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Quality of Urban Life and Families' Agency  
in European Cities: a comparison between  
neighbourhoods in Milan and Amsterdam

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To all my families

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- Daniele
- Maria Rosa, Andrea, Mario, Rosa, Chiara, Claudia
- Phaso, Barbara, Elena, Luca, Fam. Caldara, Mario, Norman, Renton
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# Introduction

The fundamental and overarching objective of the European Union is to achieve sustainable development, aiming to continuously improve the quality of life and well-being for present and future generations. (Eurostat, 2009). The overall aim of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy is to identify and develop actions to enable the EU to achieve a continuous long-term improvement of quality of life through the creation of sustainable communities.

Cities and towns are the main and the most vulnerable settings of this challenge since in the 21st century the greatest part of the entire population lives now in urban contexts. Urban context is thus a relevant arena where to deal with well-being and quality of life to address European development strategy.

To understand the processes that contribute to dwellers' quality of life in cities is a fundamental step. Quality of Life Studies have been developed relevant contributions, but this issue is a complex task and needs a multifaceted approach. As it has been argued from several years, multidimensional frameworks are more suitable rather than those strictly focused on increased incomes and wealth.

A common agreement points out how economical and material measurements, such as GDP, do not cover all dimensions implied in the concept of the well-being. The debate is going on at the international level and agreement on a unique proposal seems difficult to reach due to the coexistence of different approaches and perspectives upon the subject. Several initiatives and projects are spreading in new directions and some of them try to involve society in the definition of what matters most in defining 'well-being'.

From this experience we know that, in order to trigger a democratic and participative urban and community development, it is necessary to understand which conception of well-being is shared by citizens who live

together in an urban context. We know from geographical and urban studies how the space enters into the process of defining cultural and social behavior. Therefore, each urban context has to be considered in relation to its peculiar physical and geographical characteristics as well as its social composition.

PART I of this thesis focus on the theoretical aspects that bound and frame well-being and quality of life in human sciences with a specific submit focus of the topic at the urban level.

Chapter 1 introduces the discussion and the latest contributions on dealing with well-being and quality of life definition in the XXI century. A literature review presents a prospective on the coexistence of different approaches to well-being and happiness in Moral and Ethical Philosophy, Economics, Psychology and Sociology. In this chapter the concept of good life is analyzed from ancient notions to the more recent conceptions that open well-being to the *human development*.

Chapter 2 refers to one of the most recent approaches in well-being and quality of life studies, the Capability Approach (CA) proposed by Amartya Sen. I define this theoretical approach giving details on its elements, method, presenting the implications and the problematic aspects that could rise in using such those framework. Applications of the CA theoretical framework are presented as an introduction before describing the declination of the approach at the urban level. The city and particularly the neighborhood are the setting where I'm experimenting a new model of analysis for the urban context. The proposal it's a new direction on evaluating urban liveability referring to the CA with a deliberative enforcement.

PART II of this work present an empirical application of the proposed declination of the theoretical frame at the urban level. The research design reflects the influence of a critical approach in understanding well-being, according to model such as Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA), as an action in which people should be central in identifying their own valued dimensions of well-being (Sen 1992; Farrell 2008; Council of Europe 2009; Frediani and Walker 2011).

During the research procedures I paid attention to put into practice the base of a model and its specific methods, avoiding possible weakness implied in such a first research application. In order to ensure research accurateness and clearness I explicitly set the research design in specified

analytical levels of analysis that define the statements that framed the model and the current research application. (Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007).

The current research consists of a comparative case-study analysis where I tried to investigate the above issues in the empirical field. I've conducted the research in a three years project working in two liveable urban neighborhoods chosen within the European cities of Milan and Amsterdam.

At the methodological level, the main goal is to propose a model to investigate urban reality under the CA with a deliberative enforcement. At the empirical level two main aims are present. First, put into practice a bottom-up approach to the definition of local well-being and thus understand the difference between conceptions of well-being defined by communities who live in different European cities. Second, investigate quality of life in urban neighborhood through the CA scheme in order to deal with functioning and capability that set families' everyday urban life. Doing this I focused on the urban population selecting a number of families with children and I investigated their strategies, choices and values related to the achievement of a good quality of life in the particular neighbourhood where they are living.

Chapter 3 describes the research framework presenting how I translate the CA into the empirical field; presents the aims and the motivations that stand behind the investigation; introduces the methods and the instruments of analysis I used to approach the field; and introduces the case-study of this research project.

The empirical research proposes a comparison between two urban areas selected in European cities; Zona 9 in Milan (Italy) and Watergraafsmeer in Amsterdam (The Netherlands). Within these two cities I choose to focus on two neighbourhoods that have shown high performance in well-being and liveability measurements, as produced by third institutions.

This choice has been made with the purpose to work in a selected area in which dwellers are experiencing well-being conditions and can explain how the context impacted on their everyday life and on families' life development. Residential neighborhoods are considered as appropriate contexts where to set down the current research since many families nowadays are choosing to locate their life, also in presence of children, in urban contexts (Karsten 2007; Boterman W.R et al. 2010).

The research has two main goals. The first aim of my study gives an answer the general research questions:

- What specifically constitutes well-being to urban communities?

This first general goal can be subdivided in the following intermediate objectives:

- what does well-being mean for people who are living in urban neighborhood, what makes a valuable life for them, what are its main dimensions?
- Is well-being conception culturally and socially constructed upon local context characteristics? How does local context affect dwellers' well-being definitions?
- Which are the most relevant elements of the local context that play a relevant role in constructing local conception of well-being? Does local culture, common sense, local dynamics, social groups predominance, and the recognizable functions of the context matter?
- Which place do dwellers want to live in?

This first part allow me to clarify the values that people use to address their choices in terms of neighbourhood preference and practices and their evaluation of urban quality of life. Though, conclusion upon this first analysis sets condition to the ethical level of analysis.

Family residential choice, how families use the neighbourhood in which they are living and how this context support family life development providing certain opportunities and services are investigated as second research goal. The second aim of this research answers the general research question:

- What are the footprints of families' agency in the neighbourhood?

This second general goal can be subdivided in the following intermediate objectives:

- Which choices do dwellers do to achieve their family life development?
- Do they usually shape their activities upon the opportunities provided by the neighbourhood or do families carry out activities at other scales?



- Which kind of activities are based close to families' home? What's the relation with the city as a whole? Is it possible to define multiple scales based on type of actions?
- What families' agency footprints say about urban quality of life?

This second goal will provide a better understanding on families' functionings; how functioning are shaped in the context of living, upon which values choices are made and if functionings represent a mono-opportunity of living in the neighbourhood or if there are several alternatives (capabilities set) that families could adopt in order to enlarge they way of acting and developing their family life.

Chapter 4 presents the research results on the community definitions of well-being describing the the domanis that dwellers have point out as relevant elements for a good life. A general definition of well-being is enrich with a focus on local liveability. Results are put in comparison with national and local list of indicators used by national and local institutions to evaluate well-being. Similarities and Differences between the two case study are also presented.

Chapter 5 addresses families' urban life and an interpretation of local quality of life. Referring to interviewes data I developed two types of analysis; a sociological investigation over the main elements of families' agency, such as functionings, capabilities, opportunities, values, freedom and choices of urban life; a geographical elaboration that highlight the relation between families' agency and the urban space.

The conclusive chapter proposes three kind of assumption that stress the contribution of this work. First I discuss the contribution of this approach to Quality of Life Studies in urban contexts; second I express a conclusive evaluation of the experimented method of analysis; third I present the empirical findings and the results of the comparative investigation.

At methodological level will be possible to highlighting pros and cons of this method with all its implications and influences on the results.

At the pragmatic level, conclusions over the empirical data analysis will provide a first explanation on how we should approach well-being in urban context and on how families with children develop their life in urban contexts. Outcome will alos show similarities and differences between the two European urban contexts.

As final remarks on this work, I discuss how at the anancastic level, all the outcomes could address the definition of general and peculiar urban policy for quality of life improvement targeted to specific well-being conceptualization. Moreover, understanding how families with children use the urban context to achieve their life development would allow to improve the performance and the provision of the urban setting. Those policy implications could address the development of better city that could be suitable for families. So far it could be possible to get close to European main strategy ambitions to achieve a continuous long-term improvement of quality of life through the creation of sustainable people-centred cities.

# Part I

## Theoretical Part



# Chapter 1

## Theoretical perspectives on Happiness and Well-being

The factors that determine a *good life*, understood in terms of both the individual and the community, have fascinated mankind since ancient times and the advancement of individual welfare appears to be an ancient ideal (Spanò 1989). In this paper I will be trying to highlight how the attention which is nowadays given to the advancement of society (Hall et al. 2010) stems from a long tradition involving various cultures and sectors. In reviewing these traditions I will be focussing attention on how the knowledge produced within each sector in the form of theoretical references or as a practical tool has converged into a larger sector that deals with the development of society in a positive sense and provides people with the conditions for a life well lived.

Western culture in particular is still influenced by the intellectual sensitivity of the Greek world towards this issue; it is therefore opportune to begin with the ideas which the Hellenic philosophers produced on the theme of the good life, on how to achieve it and on the distractions that can prevent mankind from reaching this objective. The question asked by Socrates "How should we live?" is still open to answer and the possible replies take into account the good/evil dichotomy and terms such as well-being, fulfilment, eudaimonia, wisdom, contentment, happiness and many others (Haybron 2008). All these concepts have their own meaning and cover a complementary semantic area only partially overlapping within the larger area of interest.

In Western tradition the concept of a life well lived is generally expressed by words such as happiness and well-being/welfare, but these

terms have each time taken on a specific meaning according to the context and the subject. The starting point of this discussion must inevitably be ancient Greek tradition, at the origin of the study of the semantics with which the Classics have addressed the issue of a life well lived, in order to understand the bases of the variety of concepts and interpretations that today exist regarding the words happiness and well-being.

This paper is set out in sections that explain how the various disciplines have produced different conceptualizations of the terms happiness and well-being. The first section examines philosophical traditions from ancient times and, through a detailed historical discussion, arrives at the meaning given to these terms nowadays. Semantic nuances that emerge in this first part recur in the conceptualizations developed in each individual sector and it is therefore an introductory paragraph.

The following sections look at how scientific knowledge has dealt with the theme of the life well lived in different ways; I have dedicated a section to the discussion of the meanings that happiness and well-being have taken on in each sector starting from philosophy, economics, psychology, and concluding with sociology.

## 1.1 Happiness and Well-being in Culture. A historical discussion

As Spanò argues (Spanò 1989, p.72) the notion of happiness starts in ancient Greece as a philosophical term which covers a variety of concepts that emerge over time. At this stage the concept of happiness is mainly connected to that of virtue and pleasure by various philosophers.

For the Greeks the idea of happiness is linked to the mental state resulting from a feeling of fullness, from fulfilment of aspirations, an expansion of being that is in some way accomplished. This kind of happiness is called by the Greeks *macarìa* – a term related to the root of *mégas* (large, great) - and is mainly used to indicate the full and indefectible life of the gods. According to the Platonic view, this happiness, therefore, takes on the eschatological significance of intense and supreme pleasure (Spanò 1989, p.73). In the Italian language the concept of *macarìa* can be translated as beatitudine (bliss) in the image of the Christian tradition (Legrenzi 1998).

For the Greeks, while the gods can experience a state of sublime bliss,

man is capable of experiencing only transient happiness as the human condition is unstable and uncertain and moments of happiness are a gift from the gods. So man can experience only moments of *eutuchia* when the gods or fate are favourable. In any case the Greeks try to control the course of events in order to permanently experience that happiness which is usually only fleetingly tasted.

Happiness, instead of an experience, becomes a problem and efforts are made to understand what can be done not to enjoy moments of great fullness (*ataraxia* – according to the Epicurean definition), but in order to have a full and happy life (Ridone 2002). Some indications are given by the Democritean concept of *eutimia* that describes a mood of serenity or neutrality, a sort of peaceful contentment, inner fulfilment.

The objective of human life is to reach the tranquillity of the soul as this bestows a state of stable well-being. A further indication of how to achieve a state of lasting happiness is offered by the Aristotelian notion of *eudaimonia*. This term indicates a state of well-being that includes the individual's total personal satisfaction, as well as his/her proper place in the world in line with the impositions of destiny. In ancient ethics, *eudaimonia* is the highest good, worth pursuing in itself, and its implicit well-being is realized through a good relationship with the world.

According to Sumner (Sumner 2003) the translation of the Greek word *eudaimonia* corresponds better to the notions of well-being and welfare than to the concept of happiness, because, as is clear from the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle (Aristotele 1973), greater importance is given to the human capacity for living well and behaving correctly rather than to a state of happiness. The Eudemonic concept was the conceptual paradigm of reference most often used in the Greek world to describe human happiness and has influenced all philosophical thought right up to modern philosophy (Spanò 1989, p.73) with a few exceptions during the Christianization of culture that characterized Europe between Roman and medieval times.

*"It is known that medieval thinkers, who harboured a genuine reverence for their sources, were strongly influenced both by the Bible and by Greek philosophy. Devoid, however, of the philological tools that allow contemporary scholars to perceive the distance that separates these two worlds, they read the Scriptures with the philosophical categories of Greece, and the ancient philosophers with biblical categories, ending up*

by making the books, which they believed were inspired and to which they wanted to remain absolutely faithful, say things which their authors could not even have imagined." (Ridone 2002).

The influence of religious morals on medieval culture restores the Platonic concept of happiness after death (*macarìa* - bliss) in which the vision of God in the afterlife is the true bliss for mankind. The earthly life, then, is gradually devalued, not only for the pain it produces, but also due to a desire for happiness that no worldly asset, given its transience, could satisfy (Ridone 2002).

Legrenzi (Legrenzi 1998) points out that in the Bible the concept of happiness is mainly expressed with *beatus* and *beatitudo* instead of *felix* and *felicitas* - in the New Testament, the proportion is 61 to 1. In this period, philosophy is pervaded by the ideas of S. Augustine (354-430) who returns to the Platonic mind-body dualism, describing a mind that would tend instinctively towards God if only it were not imprisoned in the physicality of the body (*De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, I, 27). Prayer and reflection, however, can bring man closer to God and to a state of "quasi-happiness".

Aristotelian philosophy is revisited by S. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who, around the thirteenth century, harmonizes the main ideas of Aristotle with the Platonism of the Christian tradition. He tries to restore a concept of man as a unity of body and soul, and reverts to a theory of passions in which virtues, friendship and justice are exalted and strengthened (Ridone 2002). Daily behaviour is once again considered a factor capable of producing moments of earthly happiness which join the promise of eternal happiness cultivated through prayer.

A change in thinking at the beginning of the modern world leads to the idea that man can live well without religious and superstitious beliefs and that the supremacy of science and rationality can direct human action towards the creation of a life well lived. God and religion are no longer a guarantee to achieve the happiness a man could gain by complying with the Holy Scriptures, they are replaced by individual morals and the concept of happiness becomes subjective and empirical (Bruguès 2007). Happiness is thus demystified losing any mythical-religious reference.

Towards the end of modernity the eudaimonic tradition is eaten away at by Kantianism (Kant, 1724-1804) which states that it is impossible to base virtue on the concept of happiness. This shift involves the emergence



of self-interests which make man selfish and disloyal:

"... *the moral egoist limits all ends to himself, sees no use in anything except that which is useful to himself and, as a eudaemonist, puts the supreme determining ground of his will simply in utility and in his own happiness, not in the thought of duty ... All eudaemonists are practical egoists*" (Kant 1798).

For the first time the concept of happiness is seen as separate from a life well lived and for Kant (Kant 1798) morality lies in doing good for good, out of pure duty, not for any gratification or reward (Bruguès 2007). The virtuous man must do his duty without expecting that his behaviour results in personal satisfaction. This concept introduces a new sense of the word happiness, i.e. happiness simply as individual satisfaction.

It is therefore easy to understand the move that during the Enlightenment leads to the representation of happiness as a synonym for pleasure (Tatarkiewicz 1976), also considered a human right, comparable to that of freedom and equality (Natoli 1990). The condition of happiness is therefore a life objective that must be reached.

The spirit of the pursuit of happiness first originates, as *chasse au bonheur*, in America in the late sixteenth century with Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson before reaching Paris and spreading throughout Europe with the ideals of the French Revolution.

During the Enlightenment the belief that all individuals are equal, with equal rights to life, liberty and happiness is so strong (Legrenzi 1998) that many modern constitutions include happiness among the fundamental rights guaranteed by the state; the Americans listed happiness among the natural and inalienable rights of man, as did the French after 1789, and happiness is still present in the Japanese Constitution (Trampus 2008). Many philosophers and thinkers of the eighteenth century, such as Hobbes, De Sade and Bentham revalue Epicurean philosophy adapting it in various forms, but essentially shifting the focus from simple physical pleasure to stimuli and self-interest (Ryan R.M. 2001).

In the philosophy of the second half of the nineteenth century the concept of happiness returns to the Democritean meaning of positive existential balance (Tatarkiewicz 1976). At this time thinking alternates between two visions: one characterized by a "social" character of pleasure and happiness with a motive that is never individualistic, but rather seeks satisfaction which is shared as much as possible, the other based

on the action of individuals who through their own choice can create their own happiness. Hirschman ([Hirschman 1995](#)) describes society in the '50s as being mainly devoted to private interests, while the '60s were characterized by important phenomena of public involvement in Western Europe, the Americas and Japan. Hirschman's analysis concludes with a phase of return to private interests during the '70s pointing out that, depending on the historical stage, happiness can be understood as a public or private concept ([Hirschman 1995](#)). However, this synthesis does not consider the substantial regional differences so in Europe, especially between the two World Wars, the concept of happiness is firmly linked to the idea of industrial progress seen as the result of social planning guided by a central mind (a state, a party, a collective organization) and which can benefit society as a whole ([Legrenzi 1998](#)). Instead, in America the idea of public happiness (collective happiness) is not so important, because the predominant idea is of private happiness founded on the myth of individuality, which can be reached by individual action. In America, life itself is an individual project of self-realization in which happiness is a primary goal. The phenomena of society and institutions are therefore seen as a group of individual actions.

American culture promotes the idea that each person can find his/her own happiness making the most of the opportunities offered by life and putting together these possibilities guarantees a public happiness based on individual action. ([Hirschman 1995](#)). In this period, psychology is recognised as a science which can reveal how mental processes work so as to play a key role in channelling individual and collective actions. Happiness becomes a condition that modern man can achieve by strengthening aspects that facilitate it and limiting what curbs it.

The pursuit of happiness becomes a search for well-being and satisfaction through the use of "recipes" or individual pathways which can improve people's well-being and satisfaction. Happiness begins to be considered the subject of scientific research thereby producing new insights and definitions that we will be looking at later. A series of discussions on the concepts of happiness and well-being aimed at defining semantic content relate the latter essentially with two concepts: that of pleasure and that of virtue.

What real distinction exists between pleasure, virtue, happiness and well-being is, however, uncertain and not well defined. There is an at-

tempt to distinguish pleasure from happiness attributing to the first greater emotional intensity compared to the greater intellectual completeness of the second, but neither of these two characteristics seems to prevent the term happiness being nullified. Authors such as John Stuart Mill (Mill and Musacchio 1981) and Bertrand Russell (Russell 1967) have rejected this distinction and have interpreted happiness and pleasure in basically the same way.

Philosophical tradition has brought happiness and virtue closer together either by identifying one with the other, or by making virtue the fundamental, if not only, condition of happiness (Plato, Aristotle and medieval Christian thought), or by defining virtue as what makes us worthy of happiness (Kant). Following this line of thought, however, the meaning of the term happiness, connected with the practice of virtue, or with the completion realization of virtue itself, ends up losing its individuality.

The multidimensionality of the term happiness is, as we have seen, essentially irreducible since it includes, in its broadest sense, a variety of terminologies and irreducible concepts ranging from life satisfaction to the pleasure deriving from well-being as well as self-realization.

## 1.2 Happiness and Well-being in Science

In science the concepts of happiness and well-being have been used interchangeably, as in the philosophical tradition, if not explicitly differentiated by specific theories. When a theoretical-conceptual distinction is present the distinctive principles that underlie the definitions can be analyzed. We can see that in scientific language the term happiness has taken on myriad meanings and its different definitions can be traced to some key antithetical aspects. Research by Veenhoven (Veenhoven 1984) found:

- objective definitions, that focus on the objective conditions that define a good or satisfactory life, and subjective definitions, which instead emphasize an individual's ability to enjoy life.
- descriptive definitions, which describe the essential features of the mental state of happiness, and interpretative definitions, which instead seek to identify the conditions in which this state of mind occurs.
- definitions that interpret happiness as an emotion, and definitions

which on the other hand consider it a cognitive product of human thought.

- definitions that identify happiness as satisfaction in a general sense and definitions that attribute it a specific reference area or life domain.
- definitions which consider happiness a special experience, extraordinary and intense and definitions that describe it as a more continuous and less exceptional feeling.
- finally, there are definitions that consider happiness a fleeting moment of pleasure and definitions which instead describe it as a long-lasting state of awareness.

A further contribution that has highlighted the different acceptations of meaning taken on by the term happiness is offered by Tatarkiewicz ([Tatarkiewicz 1976](#)). He recognizes that in addition to the previous above-mentioned differentiations happiness has been defined as a concrete/real individual phenomenon or as an abstract idea/ideal phenomenon, in a subjective or objective sense, as a component that comes from outside or as a goal that requires effort by an individual, and finally as a goal that is achieved through tranquillity, or by fighting. Ultimately, if we wish to generalize, a definition of happiness is offered on the basis of a twofold consideration that gives it either a strictly emotional and psychological or a cognitive and rational meaning ([Spanò 1989](#)). We will encounter examples of this when we take a closer look at the specific scientific disciplines considered in this work.

As for happiness, the term well-being too can have different acceptations in scientific studies. Groenland ([Groenland 1989](#)) proposes a series of dichotomous aspects that identify the conceptual bases through which well-being can be defined. The main theoretical approaches to the concept of well-being are based on a distinction between:

- objective well-being, directly observable and objectively measurable, and subjective well-being, understood as perception and individual assessment.
- individual well-being of an individual and aggregate well-being at a collective level.

- cognitive well-being, the result of rational assessment, and emotional well-being expressed by individual feelings.
- temporary, transitory well-being, and stable, long-term well-being.
- general well-being, referring to the whole dimension of life and well-being in a specific domain.
- global well-being, understood as a single structure, and multidimensional well-being, resulting from the effect of several factors.
- natural well-being, resulting from a spontaneous attitude, and well-being induced by behaviour motivated by precise reasons.

Many aspects in describing happiness and well-being are fundamentally similar thereby demonstrating how the theoretical concepts of the two terms are semantically very close.

### 1.2.1 Happiness and Well-being in Ethical and Moral Philosophy

In recent philosophical thought the subject of the life well lived has been extensively analyzed thanks to contributions from several philosophers who have proposed different categorizations of the notion of well-being. At a philosophical level, one of the best-known analyses of the concept of well-being was presented in the book *Reasons and persons* (Parfit 1984) by Derek Parfit who defined theories on well-being in a classification based on three groupings (Mori 1986; Haybron 2008).

Parfit (Parfit 1984) recognizes the existence of three approaches:

- hedonic theories, deriving from an emotional-affective vision of the state of well-being and human happiness, understood as a moment of pleasure similar to the hedonistic formulations of the Epicureans and Utilitarians;
- desire theories, which identify well-being with the satisfaction or fulfilment of desires and personal preferences;
- and objective list theories which carefully investigate the conditions of well-being according to a series of assets which are essential for a life well lived.

The distinction between hedonic and desire theories dates back to utilitarian philosophical debate, and in particular to the criticisms made by John Stuart Mill (Mill and Musacchio 1981) regarding the identification of utility or happiness with simple pleasure made by Jeremy Bentham in 1789 (Mori 1986).

