baldwin, whose

work is mainly based in German and Scandinavian sources, “Social solidarity is justice defined in terms of need” (Baldwin, 1990, p 31). The principle of solidarity reflects the principles of the welfare state, including rights, citizenship and equality; in his view, insurance is not indicative of solidarity at all. The ‘renewed social agenda’ of the European Union redefines solidarity further:

> Europeans share a commitment to social solidarity: between generations, regions, the better off and the less well off and wealthier and less wealthy Member States. Solidarity is part of how European society works and how Europe engages with the rest of the world. ... Solidarity means action to help those who are disadvantaged – who cannot reap the benefits of an open, rapidly changing society. It means fostering social inclusion and integration, participation and dialogue and combating poverty. (European Commission, 2008, p 6)

However inconsistently, a principle initially based in mutuality and reciprocity has come to stand for redistribution; a principle that used to be firmly identified with social insurance has become a major justification for the provision of residual benefits.

The link between the different senses of solidarity may seem indirect. The connection between them rests in the idea of responsibility as a form of social bonding; mutual support, reciprocal obligations and moral commitments are the ties that hold us together. In the Catholic model, people are born into supportive social networks - into families and communities. The networks of mutual responsibility and support are inter-connected and overlapping. Solidarity is the process that defines those networks. Everyone - or nearly everyone - is part of a complex web of mutually reinforced interdependencies. Alfandari writes:

> Solidarity supposes the interdependence of individuals within a defined group. One can imagine a system of concentric circles of solidarity, wider and wider, which go from the nuclear family up to the international community. (Alfandari, 1989, p 73)

A society is not to be understood as a body separate or distinct from relationships of solidarity, like a member's association or group of people sharing a common set of values or beliefs; nor is it defined in terms of an identity that is bound together by a different process from its constituent parts, such as nationalism or common purpose. Any of these approaches is incomplete; they do not supply any explanation of the nature of social bonds. The solidarity of a whole society is formed through the links developed through many interactions at a more personal and local level. A society is developed as a complex set of solidarities - a network of networks.

This model is the foundation for the concepts of both exclusion and of social cohesion.

Exclusion

The idea of exclusion developed, like the model of solidarity I have been discussing, in the context of French social policy. Solidarity is what ties people together; exclusion is the other side of the coin. People are included when they are part of networks of solidaristic social support. They are excluded when they are not.

In the period after the liberation, the primary objective of French social policy was

'generalisation' - not universalism, but the progressive extension of solidarity to include increasing numbers of people, initially through the extension of insurance regimes. By the early 1970s, insurance had been extended to virtually all workers, but it had become apparent that any mechanism that relied on contributions could not serve to include everyone. There were minimum incomes in place for invalidity and old age (the *minimum vieillesse* was introduced in 1956, through the *Fonds national de solidarité*), but there were also substantial holes in the system. That was the context in which René Lenoir published his book *Les Exclus*, referring to the excluded - those who were left out of the arrangements of solidarity that others were included in (Lenoir, 1974). The object of policy became '*insertion*', or social inclusion in networks of solidarity. A large part of the response was to provide benefits offering minimum incomes to different groups - people with disabilities (1975), single parents (1976), widows (1980) and unemployed people (1979 and 1984). But 'insertion' or social inclusion was also strongly associated with ideas of social integration, going beyond income: the models of inclusion included education, training, access to opportunities and personalised social work support (see e.g. Euvrard, Paugam, 1991; Vanlerenberghe, 1992). The policy was more fully realised in the *Revenu minimum d'insertion*, a relatively comprehensive system introduced in 1988 for those who were otherwise left out. The RMI was much imitated in Europe, but there has been some movement away from the initial vision and in 2009 it was re-named the *Revenu de solidarité active*.

The idea of exclusion initially meant that people were not included in relationships of mutual support. It was rapidly extended to cover, for example, people who were unemployed (Wuhl, 1992), young offenders (Mossé, 1986) or people with AIDS (Commissariat général du plan, 1993). It could refer to people who were left out of supportive systems - for example, people without social insurance contributions, or whose entitlements had expired. It could refer to people who were shut out or denied access - immigrants, people with disabilities, people living on outlying estates. And it could refer to people who were pushed out or socially rejected- prisoners, people with aids, minority ethnic groups. Palier and Bonoli complain that the idea lumps together a wide range of problems under the same label - "poverty, long-term unemployment, public housing, urban problems, various handicaps, AIDS, racism, immigration etc." (Palier, Bonoli, 1995, p 682) - but that is what it was intended to do. And that was the position at the time the concept of exclusion was adopted by the European Commission. The UK government of the time was protesting about references to poverty; the Tiemann Report responded that that posed no problem, because the European Community could discuss exclusion instead (Tiemann, 1993) It was exclusion, rather than poverty, which informed the social protocols and later treaties.

As the idea was disseminated through the European Union, it lost much of its initial focus. English-speaking commentators, perplexed by the subtleties of French social theory, tried to explain exclusion either in terms of conventional sociology (Silver, 1994), poverty (Le Grand, cited in Barry, 1998, p.4), urban deprivation (the dominant interpretation in Scotland) or, worse, the social pathology that has recurred in discourse in England since the days of the Poor Law. The Labour Government described exclusion as

> a short hand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdowns. (Cited Hills, Stewart, 2005)

Words come to mean what people use them to mean, and it is probably true that exclusion is used more in Britain to refer to long-term deprivation and social disadvantage than it is to the original concept. The problem with that usage is partly that it adds little to our understanding, but mainly that it loses what the idea of exclusion had to offer, and still offers in much of Europe - a social concept understanding material deprivation and disadvantage in terms of integration into relationships of solidarity. Social inclusion, conversely, means specifically that a person is included in networks of solidaristic social relationships. This is rather more specific than the participation in 'everyday life' suggested in work on social quality (Beck, van der Maesen, Walker, 2012, p 62). Solidarity is based in relationships of reciprocity and mutual obligation, and social inclusion depends on engagement in those relationships, not just on co-existence.

Social cohesion

The language of social cohesion is older than the concept of exclusion. Friedkin traces back discussions of 'cohesiveness' to the 1950s, but notes that "the theoretical location of social cohesion has 'floated' among various interrelated constructs, creating tremendous confusion." (Friedkin, 2004) In the context of the European Union, the concept enjoyed a surge in the 1990s, The Council of Europe's methodology guide reviews a long series of alternative definitions of social cohesion, drawn from various sources (Council of Europe, 2005). They include:

Definitions based on social bonds:

- "the promotion of stable, co-operative and sustainable communities".

Definitions based on shared values and a sense of belonging

- "Social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunities based on a sense of hope, trust and reciprocity"
- "Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income, and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community"
- "... a society which offers opportunities to all its members within a framework of accepted values and institutions"
- "Social cohesion focuses on whole communities, on participation and governance, as well as on the needs of those who are excluded"
- " a set of social processes that help instil in individuals the sense of belonging to the same community and the feeling that they are recognised as members of that community"

In the work on social quality, Beck, van Maesen and Walker describe social cohesion as "the extent to which social relations, based on identities, values and norms, are shared." (Beck, van der Maesen, Walker, 2012, p 61.) That falls into the same category as these definitions, but it has a troubling flaw: the link of cohesion with shared identity and culture may be an indication, not of social quality, but of cultural exclusivity.

Definitions based on the ability to (live and) work together. This mixes two different

principles. One of those principles is collective action:

> • "Social cohesion is a state of affairs in which a group of people (delineated by a geographical region, like a country) demonstrate an aptitude for collaboration that produces a climate for change";
> • "Social cohesion is the extent to which people respond collectively to achieve their valued outcomes and to deal with the economic, social, political or environmental stresses (positive or negative) that affect them".

The other is a definition of cohesion based on harmonious co-existence.

> • "Social cohesion is defined as the capacity of citizens living under different social or economic circumstances to live together in harmony, with a sense of mutual commitment".