Bentham proposed a quantitative-hedonic utilitarianism that admits the existence of only one kind of pleasure which can vary only in quantity, while Mill rejected this view and defended a qualitative-hedonic kind of utilitarianism convinced of the existence of different qualities of pleasure capable of satisfying the individual regardless of the amount of pleasure present (Mori 1986). Subsequently the Utilitarians criticized the hedonism of the Classics and made other suggestions, including that of ideal utilitarianism (Rashdall 1924; Moore 1903) which proposes a definition of utility, no longer synonymous with pleasure, but as the good that man must maximize in a series of aspects such as pleasure, knowledge, friendship, aesthetic taste, and self-fulfilment (Mori 1986; Haybron 2008). As we shall see later, this theory is inserted by Parfit (Parfit 1984) in the objective list theories approach. This approach takes the form of a way out of the eternal debate on pleasure developed by the supporters of hedonic theories and desire theories.

### **Hedonic or happiness theories**

Hedonic theories consider well-being synonymous with pleasure, obtained from a surplus of pleasant experiences compared to those considered unpleasant. For hedonic scholars, in fact, well-being can be achieved through the individual experience of situations which are qualitatively significant at an emotional level and therefore when experiencing the pleasures of the mind and body (Kubovy 1999).

In this approach the notion of pleasure is synonymous with well-being and happiness, indicating an internal state which, all things considered, is nice. (Brant 1982). In this sense, states of well-being are considered motivational because a person tends to continue to repeat a particular situation or experience that gives happiness or pleasure.

The hedonic approach to well-being, known as welfare hedonism, is specifically interested just in the conditions of well-being produced by the hedonic quality of an individual's experience (Haybron 2008). Several authors (Crisp 2006; Feldman 2004; Sprigge 1988) interested in studying

hedonic well-being have looked at different aspects of emotion preferring to focus attention on enjoyment and suffering rather than pleasure and pain (Sumner 2003), but in general the hedonic approach considers everything that contributes to influencing the emotional experience of the individual. Many philosophers have rejected hedonism due to its strong attachment to the emotional-experiential factor in agreement with the considerations, mentioned previously, that led Mill (Mill and Musacchio 1981)) to consider the variability of the quality of pleasure according to the degree of satisfaction obtained by an individual.

### Desire theories

Desire theories identify well-being with the fulfilment of the various desires and preferences of individuals (Mori 1986). The basic theoretical assumption of this approach lies in the consideration that every desire corresponds to a natural propensity that leads individuals to perform actions which they expect will satisfy their desires. In this context, individual welfare increases when conditions allow the individual to perform actions that realize at least one of the things desired in that precise moment (Mori 1986, p.176-177). The maximization of well-being occurs when an individual satisfies his/her desires and, since no-one knows better than the person involved what those desires are, the individual is the best judge of his/her own welfare (Mori 1986, p.178).

To achieve well-being by means of desire satisfaction is not easy - and the desire theories are anything but simple generalizations - since various conditions, such as changes in desires, a variation in the intensity of desires, the opportunity for action, are subject to conditions which change over time. Further complications arise when considering unconscious desires, which are not present rationally in the individual's mind, as the action of the individual is determined by irrational behaviour that would not seem to lead to any satisfaction.

In general, desire theories link the welfare of individuals to the motivation that determines action and behaviour (Haybron 2008). They are the basis of game theory which examines preferences and choices in a situation of uncertainty and the idea of utility as the satisfaction of preferences or desires is also frequently used by economists (Hirshleifer 1980). Recently this theory has been criticized at a theoretical level because the gap which sometimes appears between desire fulfilment and the

achievement of personal well-being cannot be eliminated. Indeed, as has been pointed out by several authors, people often rationally want things that ultimately prove to be irrelevant or even harmful to their well-being (Darwall 2002; Sumner 2003).

Comparing the key aspects of hedonic theories with those of desire theories some basic similarities can be observed: for example, the motivational condition of hedonic happiness can be viewed similarly to the propensity to action described by desire theories. This underlines how it is impossible to maintain a clear separation, within the condition of pleasure or happiness of these two theoretical approaches, between the state of well-being (or happiness) and desire fulfilment. Moreover, the distinction becomes minimal considering that desire does not necessarily require a specific object, and that man can wish for happiness (or well-being) in itself (Mori 1986).

### **Objective list theories or substantive good theories**

Objective list theories identify well-being with the presence of elements which have a positive impact on the conditions necessary for a life well lived. To define what these aspects are, authors have developed various perspectives that consider more or less intrinsic components of life such as knowledge, friendship, self-fulfilment, pleasure, etc.

Objective list theories appeal to the universality of human nature in order to reach a definition of the optimal conditions for a person's individual development (Nussbaum 1992, 2000b). The characteristics of the items that make up these lists do not consist of hedonic aspects regarding the mere experience of pleasure, nor of a state of satisfaction that comes from the realization of desires, but bring together all those elements that, according to the various supporters of this theoretical approach (Arneson 1999; Brink 1989; Gert 1998; Griffin 1988, 2000; Scanlon 1993, 1998; Nussbaum and Sen 1993; Nussbaum 2000b; Sen 1987), make up the conditions necessary for realizing individual potential.

As Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen (Nussbaum and Sen 1993) point out, the nomenclature that Parfit (Parfit 1984) has given to this approach is misleading because it implies a rigid and ordered outline according to objective principles in contrast with the subjective and personal nature of individual well-being. As an alternative, they propose the use of the term substantive good theories as best summing up the essen-



tial character of the search for assets, conditions and opportunities that can create a better life (Nussbaum and Sen 1993, p.189). Adopting this second definition, which is also easier to interpret, impedes the criticism of elitism attributed to the objective list theories approach because of the lack of opportunity for a person to autonomously decide the positive conditions and elements for their own welfare.

Recently, some new theoretical approaches have been introduced in the philosophical debate regarding well-being and some theories from ancient times have been revisited, so that Haybron (Haybron 2008) proposes the identification of two other approaches in the classification of theories on well-being. Mainly, he adds two orientations to the nomenclature of Parfit (Parfit 1984): authentic happiness theories and eudaimonic theories.

### **Authentic happiness theories**

Authentic happiness theories use the term happiness as a synonym for well-being reasoning that happiness is authentic only if its evaluation is informed and autonomously constructed by the individual (Haybron 2008). This theory is clearly subjective because an individual's well-being depends entirely on the person's positive or negative attitude.

L.W. Sumner's theory of authentic happiness aims at overcoming the separation made by other approaches between simple emotional experience and the individual's ability for determination (Sumner 2000, 2003). According to Sumner (Sumner 2003) well-being is linked to the realization of desires and to the sharing of subjective values, and this approach is similar to a life satisfaction theory because well-being includes the ability to be satisfied with life and to experience positive emotions (Haybron 2008). Another theory of Authentic Happiness is developed by Peter Seligman (Seligman 2002) who distinguishes happiness or well-being into three types: life of enjoyment (pleasant life), life of engagement (good life) life of affiliation (Meaningful Life). This theory continues on from and elaborates the categorizations of well-being described by Parfit (Parfit 1984) to reach a broader and all-inclusive view of well-being.

### **Eudaimonic theories**

Eudaimonic theories developed strongly during the twentieth century because of a revival of moral and ethical values and due to the attention

given to the debate on virtue. The Aristotelian theory of well-being is the best known variety of eudaimonism, but actually, many scholars have taken up and developed the concepts over time: see Darwall (Darwall 2002), Foot (Foot 2001), Hurka (Hurka 1993), Hursthouse (Hursthouse 1999), Kraut (Kraut 2002), LeBar (LeBar 2004), Murphy (Murphy 2001), Nussbaum (Nussbaum 1987, 1992, 2000b,a), Sher (Sher 1997) and Toner (Toner 2006).

The general idea underlying the theories incorporated in this approach is the belief that human development is achieved through the full use of human capabilities (Haybron 2008). Eudaimonia is not simply a state of moral virtuosity since, although this aspect is essential to determine well-being, it must be accompanied by other conditions such as the realization of one's own potential and the respect for moral and ethical standards. In this perspective well-being corresponds to a complete life, in which the abilities of each person can be expressed and fully developed in accordance with the ethical and moral implications of society (Haybron 2008).

For the ancient world well-being implied man's satisfaction, but if for Epicureans satisfaction could be achieved only through pleasure, for Eudaimonics on the contrary, satisfaction and well-being are achieved in the presence of ethical and moral perfection. In this sense, Epicurean happiness can not be related to the Eudaimonic concept of well-being because the latter perceives happiness as a life in harmony with human nature and the inner self (Haybron 2008). Fromm (Fromm and Funk 1991), echoing Eudaimonic philosophy, believes that we should distinguish between subjective desires, which produce momentary pleasure, and needs rooted in human nature, which once realized promote individual growth and self-realization. From the Eudaimonic perspective, in fact, not all individual desires, once satisfied, lead to well-being or happiness because this is not the ultimate goal of Eudaimonic life. Eudaimonia occurs when the individual's life is interwoven with the profound values of existence and is holistically connected to reality (Waterman 1993). In this circumstance, individuals should feel intensely alive and authentic, with a high level of well-being.

A number of trends have developed from this theoretical approach, emphasizing various aspects: personal development, the strengthening of virtue and personal capabilities, the respect for morals. Particular atten-

tion should be given to the capability approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum and Sen 1993). This theoretical approach identifies well-being as a state in which individuals attain self-realization through a journey of personal growth based on the full use and strengthening of their capabilities - and not just simply through moral "virtuosity". Individual development can be attained by conducting a "full life", a fulfilment of human nature. A state of well-being and pleasure that allows the individual to live an excellent and virtuous life (Aristotle) is the result of the realization of human potential.

According to Amartya Sen (Sen 1987, 1992) well-being is defined by individual functionings meaning the capability of individuals to achieve the goals they have set themselves, and the opportunities the environment offers in the form of potential functioning. This concept of well-being covers both the satisfaction of an individual's basic needs and the achievement of other functionings that may vary according to the culture of reference and availability in a given environment (Delle Fave 2007). Eudaimonia thereby assumes an additional shade of meaning that releases it from the narrow individualistic approach that often characterizes some studies. It can thus be conceived as a process of interaction and mutual influence that occurs not only at a personal level, but also as part of collective welfare (Delle Fave 2006a).

Sen (Sen 1992) defines this aspect with the term agency: identifying the pursuit of objectives which are relevant and meaningful for the person in relationship with other individuals and the social context with its values. Ultimately, happiness and eudaimonic life can be achieved even within the social space understood as a common good in which all people work according to their ability to build a joint project (Delle Fave 2006b).

### 1.2.2 Happiness and Well-being in Economics

Rosmini (Rosmini et al. 1997) believes that the utilitarian philosophy produced by European modernity has aggressively invaded economics so as to become the "gospel" of economic action from the nineteenth century to the present day. I will therefore analyse in some depth some philosophical aspects of utilitarianism that improperly belong to economics. Economics looked at issues of happiness and well-being when these concepts were recognized as values measurable rationally through calculation and mathematics.

The idea of homo economicus, that evolved on the basis of the economic thought of Adam Smith and was subsequently identified by classic Utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill with a mathematical function called utility function (Lecaldano 1998), is of a "rational" being in the sense that man pursues the objective of maximizing his own welfare (Smith and Skinner 1999.)

According to the philosophical doctrine of classic utilitarianism well-being or, to better quote the classics, happiness (Bentham et al. 1998; Mill and Musacchio 1981) is determined by an action which can produce an advantage by maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. This concept is based on the belief that everything that increases the happiness of individuals is "good" (or "right") and so any action performed for this purpose is morally and ethically acceptable. The result is an allocative type view of justice, where justice is defined as the efficient management of social utility, "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" (Bentham, 1789).

The classic utilitarians have supported a hedonic perspective of well-being, identifying utility or happiness with pleasure (Mori 1986). The realization of well-being is not considered just within an individual dimension, but can also be achieved at a collective level since it is possible to measure social welfare as the sum of the single utilities of individuals belonging to society. This notion of utility as a quantity measurable and aggregatable between individuals, was named cardinal utility (Bentham et al. 1998; Mill and Musacchio 1981). According to this concept each individual is able to assign a precise value on a cardinal scale to each asset by applying the value theory. For Bentham pleasure can be expressed only through quantitative values - every kind of pleasure can only vary in quantity - whereas for Mill, happiness is a qualitative expression of pleasure - even if a pleasure is quantitatively less, it can be qualitatively greater (Mori 1986).

The criticism of classical utilitarianism by neoclassical economists underlines the fact that the estimation of happiness of one individual cannot be compared with that of another because the human mind is unable to control such a subjective and psychological variable (Bruni and Porta 2006; Fiore 2007). To overcome this and other criticisms of the cardinal utility concept of pleasure that of ordinal utility was developed building on the contributions of Vilfredo Pareto. Thus, old-fashioned

welfare Economics, which entrusted the legitimacy of economic action to subjective value judgment, is replaced by New Welfare Economics based on Pareto's objective justice approach according to which an action is "good" if produces a situation of optimal or efficient allocation in which no one sees their initial situation as being worsened, mostly identified in an objective way. (Lekachman 1971; Grasso 2001). Throughout the period of affirmation of neoclassical economics classic utility, understood as happiness and subjective well-being, remains a component which it does not make sense to measure and is thus neglected by economists (Fiore 2007; Harsanyi 1994).

Some atypical lines of research, such as those by the Neapolitan school of Antonio Genovesi (1767, 1943) and the Milanese school of Pietro Verri (1854, 1996) have kept interest in happiness and welfare alive developing studies on public happiness, which have however remained at the margins of economics (Bruni and Porta 2006), within the tradition of Civil Economics.

Only in the '70s do the themes of happiness and well-being appear once again in economics, in subjective terms (Bruni and Porta 2006), no longer with connotations of utility. In 1974 the economist and demographer Richard A. Easterlin finds - on the basis of a study performed in the previous decade by social psychologist Hadley Cantril and the results of Brickman and Campbell (Appley and Symposium on Adaptation-Level Theory 1971) - that increases in income, both individual and national, are not accompanied by an increase in subjective well-being or, better, in happiness (Easterlin 1974, 2003), as economics had until then assumed. These results challenge traditional economic theory, which saw in wealth and economic growth a goal in itself favourable and desirable to man.

Easterlin's results show that within each individual country the correlation between income and happiness is not always significant and strong, i.e. that the richest people are not always the happiest, and it also emerges how during the cycle of life people's happiness seems to depend very little on changes in income and wealth (Easterlin 1974). The study by Easterlin is so paradoxical as to become known as the Easterlin Paradox and fuels the continuing debate on the significance of economic indicators, such as GDP, and their relationship with happiness (Clark 1994; Frey and Stutzer 2002; Graham and Pettinato 2001; Blanchflower et al. 2000; Layard 2005).

Over the decades, various scholars have tried to explain the inverse link between wealth and happiness using the treadmill theory which essentially identifies three effects (Kahneman et al. 1999): the level of happiness or subjective well-being after a temporary improvement, due to an increase in income, returns to its original level - hedonic treadmill -, the increase in income increases the aspirations of individuals - satisfaction treadmill -, subjective well-being increases / decreases in relation to a comparison with the condition of other individuals, regardless of real material changes - positional treadmill - (Appley and Symposium on Adaptation-Level Theory 1971).

New developments in research in the economics of welfare or happiness are attributable to the work of Frey and Stutzer who establish a direct link between happiness, economics and political institutions, showing how the level of happiness and well-being of individuals is determined by a series of economic situations, both at micro-level and at a system-level, thereby reducing the simple effect of income and personal wealth (Frey and Stutzer 2002).

The influence of Amartya Sen has been relevant for his alternative approach to the modern economics. He has made several key contributions to the research on fundamental problems in welfare economics (Sen 1970, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1992, 1999, 2004b, 2005, 2009). His contributions range from axiomatic theory of social choice, over definitions of welfare and poverty indexes, to empirical studies of famine. They are tied closely together by a general interest in distributional issues and a particular interest in the most impoverished members of society.

Sen has clarified the conditions which permit aggregation of individual values into collective decisions, and the conditions which permit rules for collective decision making that are consistent with a sphere of rights for the individual. By analyzing the available information about different individuals' welfare when collective decisions are made, he has improved the theoretical foundation for comparing different distributions of society's welfare and defined new, and more satisfactory, indexes of poverty. In empirical studies, Sen's applications of his theoretical approach have enhanced our understanding of the economic mechanisms underlying social and development problems.

Sen has emphasized that what creates welfare is not goods as such, but the activity for which they are acquired (Sen 1985). According to this

view, income is significant because of the opportunities it creates. But the actual opportunities - or capabilities, as Sen calls them - also depend on a number of other factors, such as health; these factors should also be considered when measuring welfare (Sen 1982, 2004b). Alternative welfare indicators, such as the UN's Human Development Index, are constructed precisely in this spirit.

In the recent decades in Italy the economics of happiness has been developed primarily by economists such as Pier Luigi Porta, Luigino Bruni, Benedetto Gui and Stefano Zamagni. The approach of these researchers tends to investigate components of welfare and happiness looking at the relational aspects of well-being - relational assets - (Gui, 2001; Bruni and Porta 2006), at civil economics, and public happiness (Bruni and Zamagni 2004), at the retrieval of a eudaimonic view of life (Bruni et al. 2004) and at the strengthening of human potential (Bruni et al. 2008). As we have seen in this section, in economics happiness and well-being are well-defined but firmly linked to material wealth despite attempts by some authors to put this aspect on one side.

Unlike classical economics, which sticks to theories in conformity with precise models of analysis, recent economic studies have begun to make use of measurement techniques borrowed from the social sciences, particularly psychology. We therefore find, within the conceptual framework of welfare and happiness, an overlap between different sectors which leads to a sharing of the theoretical definitions involved in the development of precise analytical tools (questionnaires, rating scales, specific terminology, etc ...).

### 1.2.3 Happiness and Well-being in Psychology

The study of happiness and well-being as subjects of psychological research dates back to the nineteenth century when the operativization of terms was introduced. In psychology, more than in other sectors, the terms happiness and well-being each have a precise definition and must therefore be dealt with separately.

#### Happiness

In psychology happiness traditionally takes on a dimension regarding the psychological disposition and orientation of the individual and loses any

moral reference connected to philosophical tradition. Compared to the philosophical view of ancient Greece, psychology does not translate the term happiness with *eudaimonia* because the Aristotelian notion considers its inherent ethical value a value judgment on the lives of individuals (Haybron 2008), an aspect that does not interest psychology.

Haybron (Haybron 2008) states that Aristotle did not elaborate a theory of happiness in a psychological sense, or if he did it certainly does not correspond to *eudaimonia*. The psychological concept of happiness is more akin to the ideas expressed by Greek words such as Democritean joy (*euthymia*) and Epicurean tranquility (*ataraxia*), although neither of these two terms entirely define the meaning of "psychological happiness." Psychology considers happiness a mental state that may differ in degree of emotion, ranging from moments of acute emotion to generalized and longer-lasting feelings.

As regards the operationalization of the concept of happiness several theories can be observed. The main theoretical distinction traditionally identifies two schools of thought: hedonism (hedonic) and life satisfaction theory. The main distinction between these two theoretical approaches is based on the recognition of the different type of processes involved in producing happiness; hedonic theory states that happiness is something emotional and affective, something that concerns emotions and feelings (Bradburn et al. 1965; Bradburn and Noll 1969) while life satisfaction theory sees happiness as the result of a cognitive and rationalized process (Cantril 1966). Divided by their substantial theoretical approach, hedonists identify happiness with the balance an individual feels between pleasant and unpleasant moments of experience (Haybron 2008), while life satisfaction theory considers the opinion people have regarding their life as a whole or with respect to particular areas of reference (life domains).

Within the Hedonic paradigm two approaches, which differ according to the duration of the effect that happiness produces on the psychological state of the individual, can be distinguished. Classic hedonic happiness is determined by reference to a specific period of time, whether it be an hour, a day, a week or a month, which remains limited. To evaluate this happiness means being sensitive to the emotion experienced in this specific context of time as it can later be completely modified by other factors.



The second approach, unlike the classic hedonic approach, evaluates the emotional nature of the individual by giving happiness more stable and lasting characteristics evaluated with reference to distinctive personal traits. This approach bases research on the predisposition which each individual expresses towards a scale of attitudes that range from positive states of happiness to feelings of sadness and unhappiness (Haybron, 2005). The emotional study of temperament is also based on the life satisfaction theory, but with a different intention. An individual's character is in this case considered in terms of support (rational or reflective), acknowledging the fact that it can strengthen the individual's positive aptitudes (Haybron 2008) and therefore offer a stable evaluation of life satisfaction.

### **Well-being**

Well-being has attracted the interest of psychology researchers especially in the last few decades. In psychology the concept of subjective well-being (SWB) is generally referred to when discussing this issue: a condition characterized by an positive emotional level (presence of pleasant affections and absence of unpleasant affections) and by the presence of feelings of satisfaction regarding one's life, both in general and within its various domains (work, family, friendships, ...) (Diener 1984; Diener E 2000). There are thus two aspects that intervene in determining the evaluation of subjective well-being; an emotional aspect that expresses "how the individual feels", and a cognitive aspect that defines "the degree to which the individual perceives his wants to have been met "(Veenhoven 1984).

At an emotional level subjective well-being covers the entire field of an individual's emotional situations that can range from agony to ecstasy (Diener E. 1997) while at a cognitive level subjective well-being is influenced by levels of fulfilment ranging from total satisfaction to complete dissatisfaction. Several authors agree with the distinction between the emotional and cognitive components of subjective well-being and believe that these aspects can be studied simultaneously to provide a complete picture of subjective well-being (Headey and Wearing 1989; Goldwurn 1995; Lucas et al. 1996; Diener E. 1999, 1997). In a certain sense it can be said that subjective well-being as studied by psychologists also includes the results obtained on psychological happiness, even if the concepts in-

intersect only in the case of certain definitions of both concepts.

The evaluation of subjective well-being is the responsibility of the individual who assesses his/her life in general considering the frequency and intensity with which he/she has experienced positive emotions at the expense of negative ones, and satisfaction with life. Temporary factors can momentarily affect an appraisal of one's life (Headey 1991), but subjective well-being is something stable and varies little over time (Diener 1984; Headey and Wearing 1989; Diener E and Diener M 1995; Cacioppo and Berntson 1994). As Goldwurm et al. (Goldwurm 2004) state, the evaluation of subjective well-being is determined by components that are prevalently constant over time, while a small number will change depending on individual situations.

A second line of investigation has suggested a definition of subjective well-being in terms of psychological well-being, understood as optimal psychological functioning, or "positive mental health" (Ryff 1989). In this tradition of research subjective well-being is considered an indicator of psychological well-being. Both perspectives perceive well-being as a strictly individual phenomenon, although in the study of psychological well-being factors that help to determine it have been examined from an interactionist perspective, which, in other words, means that although subjective well-being is an individual experience, it can be considered the result of interaction between the individual and the context, or the outcome of an optimal fit between subject and environment.

The theoretical approaches which investigate the subjective perception of well-being are divided into two different perspectives (Bornstein 2003; Delle Fave 2007). One is the hedonic approach (Kahneman et al. 1999) that focuses on the concept of subjective well-being (SWB) analyzing the affective dimension and the evaluation of life satisfaction. Hedonic psychology is defined by Kahneman and colleagues (Kahneman et al. 1999) as the sector that studies the conditions that make life pleasant or unpleasant, and which investigates the entire emotional field that ranges from pleasure to sorrow, from joy to sadness, from interest to boredom.

In summary we can say that the theories which refer to the hedonic paradigm focus mainly on the affective dimension of subjective well-being. The other point of view from which to study subjective well-being refers to eudaimonia and psychological well-being (PWB) (Waterman

1993; Ryan R.M. 2001) through the study of processes of self-fulfillment, construction of meaning and sharing of common goals (Ryan RM and Deci EL 2000). This research perspective is fairly recent and is quite innovative as it introduces value aspects which had so far been omitted in psychology. According to this approach subjective well-being follows the Aristotelian eudaimonic line and refers to the potential with which the individual can lead a life fully-lived (Ryan R.M. 2001).

Psychological research which follows this view focuses on identifying the factors that maximize the capability of individuals to realize their potential. In this sense, eudaimonic well-being can be seen as a multidimensional approach and two theories in particular have been associated with this eudaimonic approach to well-being: the Self-Determination Theory has proposed a eudaimonic well-being obtained through the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and psychological relatedness (Ryan RM and Deci EL 2000); the Psychological Well-Being Theory that considers eudaimonic well-being as a condition that concerns six aspects of human life: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental master, and relatedness i.e. a positive sense of connection with the outside world (Ryff and Singer, 1998).