'Community cohesion' has been interpreted in the UK in terms of living together well, implying social interaction and tolerance for diversity. (Ratcliffe, 2012)

There is a striking gap in this list - there is very little on group cohesiveness, in the sense considered by Friedkin, or indeed in the sense emphasised in recent work on social quality (Berman, Phillips, 2012). A definition that was based on durable group membership might reasonably emphasise the processes of belonging and commitment. Social groups have three core elements: identity, which is based on social recognition of the group; membership, which is the identification of people with the group; and relationships between the group's members. Cohesion rests, necessarily, in the third of these, the relationships between the group's members. The features which are actually identified are shared values (which do not in themselves define relationships), co-operation and reciprocity. Shared values do not define relationships, even if they are a precondition for them; in a globalised society, many of us share values with others we do not identify with. So the process comes down substantially to cooperation and reciprocity, which are the same terms as solidarity.

Solidarity is sometimes taken loosely to the existence of social relationships, and in that sense most of the definitions of social cohesion - even those concerned with the vague and woolly idea of social harmony - can be seen as manifestations of solidarity (cf Berman, Phillips, 2012, pp 156 ff.). However, an emphasis on identity is not enough, and nor is co-existence. Social cohesion needs people to be bound to social groups and networks, and groups and networks have to be bound to other networks. I wrote in a previous book:

> If society is an interwoven series of networks, solidaristic obligations are often the threads which bind the networks together. This is another way of describing social cohesion. Solidarity is not the only process through which social cohesion might be developed - culture, belief, or common interest matter just as much - but it is integral to social cohesion, and wherever there is a degree of social cohesion, some elements of solidarity are likely to be found. (Spicker, 2000 p 49)

This can perhaps be put more strongly. There have been societies which have attempted to form a sense of social cohesion without depending on solidaristic networks. National solidarity is built from the combination of local and communal solidarities. Mussolini tried to build national solidarity around the idea of the state, Hitler around race. (Stjernø, 2005, ch 8) Both were self-defeating, because they lacked (and indeed, they undermined) the basic

and intermediate foundations around which national solidarities are formed. Social cohesion cannot be based solely on a sense of identity or belonging; it is not just a matter of culture, such as a common language, because people can be born into a culture without having direct or indirect links of responsibility to each other. If a society has identity, culture and common practice in a world where people are atomized and alienated, it cannot be cohesive.

Cohesion depends on social bonds - relationships that define the pattern of social interaction, that continue and last. The bonds of family and religion have that effect, but other relationships either do not define patterns of contact - identity, disability, 'race' and nationality - or have proved ephemeral. The language of solidarity is the one of the strongest senses in which such bonds have been discussed. The bonds of solidarity are identified with patterns of 'gift-exchange', (Titmuss, 1970) including altruism, balanced and generalised reciprocity. Exchange confers obligation, and the obligations are enduring, within and beyond families. Several definitions of social cohesion are concerned with related ideas - "reciprocity", "mutual commitment" and collective responses to social need.

The problems of solidarity

We have, then, two concepts with a common root: inclusion and cohesion. The ideas of solidarity, exclusion and cohesion are part of the same discourse. The inter-linking of the concepts is evident in French documents (see e.g. Commissariat général du plan, 1993), but it can be seen much more widely. It can be found, for example, in the European Union's recommendation on common criteria for social protection, which opens with the statements that "reinforcing social cohesion within the Community requires the encouragement of solidarity with regard to the least privileged and most vulnerable people"; and that "in a spirit of solidarity, it is important to combat social exclusion" (European Community, 1992); the EU Green Paper on Social Policy, which refers repeatedly to all these concepts (Commission of the European Communities, 1993); or the Council of Europe's Strategy for Social Cohesion, which closely identifies social cohesion and inclusion with solidaristic provision (Council of Europe, 2004). Social cohesion and social exclusion are both concerned with the integration of people into relationships of solidarity. And both consequently mean much the same thing - they are describing the same relationships and the same processes. Where there is cohesion, there is solidarity, and where there is solidarity, there is inclusion.