According to the hedonic idea well-being is essentially achieved through the individual attainment of happiness and pleasure, while from a eudaimonic point of view well-being is achieved through the realization of human potential at both an individual and community level (Shiner and Jost 2002). Subjective well-being (SWB) encoded as a state of happiness that sums up life satisfaction and good mood has been the subject of psychological research from a hedonic perspective (Diener E. 1999).

The use of SWB indicators has become widespread in recent years and much research uses this variable, despite criticisms as to the operational definition of the concept (Ryan R.M. 2001). Many meta-theoretical perspectives associated with hedonic psychology have developed in current psychological thinking; many of these have, however, refrained from applying a precise theoretical framework by proposing instead an empirical approach which could lead to the formulation of general rules (Diener E. 1997).

Many methods of analysis of subjective well-being have been used to identify and quantify personal well-being due to the increasing attention

of scholars and researchers towards the subjective opinion that individuals are able to express regarding their health, their degree of satisfaction in different life domains, their achievements and future goals (Delle Fave 2007). Although well-being has been of interest, albeit sporadically, throughout the twentieth century, in the field of psychology it has never become an end in itself in terms of scientific practice.

In a 1998 article the American psychologist Martin Seligman expressed the need to pay more attention to human actions and affairs in order to understand the aspects of positive emotion, potential, human virtue and capability. With the help of Neal H. Mayerson, Seligman started scientific research concerning subjectivity, setting up a new area of research in psychology, which he named Positive Psychology. Positive psychology research inaugurates a tradition which is founded on the belief that people can improve their quality of life by strengthening their individual characteristics.

The task entrusted to positive psychology lies in the scientific study of the potential and virtues that enable individuals and communities to conduct meaningful and fulfilling lives by strengthening their inner characteristics and the increase in significant experiences in terms of affection, fun and fulfilment. This represents a revolutionary perspective compared to traditional Western psychology that favours intervention aimed only at reducing, or compensating for, personal limitations (Delle Fave 2006a). The classic disciplinary approach has determined, according to Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (Seligman ME and Csikszentmihalyi M 2000), a lack of attention towards individual satisfaction, the positive development of the community and those positive characteristics that make life valuable. Through the approach of positive psychology, the scotomization of the positive implicit in classic psychology is interrupted. The innovative power of positive psychology lies in having widened research perspectives from a concern to compensate for dysfunction to the reinforcement of the positive qualities of the individual (Seligman ME and Csikszentmihalyi M 2000).

For a complete definition well-being must therefore be considered a multidimensional phenomenon that includes aspects of both the hedonic and eudaimonic concepts (Ryan R.M. 2001). Unfortunately, little research has been conducted using both approaches due to the fact that the application of theoretical constructs to the reality to be investigated

is far from easy (Haybron 2008).

#### 1.2.4 Happiness and Well-being in Sociology: Quality of Life Studies

Sociological attention towards the characteristics that determine a good life date back to the '60s, when Western societies felt the need for a response to the worsening of living conditions due to industrialization and modern society. This deterioration was due to the pressures of post-war reconstruction imposed in the various countries, which had focused primarily on the goals of recovery and economic development pushing and spreading mass production to disproportionate levels whilst ignoring the human aspects that would be damaged in the process.

The accelerated pace of work, poor safety conditions in workplaces, the increasing awareness of the existence of human-rights - legitimized by the Charter of Human Rights signed in Paris in 1948 - and the creation of the first movements for the protection of the natural environment and human health led to an awareness that living conditions were undergoing a qualitative decline which required action. In this period the focus of sociology on living conditions gave rise to studies on the Quality of Life (QoL). Until a few decades ago scholars conducted their research almost exclusively on pre-determined samples of the population, with the sole purpose of obtaining a set of variables common to all individuals. Among the intentions of the researchers there was that of trying to create a set of standard variables and, ideally, so develop some sort of welfare protocol, valid and commonly accepted, for the entire population (Cicognani E. 2001).

Initially, the concepts of welfare and quality of life were linked to objectively detectable data, to a socio-demographic context and to objectively measurable characteristics that could be studied without the introduction of random and subjective variables. For a time, income, social class and role in society were recognized as the key indicators for the assessment of welfare, understood as the quality and quantity of services which could be accessed by the population. So this concept was modelled on the purely objective measurement of data obtained from the context, without addressing the subjective side of quality of life and welfare (Della Fave and Massimini 2005).

In sociology, the introduction of a subjective component to the study

of welfare is relatively recent (Armezzani and Marhaba 1999) and occurs as a result of the widening of the concept of quality of life to include perceptive and subjective experience. The interest of sociology for subjectivity is fairly recent, and is the result of an epistemological turning point that led the individual to become a sociological entity, and society to be seen as the sum of individual action. The '80s saw the start of a process of individualisation of society and this fact is also reflected in studies on QoL which began to represent the individual as a subject capable of expressing an opinion on his own life in relation to a certain culture, to the values in which a person believes, to the objectives, expectations and personal concerns (Bailly 1981).

A series of studies focussed on individual aspects of the person recognized as a single entity, unique, different from others and with a clear perception of his/her background experience. The individual therefore starts to be considered as the basic unit from which to start in conducting research and this attention opens the way for studies on the quality of life that try to combine subjective data with classic objective indicators and to suggest intervention to promote the quality of life of individuals (Cacioppo and Berntson 1994). The assumption is that welfare, like happiness, does not depend solely on the objective conditions of reality and on the psycho-physical state of the individual (Delle Fave 2007), but is the result of a subjective judgment which can only partly be influenced by the material constraints of existence. It is worth noting that welfare and happiness are part of the subjective dimension of the wider concept of QoL which also considers other aspects of an individual's life, both objective and subjective, such as demographic characteristics, health, environmental quality and protection, climate, housing, public safety, social unrest, working conditions, economic conditions, leisure and culture, the availability of services, participation and interpersonal relations (Nuvolati and Zajczyk 1997, p.77-78).

A definition of QoL should take into account the evolution in culture and values and the changes in needs over time, in a concept which can summarize the complexity of the problems that characterize modern life, not only in a material but also in an existential sense (Nuvolati 1998, p.19). Nowadays, the subjective dimension plays a fundamental role in determining the quality of life, but on the other hand it is not easy to analyze, because cultural and socio-economic differences change

and influence people's perceptions. Sartori (1993) defines QoL as "*the perception that individuals have of their position in life in relation to their objectives and to the value system that they have accepted and incorporated in making their decisions.*"

Glatzer (Headey 1991) elaborates the concept further in two ways: in a broader sense, defining QoL as the constellation of the objective components of welfare, and in a narrower sense emphasising the individual perception and evaluation of subjective well-being in various life domains. Glatzer's definition also reminds us that in social science there is a substantial difference in terminology between the terms welfare and well-being. With the term welfare social researchers usually indicate material conditions, often linked to state intervention (the welfare state) and the standard of living, referring to the amount of resources not only economic but also social, cultural, human and relational which provide the public with a standard level of well-being. Well-being instead refers to the feeling of well-being (Nuvolati 1998, p.29), that is to a subjective evaluation expressed about life satisfaction, happiness, subjective well-being, etc ... In these evaluations the subject's cognitive and affective components condition each other (Argyle 1991; Lewinshon 1991; Veenhoven 1991; Nuvolati 1998).

In recent decades, sociology has continued to study individual and collective conditions of life, distinguishing the various concepts of well-being, welfare, living standards, life satisfaction and happiness (Stull 1987; Groenland 1989; Björk et al. 1989; Spanò 1989; Schifini D'Andrea 1988; Vergati 1989) essentially proposing the distinction between the objective and subjective components of quality of life and where necessary by relying on theoretical formulations offered by philosophers, economists and psychologists. In fact sociology has only rarely created its own definitions for the individual concepts of well-being and happiness, instead mostly using working definitions developed by psychologists and economists according to whichever approach best suits their research objectives.

Already in the early '70s the study of welfare and happiness was part of sociological research together with objective aspects, material and not. In the definition of the elements that determine the quality of life developed by Allard (Allardt 1971) well-being is conceived in general terms as the condition resulting from the enjoyment both of objective

assets (having, being, loving) and subjective assets such as satisfaction and happiness. In his theoretical formulation happiness is therefore an emotional element that, together with life satisfaction, makes up the subjective part of general well-being (Allardt 1971). The theoretical scheme formulated by Allard has been revisited and adapted over time by various sociologists who in some cases have changed terminology and in others have added new dimensions influential in determining the quality of life of individuals such as those referring to the environment, contextual aspects, socio-cultural characteristics and comparison with other situations (Martinotti 1988; Spanò 1989; Vergati 1989; Nuvolati 1998).

In sociological studies the issue of well-being and happiness is considered a subject of research that combines objective, subjective, tangible, intangible and contextual elements in order to identify the best living conditions in which people find satisfaction, well-being and happiness. An exception is work by Ruut Veenhoven which has made a major contribution to the sociological study of subjective well-being in a different perspective. Since the '80s several studies have been developed by Veenhoven on the theme of individual well-being not so much as a measure of satisfaction of given conditions, but as a psychological state of its own (Veenhoven 1984, 1991; Veenhoven and Argyle 1989; Veenhoven 1994, 1995, 1996, 1999, 2000; Veenhoven and Hagerty 2006). In particular, he has created his own notion of subjective well-being defined in terms of overall happiness (Veenhoven 1984) by which he means both a cognitive evaluation of life satisfaction as well as an emotional judgment of experience. To clarify, Veenhoven considers life satisfaction not as a mere cognitive evaluation, but as a general opinion on life which draws on two sources of information: cognitive comparison of life and information on the emotional state of how an individual feels most of the time (Veenhoven 2008).

According to some sociologists, subjective well-being should interest only psychological studies because it is a state of mind and not a characteristic of society (Veenhoven 2008). Contrary to this belief, Veenhoven believes that the study of the subjective well-being of individuals produces important information concerning the quality of the social system and hence useful indications to guide choices and progress towards improved social conditions can be identified (Veenhoven 2008). In this sense, the subjective well-being of individuals is to be understood as a



product of the social system and at the same time as a factor which intervenes in determining the functioning of the latter. According to this perspective sociology is open to the study of the subjective dimension of well-being as consistent with its goals and research interests.

### 1.3 Further pathway in Well-being and Quality of Life Theories

Some interesting theoretical features emerge as conclusion. It is clear that the concepts of well-being and happiness to which I have referred are completely distinguishable only in certain cases. In most of the theoretical formulations, the meaning of the two concepts almost coincides or at least overlaps to a large extent.

Differentiation of the two concepts reflects a more or less similar structure within which the main distinctions are between emotional and cognitive factors, considerations about living conditions in general and those specific to a precise domain, between the extraordinary quality of an intense experience and more stable and longer-lasting characteristics, between a natural and autonomous state of being of an individual and the view that considers the activities and motivation of the individual as a essential means for achieving a life well lived.

The researcher interested in studying well-being and happiness and the conditions that determine a good life should keep in mind the considerations I have highlighted, especially by referring specifically to the original theories in order to avoid possible inaccuracies which may be subject to criticism.

Considering the contribution that each scientific sector has made to the study of contemporary society, there is an undoubted need for a holistic approach to the study and to the definition of guidelines for the advancement of society and this is the sense in which we can consider the proposal made by Enrico Giovanni, President of ISTAT and a member of the OECD, who, when introducing the IX Conference of International Society of Quality of Life Studies held in Florence in late July 2009, highlighted the need for the various sectors to join together and collaborate by inaugurating innovative perspectives capable of linking the contribution of different fields (psychology, neuroscience, ecology, relational economics, cultural science, etc. ..) in order to analyze contemporary societies.

In conjunction with this interdisciplinary innovation the study of social progress should also open its doors to society itself, with a process of participation and sharing of knowledge that enables the transition from " statistique " knowledge to "societisque" science i.e for society. These are all hypothetical premises whose validity will be appreciated only in the future.

## Chapter 2

# Capability Approach and Urban Application

As highlight in the first chapter, defining the notion of *good life* used in a specific context of research permit to understand in which field of studies we should refer to. In the current work I undertake one of the most recent approach considered an interesting and adequate framework to approach contemporary issues: The Capability Approach (CA) proposed by Amartya Sen and developed together with Martha Nussbaum and other academics (Sen 1970, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1992, 1999, 2004b, 2005, 2009; Nussbaum and Sen 1993).

The CA gave the opportunity to move from an income-based perspective to account for the constitutive plurality of human life an it has been widely advocated by the sociological literature on welfare and poverty too (Fitzpatrick 2001, pp. 1-20). These studies are used to describe the quality of life of individuals and households considering a plurality of indicators not exclusively based on wealth. Nowadays the reference to personal characteristics as well social and environmental domains becomes a must in order to enrich the discussion and the debate around the sustainability of development patterns.

The theoretical frame proposed by CA offers an innovative point of reference to guide the promotion and the evaluation of processes in achieving more good societies. There has been a considerable amount of research on the concepts, measurement and the applications of the CA since Amartya Sen introduced the concept in the early 1980s. Among those, Nussbaum (Nussbaum 2000a, 2006), Alkire (Alkire 2002), Drèze and Sen (Drèze and Sen 2002), Comim et al. (Comim 2008) and Sen

(Sen 2009) can be counted. Moreover, the launching of the Journal of Human Development and Capabilities in 2000 and establishment of the Human Development and Capability Association in 2004 have generated an important ground for academics as well as practitioners to share their knowledge and experience with each other.

## 2.1 Amartya Sen and the Capability Approach

In recent years, the debate on well-being has been deeply renewed by the essential contribution of Amartya Sen. The CA is widely recognised as one of the more complete and comprehensive approaches to welfare analysis. Amartya Sen (Sen 1985) suggested the Capability Approach (CA) as a criticism towards the assessment of well-being in welfare economics and utilitarian approaches, which disregard the distributional issues and consider equity of utilities as a necessity of justice. One of the central points is to include not only the economic understanding of well-being in terms of income but also as a broader understanding of the concept in terms of capabilities, opportunities and freedoms. In the CA, notions such as opportunities, functionings, alternatives and freedoms of individuals in the understanding of quality of life have later been developed by Sen and Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum and Sen 1993; Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2000a, 2006; Sen 2009).

Its formulation considers a plurality of well-being dimensions and proposed the interaction among them as an issue to investigate. What mainly characterises the CA from other multidimensional approaches is its unique way of conceiving the meaning of well-being. It is not an approach that simply enlarges the evaluation of well-being by adding more variables other than income. Although the roots of the core aspects underlying the CA can be traced back to Aristotle, Adam Smith and Karl Marx (Robeyns 2005), one can say that the motivation of the CA mainly originates from the criticism towards the Utilitarian equality and Rawlsian equality (Sen 1980).

Sen criticises the views of Utilitarians on distributional issues as they neglect the importance of inequalities in the distribution of welfare and do not consider the difference in the increase of utilities in relation to the marginal increase in income (Sen 1980). The capabilities approach has the merit of extending the classical welfarism based on the consumption

of goods, and the traditional approaches of citizen as consumer. As human beings, people are seen as moral agents that follow life goals, which can exceed the maximisation of their utility or the simple condition of goods possession. Moreover, he points out that “*the utilitarian approach attaches no intrinsic importance to claims of rights and freedoms*” (Sen 1999, p. 62). Even though Sen acknowledges that the most influential social justice thought was formed by John Rawls, who introduced contemporary understanding of justice in his writings from the late 1950s, he disagrees with Rawls’ view on the priority of liberty and primary social goods.

According to Sen (Sen 1999), liberties are not the only sources for individual’s own advantage but they are a part of it along with others such as income. Sen also disapproves of Rawls’ thoughts on the issue of primary goods, as Rawls values primary goods more than is needed: “*Rawls takes primary goods as the embodiment of advantage, rather than taking advantage to be a relationship between persons and goods*” (Sen 1980, p. 366). Another criticism towards primary goods is that since people are different to each other in many senses and have a variety of needs, what they want would be different from one person to the next. Thus, primary goods would not be a good way to judge the advantage (Sen 1980). Sen agrees on the centrality of individual well-being, but does not identify it neither in utility nor in Rawls’ social justice terms.

The CA is presented with its elements that shift the focus from the condition of having resources to the state of being free to make choices coherently with personal values. In the CA, the achievement of well-being is the condition in which a person acquires specific functionings chosen within a set of capabilities available, listening to personal evaluation. In the CA well-being is conceptualised as a process and not as a static and materialistic condition. Sen’s definition of well-being identifies a more extensive condition than material wealth. It involves “what the individual can do or can be” (set of being and doing) as the means and resources available related to the ability of people to transform these resources into outputs, targets (capacity space or capability set), or achievements (functioning) that establish overall well-being and quality of life of people.

This approach is able to capture aspects and interrelationships that usually remain in the background, thanks to the complex and intricate nature of the scheme (Chiappero-Martinetti and Sen 2009). The plurality

of personal and family factors and the multiplicity of social contexts, environmental and economic elements have a role in determining the process of individual welfare. This approach is able to shed light on the complex net of relationships that characterises the process of well-being achievements. In order to comprehend the CA fully, it is important to introduce the main components underlying this approach. In the early 1980s, Sen (Sen 1980) raised the issue of the person's ability to do certain basic things, which was ignored by all former welfarist approaches. As an alternative to the previous model, Sen introduced the notion of functionings and capabilities.

- **Functionings** represent the state of existence of a person; they are not produced or owned by persons or households and there are various things that a person values doing or being in order to lead a life (Nussbaum and Sen 1993; Sen 1999). Functionings are the valuable activities and states that make up people's well-being, such as a healthy body, being safe, being calm, having a warm friendship, an educated mind and a good job. Functionings are related to goods and income, but they describe what a person is able to do or be as a result. When people's basic need for food (a commodity) is met, they enjoy the functioning of being well-nourished (Sen 1999).

Opposing Rawls' idea on primary goods, Sen drew attention to the relationship between people and goods and mentioned that what is important for people is the functionalities of goods rather than the goods themselves (Sen 1980): "*The capability approach focuses on human life, and not just on some detached objects of convenience, such as incomes or commodities that a person may possess, which are often taken, especially in economic analysis, to be the main criteria of human success*" (Sen 2009, p. 233).

- **Capabilities** are "*the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for [a person] to achieve*" (Sen 1999 p.75). Put differently, they are "*the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value.*" (Sen 1999, p.87). Capabilities are a kind of opportunity freedom. Just like a person with a lot of money in their pocket can buy many different things, a person with many capabilities could enjoy many different activities

and pursue different life paths. For this reason the capability set has been compared to a budget set. So capabilities describe the real actual possibilities open to a person. Activities or states that people do not value or have reason to value could not be called capabilities.

Sen points out the relationship between functionings and capabilities and describes the capability as “*our ability to achieve various combinations of functionings that we can compare and judge against each other in terms of what we have reason to value*” (Sen 2009, p. 233). It is important to mention here that the capability represents a degree of freedom, as persons choose freely or somehow are obliged to make a choice between different functionings (Sen 1999). Sen perceives a condition, such as poverty, as a capability deprivation rather than describing it as not having the sufficient income to afford basic needs. For him, poverty is a capability failure (Alkire 2002, p. 156). As seen with the presentation of the concepts that are the two pillars of the CA, Sen put all the attention on people’s ability to be an agent and act in life.

- **Agency** refers to a person’s ability to pursue and realise goals that he or she values and has reason to value. An agent is “*someone who acts and brings about change*” (Sen 1999) The opposite of a person with agency is someone who is forced, oppressed, or passive. The agency aspect is important “*in assessing what a person can do in line with his or her conception of the good*” (Sen 1985, p.206). Agency expands the horizons of concern beyond a person’s own well-being, to include concerns, such as saving the spotted owl or helping others. In this perspective, people are viewed to be active, creative, and able to act on behalf of their aspirations. Agency is related to other approaches that stress self-determination, authentic self-direction, autonomy and so on. The concern for agency means that participation, public debate, democratic practice, and empowerment are to be fostered alongside well-being.
- **Freedom, choice, values and opportunities** become as well crucial concepts in the CA. Sen values freedom as a combination of both “*processes that allow freedom of actions and decisions, and the actual opportunities that people have, given their personal and*

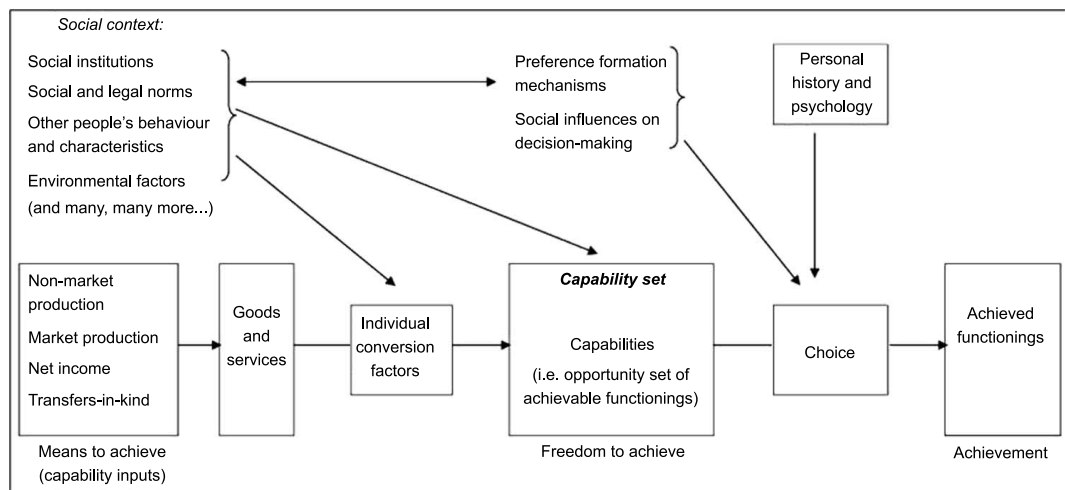


Figure 2.1: Capability set in the context schema

*social circumstances*” (Sen 1999, p. 17). One can have capability to do or be whatever he/she values, but may not have the chance to make his/her choices in order to fulfil the requirements of his/her desired well-being. Here, Sen stresses the opportunities of freedom and discusses how opportunities that a person might have had for all his/her life are more important than the final result that person has become or has done: “*The concept of capability is linked closely with the opportunity aspect of freedom, seen in terms of ‘comprehensive’ opportunities, and not just focusing on what happens at ‘culmination’*” (Sen 2009, p. 232).

Likewise, Nussbaum notes, “*the capabilities to which all citizens are entitled are many and not one, and are opportunities for activity, not simply quantities of resources*” (Nussbaum 2006, p. 74). Sen is not only interested in what we have achieved already, but he is also concerned with “*our ability to achieve various combinations of functionings that we can compare and judge against each other in terms of what we have reason to value*” (Sen 2009, p. 233). In the end, the choice to embark on many different opportunities would be ours if we have freedom to do so.

In the next figure, Robeyns (Robeyns 2005) shows a representation of a person’s capability set in his/her social and personal context (Robeyns 2005, p. 98).

It is difficult to visualise the relationships between the factors forming the CA, still, the figure demonstrates important information. As the



figure makes clear, there are many factors occurring from both the social context and person's individual past actions or history that influence the formation of his/her capability set as well as his/her motivation to make choices which in turn compose his/her functionings.

*“The relation between a good and the functionings to achieve certain beings and doings is influenced by three groups of conversion factors. First, personal conversion factors (e.g. metabolism, physical condition, sex, reading skills, intelligence) influence how a person can convert the characteristics of the commodity into a functioning. Second, social conversion factors (e.g. public policies, social norms, discriminating practices, gender roles, societal hierarchies, power relations) and, third, environmental conversion factors (e.g. climate, geographical location) play a role in the conversion from characteristics of the good to the individual functioning.”* (Robeyns 2005, p. 99).