There are however two key weaknesses in the social model I have been discussing, and further principles are needed to repair the damage. A cohesive society, the argument runs, is built on obligations. The character of those obligations is personal and all-encompassing. The first problem with this is a general problem with communitarianism of all kinds; if the nature of the relationships is personal and defined by their context, those relationships are intrinsically particular rather than universal (Spicker, 1994). Jean Marie Le Pen, the former leader of the French National Front, argued: "I like my daughters more than my cousins, my cousins more than my neighbours, my neighbours better than those I don't know and those I don't know better than my enemies." (cited Simmons, 1996, pp 242-3) This is an appeal to a widely held sentiment; but if it is not balanced by a sense of individual rights and respect for persons, it can be dangerous.

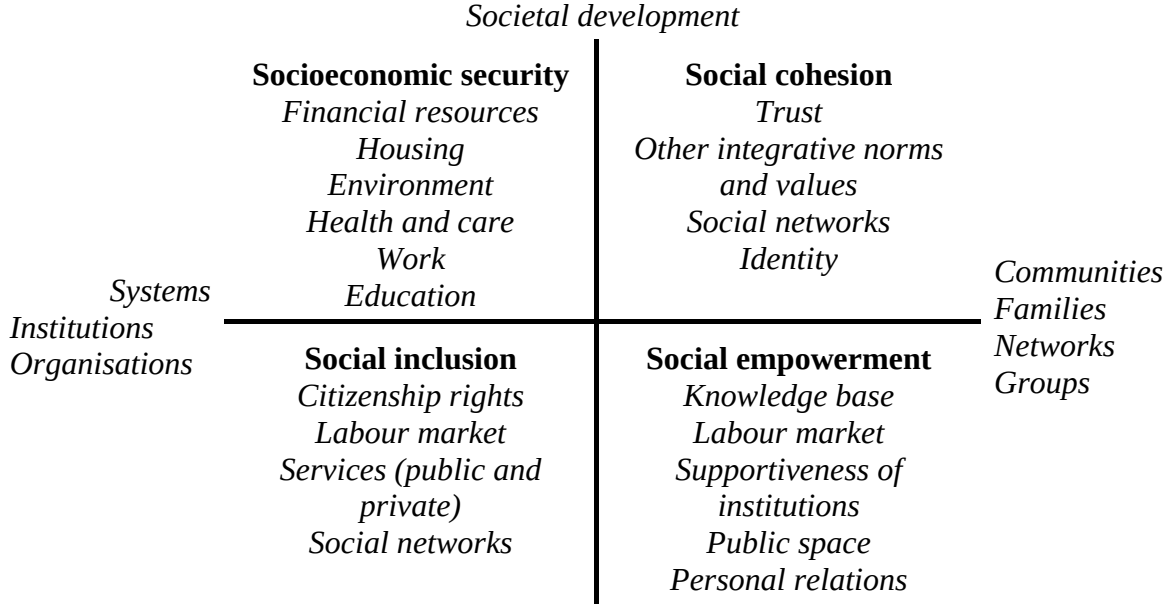
The second problem is that obligation is not enough. We have seen many societies built on obligations, and they are not necessarily good places to live. The word used by sociologists to describe a given set of roles, obligations and expectations is 'status'. Feudal societies are based in a structure of obligation. Caste societies are societies in which everyone has a

place, and everyone has obligations which stem from status inherited at birth. Cohesive societies are often unjust, profoundly unequal societies, and inequality has major effects on quality of life. We know, for example, that societies which are more unequal tend to have poorer health and life expectancy, greater crime, more violence and poorer opportunities. (Wilkinson, Pickett, 2009) Part of that is certainly attributable to unequal command over resources, but inequality in itself has a corrosive effect. And that presents a serious problem with the construction put on social cohesion for the purposes of measuring social quality. Cohesion may be necessary for a good society, but in itself does not add to the quality of life, and when it goes up it is not necessarily the case that the quality of life has gone up with it. Writers on social quality have clearly been aware of the implications of inequality for social quality. Walker identifies it as a core principle in relation to inclusion (Walker, 2011, p 9); Ka Lin has suggested that discrimination is an indicator of exclusion (Ka Lin, 2013). The formulation of social cohesion used in the Council of Europe's 2004 strategy has a similar emphasis: "social cohesion is the ability of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation" (Council of Europe, 2004, art 1). The common thread here is that a principle of equality has had to be introduced, as a counterweight to the potential problems otherwise associated with solidarity and social cohesion.