*“The capability approach thus takes account of human diversity in two ways: by its focus on the plurality of functionings and capabilities as the evaluative space, and by the explicit focus on personal and socio-environmental conversion factors of commodities into functionings, and on the whole social and institutional context that affects the conversion factors and also the capability set directly.”* (Robeyns 2005, p. 99).

As described in the CA presentation, the main characteristics of Sen's approach refer to a complex conception of the meaning of well-being and quality of life able to join the micro and macro dimensions, individual and contextual paradigms and means and goals in the process that drive to individual achievements. Through the CA, poverty, deprivation and inequality assume a new and clear meaning as well as the conception of well-being and quality of life. He notes that well-being is not a condition external to the person, but something acquired within the person in itself. In more precise terms, Sen defines well-being as a condition in which a person can "function" by exercising its freedom of action and choice” (Sen 1985; Magni 2006).

The CA offers a new perspective of the study of well-being and quality of life by putting on a regulatory investigation focused on an ethic based on social character which “seeks to define the criteria to guide the architect into the society and to establish the rightness of actions that have a significant public concern rather than focusing only on the action” (Magni, 2006, 7) . Each person chooses to take certain actions according

to principles that are important for the person. “*In this sense, well-being can be understood as a set of value operations*” (Magni 2006, p. 54) and well-being can be translated in methodological terms as an index of individual’s functionings (Sen 1985, p. 25). The acquisition of well-being is achieved when the individual is in a position to convert the resources available in its context of life into new possibilities of action (capabilities).

Well-being is defined as the relation between individual’s freedom of choice and her/his achievements. That establishes his/her way of functioning and the possibilities to reach other achievements that represent an individual’s capability set.

Well-being can be defined as “*an interplay between the resources that a person is able to comand; what they are able to achieve with those resources; and the meaning that frame these and that drive their aspirations and strategies*” (Gough and McGregor 2007).

Thus, human conditions of well-being are defined by their achieved functionings and by the capabilities available for them to achieve. This result depends on the influence of 3 typological constrains: personal, sociological and environmental factors.

Well-being is therefore the result of the interaction between the individual’s freedom of action and characteristics of the environmental, social and cultural context in which she/he lives (Sen 2009). Those elements show how peculiar is to properly define the conditions of well-being. For this reason appropriate evaluation of what well-being represents in different contexts must be taken in to consideration. In this perspective, the contextual dimension intervenes significantly in the process of acquiring and building well-being (Sen 2004ap.77;Magni 2006 p. 124).

The context shape and conditions heavily influence individual actions, so it is necessary to give them special attention. Since this approach refers to the opportunities of conversion from resources into capabilities, it offers a more contextualised research perspective. It is centred on the individual and on her/his society and it is not limited to the mere evaluation of resources being offered, nor just only on personal satisfaction, desire, need and preference.

### 2.1.1 Participation and deliberative assessment

Another element of Sen’s theory is the idea of ‘defining a just society’. In *The Idea of Justice* (2009) Sen proposes a comparative approach to

justice rather than the transcendental approach. He poses questions to define the process in achieving more just societies rather than trying to define exactly what just societies or institutions would be. Here, Sen describes the CA as “*a general approach, focusing on information on individual advantages, judged in terms of opportunity rather than a specific ‘design’ for how a society should be organized*” (Sen 2009, p. 232).

At a first glance, the CA seems to be another contribution to the liberal theories of social justice, however, with its understanding of issues, such as distributive justice, individual differences, well-being and inequality, the concept proposes a broader understanding of social justice.

The CA has the merit to advocate for a more inclusive and democratic approach, which emphasises the essential role that individuals and public debate should have in society. Sen’s theory welcomes bottom-up approaches and deliberative practices: “*the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and significance of particular capabilities*” (Sen 2004a, pp. 81).

For this reason, Sen’s CA does not propose any group of domains that define a list of pre-determined elements of well-being, as different values and a range of judgments are present in societies. This process should be based coherently within the specific context in which it would be implemented.

A special number of the Human Development and Capability Association (Development and Association 2007) has been dedicated to the legitimacy of poverty and well-being dimensions in a given context. Alkire (Alkire 2007), Biggeri (Biggeri 2007) and Frediani (Frediani 2007) have proposed some applicative directions that welcomed the adoption of judgments relativity.

Examples adopting Sen’s position on a relative metaethic could be found in the implementation of recent institutional programs.

The Social Policy Department at the Council of Europe launched in 2004 new direction of well-being understanding and its accountability (Council of Europe 2009). In its Strategy for Social Cohesion (2004) the Council of Europe defines social cohesion as the capacity of a society to ensure well-being for all its members, minimising disparities, and accentuates the importance of “social actors” joint responsibility for its attainment.

Starting from the CA framework they “*define human development as “well-being for all” in the light of criteria set by today’s citizens while showing how this goal raises questions for society as a whole*” (Farrell 2008 p.120). In the latest article, Gilda Farrell (2008) analyse the concept of human development, drawing attention first to the deficiencies resulting from the “simplification” inherent in its implementation, especially by institutions, and second to the advantages to be derived from determining the concept’s policy implications – in terms of well-being – and the ensuing priorities and strategies via a bottom-up- or grassroots-approach.

“*Against the background of modern European society, in which different concepts of well-being come into conflict, the Council of Europe has sought to formulate a grassroots definition of well-being by encouraging citizens to participate in a community debate, whether held within municipalities (territorial level) or businesses undertakings (enterprise level) and extended to vulnerable groups*” (Farrell 2008 p.124-125;).

To make well-being for all a shared political choice, in a human development context, citizens must be given the opportunity of participating in a joint exercise to define the concept. The project is running by the Council of Europe using participatory debate to fine down the criteria of well-being and to analyse individual and collective strategies Council of Europe 2009.

In 2007 the Belgium Science Policy founded the project *Toward theoretically sound and democratically legitimate indicators of well-being in Belgium (WellBeBe)* as part of the Science for a Sustainable Development-SSD Program.

In the presentation of this project it is argued that a “*democratic and participative transition towards sustainable development, it is necessary, first to know what are the shared conceptions of a good, valuable life and second, what criteria citizens use to assess social arrangements in terms of quality of life. The project aims at working out an index of well-being in Belgium which would be altogether internally consistent, democratically legitimate and suitable for guiding and assessing sustainable development policies*” (Boulanger 2008).

These relevant projects reveal a new approach to evaluating well-being based on deliberative and participative processes that consider the relativity of the social judgments as a point of reference. Most of the traditional application of the CA, as one can infer from the next

section, frequently prefer to adopt a metaethic objectivism rather than formulate a relative conceptual framework of the social values.

### 2.1.2 Applying the CA

The CA has a variety of applications in different areas such as health, education, employment, human development, gender issues and poverty (Sen 1999; Alkire 2002; Comim 2008). The term was first used in an empirical study by Sen (Sen 1999) to make international comparisons of the achievements of different countries in the field of extended capabilities and enhancing functionings. In the same study, research was carried out by using the CA to make comparisons of the relationship between well-being and functionings of men and women in India. However, using the CA in studies with such high aggregation levels was criticised by Sen himself, due to the limitations of the reliable data at this level of aggregation (Sen 1999).

There are, however, studies that aim to address the provision of health care, schooling or poverty at both local and regional scales, promoting high levels of participation. In these studies, the CA is used both as a base for an a priori exercise (Comim 2008) and as an evaluation method during and after the project (Alkire 2002; Comim 2008).

The CA can be seen as a useful theoretical framework for analysing and measuring poverty and inequality, but also the dual aspect of equality and well-being. This is done by focusing on what people are actually able to do and be and to what extent they can achieve in relation to their values. The CA is inherently multidimensional and complex due to its ethical and legal foundations (Chiappero-Martinetti and Pareglio 2009). This approach raised great interest within many disciplines at national and international level, but of course doesn't come without critics. These critics are mainly related to the complexity of the approach, which may discourage empirical application or impose simplifications that limit the final conclusion. These difficulties are not insurmountable, and the strengths of its capacity largely justify the efforts spent in applying Sen's CA.

Although this is a complex and articulated theoretical framework, the CAh has substantial elements of flexibility that allows adaptation and modelling for different types of analysis. All the recent applied research associated directly with human life, such as health, education,

employment and quality of life show that there is a need for a better understanding of people's agency, functionings and capabilities defined under notions of the CA. This would require attempts to employ more participation and disaggregate approaches. On this basis, the next session proposes an application of the CA framework at the urban level, including a deliberative enforcement.

## 2.2 Applying the CA at the Urban level

The innovation brought by the CA set a new interpretation of Quality of Life into Urban Studies. The CA shifted the attention from the inherent nature of the city to urban welfare assessment based on the actual ability of individuals' "use" of the city in order to acquire capabilities and functionings. Within this theoretical frame, Sen highlights the vital role of well-being when one wants to analyse "*social inequality and the evaluation of public policies*" (Sen 1992, p. 105).

The CA offers the opportunity to focus on dynamics between social groups in specific contexts. Under this framework, the concept of well-being coincides with quality of life (Magni 2006, p. 55) because enjoying the freedom to realise personal capacities is considered a necessary condition for obtaining a good life.

The concept of quality of life is central to modern societies and the welfare assessment, both in individual or collective terms, should be the essential reference in the definition of public policies aimed at improving the living conditions of individuals and society. Defining and measuring the concept of quality of life is not easy and often ends with being synthesised in partial by economical, social and environmental indicators in order to emphasise a multidimensional character. The capabilities approach is particularly suited to analyse and measure the quality of life and its sustainability processes in all society, even in the advanced socio-economic scenarios, because it refers to the peculiar characteristics that shape every reality. For that reason, I aspire to provide with this work an explorative method to define well-being in European cities rather than propose a new applied instrument to measure its performance. My results and conclusions could be useful in further researches by researchers or policymakers that want to establish a team of experts to measure well-being.

The proposed application of CA as an evaluation method for urban quality of life could be considered also as complementary to existing quantitative and qualitative methods or on its own. The choice of this theoretical framework addresses several points: Firstly, it is an approach that takes into consideration the human condition in its entirety, considering also the effect played by the environment, the social and cultural values and by the peculiar individuality of people in the society. Secondly, Sen developed a normative theory that takes into account ethical assumptions and does not structure its framework for a specific social reality or geographical context. Thus showing a back side effect that someone could consider of being too vast and vague. This theoretical openness could be difficult to manage properly and cause misinterpretation of the general frame, producing unclear operationalization and unsound conclusions. On the other hand, the complexity of the CA allows multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches that are necessarily in most of the cases in which the object of the study deals with human development (Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007; Chiappero-Martinetti and Pareglio 2009; Chiappero-Martinetti 2011). Obviously it is necessary to make simplifications and trade-offs between theoretical principles and operational requirements.

The research perspective is coherent with Sen's CA and intends to approach well-being and quality of life by focusing on all the valued functionings (Qizilbash 1998, p. 53) recognised by individuals, community and society in their urban environment. In the CA prospective, the possession of goods doesn't define people's well-being. Primary goods (Rawls 1971) are means and not intrinsic ends, and as a consequence they would not be able to account for the full range of the diversity of human beings (Sen 1992, pp. 81–87, Sen 2004b, p. 332). The condition of being able to function coherently with one's beliefs, represents the condition of human well-being. This implies focusing on what the individual actually is and does (functionings) and what can be and can do (capabilities). In this practice his or her personal characteristics drive individual choice and agency. The acquisition of well-being is therefore a process of interaction of the individual with his or her environment.

The availability of resources is a condition to ensure human well-being, thus people should count on resources accessibility in order to develop their achievement in life. On the contrary, measuring resources

without taking into account if they are means for individual well-being, is not an adequate metric to measure it (Blečić et al. 2010). An essential element included in the CA theory is the possibility for people to convert the capabilities set available in the environment into personal functionings.

The research aims to explore this process in a particularly space frame, the urban context. As already pointed out, the individual process of functionings achievements is influenced not only by the personal characteristics, but also by the environmental and social conditions (Robeyns 2005, p. 99). Urban structure, mobility path, urban commodities, parks and green areas, urban services all matter as part of the environmental constrains (Nuvolati 2011). As explained in the theoretical chapter, space also includes social stratification systems and cultures. In this perspective the urban environment counts also on social norms, local cultures, urban and public policies, local communities, land marks, etc. The urban shape and its social organisation represent relevant elements on performing the context in which the individual lives and acts (Nuvolati 2011). The CA properly welcomes the understanding of the context as a constitutive elements in the relation between the individual and the space of action. The context provides resources for people actions, generates opportunities but at the same time represents a bond of action with its physical structures and limits (Chiappero-Martinetti 2011 p.14).

Therefore, assessing urban Quality of Life in Urban disciplines, means to look at the actual ability of each individual to use the city in order to acquire functionings and capabilities, rather than simply base the investigation on the intrinsic characteristics of the city (Blečić et al. 2010).

The CA points out the importance of shifting from the urban means to the real opportunity for people to take advantage of the elements that constitute the urban space. Abilities, opportunities and accessibility became relevant concepts for setting urban analyses, which are able to show elements of injustice in terms of city accessibility and freedom in personal life development (Nuvolati 2009a). Quality of life represents a key element in the urban analysis on the evaluation of city liveability in all its traits and on the theoretical perspective to observe social changings and people's ways of life (Nuvolati 2010). Based on such evaluation, governments and local authorities should develop urban policy that is able to promote what matters most to people; to foster citizens' abilities



to access local opportunities and to guarantee their freedom of choosing and taking actions coherently with their values. I describe individual well-being as a process in which goods and resources available represent a means for well-being achievements.

To let individual's agency and the plurality in the social, environmental, economic, institutional, and cultural elements define the contexts in which individuals act. As Nuvolati affirms (2010, p.100) Sen's categories can be a reference point to analyse urban quality of life and the local policy that foster thanks to the shifting of people's actions and activities rather than focusing on resources and commodities (Nuvolati 2009b). Such approach to urban life aims to analyse the events and the elements that restrict the possibility to transform goods and recourses into real opportunity for people's capability development.

As Nuvolati wrote (2010), in the evaluation of urban quality of life, we should focus on how the city allows people to transform local resources into functionings and capabilities. He addresses an explicative example that distinguishes a middle-sized city from metropolis (Nuvolati 2007). In a metropolis people could count on a large variety of goods and service provision, but this complex array of resources is not always easy to reach. Accessibility problems may occur, not only in terms of service provision but also in relation with the capacity of people to take advantage of the resource. The metropolis is characterised by a high degree of complexity that could limit people's access to all the opportunities provided. On the contrary, middle size cities provide lower service provision but they are easier to reach and to transform into useful resources for people (Nuvolati 2010). Urban size affects people's capacity of transforming resources into real and usable opportunities (capability set). Accessibility evaluations could drive those investigations.

Following these interpretations based on a CA conceptualisation for urban analysis, we can evaluate quality of urban life as a process of using the city as a mean to people's life development rather than a measurement of provisioning supply. The theoretical framework adopted in this project therefore refers to CA through which it is possible get close to the real way of living in the city. The main theoretical elements translated from the CA and applied for the urban level are shown in the next table. For all those reasons I find the CA a suitable framework to investigate the relation between neighbourhoods and urban families' well-being

CA CATEGORIES	ORIGINAL DEFINITION	DECLINATION FOR URBAN STUDIES
Functioning	State of person's existing. Person's way of being and condition of having	Person's urban behavior and condition of living
Capability	Alternative combinations of functionings feasible for a person to achieve. Real actual valued possibilities open to a person	Alternative valued and feasible way of living city
Agency	Person's ability to pursue and realize valued goals in line with his or her conception of good	Urban valued activities and actions chosen by person to develop life
Freedom	Combination of processes and opportunities that allow freedom of actions, decisions and access to goods	Urban possibilities to act, express oneself, and use the city
Opportunity	Provision of what people can have in total, given their capabilities	Urban provision of alternatives means to living in the city
Choice	Decision made by people in order to manage functionings	Decision to assume urban behaviour and condition of living
Value	Moral assessment of people that drives people value	Cultural and personal consideration on good or bad

Table 2.1: Urban declination of CA Categories

development.

### 2.2.1 Urban life in Neighbourhoods

From neighbourhood and urban quality life studies we know that different families have different expectations and needs of what a neighbourhood is or should be. To give an example, a young full-time working couple with young children that recently moved to the city will have a different relation with its neighbourhood than an older couple with grandchildren who have lived in the neighbourhood for years. The first couple may not be involved in the neighbourhood's social life or wish to be, and have chosen the neighbourhood because of the proximity to work and entertainment. While for the second couple, the neighbourhood may be defined by its social interactions and feeling of belonging. Differences may be related to income, social interaction, housing, life stage and planning, class, life style but also in subjective and emotional evaluation implied

in feeling of place attachment.

Several studies have taken into account the differences in people's approach to urban choices related to shops, leisure, children's schools, social activities, jobs and other facilities that could be located in the neighbourhood where people are living or more generally in the city. Referring to the CA and applying that to urban level, we focus on people's agency looking at their real action and activity. But, giving a delimitation to people's activities related to their neighbourhood is complex because the definition of neighbourhood in itself is not as straightforward as it may seem.

Building on Galster's (Galster 1986, 2001) explanation of elements to consider when facing neighbourhood level, we can discern the following attributes:

- Structural characteristics of residential and non-residential buildings/housing (type, scale, materials, design, state of repair, market demand, density, etc.)
- Infrastructural characteristics (roads, public space, urban design and landscaping)
- Demographic characteristics of the population (age distribution, ethnicity, household compositions, etc.)
- Class position of residents (income, occupation, and education composition)
- Tax/public service package characteristics (presence and quality of schools, parks, policing, administration)
- Environmental characteristics (degree of land, water)
- Proximity characteristics/location (access to public transport, main roads, entertainment and shopping; both distance and transport infrastructure)
- Political characteristics (degree of political activism, awareness and mobilisation aiming residents)
- Social interactive characteristics (local friendship and kin networks, interpersonal contacts, participation in neighbourhood associations;

i.e. the degree of social efficacy, social capital, but also crime and contention)

- Sentimental characteristics (a shared identification with place, historicity of buildings)
- Reputation (representation of neighbourhood, stigma, outsider views).

These attributes are typically present in all neighbourhoods but the quantity and quality varies across urban space relationally, meaning different types of neighbourhood. Moreover, the absence of certain characteristics, notably social interaction, at a location may mean the absence of 'neighbourhood'. Those dimensions add complexity to the implementation of empirical studies, yet, must be considered as a whole in order to maintain a good level of understanding.

In the next chapter I describe the methodology developed to address quality of urban life at neighbourhood level, enriched with specific solutions to carry out the comparative empirical research.

## Part II

# Empirical Research



# Chapter 3

## Research Design

The current empirical research implements a methodology to investigate well-being and quality of life of citizens in urban neighbourhoods, referring to a model such as the CA with a deliberative enforcement. As described in the first part, the CA could be a valid and effective framework to analyse urban realities. In this work I used a methodological application that could be developed for future investigation based on city level.

The CA by Amartya Sen is the reference theory that leads the investigation. This research proposes an operative definition of functioning and capabilities engaging the CA with urban quality of life. Operationalization implies a trade-off between theoretical aspects and pragmatic definition as a consequence of empirical analyse. Referring to this theoretical framework I'll try to define, as best as possible, all the steps that bring the declination of the CA used in this work in order to set a border to my investigation avoiding misinterpretation. In this chapter I am going to explain the general research design, the aim, the motivation that drives the research purpose and questions, the procedures used to develop the research methodology, to build up the instruments of the investigation and to select the case studies.

In the Research Design chapter I describe the elements in this research approach referring to the analytical framework proposed by Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni ([Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007](#)) on conceptualization of poverty. The attempt here is to use the suggested frame to develop an accurate concept of well-being in relation to quality of life in the urban context. As Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni suggest ([Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007](#), p. 361) I would like to present

in this section the current research approach as clearly as possible to the public sphere. So, the general aim of the next paragraph is to face the normative perspectives involved in the research, to define the way I build the concepts implied in the study and to set justifications for the investigation choices.

Aim and motivation are presented in this chapter as well as the procedure with a description of the method, the instruments, and the case studies.

### 3.1 Research Framework

This paragraph presents a conceptualization on well-being taking as a reference the analytical framework proposed by Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni ([Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007](#)) turning from their argumentations on poverty definition to the condition of well-being referred to in this research. I take into consideration five separate levels of analyses as they suggest and for each of them I describe how my research deals with them.

The five levels of analyses are: metaethical; ethical; explicative; metric; and anankastic ([Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007](#)).

- The metaethical level refers to the validity of ethical judgments and to the philosophical argumentation on the possibility to express inter-subjective, inter-cultural or inter-temporal judgments on human conditions ([Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007](#), p. 361). In my research I take a local prospective to the assessment on well-being through the judgments of a selected group of people who are living in the context of the analysis. The group considers a good variety of the local population. The validity of their ethical judgments is limited to the local (social, historical and geographical) context ([Sen 2004a](#) p.77; [Sen 2005](#) p.258; [Magni 2006](#) p.124-125). Holding this position there are no ambitions to validate these judgments more generally. I don't refer to any pre-constituted list of dimensions while dealing with the definition of well-being. The local community through a selected group of people is charged to develop its concept in relation with the context thanks to a bottom-up process. A relative position is here implied. This metaethical position is in line with Sen's position. He recognizes the existence



of a descriptive moral relativism based on the admission of moral disagreement (Nussbaum and Sen 1993 p. 124-140). Sen considers values as relative judgments contingent to the specific society or community in which they are made. As a consequence of that position he allows the coexistence of different values (Magni 2006 p.125) and the possibility of conflict between them (Frankena 1973 p.208).

- The ethical level refers to justice and to both axiological (value judgments) and prescriptive (moral roles) statements. The definition of what is justice (and injustice) comes from a moral judgment and in my research it is addressed by the values presented in the local culture and society. A significant part of my research is developed around the issue of building up a definition of well-being that could characterize the way in which local citizens define a well state of being and a good life situation. Starting from the definition of what constitutes well-being for the local context. It is possible to develop statements related to the necessity that people access a situation of well-being and that well-being should be made available for all. Which elements must be guaranteed in order to achieve a condition of well-being? It could bring to mind the basic needs approach but the Capability Approach differs from it, giving a fundamental role to the agency and not to goods in themselves (Alkire 2002). At this level of analyses the interpretative supports solving these statements in the theoretical perspective. An absolute definition of well-being is developed in this research. The way in which one faces well-being, at a glance differs from the comparison of the distribution of well-being among the population (relative definition). I take into account a definition of well-being that attempts to express a concept that is generally valid for all the local community that I am referring to. Such a definition highlights well-being as a condition of having a good life. Adopting a relative definition would have meant looking at the local distribution of well-being, and then set the concept referring to the local population with a more good living situation than other dwellers in the area. Such a definition highlights well-being as a condition of having a better life. So far, the definitions coming from an absolute approach differs from the relative one. It will be used to

evaluate how local life is actually performed in the context and if any capabilities are missing, instead of being used for analysing the distance between the people who live well -by (relative) definition- and those that do not.

- The explicative level, or the descriptive level, as it is better known, fit the current research which refers to empirical statements that describe the causal nexus in well-being assignment. A second part of my research is charged to describe the process that led people to attain their well-being, focusing on families' life strategy and life-plan. The main research hypothesis sees the achievement of well-being as a process where opportunities and families' ability play an important role in dealing with social and environmental constraints. Well-being and poverty could be seen as opposite conditions originated from the presence/absence of individual chances (freedom) to access resources, services and opportunities in the spaces of living. Collecting data from the families' experiences, I describe the dynamics that occur along this process. I evaluate families' life paths referring to the ethical absolute definition of well-being built up with local citizens. It summarizes the elements considered by citizens to be needed in order to have a good life. This "local list" allows me to understand how the context plays a role on families' well-being development.
- The metric level refers to accuracy/appropriateness of the procedures of analyses. For this research it is better to define it as a deductive level where I focus on operative statements. Here I set the explanation on how one can deal with measuring the well-being of citizens in the local context, and which method(s) of analyses I use. In this research well-being is operationalized in terms of freedom to achieve certain functioning according to the Amartya Sen's Theory on Human Development ([Sen 1999](#)). The major method of investigation proposes several qualitative techniques such as focus groups and interviews, but also some quantitative probes detail the data reported in the results.
- The anankastic level refers to effectiveness and to technical statements that point out solution or strategy to assess better condition. In my research I identify families with children as a target group

and in the conclusion I present possible policy implication that could improve their achievement of well-being. Since well-being is a multidimensional matter, several policies could be defined to improve a good life in the local context. Depending on the results, a specific targeted policy could be mainly implemented between the others in order to play an efficacy role on particular dimensions.

## 3.2 Aims and motivations

The general goal of this research is to apply Sen's CA in urban contexts in order to investigate well-being formulations in terms of functionings and capabilities, looking more closely at dynamics and processes of families' achievements. My study represents an attempt to develop a method of analyses to define urban quality of life through the CA and to test it in two European cities. Positive results and feedback on its validity would produce an instrument of analyses for urban reality that aims to evaluate and support public policies. Inside this main theoretical and methodological contribution I focus on practical aims referring to the research fields where conclusion could lead to policy proposals.

In order to face more closely specific social contexts this research starts with building up a local definition of what liveability constitutes of for the citizens' common opinion. The research wants to define a concept of liveability that comes from an metaethical notion of well-being built and accepted by the local community. This phase of set reference values constitute the formulation of the metaethical and ethical levels of my analyses. This is an attempt to deal with the critics that point out Sen's indetermination in his theory regarding the ethical dimensions.

Sen doesn't propose any further specification on the need to ensure "a *minimum base of capabilities*" (Sen 1999). And at the same time the Nussbam's list of capabilities couldn't be accepted as a valid formulation since there is no common deliberation on its elements, but the capabilities list are considered from what she values as ethically acceptable (Nussbaum 1988).

*"The problem is not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one predetermined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. [...] To have such a fixed list, emanating entirely from pure theory, is to deny the pos-*

*sibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and significance of particular capabilities” (Sen 2004a, pp.77, 81).*

I made the following statement as my point of departure to assess well-being as the kind of life one is living:

*“The evaluation of well-being in a society should be based on how people conceive the quality and well-being of their lives. The first idea that occurs when making ‘the evaluation of a life’ is that every individual has to decide for himself what is valuable for him or her. A valuable life is something personal, something that people consider as ‘a good life’ in such a way that an individual can ‘approve of’ his life” (Defloor and Van Ootegem 2008, p. 4).*

Producing a local definition of well-being would allow me to evaluate differences between the concept of well-being used in the objective measurements. Elements of discrepancy will help to develop certain awareness that is both useful to carry out my research, advantageous for future studies and can address public policies coherently within local situations. The expectations of this research would inform policymakers about the dynamics that are taking place in the neighbourhood’s community. Recommendations for improving dwellers’ quality of life would follow in the conclusion chapter as opportunities for policies implementation.

A second empirical aim I explore is the ways in which citizens are able to develop their family life when they settled down in a neighbourhood considered of having high liveability. Particular attention is given to understand a local definition of well-being defined by neighbourhoods’ community.

Through the CA I analyses which are the processes supporting family’s well-being and development referring to the ability of taking advantage of the opportunity presented in the neighbourhood. Knowing this process, it will be possible to point out the implications on how to address public policies that are able to face the gap and to facilitate the well-being development of families.

Referring to the CA my research stands for a method to find answers to questions such as how families value their neighbourhood, why they are living there, what are their activities and consumptions of local opportunities and how the neighbourhood can meet their expectations,

support their capabilities and their well-being achievements. Particular relevance is given to describing which constraints, such as personal history and psychology, social context and influences, or environmental structure (Robeyns 2005, p. 98) might obstacle families' ambitions and life development. That is to focus on the processes that lead family members to convert capabilities into functionings. This phase will serve to clarify what are the acquisitions already owned by families and what they request in order to satisfy their life aspirations. In these terms, we need to understand "*and response to, the complexity of the needs and aspirations of dwellers and of the ways in which structural processes limit the opportunities of different group of women and men, girls and boys to improve their well-being*" (Frediani and Walker 2011, p. 2).

### 3.2.1 Research purpose

The importance of shifting the focus from the resources that characterized the context of living to the actual individuals' opportunities that they are free to access in terms of services, commodities and agency is the main purpose of Sen's model. "*This will prevent us from emphasizing, for example, health facilities but the capability of people to use the health facilities which they value. By expanding the focus to capabilities, we are able to broaden the information space to evaluate wellbeing and measure the effectiveness of policy responses to improve wellbeing or reduce poverty by including choice, autonomy and deliberation*" (Duraiappah 2003, p. 14).

The purpose of this research is to address these issues closely and to propose a possible methodological and operational solution.

Empirical results will provide contribution of families well-being research to policy. There are two potential roles: supporting and developing families' well-being could be a direct policy goal to improve their quality of life; indirectly it could be an input to policy and a guide to address further developments. The former would imply a focus on improving the achievements of functionings by whatever means necessary. An analysis of families' well-being is a key to understanding the relative contribution of different dimensions of life to the quality of people's lives. The latter indirect aspect implies using the results to better understand the relations between developing urban plan and the agency of families.

### 3.2.2 Research questions

The driven assumption of my research considers Sen's CA an adequate framework to study living conditions of families in urban context, more than an approach based on indicators that describe the provisions and resources in a context. I believe that the number or the quantity of urban facilities do not reveal welfare and quality of life of citizens in a direct way, but rather the opportunities to convert those facilities into useful resources that allow people to achieve their own purposes can provide a better report.

People's perception on their development depends on the achievements of certain commodities and on the freedom to widen their individual wellbeing. I carry out my research in residential neighbourhoods with a high level of liveability, according to objective measurements produced by third-party institutions described in the next chapters.

The research has two main goals; the first phase of this research is related to liveability definition and characterization. In order to investigate this issue it is necessarily to understand what frames local values and citizens' opinions. The first aim of my study gives an answer to these general research questions:

1. What specifically constitutes well-being to urban communities?

This first general goal can be subdivided in to the following intermediate objectives:

- What does well-being mean for people who are living in an urban neighbourhood, what makes a valuable life for them, what are its main dimensions?
- Is well-being a conception culturally and socially constructed upon local context characteristics? How does local context affect dwellers' well-being definitions?
- Which are the most relevant elements of the local context that play a role in constructing local conception of well-being? Do local culture, common sense, local dynamics, social groups' predominance, and the recognizable functions of the context matter?
- Which place do dwellers want to live in? This first part allows me to clarify the values that people use to address their choices in terms

of neighbourhood preference and practices and their evaluation of urban quality of life. Those latest issues are address in the second part of the empirical research and I interpreted them based on the definition of well-being as a reference of judgment given by the local community.

The second part of the empirical research looks at the interpretation of how families achieve certain functioning in the urban context in which they are living. In more general terms this research investigates families' agency based in the neighbourhood of residence.

Values including family residential choice and how families use their neighbourhood, in context, support family life development, providing certain opportunities and services which are investigated as a second research goal. The second aim of this research answers the general research question:

2. How do families structure their agency when they choose to living in the city? This second general goal can be subdivided in the following intermediate objectives:

- What choices do families make to achieve their family life development?
- Which strategies do families put in action to reach their development goals?
- Do they usually shape their activities upon the opportunities provided by the neighbourhood or do families carry out activities at other scales?
- Which kinds of activities are based close to families' homes? What is the relation within the city as a whole? Is it possible to define multiple scales of agency?
- What are the footprints of families' agency in the city?

This second goal will provide a better understanding on families' agencies; how families' functionings are shaped in the context of living (footprints), upon which values families made their choices. How these choices framed families' agency in relation with urban space. This investigation identifies if families' functionings represent a mono-opportunity way of living or if

there are several alternatives (capabilities set) that families could adopt in order to enlarge their way of acting and developing their family life.

Having a single prospective of agency represents a poor environment and a low opportunity of well-being. On the contrary, disposing of several opportunities enlarge the freedom of families to undertake the behaviour that most suit their values and development goals. The following section explains the methodological practices and the instruments used to collect the data in order to answer my inquiries.

### 3.3 Procedure

In order to investigate the urban context applying the CA with a deliberative enforcement, I developed a specific method of analysis that stands on the application of theoretical elements at the city level. The elements considered in the CA have been conceptualized referring to urban life and to people's activities in the city. The next table summarizes the specific urban translation given to the most important theoretical notion in the CA. According to the concepts of CA, functionings "*are various things that people manage to do or be in order to lead a life*" (Sen 1999, p. 16) and individuals can get more than one functioning from good. In this perspective a city can support several functionings that a person can get from the urban context.

The city offers huge amount of goods, resources and opportunities but people need to be able to 'access' needs and wants in order to achieve their functionings. Urban functioning refers here to the peculiar ways of carrying out the kind of life that people want to have in city. Examples of urban functioning could be: living in the city for working in a proficient company that values one's professionalism; living in the city for giving specific education to children; living in the city for enjoying social life and cultural events.

By definition the city offers more opportunities than the rural areas, but that is not a sufficient condition in order to achieve functionings. Having access to urban facilities is a fundamental pre-requirement. In Sen's work, having access to urban provision is influenced by three kinds of constraints. These are in relation with personal, social and environmental characteristics that could limit and hinder people on their functionings achievement.



Personal constraints are equivalent to those in cities as in countryside, but some of them could impact differently when facing social and environmental elements that typically belong to urban contexts. For instance, a man in a wheelchair could be more limited in accessibility when wanting to reach a green area in a city than in a small village due to the higher amount of physical obstacles in his path. On the contrary, the city could offer him the possibility to participate in social activities with people with the same disability more easily than in a rural environment where he could be the only one with that specific mobility restriction. In terms of urban capabilities, I refer to the general provision of opportunity set of achievable functionings that people could access in the city.

Urban capabilities set define the ways in which people could set their life in urban context. For example, a city could offer a young girl the possibility of becoming very athletic thanks to the system of gyms and special incentives available. Or perhaps, a family might take advantage of the city's cultural events in order to develop their children's art and theatre knowledge.

Opportunities are described as what people can have in total, given their capabilities. In urban context, it corresponds with the city system as a whole, including its goods, resources, law regulations, social aspects and culture.

Values are moral assessments of people, and in the city, they can be considered in a variety of topics from cultural-integration concerns to necessity of social interaction and reaching job market.

In the CA literature, freedom is seen as a way to reach actions and decisions. People's freedom is affected from (and also affects) their values, capabilities and opportunities. If a person chooses to use the public transport even though he/she has freedom to choose to drive a car, then this would give information about this person's value system and indication on the presence of urban public transportation service.

Choices can be regarded as decisions made by people in order to manage a functioning. Using the same example given above, that would be choosing public transport rather than driving a car. In the city it is possible to identify an urban agency that describes a main way in which people and families are able to carry out their life in relation to the characteristics of the urban context.

CA CATEGORIES	ORIGINAL DEFINITION	DECLINATION FOR URBAN STUDIES
Functioning	State of person's existing. Person's way of being and condition of having	Person's urban behavior and condition of living
Capability	Alternative combinations of functionings feasible for a person to achieve. Real actual valued possibilities open to a person	Alternative valued and feasible way of living city
Agency	Person's ability to pursue and realize valued goals in line with his or her conception of good	Urban valued activities and actions chosen by person to develop life
Freedom	Combination of processes and opportunities that allow freedom of actions, decisions and access to goods	Urban possibilities to act, express oneself, and use the city
Opportunity	Provision of what people can have in total, given their capabilities	Urban provision of alternatives means to living in the city
Choice	Decision made by people in order to manage functionings	Decision to assume urban behaviour and condition of living
Value	Moral assessment of people that drives people value	Cultural and personal consideration on good or bad

Table 3.1: Theoretical Concepts of Reference

### 3.3.1 Method

The methodology used in this research refers to the interpretative paradigm. The interpretivism, launched by Weber in the late XVIII century, does not aim to find the objective explanation of the reality but to understand how the reality is created by individual and social meanings. The ontology of the interpretative paradigm counts on constructivism and relativism, as it faces with multiple realities, which are framed on the individual or social cultural experience of reality (Weber 1968).

The single reality or even the one shared by a social group, change between cultures so there is no a single reality universally acceptable by all. The epistemology counts on the relation between the researcher and his/her object of study refusing all kinds of positivistic approaches.

*"Sociology [...] is a science concerning itself with the interpretive understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences. We shall speak of 'action' insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to his behavior—be it overt or covert, omission or acquiescence. Action is 'social' insofar as its subjective meaning takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course"* (Weber 1968, p. 4).

The interpretivism focuses its methodology on the scientist who looks for the understanding of the meaning implied by the individual agent in his/her action. To understand is to grasp the intentionality of human action, through the subjective meaning attributed by the individual's behavior (Weber 1997 pp. 4-6; Corbetta 1999, pp. 32-39). The interaction between the scientist and the object of his/her study is the fundamental element that sets the analyses and through an inductive process it is possible to shift from peculiar case to the generalization of ideal types and statements of possibility (Corbetta 1999 pp. 32-39; Weber 1997, 1958).

The researcher plays an important role in selecting the phenomena and the problems he or she wants to evaluate as being relevant for the analyses using cultural, social and historical values (Weber 1958, pp. 8-11). Weber stresses on the fact that this choice is made without any pre-determinate value; it is a choice non-judgmental (Weber 1997 pp. 12-25). In the interpretivism many realities could exist, as many relations of value are possible to act. Nonetheless the Objectivity of the Social Science is guaranteed by the internal research procedures and the possibility to compare the action with the conceptualized ideal types (Smelser 1976).

The ideal type is the methodological contraption that allows the understanding and the casual explanation of social phenomena and it assures the procedures objectivity (Ragin and Zaret 1983).

Within the interpretative paradigm it is impossible to both generalize the data and moreover to deduce the results of the interaction by codes and numbers. The approach aims to give an accurate description on what the individual or the social group have showed and to assign an explanation to the outcomes through the subjectivity of the researcher. Qualitative and subjective techniques of analyses support the scientific investigation within the interpretative approach. In this research the subjectivity is seen as a resource.

My condition of being, for instance, a semi-outsider in the Milan context has produced a deeper understanding of the subjects that came out in the discussion. For the Amsterdam field I cannot say the same, since I started to work on the ground after only a few months of arriving in the city.

As far as being a constraint, my position in the Dutch case study and my experience guided me on a more critical approach over the general discussion. Sometimes asking questions that were seen as ingenuous had the side-effect of putting the participants in the position that they had to explain the subject more accurately, taking into account how the Dutch culture plays its role in the treatment of some issues. Moreover for the Dutch case study all the interactions and inquiries were held in English due to my inaccessibility to speak the Dutch language at a good level.

I am conscious that this choice puts into the research a discrepancy between the Italian case – in which all the inquiries and analyses have been done in Italian – and the Dutch case. I had evaluated carefully this gap during my project design. What supported my choice to approach the Dutch context using the English language were the analyses of data from several research reports - English Proficiency Index (EF 2011; CBS -Statistics Netherlands). Those reports show that the Netherlands is the second country in the non-native English-speaking world rankings in terms of language proficiency. Also National Statistics show more of the 80% of Dutch population speak English at a decent level (CBS -Statistics Netherlands). This can be explained due to the fact that the Netherlands are rooted in the closest sub-branch of English language as the Frisian and the Low German languages (Eurobarometer 2006). Then, official Dutch

follows together with German and Scandinavian languages. The 20% of non-English speaking citizens are mainly immigrants and children at pre-school age. In the selected neighbourhood in Amsterdam only the 30% of the population is classified as immigrant (non-autochthone)(Lindeman et al. 2011).

### Method for Focus Groups Discussion

The research wants to define a concept of liveability that comes from an ethical notion of well-being built and accepted by the local community. This phase sets reference values that constitute the formulation of the ethical level of my analyses. This is an attempt to deal with the statement that point out Sen's indetermination regarding any given-list of the need to ensure "a minimum base of capabilities" (Sen 1999). A second attempt implied in the focus group method is to introduce a bottom-up approach into the definition of well-being that is investigated in this scientific research. To define the structure and the framework of the focus groups, a broad range of methodological publications were consulted.

The focus group method is considered a valuable tool for getting a wide variety of information on a subject. "It allows researchers to look beyond the academic world to find out what people really think a wide amount of subjects and helps to identify problems" (Spillemaeckers et al. 2008).

*"Properly structured focus groups can provide unique perspectives and can produce ideas that lead to innovative programs as well as program improvement"* (Kathlene Larson 2004 p. 2).

The methodology for a focus group has to be flexible and fitting the aim and the context in which it has to be applied (Spillemaeckers et al. 2008). Focus groups are most often used in the exploratory phase of a research project, as they not only give information about the individual meaning of the participants, but during focus group discussions people interact and adjust their opinions, so a collective sense is made (Barbour 2007; Fern 2001).

Internal validity of qualitative research, and so far, of focus groups too, is about quality management. The most relevant quality management element is mostly anchored in the research practice itself (Flick 2007). Applying the right method, thinking over the most appropriate procedures and being transparent about the overall process are the main

over all steps to assuring quality in the research (Flick 2007 pp. 134–137). There is not one strict focus group methodology and the validity in qualitative research is not about the existence of some absolute truth or reality, but about the relationship between the account and its object (Spillemaeckers et al. 2008 pp. 7–8). For qualitative research the understanding is a more fundamental concept than validity as intended for the qualitative analyses. Description, interpretation, theoretical integrity, generalization and evaluation are the main elements of quality management for qualitative research (Maxwell 2002 pp.39–43).

An organizational framework for the focus groups was set up following several guidelines (Greenbaum 2000; Kathlene Larson 2004; Krueger and Casey 2000; Morgan et al. 1998). The key to planning in focus groups is to think through the whole project (Spillemaeckers et al. 2008). One can get a great deal of information during a focus group session but the different steps to be taken have to be prepared carefully.

In this research the focus groups are used to find out what people living in the same milieu refer to when regarding the word, ‘well-being’; what influences the participants’ well-being and why and what they think they need for having a good life. I am not only looking for the meaning of the individual, but I want to be able to use this information to get more insight in to the point of view of citizens in the urban neighbourhood. Focus groups are not only a tool to find out the why behind the statements, but also to get a diversity of opinions through the interaction of the participants based on common elements defined by the target group (Barbour 2007; Flick 2007; Liamputtong 2011; Puchta 2004).

The focus groups gather data on the cultural conceptions of well-being and its related concept of quality of life, as they are shared by the population. As referred by the most recent theories on well-being evaluation and measurement, there is not a unique definition of what characterises people of being well (Ceri and Magni 2004; Magni 2006, 2010), but it is a constructed concept that differs from place to place, society to society, group to group. When studying urban neighbourhoods, it is important to start from the local conception of well-being shared by citizens who are living in the specific urban context. In this way, it is possible to fill the focus groups outcomes using the meta-ethic level that framed the analyses. Different authors support the necessity of considering the meta-ethic relativism as a status quo condition of re-

search (Magni 2006; Chiappero-Martinetti and Moroni 2007; Chiappero-Martinetti et al. 2011). As an open process of building knowledge, it needs democratic procedural aspects (Robeyns 2003).

This research takes a conceived step in this direction and whatever its results will be, subjected to other reviews, extension and changings, it will be an intrinsic character of the relativeness of the matter and of the reflexivity and sensibility of the author. Basing this research upon the Focus Groups' results highlights the research aim of recognizing the existence of a relative starting point that drives people's judgment depending on their experiences. And as Ceri and Magni said (Ceri and Magni 2004), without a pre-fixed definition of meta-ethic level, different societies as well as different individuals might have contrastive values, all of them right and valid at the same time, because there is no pre-constituted direction for any judgment.

The Focus Groups' results contribute to the definition of values and judgments according to the specific case studies taken into account in this research. Saying what represents a well situation of being is an expression of judgment and if I want to understand elements of quality of life in my case studies I have to start with framing the well-being conception and its related meanings? *“Through focus groups it is possible to gather information on the individual and the societal aspects that influence well-being, the impact and value they have and how things could be better”* (Spillemaeckers et al. 2008 p.10).

In each urban context, I organized two focus groups to engage ten representative stakeholders among the local dwellers. The choice to carry out two focus groups instead of having only one is primarily related to the increasing difficulty for the conductor, to accurately drive high numbers of perspectives in a single round table. Furthermore, choosing to have two focus groups permits to analyses two processes of interactions between the participants. Making this choice, I can highlight evidences that couldn't be seen by focusing on a single group's dynamics.

Participants are selected by looking at the socio-economic composition of the neighbourhood. Gender, age, nationality, job, family, location in the neighbourhood and social vulnerability are the characteristics taken into account to compose the focus groups. To cover the many differences present in the case study, I look at several profiles focusing on the following seven dimensions:

- Gender; women and men in different countries and different social and cultural contexts perceive and access well-being differently during their life course.
- Age; individual attitude, needs and capabilities change in relation to age. In this research I consider three groups of age: youth (18-34 y.o.) – adult (35-59 y.o.) – elderly (over 60 y.o.)
- Nationality and Origin; a cultural background dissimilar to the mainstream carries out different values and perceptions of well-being. In the case studies I take into consideration people belonging to the largest nationality groups of immigrants. But also the issue of coming from another place of origin (other city or neighbourhood, or from the rural area) does matter in the definition of needs, expectations and feelings of belonging.
- Job; the way in which people take part in social life has different results on satisfaction, goals, standard and expectations. In this research I consider student, employee, self-employee/employer, retired or people under subsidies, housewife/man and unemployed.
- Family; Individual prospective changes depending on family organization, thus I take into consideration different types of being a family: two parents with at least one child, single parents with son/daughter, family with no children, parents with son/daughter living out of home, single living in co-habitation, widow/ living alone.
- Location; even inside the same neighbourhood there are differences from place to place. In this research I collect people that come from the areas in which it is possible to divide the case study field.
- Social Vulnerability; vulnerable people are affected by problems and situations that other people are not. Therefore I include in the focus group the point of view of disabled people, immigrants. . .

Maintaining diversity within the focus group participants is a major goal in order to collect and include a large spectrum of citizens' points of views. Two Focus Groups allow people to discuss the local conception of well-being in each of the two neighbourhoods. In both of the case studies there is a group with a female majority and the other with a male majority.



The reason being, is I want to analyse possible differences in group dynamics and outcomes. The participants were selected by going into the neighbourhood and reaching the people through university connections, local NGOs and associations, personal contacts, groups on main social networks and by letter delivered at home. The names of the participants are not revealed for confidentiality reasons. Each Focus Group was organized in a proper setting, where all the participants could feel comfortable with the situation and be willing to converse with the other persons. All the Focus Groups were video and audio recorded to be available for the analyses.

Participants were selected after availability inquiries. In Milan personal contacts helped me to find successful strategies and means to reach the desired group of people. Social networks and informal groups played a relevant role. In Amsterdam I approached the field delivering over 600 letters of inquiry in the post-boxes of people in the neighbourhood. I received great support from the local municipality officer who helped me to collect people's availability for taking part in my research. The focus groups have been conducted using a pragmatic method (Rondinella and Segre 2011) by engaging people's participation in a discussion supported by a list of dimension, defined by an expert. The local participation is considered as a group of stakeholder representatives for the specific neighbourhood community (Atkisson 1997; Valentin and Spangenberg 2000).

A literature study of existing indexes on well-being and indicators is used as the basis for a list of dimensions (the ex-ante list). For the Italian case study, I took into consideration the list of dimensions defined in the BES project (Benessere Equo e Sostenibile – ISTAT, CNEL) as reported in the Appendix (Appendix 1 - I 12 domini per la misura del benessere in Italia). For the Dutch case study I refer to the liveability dimensions defined by the scp (Appendix 2). This method seems to be adequate to guarantee legitimization of the outcomes and coherence with the general aim of the research. Sen acknowledges, “*some basic capabilities will figure in every list of relevant capabilities, [...] but the exact list will have to take note of the purpose of the exercise*” (Sen 2005 p.159).

### Method for Interviews

In the interviewing phase I introduced the proposed urban declination of the CA to investigate families' agency. The results obtained from the Focus Groups' discussions define the dimensions that I investigated using the translated CA elements for families' city life. The next tables show how the methodological interviewing grid has been created.