The representation of social quality

In the formal representation offered by the team working on social quality in Europe, social cohesion and social inclusion occur in different quadrants of a graph (Beck et al, 2001, p 352; Herrmann, van der Maesen, Walker, 2012 p.103). This has been a consistent part of their formal representation of social quality, even if the specific elements referred to within the quadrants have been represented differently as the model has been refined. The 2012 version of the graph is shown in Figure 1 (Herrmann, van der Maesen, Walker, 2012 p.103).

Figure 1: Social quality



In relation to inclusion, the context of 'systems, institutions, organizations' is limited, and its

identification with citizenship rights (Beck et al, 2001, p 351) is a muddle; citizens can be excluded, and non-citizens can be included. There is a recognition that 'social networks' - which also feature in the upper right quadrant and on the right-hand axis - are relevant both to inclusion and to cohesion. Inclusion and cohesion, which stem from the same source and depend on the same conceptual structure, are similarly represented as opposites. This is only partly a confusion about social networks, however; the attempt to distinguish inclusion and cohesion formally is doomed to failure. Inclusion has to be understood in terms of the relationship of people to solidaristic social networks, and those occur primarily on the right hand side of the graph. It follows that inclusion is in the wrong quadrant.

That prompts in turn an obvious question. If the lower left quadrant should not contain inclusion, what should it contain? The dimension that the authors hoped to capture has two characteristics: that it should be concerned with the 'biographical' (individual, human and personal) elements of social quality, and that it should be concerned with systems, organisations and institutions as opposed to informal social networks. That is the role of rights and entitlement, which in earlier work the authors had placed on the right hand side of the graph, but which no longer features directly. A consideration of rights includes citizenship, and political, economic and social rights in both universal and particular dimensions. This is a gap in the current model that cries out to be filled.

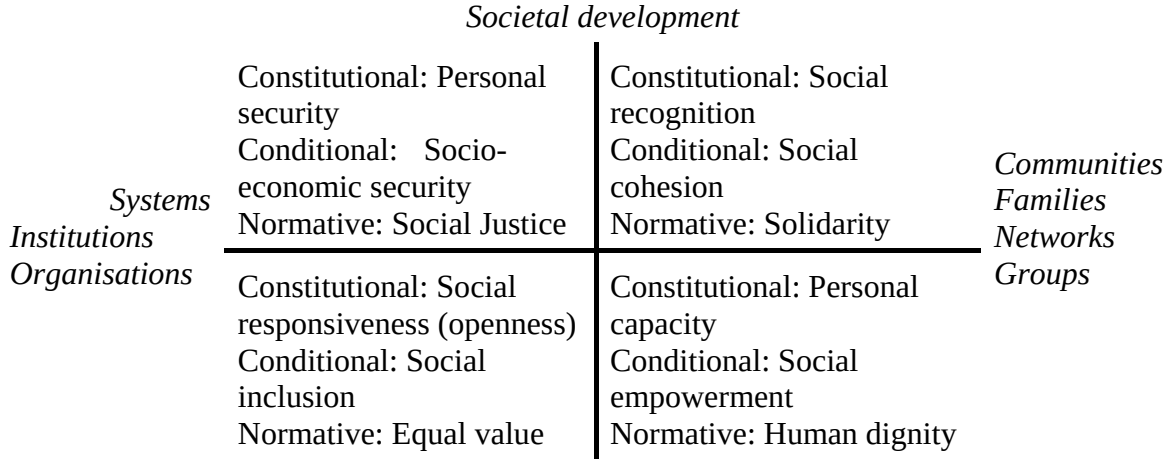
Process, contingencies and norms

The model of social quality has been elaborated by adding further dimensions. Figure 2 (Beck et al, 2012, p 66) includes three dimensions:

- constitutional or constitutive factors, variously described as processes and as factors which 'enable individuals as social beings to become competent social actors';
- conditional factors, which are key dimensions of social quality, or contingencies, or factors that influence opportunities and resources for social action; and
- normative dimensions, also described as 'orientations'. (Beck et al, 2012, pp 60 and 66.)