Interviews were used to investigate families' agency and their life development in relation to the neighbourhood characteristics. In each case study I carried out 20 interviews with families that are living in the neighbourhood. Families were selected based upon two parameters: Families must have lived in the neighbourhood for at least three years, so that they could refer to a certain established life experience in the area; Families must have at least one child from 0 to 17 years old in order to have come across a wide range of necessities and life aspirations, including adult and young parents but also kids, youngsters and teenagers attitudes. Families with these characteristics were selected randomly in different ways such as; encountered directly in the neighbourhood or using social network means like Facebook groups, mailing list, personal contacts, letters and announcements. Schools, playground and green areas were the places where I approached families' members to request their availability for the interview. People from local libraries, cultural associations, informal groups that work in the neighbourhood and voluntary centres facilitated my research in meeting families' availabilities. Their social networks helped me on spreading my announcements through the community. Elements of social trust played a major role during the process of building a relationship with the future respondent.

Even if I was walking in specific places that I had recognized as the core of my neighbourhood of reference, I left people to decide if they have considered themselves as dwellers respectively of Zona 9 and Watergraafsmeer. Each family had been contacted personally and I arranged an appointment with either both parents together or one of the two. Usually the interview took place at their home, but in other cases we met in public places such as libraries, bars and cafes, local municipal places, their office or even sports fields.

All the interviews have been audio-recorded with the exception of a handful due to the families' unexpected availability and two for technical problems with the recorder. During the interviews I paid attention to

CA concept	Questions	Conditions of well-being (example of domains)						
		Transport	Environment	Sociality	Leisure	Job	Education	Health
Opportunities	Which goods, services and conditions establish well-being?							
	Do you use/frequent each Opportunities?							
Ability (individual conversion factors)	<b>NO - why?</b>	Limits: impediments to develop capabilities						
	Personal factors: Which personal factors do NOT enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?							
	Social factors: Which social factors do NOT enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?							
	Environmental factors: Which environmental factors do NOT enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?							
	<b>Yes - why?</b>							
	Personal factors: Which personal factors do enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?							
	Social factors: Which social factors do enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?							
	Environmental factors: Which environmental factors do enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?							

Table 3.2: Methodological Setting of the Interviewing Grid (1/2)

CA concept	Questions	Conditions of well-being (example of domains)								
		Transport	Environment	Sociality	Leisure	Job	Education	Health		
<i>Functionings (achievements)</i>	Which aims/purpose/motivations do you use/frequent each Opportunities for?									
<i>Capabilities (ability to achieve)</i>	What do opportunities allow you to obtain as a person?									
<i>Values</i>	Which values/considerations address your actions?									
<i>Freedom</i>	Which conditions allow you to rich each Functionings? Do you miss any type of freedom?									
<i>Choices</i>	Why (which choices) do you use/frequent each Opportunities?									

Table 3.3: Methodological Setting of the Interviewing Grid (2/2)

creating a warm atmosphere in order to set a welcoming environment. The participants may feel anxious or embarrassed revealing their experiences and feelings. I declared openly the general purpose of the interview and I assured them that I would ensure the anonymity of the data. When interviewing a family's members, I paid particular attention in getting to the exact meaning entailed by the respondent. Questions that helped the interpretation of their answers included; '*What do you mean by...?*' and '*In what sense...?*'.

The interview methodology refers to these approaches depending on the purpose of the investigation. When facing the description regarding how families recognized their neighbourhood as a good place for living and the daily activities I refer to a semi-structured grid which was used in order to guide the interview over the main topics and to treat the most interesting issues. This approach allows me to establish more appropriate data comparability.

All the questions were open and neutral, and have been asked in a friendly way starting from general issues to specific ones. This funnelling process guides respondents through complex issues or concepts by using a series of sentences that progressively narrow to a specific question. When I investigated the aspects related to families' agency in relations with the local context, I developed an approach devoted to in-depth interviews method, introducing elements from the narrative interviewing approach. That allowed me to investigate more accurately a family's experience and the narratives produced by its members.

What is considered to be important and what is not come out during the interview and for that reason was crucial not to interrupt the person who was speaking. Reinforcements that show empathic involvement were played to stimulate the narrative. On the major highlighted topics, I asked specific questions to gather a precise explanation of the matter. Before closing the in-depth interview phase I tried to summarize what happened and to balance the narrative in order to get confirmation of their point of view upon their argumentation. This method has been defined in order to be able to reach in depth information regarding functionings and capabilities of families' urban life but especially upon their values, choices and level of freedom.

All the information collected during the interviews has been used to set the description of families' agency with two different focuses on the

urban agency and families' strategy in urban life. A first one is based on sociological analysis that aims to understand the social meanings of families' agency. A second one is based on a more geographical investigation that looks at the time-space relation. The combination of those two type of investigation show different possible application on how to use data coming from the urban declination of the CA. Furthermore the conclusion of this work benefit from a variety of results.

### Methods for Complementary Analysis

To enhance data gathering and the knowledge on the neighbourhood, I include in the research a series of small deepening. These secondary analyses allow me to add some details to the local description and to have a counter proof of data collected within the major methodology. These complementary analysis refer to different approaches:

**EXPERT INTERVIEW** Expert interviews are considered a standard method of qualitative approach in divergent fields of the political and social sciences (Bailey 2007). However, expert interviews are still marginalized in international discussions about the methodology and methods of qualitative research (Bogner et al. 2009). I interviewed key people considered to be experts on a specific topic, using a semi-structured interview to support myself during the talk on their professional topic. Obtaining their availability for the interview was difficult and during the interview I had to find a balance between their high specialization – a negative side effect was to take for granted relevant elements I was looking for – and a sufficient level of detailing.

**ETHNOGRAPHICAL INTERVIEW** Whilst walking in the neighbourhood, alongside participant observation, I had opportunities to establish some conversations with local dwellers. I developed an unstructured and spontaneous production of questions following the flow of each interaction. I did not know in advance what would be neither the outcomes nor the questions to ask and I could not take any notation during the interviews. Success depended very much on my capacity to establish a good talk with the respondent. Results are based on my communication re-examination after having concluded the conversations and are integrated into the data analyses to support the discussion and my conclusions.

**NATURALISTIC OBSERVATION** Naturalistic observation is a re-

search method commonly used by psychologists and other social scientists. This technique involves observing subjects in their natural environment. External perspective. The steps of my approach on this method were: - Select the context to observe as suggested by some of the data collected during the focus groups and the interviews. - Define what should be documented. In my case I focused more on social interactions, people's activities and environmental characteristics. - These provided a descriptive overview of the field.

GIS ANALYSIS Thanks to Geographical Informational System I was able to locate on a map based on OpenStreetMap the data collected during the research. The data has been collected listening to interviews and using kml (keyhole markup language) files from Google Maps to locate all the urban provisions used by the families I interviewed. Then I turned the kml files into shape files in order to use them in the ArcGis software by ESRI. For each country I used the national projection system (Monte Mario for Italy and Dutch RD projection).

In order to work on real paths existing in the geographical context, I extracted road data from OpenStreetMap through Geofabrik.de and clipped the area of interest in the two cities by rectangles surrounding. The geo-analysis looks at the families' agency paths trying to highlight the space-time accessibility of their actions. On completion of that work, I created network datasets in ArcGis using a speed of 4.8 km/h for walking, the same speed used by Google Maps, and 20km/h for biking.

I had developed a biking network for Amsterdam and a pedestrian one for Milano respecting the main mean of travelling in both cities. When calculating time, I used the OD Cost Matrix function of Network Analyst and connected houses to families' destinations as a representing of city functions. Then I exported the results in MS Excel and created the average time field that contains the value-time for families to reach those destinations. The final maps have been created to show the footprint of families' agency in the urban context.

### 3.3.2 Instruments

#### **Instrument for the Focus Groups Discussions**

I conducted the discussion using a flexible grid of questions containing all the items to investigate (Appendix 1). During the discussion I took this

list of relevant points as a reference framework that I followed without a specific order but in relation to the subject of the conversation. Discussion is needed in focus groups in order to get different opinions and interaction, avoiding any conflict. To achieve the best results I undertook talks that would let the participants express their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes so that they could feel free to express his or her own view (Puchta 2004:119).

To avoid risks I managed through moderation techniques (Fern 2001) the most common compliances that can affect the validity of focus groups. Those elements of risks usually are: the participants try to be close to what he or she think the conductor wants to hear from him or her; participants can assume a similar position to other people for reasons of acceptance or avoiding disagreements; strong and weak attitudes, as well as communicative skills, affect the discussion and the process of building opinions.

Being aware of downsides that could affect the Focus Groups' dynamic is a good way to be successfully involved in the session. Moreover, I pay careful attention to not anticipate or inflict any personal judgment or indication over the expected meaning of well-being, I ask specifically to people with equal opinions to specify their own specific position, trying to highlight differences between them.

I intentionally restrict participants' excesses giving to those who had more difficulties to cut in on the conversation the chance to take part in the discussion. However, as Fern describes, the distortions in the truth of the answers are not necessarily bad (Fern 2001 p.127) even if they have some influence on the results (Fern 2001 pp. 110–115).

*“Social comparison processes cause individuals to focus more on common responses and group interaction so the phenomenon under study is ‘collective’ in nature. These are social influence, free riding, reciprocity and liking, production blocking, the influence of information, information sharing and persuasive arguments and attitude polarization” (Spillmaeckers et al. 2008 p. 9).*

While conducting the focus group on well-being I used several pretexts to cope with these elements as much as possible in order to get successful discussions. In these terms the researcher's sensibility is an evident element of the research process and it is taken as an avoided matter. During the focus groups I was already comparing the emerged



opinions and analysing the first data. It was very useful to adopt such a conduct while listening to all the participants' interventions regarding their conceptualization on well-being and it was of a great help for the analysis.

A test of the focus groups' questions had been carried out for each case study before the two Focus Groups took place. For the Italian case study, all the inquires and discussions have been done in Italian, for the Dutch case I arranged a grid of interviews in English and I slightly changed the translation of some questions to improve the comprehension and to facilitate the data collecting. The two grids (one for the Italian case and one for the Dutch one) have the same structure and it tries to frame the meaning of well-being, its elements and its boarders.

The Focus Group starts with an introduction of myself, and the general information about my research activity. Some indications on how the discussion would have been developed had to be explained in order to clarify the scope (bring evaluation on the concept of well-being close to people and to evaluate what matters to them in the local context, stimulating a debate), set few rules (try to keep focused, maintain momentum, get closure on questions), and introduce the contents of the Focus Group session (I facilitate the discussion and we use post-it in an interactive way, I record the meeting and take some notes, yet, don't loose concentration).

All the participants had to introduce themselves to the other clarifying their position standing to the socio-economical dimension that I selected them with (age, gender, nationality, job, family, location, and vulnerability). The general aim of this grid is to build the discussion around the theme of well-being and ill-being in order to define the frame that lead the local judgment and evaluation and introduce the relation with the local context.

### **Instrument for the Interviews**

In the interviewing phase I referred to a general grid of topic that I used during the conversation with the families' representative (Appendix 2).

As introduced in the methodology explanation, I tried to establish a positive setting and a colloquial conversation. In order to reach that goal the interviews started with questions and conversation that could break the ice and put them in a confident situation. So the first issue included in

the interviews is related to the families' history and background, to their components and then moving gradually to speak about their decision to choose that neighbourhood as a place to live.

A focus on the perceived boundaries of their neighbourhood is included as well as how the relation with the local environment is and which activity they normally carry out. One time speaking about a specific activity, action or access to a peculiar opportunity, it is possible to investigate the urban elements I decline from the CA. I used a grid that combined the definition of local well-being dimension with the declination of the CA main elements for the urban level as a reference.

For each of the well-being dimensions, the grid supports the investigation addressing questions related to families' urban functionings, capabilities, constraints, values, choices and freedom. All these elements are related to the dimensions of well-being defined by the first part of the investigation.

When I focus on the investigation of families' functioning, the related questions referred to aims, goals and motivation that guide their specific action. Urban capabilities address questions that focus on the ability of families to achieve state of being or doing through their functioning. The analysis over the presence of constraints is included in the interviews referring to questions that focus the attention on the existence of personal characteristics that do not allow families to access a particular opportunity or to specific social and cultural norms that avoid or limit the achievement of opportunities. Neither to geographical and physical environmental elements that reduce the possibility to reach and access an urban opportunity.

Values refer to families' moral judgment and ethical orientation that address their choices and preferences in the selection of urban opportunities. In relation to the achieved functionings, the grid stresses the investigation of the level of freedom implied in that process. Another line of questioning investigates the issues related to which kind of choice families make in order to use or to select specific opportunities. In order to better understand a family's agency, I focus on the related opportunities, investigating their location and how the family accesses them.

### Instruments for the Complementary Analysis

Even if the main data gathering has been done through the Focus Groups and the Interviews, other investigations have been done.

During the processes that got me close to field works I carried out some interviews with local functionaries, few ethnographical interviews with dwellers meet in the neighbourhoods and natural observations of the contexts.

During the meeting with the government officials I didn't really follow any grid of interview but I prepare myself with a little bit of knowledge about what the district government is doing in the neighbourhood and what are the future perspectives over it. In Milan I could talk with the President of Zona 9, Beatrice Uguccioni, and a official from the Planning Office. In Amsterdam I had a meeting with the official in charged for civil engagement and participation (Participatiemakelaar), Broer Soolsma.

The reports of the ethnographic interviews with dwellers and natural observations didn't follow any fixed scheme, but as admit by their methodology, I let the environment and the interlocutors to inspire my questions and observations. Information have been integrated into the data collected during families' interviews.

A extra instrument of analysis has been defined in order to produce usable data for the geographical investigation using the GIS. From the families' interviews I took the data that allows me to draw the maps. All the information has been placed in the table in order to process the GIS analysis.

Departure	Destination	Freq/Week	Type	Transport	Distance
Home_M1	Park_NW	1	Leisure	walk	247.76888
Home_M1	Playg_Herm	2	Leisure	walk	483.52696
Home_M1	Playg_CaG	0.1	Leisure		2246.1088
Home_M1	Shop_Mall	1	Shop	car	3565.94712
Home_M1	Shop_Coop		Shop		483.5604
Home_M1	Sport_Swim		Sport		206.84176
Home_M1	Library	1	Leisure		802.056
Home_M1	Sport_D	1	Sport	walk	166.90808
Home_M1	Job_1	5	Job	car	3113.2824
Home_M1	Center_Leisure	0.5	Leisure	transport	6593.76472
Home_M1	Scho_Cesari	6	School	walk	109.66784
Home_M1	Family_1	3	SocActivity	car	1098.32888

Table 3.4: Data Table for the GIS analysis (Home\_M1 example)

Family	Age	Status	M/F	Education	Neighb. based
M1	36	parent	f	master	70%
M1	38	parent	m	master	70%
M1	2.5	child	f	/	70%
M1	1.5	child	f	/	70%

Table 3.5: Families Data Table for the GIS analysis (Home\_M1 example)

### 3.3.3 Case-study

The research proposes a theoretical application of the Sen's CA to evaluate quality of life at neighbourhood level investigating families' agency. In order to apply the proposed method in more than one context and having comparative results I choose to develop my researchh at the neighbourhood level in two European cities; Milan in Italy and Amsterdam in The Netherlands. These cities have been considered as adequate case study for setting the investigation on social dynamics that drive families' life development and for establishing a comparison on this phenomenon between the cities.

The methodological aim attempts to test the pertinence of the proposed method to study urban neighbourhoods in relation to their citizens' life development. The empirical and comparative analysis has a real interest in the cases as such and it's an empirical inquiry investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. In this research boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and a multiple sources of evidence are used in order to reach a better comprehension of the reality (Yin 1989:23).

I have chosen to set my research in these two cities due to their major urban role in their own national sphere. Milan and Amsterdam are cities where financial, executive activities and private sector play a major role in their domestic activities. Being national business core of the relative country, Milan and Amsterdam are cities that held concentration of high skills professionals with a relative high salary and have a stable position or temporary jobs (Musterd and Kempen 2000). These cities provide high standard of services and opportunities that influenced the general provision of goods and commodities at citizens' disposal. Government affairs don't affect the urban composition of those two cities because administrative functions are located elsewhere such as Rome and De Hauge (L'Aia). Moreover specific opportunities allowed me to work in

both of the field.

In Milan I've been collaborating with the research team who worked on a research project on space and poverty in Milan ("City, Well-being and Poverty", FLA, in Appendix 3). During this time I developed a first focus survey on some of the most interesting neighbourhoods' profile. One of them was the neighbourhood I chose, so I already had an easy access to the working field. In Amsterdam I had the possibility to be accepted as visiting researcher for a year and half at the Amsterdam Institute of Social Research at the University of Amsterdam and the Urban Geography Group were interested in supported my research focus on a neighbourhood in the Dutch city. How families in their everyday life take advantages of this city's provision is one of the objects of my investigation.

In each city, I examine a residential urban area turned out to be well endowed in term of conditions of liveability. This decision has been made in order to face a residential contexts where to look at families with children and where dwellers have good opportunities to achieve their well-being and a good quality of life. Scientific and official reports in both cities provided the information I used to define and select the areas of analyses.

For the case study selection in Milan I chose to refer to scientific research project "City, Well-being and Poverty" (promoted by Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente (FLA) under the coordination of the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Pavia (IUSS). It provides an analysis that refers to data from the infrastructural, economical and social situation. While selecting the case-study in Amsterdam I referred to official data provided by the municipality in yearly reports over the condition of the city (Staat van der Staat Amsterdam. Ontwikkelingen in participatie en leefsituatie; State of the City of Amsterdam. Developments in participation and living conditions - Appendix 4). It includes analysis on city liveability and urban quality of life The VI Edition published in 2011 provides data for the 2010 ([Lindeman et al. 2011](#)).

Several units of analyses have been taken into consideration while focusing on the neighbourhood selection. After the evaluation of different scales of analysis, I chose to refer to a medium scale that could refer to an area that includes residential structures, recreational spaces, infrastructure and services as part of the functional space.

		EX-ZONA 9	WATERGRAAFSMEER
Population (2011)		43.312	14.556
Age	0-19	14%	22%
	20-29	12%	13%
	30-44	22%	25%
	45-64	26%	26%
	65 +	24%	14%
Nationality	Autoctones	95%	70%
	Immigrant	5%	30%
	<i>of which</i> Western	1%	15%
	<i>of which</i> Non-W	4%	15%

Table 3.6: Population Age and Nationality in the case-study

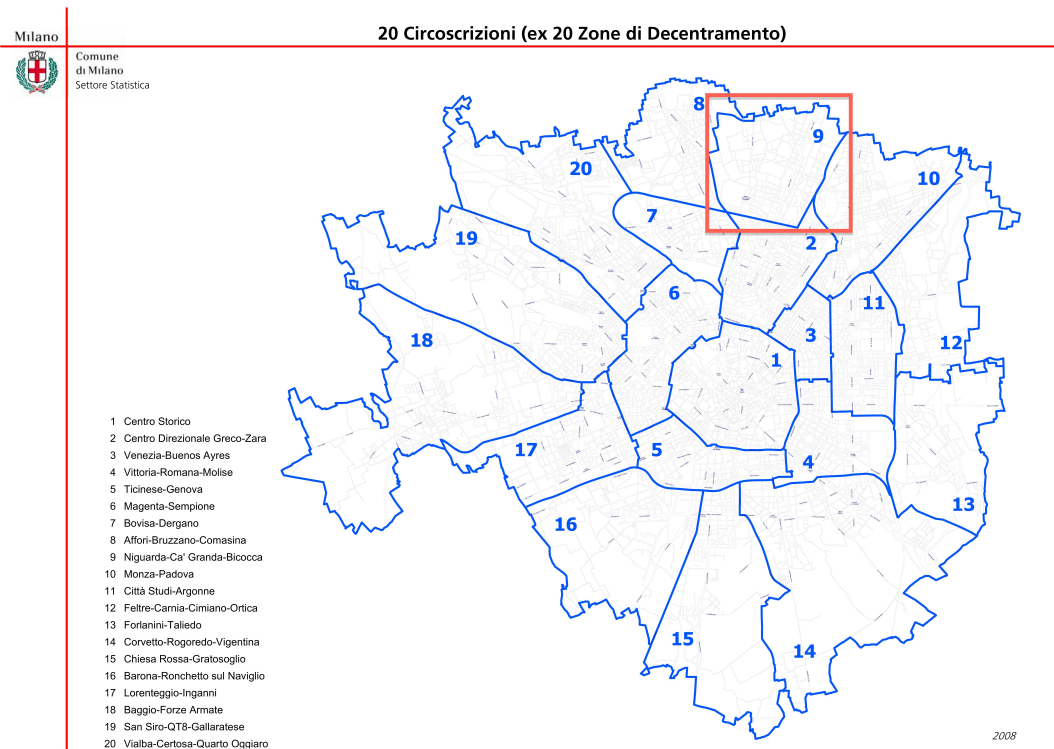
By purpose I didn't want to pre-define bounders to my neighbourhood but discover them trough the fieldwork research. When I collected information trough the administrative data I referred to municipality space allotment that divides the city in medium partitions and in particularly to one of the twenty boroughs that divided the city of Milan till 2002 (called in Italian Ex-20 Zone ) and to three administrative partitions (called in Dutch buurtcombinaties) of one of the current eight areas that shaped the city of Amsterdam (called in Dutch 8 Stadsdelen).

In Milan I set my neighbourhood choice on the ex-Zona 9 that includes urban neighbourhoods called Niguarda, Prato Centenaro, Cà Granda and Bicocca. In Amsterdam I chose to work on the Watergraafsmeer area that includes urban neighbourhood called Don Bosco, Frankendael and Middenmer. The maps show the location of neighbourhood selection in relation to the entire city.

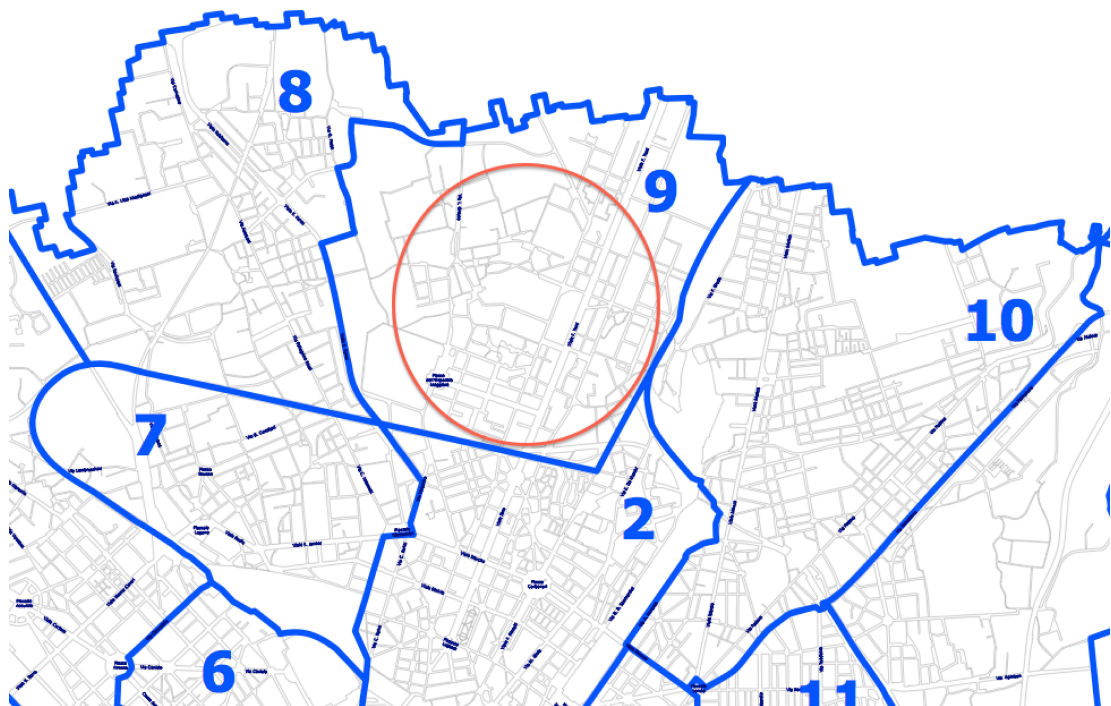
The size and the composition of the twenty boroughs has been considered to be most appropriate to set the current research. As the map showed those two neighbourhood are located at the external periphery in both Municipality. That entails an urban structure that it characterized by a certain distance from the city center and a relative closeness to the out-side of the city with its main roads and a less dense use of space compared to the high coexistence of buildings in the city center.

Both neighbourhoods are welcoming residential area as the major destination of their land use. It determines a high number of residence dwellers and families that are living and working in the city.

As described previously the neighbourhoods have a high standard provision of opportunities and good condition for urban life. This char-

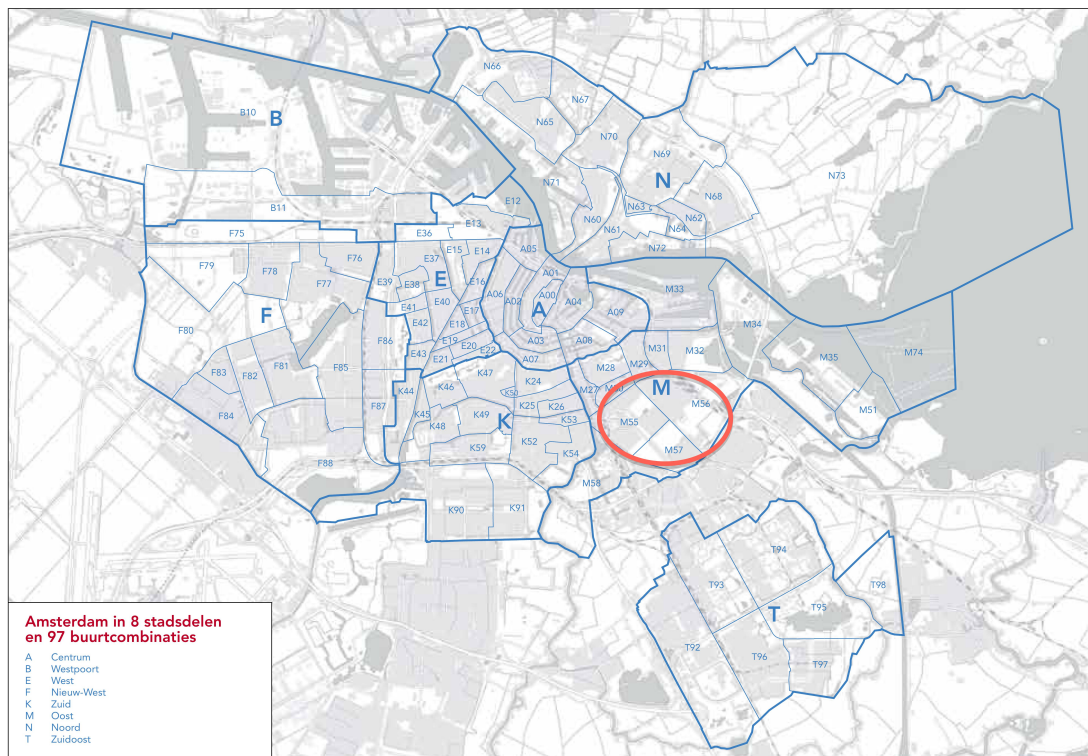


(a) Map of Milan - Ex-20 Zone

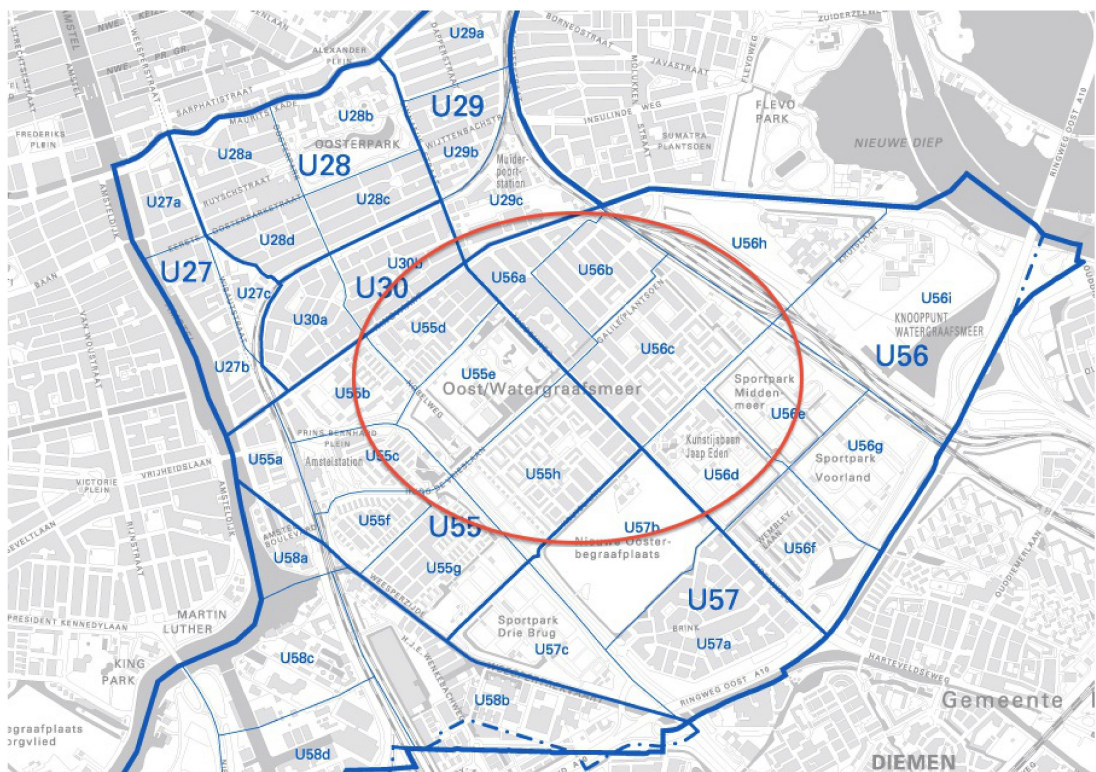


(b) Map of Ex-Zona9 - case-study area

Figure 3.1: Map of Milan and Ex-Zona 9



(a) Map of Amsterdam - 8 Stadsdelen



(b) Map of Watergraafsmeer - case-study area

Figure 3.2: Map of Amsterdam and Watergraafsmeer



acteristic allows my research to investigate over real life experiences with such opportunities. Otherwise dwellers and families should have been referring to wishing or expected opportunities that are missed in their local environment. From a cultural and anthropological prospective the two selected neighbourhoods share a similar historical development.

The ancient core of Ex-Zona 9 and Watergraafsmeer were founded as the independent Municipality of Niguarda and Watergraafsmeer in the main city surroundings. They had their own height of importance in the XVII and XVIII centuries as suburban villages with their own identity and prestige. Historical documents and oral traditions confirm the existence of a local community that were tight in the village. Moreover element of cultural and historical heritage confirm the relative autonomy of the original setting.

In the early XX century as a result of the European urban tendency to spread and incorporate the neighbouring land the two village have been taken into the main city Municipality. In 1923 Niguarda was included in the Municipality of Milan and since 1921 the Watergraafsmeer is part of the city of Amsterdam. These elements tight the similarity between the two selected case-study in terms of socio-geographical characteristic and especially in community background and the persistency of cultural value.



## Chapter 4

# Defining Well-Being and local Quality of Life

The analysis is based on information recorded and on the notes I took during the investigation phases. Data is treated with an interpretative and qualitative approach focusing on the meaning of aspects that are built by social interaction in the specific environment and within the community and its culture at the present time. For my research it is important to get the point of view of the people engaged in the discussion and their specific prospective upon the subject. Under the interpretative paradigm, all the observations are subjected to people's way of seeing and conceptualising the world around them from their own perspective.

Focus group discussion, interviews and observations are examples of situations in which the context and the social interaction play an important role on the formulation of meanings; a discussion cannot be the same as another one, and its meaning is related only to the specific situation in which it has been produced. For the Focus group analyses I am reporting the results by presenting a summary with examples and common comments taken from the focus group discussions.

In general there was no particular problem of unbalanced relations in terms of gender, education, wealth, and nationality comparison between the participants. Each person took the opportunity to express his or herself freely and in equal proportion. The elements of well-being and local liveability that I reported have been discussed by all the participants. I tried to stimulate the discussion and the reflection on well-being starting with a list of dimensions that are representing and influencing well-being. As I said, these lists refer to the specific national domains' definitions.

So the participants, after having listened to the reading of this list, were encouraged to discuss under my guide and my approach inspired by the CA.

The Focus Groups started with a general introduction of my research with an explanation of the general framework. In this context I introduced them to the list of dimensions that define well-being referring to the national conceptualisation. For the Italian case I referred to the list of dimensions elaborated in the project *Benessere Equo e Sostenibile* promoted by the National Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) (see Appendix 5). For the Dutch case I referred to the domains used by the National Dutch Institute of Social Research (SCP) to measure national well-being in an official monitoring report (see Appendix 6). The same happened when I introduced the discussion over the declination of well-being at the local level addressing the conversation on liveability and local quality of life.

For Milan, I referred to the indicators used in the project “City, well-being and poverty” produced by Fondazione Lombardia per l’Ambiente (FLA) (see Appendix 7). For Amsterdam I considered the list of dimensions that the Municipal Statistical Office used to write the annual monitoring city report called in Dutch *Staat van der Staat Amsterdam*, the *Ontwikkelingen in participatie en leefsituatie* (see Appendix 8). Citing this information in the introduction, as a general example of defining well-being, was a reasonable way to let the participants know about the possible dimensions they could refer to without forcing them to recognise these as issues upon which to react with when regarding personal considerations. I introduced the Focus Groups Discussion in the following way:

*”I’m Michela Guerini. I’m doing PhD research that at this moment aims to discuss the meaning of well-being with you and to delineate its definition since there are lots of definitions with different specification ambiguity. For example, at the national level well-being is defined in terms of health, housing, leisure, social inclusion, durable goods, mobility, holidays and sport, but other institutions add some more elements and others restrict the list, so there’s not a clear definition.”* (From the grid used for the Dutch Focus Groups).

The first elements put into discussion were the contents that participants have written on their post-it on their own definition of well-being

as requested. I read all the written words and sentences to the group one by one, asking for their opinion on each of them. Based on these elements, the discussion was built up to define a shared concept of well-being. From this we switched to the description of what well-being implies at local level, considering the environment of living and quality of life aspects. I treat all the outcomes and results in the next few paragraphs, referring to each specific case study. I also present a description of the FG settings and the participants. 10 participants were chosen taking into account the social-demographic and geographical variable as described in the methodological part and represented in the above summary.

Between November and December 2010 I organised two focus groups with citizens from the selected neighbourhood in Ex-Zona 9 of Milano. In Milan the first Focus Group took place on Friday, 26th November from 18.00 to 19:30 at the Centro Culturale, Via Hermada 14, Milano. The location is a cultural place offered by the local housing Cooperative Abitare. The second Focus Group took place on Saturday, 18th December from 10.30 to 12:00 in Via Passerini 36, Milano, where the association called Banca del Tempo Niguarda is located.

Between October 2011 and January 2012 I organized the two focus groups with citizens from the selected neighbourhood in Watergraafsmeer area. In Amsterdam the first Focus Group took place on Monday, 31st October from 19:00 to 20:30 at the Bibliotheek Watergraafsmeer, Linnaeusparkweg 220, Amsterdam (local library in the neighbourhood). The second Focus Group took place on Wednesday, 18th January from 19.30 to 21:00 at the Stadsdeelhuis Oost, Gemeente Amsterdam, Oranje-Vrijstaatsplein 2, Amsterdam (local municipal building in the area).

The Appendix 9 shows the characteristics for each participant involved in the Focus Groups discussions for both of the case studies. The relevant parts of the discussions are presented and described in the next pages within the classification of domains that matter most to the participants as dwellers in the neighbourhood. During the focus groups participants discussed several domains and from their opinions and dialogues I defined the elements that belong to a local definition of well-being. There has been the possibility to take into consideration the definition of ill-being, as antonym of well-being, and those elements were useful to stress the main elements to consider as relevant domain.

During the focus groups there was not a clear distinction between the

discussion on a general definition of well-being and the debate on what makes local liveability at the neighbourhood level. In order to present the data I had to divide the two kinds of statements. The results of the Focus Groups are presented at first separately for each case study and then a comparative paragraph introduces the conclusion for the first part of this research. Here I discuss the differences between the two well-being and liveability definitions and I sustain the need for such an approach to deal with quality of life evaluations and measurements referring to the CA with a deliberative enforcement.

#### 4.0.4 Well-being and Quality of Life in Zone 9, Milano

During the Focus Groups discussions held in Milan, I collected data to produce a bottom-up definition of well-being referring to the elements that participants recognized as constitutive dimensions. Regarding a general understanding of well-being I present and describe the Focus Groups' results. Participants recognised 7 dimensions that frame the local well-being conception: Environment, health, income and job, social interactions, safety, culture and leisure and social security. The following pages specify what dwellers refer to for each of the above specific dimensions, proposing the transcription of sentences and consideration produced during the discussions.

**Environment** Having a clean and unpolluted environment is considered one of the domains that affect human well-being for the local participants.

Fernanda: *“In order to live well you must live in a healthy environment with good air, with not too much traffic, with drinkable water”*.

Lorenzo: *“Also, the environment must be clean from garbage and substances that damage the natural as well as the built areas”*.

Having access to parks, green gardens and natural areas support and positively affect people's well-being.

Anna Maria: *“The opportunity to take a rest from the city-life and enter in the park with all the nature around is something that recharges you and gives you the opportunity to appreciate the natural landscape, the animals. . . After a busy day or week people need it”*.

Cristiano: *“ Yes, that's the reason why lots of people from Milan go out of the city during the weekend, because in Milan there's no big parks*

*where you could go*".

Thus, the environment domain has a double characterization:

- Environmental Quality
- Access to parks and green areas

**Health** It was easy for participants to agree on the importance played by the characteristic of having good health as a relevant element for well-being.

Gabriele: *"Well, if you have bad health, all your life is affected by it. A simple painful tooth as well as major disease affects your everyday life. I'm still young and in good health but when I'm ill I'm so down and the rest doesn't really matter"*.

Fernanda: *"When one becomes older than he/she realizes that a cold weather or eating special type of food affect your body and you are not so free to do whatever you want anymore, so health is very important"*.

Silvia: *"For my experience, when I got ill and started to have mobility problems my life changed completely and for the first period I was so bad... but then I reached a balance and with the time I learn to live with another approach, but I don't live so nicely as before for my healthy problems"*.

Maria: *"yes, health is so important, I'd put it as the first element of well-being"*.

Being healthy contains also psychological and emotional aspects that refer to feeling well or being happy.

Silvia: *"Sometimes my well-being changes from day to day just because today I feel happy and tomorrow I could be in low spirits"*.

Cristiano: *"Yes, also having a healthy mind and a good emotional status is important"*.

Anna Maria: *"Yes, let's say that health is made by both physical and emotional elements"*.

Thus, the health domain has a double characterization:

- Being physically and psychologically healthy
- Feeling well/being emotionally fine

**Income and Job** Participants referred to the economical and wealth issue with a specific meaning related to stability and certainty in the long run.

Cristiano: *“For me well-being means to have an income that support my choice for the future and not be panic to plan certain expenses because I could not have the money to do it in the future. I’m relatively young (32 y.o.) and I’m lucky to have a permanent contract otherwise I’d not be free to make plans for my life, as for example choose to go living by my own”*.

Maria: *“Job is very much related to economical situation because you need to work in order to gain enough to live a good life”*.

Alam: *“I’m a seller and sometimes I’d like to have a fixed income because in this way I’d be more free to make some choices, for example for my children’s activities... but in my situation I never know how much I’ll earn the next month, especially in this period of crisis”*.

Moreover, participants revealed the necessity of having a sufficient income level in order to live a good life. They usually referred to a situation in which one could “have enough for living a decent life” but with no reference to any medium salary or explicit income.

Anna Maria: *“Having enough money is important. I’m not saying that one needs to have money to exaggerate, but enough to supply basic need or solve quickly some situation, for example be able to pay a private doctor if you have a specific problem to solve”*.

Luigi: *“If you have a positive economical situation one could count on the possibility to face problems and events with less fear to not be able to face this situations, yes, it’s right. Money helps you”*.

Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Economical and working stability (vs uncertainly)
- Sufficient income or economical situation

**Social Interaction** The possibility to count on social relations has been discussed without any disagreement. All the participants considered having social interactions as a basic element for human well-being.

Silvia: *“Since five years I come to Diapason (centre for disabled people) and it’s a great opportunity for me to meet other people and have relations with them. Some of them became my friends and when I can’t go there, for example during the weekend, I miss this opportunity”*.

Alam: *“Social relations are important also in term of support not only as having friends. Knowing other people can enlarge her/his network and find support to solve some problems for example”*.



Cristiano: “*Yes, if you know people from different group then you have more networks of acquaintances to refer to...*”.

Here there is an implicit reference to the concept of Social Capital (Bourdieu, 1977). Participate in social activities is also an element that support human well-being. Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Having social networks and relations
- Participation

**Safety** Participants explained how important it is for people to feel safe while walking on the street and about the safety of their material goods. Personal and material security allows people to live more nicely avoiding negative feelings and the fear or suspicion of mischief.

Luigi: “*If you feel vulnerable to burglars or so, you always think that something wrong could happen and so far that’s affect negatively your everyday life*”.

Angela: “*If the environment is not safe, walking in the street at night time for instance, you don’t do it or you need to ask someone to come with you. So your opportunities are reduced because you can’t always ask people to bring you at home. Maybe you decide not to go out at night or to come back home earlier*”.

Unsafety is seen as a limitation to human action and in these terms is well in line with the CA model that defines in this case, safety as an element of well-being. Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Personal safety
- Goods safety

**Culture and Leisure Opportunities** For local participants a condition of well-being should embrace elements of culture and opportunities of leisure. Cultural activities are seen as elements to stimulate one’s mind and the ability to increase his/her knowledge. That improves people’s potential to improve life as a whole.

Fernanda: “*Culture, schools and recreational activities support people to develop own knowledge and in this way one is able to face changes and react to them consciously. For example learn how to use a computer is something that allow you to deal with new social media and networks*”.

Angela: “*If there are opportunities to attend meetings or seminars during the weekend, you have the opportunity to learn something new,*

*heard different opinion and know new people”.*

As it has already come out, culture and leisure times are strongly related to opportunities provide by the environment in which one is living.

Alam: *“When there are meetings or public parties and you participate in them, you enjoy the social life and it’s better than stay at home watching TV. If you don’t have opportunities of leisure, such a nice place where to go (parks, gardens) or events, you don’t enjoy your free time. For that reason I always try to bring my children to all the events organised close to our home, so they can meet new people, see different things and also get close to the local culture”.*

Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Cultural opportunities
- Leisure opportunities

**Social Security** Being able to count on social services and social assistance is a well-being dimension that participants express to be important and so far should be taken into account. They were usually referred to in both focus groups in relation to social protection as a set of benefits available (or not available) from the state, market, civil society and households, or through a combination of these agencies, to reduce multi-dimensional deprivation (poverty, old age, disability, unemployment and others).

Anna Maria: *“It’s important for the society to have social assistance and adequate services, for example for elderly or for deprived people”.*

Luigi: *“Well-being is a condition in which people are able to satisfy their own needs and if they are not independent for certain activities or status they must receive support”.*

Lorenzo: *“Yes, but then there are people who take advantages of these services and it’s not fair that our taxes are used to help who doesn’t really need social assistance”.*

Gabriele: *“Yes, but this an other issue related to how the social security must be managed. In general it should be provided in a fairly way and how the right way to do it must be developed”.*

When moving from general concept of well-being to the meaning of well-being and liveability at urban scale, participants made more precise references to their own neighbourhood. I define 6 dimensions that describe how dwellers conceptualise local quality of life.

**Green areas** Having access to parks, gardens and playgrounds are important opportunities for the people who are living in the neighbourhood. These areas represent a place where they can meet other people or friends, play sports and have a rest from the business of city-life dynamics.

Anna Maria: *“I walk in the park almost everyday, even when I don’t have so much time for all I have to do. But few minutes in the green help me a lot to feel better, so I couldn’t image myself living well without a park or natural area close to my home”*.

Cristiano: *“Yes, the park is an important element for local liveability. It also helps on cleaning the air from pollution and to walk with no cars around...”*.

Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Access to park, gardens, etc.
- Access to natural resources

**Mixed opportunities** Whilst speaking about local liveability in both of the focus groups discussions, the importance of having different kinds of opportunities has emerged. Participants referred to this domain as the provision of public and private services in the local area that could satisfy several needs and provide different opportunities. Not only local shops, cafes, restaurants and fast-food shops, but also meeting places such as Centro di Aggregazione Giovanile (CAG). For young people or elderly, they are relevant resources that offer a good mix of local opportunities.

Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Multi-cultural opportunities
- Multi-targeting opportunities

**Social Community** Participants recognised the presence of a social community as an element of value in order to have a good quality of life in the local context. Social cohesion and the sense of community emerged as major domain in social life. People who are living in the area recognise themselves as a community, with its own characteristics belonging to the history of the neighbourhood and to the town. Feeling the divide between their area from the rest of the city and from other neighbourhoods. There are also monuments that highlight this well kept local community. Luigi: *“When I moved to this neighbourhood I didn’t*

*know about all the history of the area and its past linked to Manifattura Tabacchi (factory), Villa Clerici and the Seveso overflows. With the time I learned how all this is still present in the local community within its dwellers and it's something nice".* Lorenzo: *"Yes, Niguarda has its own history and for example, we celebrate the Liberation day on the 24th of April and not on the 25th because people in Niguarda defeated the enemy by themselves one day in advance".* Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Social cohesion
- Share local community culture

**Be connect with the city** Connectivity and public mobility emerged as relevant elements that improve the local liveability because it allows dwellers to move in and around the city. That implies that people should not only have easy access to public transport and services but also count on good mobility infrastructures for car driving, bike lines for cycling and decent sidewalks to walk around.

Fernanda: *"If one chooses to not have a car, public transport must be able to supply people who need to move in the city. But not only to the city centre, but also to other parts of the city as close neighbourhoods. If you want to go the city centre from here it's very easy and you have several opportunities, but if you want to go to other suburban neighbourhoods it's very bad"* Me: *"So does it mean that the mobility is developed principally in a radial dimension rather than concentric?"* All: *"Yes, it does!"*

Cristiano: *"Being a suburban neighbourhood of Milan, it's also easy to move outside and in few minutes you reach the highway for all the destinations you may like".*

Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Good conditions for mobility
- Good public transport connections

**Proximity to facilities** Having easy access to facilities, services and other commodities such as bus or tram stops, supermarkets, schools, sport centres, green areas, etc. increases the quality of local life. Participants explain that regarding their everyday life activities they prefer to go to closer shops instead of going to a better place that sell the same products. Proximity has an individual meaning depending on personal characteristics, but it has been agreed that in order to be close enough

a service it should be at a walking distance with minimal big streets to cross.

Thus, the domain has a double characterization:

- Facilities at walkable distance
- Easy access to services

**Built Environment** Living in a nice built area has been recognised to be an important element for urban liveability. Good housing conditions, well-designed streets, good-looking monuments and landscape are dimensions addressed in defining the necessity for the quality of the built environment.

Fernanda: *“You live well if your environment is pleasant to live, to see, to walk around”*

Angela: *“When I see some neighbourhood with high concrete buildings with a small garden around I feel sorry for the people who live there. I wouldn't like to live in such a place because it's not nice”.*

The next Table summarises all the well-being & urban liveability dimensions with sub-domains as the results of the Focus Group discussion interpretation in Milan. The list of dimensions recognised by participants from Ex-Zona 9 cover several domains and for most of them sub-themes have been taken into consideration.

Confronting this list with the dimensions used by ISTAT-CNEL at national level, it is possible to face similarities, missing and unmatched domains. The next table shows this comparison and the matched domains are written in bold.