I should perhaps start by saying that I mislike this approach. The terminology is not self-explanatory; the formalism invites arbitrary classification; the terms are defined differently in different places. The reference to 'individuals' invites the question whether 'society' does indeed consist of 'individuals', and if so what the relationship between the two might be.

Figure 2: Social quality*:* constitutive, conditional and normative elements



That said, the construction of the upper right quadrant should now be straightforward. Solidarity is the guiding principle; social inclusion (not recognition or status) is the constitutive element, the process that engages people as actors in society; social cohesion the conditional element.

Inclusion cannot be the condition for the lower left quadrant, and the meaning of 'social responsiveness' is deeply obscure. This should not, however, be difficult to resolve. If the argument above is accepted, citizenship - the 'rights to have rights' - is 'constitutive', and personal, economic and social rights are 'conditional'.

There is a further dimension which is not sufficiently adequately considered as it stands. There is a reference to the principle of equality in terms of 'equal value'. That is only one of a long series of applicable values, and it may not be sufficient in itself to compensate for some of the problems associated with solidarity, security and cohesion. The principle of 'equality of persons' is one of the most basic forms of equality, represented for example in the US Declaration of Independence; but there are other forms, including equality of rights, citizenship, access to the conditions of civilisation or equality of welfare. (Spicker, 2006, ch 3) The forms of equality that most directly link biographical development with systems are equalities of rights and citizenship. Access to the conditions of civilisation - the phrase is Tawney's (Tawney, 1930, p 122) - or equality of welfare are needed to counteract the tendency of older forms of solidarity and social cohesion to restrict people's scope for action, but as they depend on systems and institutions designed to influence societal development, they relate more directly to the upper left quadrant.

Measuring social quality

The discussion of inclusion and cohesion has implications for the process of 'measuring' social quality. I put the term 'measuring' in inverted commas, because it is problematic. Most complex social phenomena do not lend themselves to measurement; we use indicators, and we try to do it by providing an series of confirmatory indications in order to avoid the situation where an inappropriate or invalid indicator distorts perception of the issue we wish to examine.

The discussion above raises three key problems in the operationalisation of social quality. The first is validity. The factors which are being considered might be relevant to social quality, but it is not clear that they are doing what the commentators think they are doing. Ka Lin suggests, for example, that cohesion can be measured in terms of trust and pride, and that inclusion can be measured in terms of social tension and discrimination (Ka Lin, 2013.) Alan Walker suggests that inclusion can be identified in terms of social recognition or status (Walker, 2011, p 9.) Neither of those interpretations is consistent with the understanding of the terms I have been outlining in this paper. They are not indicators of inclusion, but of something else.

Second, there is the effect of using indicators of overlapping social phenomena - in this case, of inclusion and cohesion. If the indicators used are distinct, they can be mutually reinforcing, and that is generally a good thing. If, however, the aim is to create a summary index of all items, the effect of using two overlapping categories is to weight the index strongly in the direction of those categories. Simply put, inclusion plus cohesion have a weight of 2 when socio-economic security and empowerment each have a weight of 1. While there is a strong case for the inclusion of cohesion and exclusion, they are not sufficient for social quality - without counterbalances, they can be suffocating - and the weight seems disproportionate.

The third problem concerns the construction of indices. Composite indices work in general by adopting a selection of indicators from a wide possible range. Indicators have to be selected because of the work they do; indicators that are too highly correlated are just as problematic as indicators with too low an association. Even if the theoretical underpinnings are sound, an index may give a distorted picture. The project of developing an understanding of social quality needs, however, to re-examine the potential range of indicators by which quality can be identified, and consequently the process of developing appropriate measures remains a task for the future.

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