As we can see many domains are matching; Environment, Health, Income, Job, Social interaction, Safety, Culture, Leisure and Social Security. The BES definition includes all aspects that have been mentioned in the focus group. Others include elements regarding Research and Innovation, Politic and Institutions, Subjective Well-being and Education.

An interesting result to comment on is the complete lack in the focus groups' definition of well-being. Specifically with any reference to subjective evaluation or emotional feeling that could be summarised in personal satisfaction or happiness. It is not possible to formulate a clear explanation for these results, but the current situation generated by the economical crisis could have played a part. Hence, people are focused more on material and practical conditions than a state of being happy or

<b>Environment</b>	Environmental quality
	Natural area & Parks
<b>Health</b>	Being physically and psychologically healthy
	Feeling well/ Being emotionally fine
<b>Income &amp; Job</b>	Economical and working stability
	Sufficient base economical situation
<b>Social interaction</b>	Having social networks and relations
	Participation
Safety	Goods safety
	Personal safety
<b>Culture and Leisure</b>	Opportunities of leisure
	Cultural opportunities
<b>Social Security</b>	Social security opportunities
Green areas	Access to parks, gardens,...
	Access to natural resources
Mix of opportunities	Multi-cultural opportunities
	Multi-targeting opportunities
<i>Social Community</i>	Social cohesion
	Share local community culture
<i>Be connect with the city</i>	Good conditions for mobility
	Good public transport connections
<i>Proximity to facilities</i>	Facilities at walkable distance
	Easy access to facilities
<i>Good built environment</i>	Residencial density

Table 4.1: Ex-Zona 9: recognised domains for WB

Focus Group Dimensions	List of dimension (BES, ISTAT-CNEL)
<b>Environment</b> <b>Health</b> <b>Income &amp; Job</b> <b>Social interaction</b> <b>Safety</b> <b>Culture &amp; Leisure</b> <b>Social Security</b>	<b>Ambiente</b> <b>Salute</b> <b>Benessere economico</b> <b>Relazioni sociali</b> <b>Sicurezza</b> <b>Paesaggio e patrimonio culturale</b> <b>Lavoro e conciliazione tempi di vita</b> Benessere soggettivo Ricerca e innovazione Qualità dei servizi Politica e istituzioni Istruzione e formazione

Table 4.2: Ex-Zona 9: General WB domains in comparison

Focus Group Dimensions	List of Indicators for Milan (FLA)
<b>Green areas</b> <b>Mixed opportunities</b> <b>Social Community</b> <b>Connect with the city</b> Proximity to facilities Built Environment	<b>Housing &amp; Environment</b> <b>Infrastructures &amp; Services</b> Inequality Poverty <b>Security</b> <b>Social Security</b> <b>Social Relation</b> <b>Cultural Opportunities</b>

Table 4.3: Ex-Zona 9: Local WB domains in comparison

satisfied.

Coming to the local definition of quality of life and liveability, I confront the results with the field considered in the project research “City, Well-being and Poverty” conducted in Milano.

Looking at the list of dimension with the one used in the research project carried out in Milan, it is possible to see corresponding domains, such as Environment, Services and Opportunities, Social Relations, Mobility and Connectivity. A series of elements considered in the FLA project are already included in the general definition of well-being formulated by the focus groups participants.

The table shows the results of this comparison referring to the FLA

list of indicators. To conclude this paragraph, I can argue that the local definition of well-being and liveability contain several meanings and nuances that confirm the complexity of dealing with quality of life evaluations. Generally the results are well matched with official domains used in applied research, confirming that the production of meaning is culturally determined. I can affirm that the local community in Ex-Zona 9 corresponds with part of the generalisation that has been produced for the Italian population as a whole. It refers to a situation that includes the subject and his/her life conditions and possibilities of actions, being healthy and having a proper job that could provide economical support and also leisure time, a natural and cultural environment in which the individual is living and a social context that provides support through relations and interactions. Furthermore, particular elements characterise the well-being definition built within the local community in a specific and context-based acceptance.

In the general definition of well-being participants recognised the connectivity and mobility issue as an important element for their life development and this issue is not properly considered in the BES list of domains. As one can read in the BES document, the previous aspect is included in the general dimension Quality of Services that summarised social security services and other opportunities provided by the state or by the local government. The connectivity and mobility issue augmented by the dweller is not only related to services provision but furthermore to personal opportunities and possibilities to be freely mobile in the socio-spatial environment that refer more directly to the CA used in this research. Regarding the concept of local liveability, it is possible to see how the general definition of well-being is taken for granted.

People advance in the specification of elements that affect the general idea from a more close everyday life perspective. Coherently with this dynamic it is possible to see how the list of indicators used in the research promoted by FLA has considered several dimensions that cover elements of quality of life and liveability at the local level. If we confront that list with the final result of the Focus Groups, it is only the Inequality dimension that does not fit with the research outcomes. However, in the FLA's list there are missing elements that radically influenced local quality of life such as the proximity to facilities and the quality of the building environment.



A confirmation of how the general definition of well-being influences the conception of local liveability is visible when confronting the outcomes. Dimensions such as the Environment come close to the local context; its peculiar environmental provision consisting of parks, gardens, natural resources and also a well done building environment. The dimension of Social Relation becomes explicit in the feeling of being part of the social community; the dimension of Income and Social Security get close to the possibility of having a mix of opportunities and being able to access them easily. Those elements represent contextual objects that could differ from context to context depending upon what people consider to be the right provision for a good environmental setting.

First remarks of a definition of well-being for the local liveability is rising. Facing the definition of well-being and liveability at the closest level as possible also emerges as a necessity to implement in deep analysis in urban and local studies. As the results have shown, well-being is socially and culturally defined, but is also influenced by the particular urban environment and its geographical space.

#### 4.0.5 Well-being and Quality of Life in Watergraafsmeer, Amsterdam

During the Focus Groups discussions held in Amsterdam I collected data to produce a bottom-up definition of well-being referring to the elements that participants recognised as constitutive dimensions. Regarding a general understanding of well-being I present and describe the Focus Groups results. Participants recognised 10 dimensions that frame the local well-being conception: health, social relation, comfortable material situation, housing, culture and leisure, mobility and accessibility, safety, environment, job, freedom and realisation.

The following pages specify what dwellers refer to for each of the above particular dimensions, proposing the transcription of sentences and consideration produced during the discussions .

**Health** Having good health is considered both at physical and psychological levels and is a condition that supports well-being. A healthy condition allows people to have a serene life, in peace of mind and wholesome. Health is related to the possibility of utilising all human capabilities of the body and of the intellect.

Joke: *“We knew from the daughter of my sister that she was pregnant, even if she had a very dangerous operation. That was such a nice news for me and when you said, “being poor is a situation of ill-being” I thought, puff... what’s money! Health is so much important.”*

But health also means to be able to function properly and independently without the need to count to on anyone else’s help:

Henk: *“If you have a bad health as; having some disease, being on a wheelchair chair... you have to take time to re-establish the harmony with your new situation. It takes time and you are not independent anymore. That will affect your well-being.”*

Marianne: *“For example, I’m not able to walk very well because my legs are old. But with my bike I go everywhere I need. Of course not too far, I stay in the neighbourhood but it’s enough to do what I like and I’m happy.”*

In this context Health is also related to feeling well, such as living relaxed without periodic stress, being self-confident, feeling right with one’s life and being happy.

Ella: *“I wrote (on the post-it) “eating, drinking, having fun in the sun” because I think well-being is necessarily related to how you feel. Being happy and able to enjoy life are important...”*

Julie: *“Yes, having a life without stress, like being very busy and having no time to relax with your family, for instance.”*

To summarise the components of health we can refer to these points:

- Having all the human physical & psychological abilities
- Feel physical & psychological independence
- Feeling well/Emotionally good

**Social relation & participation** It does not surprise me to discover that having social interaction and being connected with other people are elements that support well-being. The participants made references to the necessity to share time with other people and take part in group activities.

Henk: *“For example, the possibilities to be engaged in voluntary activities it’s important for well-being because you meet people and you feel part of a group and with them you spend time doing something good for other.”*

The concept of being connected with another is a major issue they

discussed:

Pit: “ *Yes, be connected to other people it’s important! All those relational opportunity help you to establish or come across social relation. Everybody needs to have a social life otherwise you are alone.*”

Participating in social life is also considered an opportunity that influences well-being positively.

Marianne “*Participating in some activities allow you to know people who live close to you with same interests, hobbies. It also helps you to meet someone with your same problem and you learn from them how to solve your problem.*”

To summarise the components of social relation we can refer to these points:

- Freedom to join group/ Have social networks
- Be connected to people
- Participation

**Comfortable material situation** During the focus groups, people refer to material conditions more generally than to money/income issues. But of course, in order to own goods and access commodities that support people’s well-being, it is important to have a sufficient economical situation. Most of the time people refer to a comfortable condition when dealing with the material situation.

Henk wrote on the post-it: *‘having enough to live on’.*

Joke: “*...when I was living with my family we didn’t have so much money. We were, let’s saying, a poor family, but I don’t remember a moment in which we were not happy. You can live happy with few money.*”

Henk “*I meant, having enough to live on, in a complete sense. Being very poor, or unable to pay the rent or other things .... the limit is to have money for buying proper food...*”

A comfortable situation could be seen as having material/economical opportunities to achieve certain personal goals that matter for an individual. For instance “*having money to afford to be pregnant and having a child*” said Bart.

**Housing** The house could be seen as part of one’s material situation but it has shown to have a particular meaning. For that reason I decided to treat it as a single component of well-being. Having a decent house is one of the main goals for people when facing their development. Having

sufficient space/rooms is a major condition, especially when a family get children. But 'house' does not only mean the building structure in which one is living. The Focus Groups showed that the house should also be a safe and protected place where people based their life development. In order to be a good place to explicate this function, the house must be in good condition i.e. salubrious and hygienic inside, limited pollution and relatively quiet surroundings.

Julie: *"I lived in Amsterdam South and I was single and I had an apartment on my own. Then I met my boyfriend and when I got pregnant the house was too little and we couldn't expand because buying a bigger house there was too expensive."*

Henk: *"Having a good house with enough space. For instance, I need to have a room for my own where I can develop my activities. Then if it's in a good neighbourhood, it's better..."*

To summarise the components of housing we can refer to these points:

- Enough space
- Interior conditions
- Surrounding conditions

**Leisure & culture** Free time is seen by participants as an fundamental aspect in life that allow people to achieve and express their well-being through entertainments, cultural events, enjoying nature, visiting places, having recreational activities etc. People's argumentation has been mainly related to doable opportunities of leisure rather than simply focusing on free time in its self. It means that people's well-being depends more on the chances to undertake activities they like and they value. The condition of not being occupied by any activities causes one not to be provided with positive elements for people development.

**Mobility & Connections Opportunity** Opportunities of being connected and moving from one's home and reach places of interest have been discussed as an element related to accessibility. Having physical access to places that offer services, encounters, and commodities is a requirement for people's well-being. The ability to move independently in the house and also from the house to other external places is related to the mobility issue. It contains various elements; walkability, public transport, private mobility such as using bikes, cars or other means. An extra element to ensure mobility is the possibility of having connections

between one's point of departure and his or her final destination. Physical and accessibility constraints break down connection lines and affect mobility negatively. To summarise the components of mobility and accessibility we can refer to these points:

- Walkability & biking
- Public transport accessibility
- Connections

**Safety** During the Focus Groups it came about that the condition of feeling safe was the main element of topic for the discussions. Many participants have mentioned it in their post-it and during its argumentation several elements emerged. Safety of objects, such as private goods and material condition, personal safety and rights. No one mentioned environmental safety, which is an area that represents a main issue for the local government and its service providers. Watergraafsmeer is the lowest land in the City under the water level (-5,38mt) and it is surrounded by canals and dams that bring and keep out the water in the area. To summarise the components of safety we can refer to these points:

- Goods safety
- Personal safety

**Environment** In this domain participants described and agreed on several elements that constitute the environmental support for people's well-being. First of all, the places where people are living should be unpolluted (air quality, noise at first) thus environmental quality is recognised as a well-being element. Moreover, participants referred to the presence of natural environment as a requirement for recreation and regeneration. This outcome is clearly connected with city life-style. Having access to parks, green gardens and areas with wild nature support can positively affect people's well-being. To summarise the components of environment we can refer to these points:

- Environmental quality
- Natural area & Parks

**Job** Having a job position was defined as a domain that supports well-being without too much motivation. In its simplicity, jobs are undertaken as an important element in life to reach personal satisfaction,

social recognition and economical support. A specific element in this domain came out in terms of having a nice working environment, such as good colleagues and working position.

**Freedom & Realization** This domain represents something very close to the Dutch way of thinking and being. The participants recognised in the value of freedom a peculiar cultural element that belongs to national identity. They referred to freedom in terms of self-determination, freedom to express one's ideas and behaviours and be treated with respect. This concept is followed by the possibility to realise and improve one's desires and wishes. The participants see personal freedom and realisation as cross-domain that affects well-being as a whole. About freedom:

Henk: "*Freedom, yah. I think it works for all of us.*" Joke: "*We are used to it*". Henk: "*We, yes. Because we are Dutch, it's so, it comes with being born in Holland*". All: "*Yah! Yah!*" Henk: "*We do not know it even. When I was young I didn't feel the lack of freedom, but of course my parents did during World War II*". Bart: "*I do not fully agree!*" Me: "*No? Why?*" Bart: "*Well, let's say. Nation wide ok, but, for example in my job, now and then, I'm getting in touch with the subject where, in my opinion, most people do not realise that freedom is in danger. When project have the danger of making freedom smaller and smaller. But, I do agree, we do not live by far from North Korea. I'm happy about it.*" Julie: "*It's a great luck that we are born here.*" Bart: "*Sure, but I'll think that nobody has the objective to constructed that now. It happened long time ago gradually and I'm very happy that we live in the Netherlands, we have a free mind and we need to be our guards with good intentions.*"

When moving from general concept of well-being to the meaning of liveability at urban scale, participants always made references with their own neighbourhood. The general definition of local urban liveability depends from the domains that constitute the well-being as a whole. Moreover, a list of specific dimensions seem to be needed in order to describe how well people are living in their neighbourhood. I define 6 dimensions that describe how dwellers understand local well-being in relation to the neighbourhood.

During the Focus Groups, participants have defined the following 6 issues to conceptualise local quality of life: mixed opportunities, social

trust, connectivity, proximity to facilities, built environment and urban community.

**Mixed opportunities** During this Focus Group, the discussion highlighted that living in a mixed neighbourhood could develop several opportunities coming from different cultures and places around the world. This domain was difficult to summarise because there were conflicting positions and it took time to get the participants to agree on the issue. Some of the participants had a very positive opinion about living in a mixed neighbourhood. They referred to the possibilities for a person to get to know their culture, learn new things and to take advantages of certain services provided by a group of people whp are non Dutch; for instance fast food, ethnical restaurants, vegetable and food shops, haircutters, low budget shops etc. Some of the other participants totally agreed with these motivations because even if they provide useful services, it is not always good to have those activities on your doorstep.

*Pit: "it's good if you can have a city adventure in 10 minutes and at the same time can experience a natural adventure in some parks or wild area"*

Also the possibility to have on the same urban area different kinds of services, opportunities and lifestyles targeted for young, kids, women or elderly is something that enlarge people's basket of goods. To summarise the components of mixed opportunities we can refer to these points:

- Having multi-cultured opportunities
- Having multi-targeting opportunities

**Social trust** The participants considered elements of well-being as social dimensions such as social trust. This element allows people to live their lives surrounded by people on which one could rely on and consider the environment as a friendly place. This element helps people to avoid unsafety and uncertainty regarding their current and future life. This is an important aspect of life especially for families with children and elderly. To summarise the components of social trust we can refer to these points:

- Rely on neighbours and local dwellers
- Perceive a friendly neighbourhood

**Connectivity** One of the main elements that participants were referring to whilst speaking about urban liveability, was the possibility to be well connected to the city centre by public transport and bike line, but also to travel out of the city without spending too much time doing so.

Marie referring to aspects of local liveability said: “[...I] live in a place from where I can depart quickly to all parts of the country or go into town as well. For example, this is very important for people who go to work everyday!”

To summarise the components of connectivity we can refer to these points:

- Having a connection with the city
- Having a connection with the outside-city

**Proximity to facilities** Having easy access to facilities, services and other commodities, such as bus or tram stops, supermarkets, schools, sport centres, and green areas increase the quality of urban life. Participants explained that regarding their everyday life activities, they prefer to go to closer shops instead of going to a better place that sell the same products. Proximity has an individual meaning and in the discussion was mentioned taking into consideration a journey of 5-6 minutes walking or 10 minutes biking. To summarise the components of proximity to facilities we can refer to these points:

- Having facilities at walkable distances
- Having easy access to facilities

**Built environmental density** An expected element I included in this domain is the notion of space, which can be analysed in terms of environmental density. Having a spaciouly built environment refers to the architectonical structure of the area in which people are living. Having large sidewalks, streets with enough parking slots and houses that are not built up too high, help people to enjoy their environment more, reducing any stress due to high environmental density. Living in a pleasant-to-see or value built environment promotes a positive element that improves people’s liveability. They can translate the aesthetic impression into a satisfied feeling that affects life positively.

To summarise the components of built environment we can refer to these points:



- Residential density
- Spacious built environment

**Urban community** An aspect of local community life is that participants recognised the feeling of being part of a group. Recognising oneself as belonging to some particular unit, community or place is a condition that supports local liveability in terms of creating the basement from which one could start building up his or her own life. Participants summarised these elements with two concepts: belong to a community in which one recognises his or herself as a member, thus not feeling socially isolated; and recognising an area or a place as ones own territory of life.

Pit, Marie, Ineke (all agreed): *“Having a level of anonymity that allow you to avoid social control, but also, as it happens in the village, going around or to the shops and be recognised by other dwellers or shop-holders”*.

Abdul: *“Yes, if I have to compare the area where I have been lived before moving here with this one, yes, here the environment is cosy; nice blocks of houses, spacious, little gardens, and then a sense of community because people are in contact”*.

To summarise the components of built environment we can refer to these points:

- Social integration (not isolation)
- Be part of local community

The next Table summarises all the well-being & urban liveability dimensions with sub-domains as the results of the Focus Group discussion interpretation in Milan. The list of dimensions recognised by participants from Watergraafsmeer cover several domains and for most of them sub-themes have been taken into consideration.

Confronting the list of dimensions elaborated from the Focus Groups outcomes with the dimension used by SCP at national level, it is possible to face some missing and unmatched domains. The table shows the results of this comparison.

The general results show that participants of the local community defined their definition of well-being considering more domains than the SCP does at the national level. Confronting the two lists of dimensions, the matching domains are Health, Social Relation, Material Situation, Housing, Leisure and Mobility. Local community defined in addition.

<i>Health</i>	Having all the human psysical & psychological abilities Feel psysical & psychological independent Feeling well/Emotionally good
<i>Social relation &amp; participation</i>	Freedom to join group/ Have social networks Be connected to people Participation
<i>Comfortable material situation</i>	Comfortable material situation
<i>Housing</i>	Enough space Interior conditions Surrounding conditions
<i>Leasure &amp; cultural</i>	Opportunities of leisure
<i>Mobility &amp; Accessibility</i>	Walkability & biking public transport accessibility connections
<i>Safety</i>	goods safety personal safety
<i>Environment</i>	Environmental quality Natural area & Parks
<i>Job</i>	Job
<i>Freedom &amp; Realization</i>	Freedom Realization
<i>Mixed opportunities</i>	multi-cultural opportunities multi-targeting opportunities
<i>Social Trust</i>	rely on neighbours and local dwellers perception of a friendly neighbourhood
<i>Connectivity</i>	connection with the city connection with the countryside
<i>Proximity to facilities</i>	facilities at walkable distance easy access to facilities
<i>Low environmental density</i>	residential density building density
<i>Urban community</i>	social integration (not isolation) be part of local community

Table 4.4: Watergraafsmeer: recognised domains for WB

Focus Group Dimensions	List of Indicators for Milan (FLA)
<b>Green areas</b> <b>Mixed opportunities</b> <b>Social Community</b> <b>Connect with the city</b> Proximity to facilities Built Environment	<b>Housing &amp; Environment</b> <b>Infrastructures &amp; Services</b> Inequality Poverty <b>Security</b> <b>Social Security</b> <b>Social Relation</b> <b>Cultural Opportunities</b>

Table 4.5: Watergraafsmmer: General WB domains in comparison

Safety, Environment, Job, Freedom and Realisation as elements that affect people's well-being and that is of course related to the fact that they are living in an urban context where safety and good environmental conditions are harder to get than in rural areas.

Holidays and Sport are included in the SCP but the local community did not mention them in the discussion groups. A reason for why Sport does not show up could be that people already considered it as part of the social relation opportunities. In fact, during the interviews that I present in the next chapter, families participate in lots of sport and it seems to be a relevant activity in their everyday life, especially as an opportunity to have social relations and develop friendship and contacts.

Confronting the list of dimensions with the one used by the Municipality of Amsterdam (Stad van der Staat VI), it is possible to face some others missing and unmatched domains. The table shows the results of this comparison.

Participants from the local community referred to specific domains while discussing context liveability. As it happened, for the case study in Milan a more in depth description of elements came out. Social Relation has declined in terms of Social Trust and being a part of the local Community. Services provision is summarised in Connectivity with the city centre, being able to access easily the facilities and having mixed opportunities to encounter other culture and different kinds of services. An interesting element that has emerged is the definition of a low standard of environmental density as a key element for liveability. We do not find that in any list of dimension that aim to measure quality of urban life.

Focus Group Dimensions	Official Amsterdam Indicator (SvdS VI)
Mix of culture & opportunities Social Trust Connect with the city Proximity to facilities <b>Low environmental density</b> <b>Urban community</b>	Education Wealth Leisure Active in Association Social Integration Political interest <b>Social cohesion</b> Cleaness <b>Residential grade</b> Internal mobility Livelihood-index*
	* data from national scp

Table 4.6: Watergraafsmeer: Local WB domains in comparison

Comparing those elements with the parameters that the Municipality of Amsterdam is using for monitoring the state of the City, it is possible to see how the official indicators refer mainly to domains that describe a general condition of well-being instead of focusing on context liveability. They take into account an index of liveability that is a calculation over the SCP domains for the local level. Therefore, there is a redundancy of elements for a general well-being definition, such as Wealth, Education, Leisure and Political Interest. The matching domains with the community definition of liveability are Social Integration and Cohesion, Residential value, and Mobility. No reference to service provision is taken into account by the Municipality, yet in the focus groups discussions about having a mixed choice of opportunities and proximity to facilities are elements of relevance.

#### 4.0.6 Comparison on deliberative definitions of Well-being and Quality of Life

The general application of the proposed method worked positively without any particular problems. Predictable obstacles in the Focus Groups organisation slowed down the research implementation, adding extra cost in terms of time-consuming. Fortunately, the procedures have been carried out successfully and in line with the expectations. That is a positive result for the confirmation of the proposed method of investigation of

EX-ZONA 9	WATERGRAAFSMEER
<i>Health</i>	<i>Health</i>
Social interaction	Social relation & participation
Income & Job	Comfortable material situation
/	Job
Culture and Leisure	Leisure & cultural
<i>Safety</i>	<i>Safety</i>
<i>Environment</i>	<i>Environment</i>
Social Security	Housing
/	Freedom & Realization
<i>Mixed opportunities</i>	<i>Mixed opportunities</i>
Green areas	/
Be connect with the city	Connectivity
<i>Proximity to facilities</i>	<i>Proximity to facilities</i>
Good built environment	Low environmental density
Social Community	Urban community
/	Social Trust

Table 4.7: Comparison on well-being definitions

the ethical dimension that has the role to affect individual's choices and values. Regarding the empirical results over the comparison between the two definitions produced through the bottom-up approach, I present the next table.

This table compares similarities and un-matching elements in the comparison between the definitions of well-being and liveability that have been built up in Ex-Zona 9 in Milan with Watergraafsmeer in Amsterdam. Possible explanations for those results are made. Further studies could analyse those elements more deeply.

A series of common elements come up looking at the definition of domains that the participants from the local community in Milan and Amsterdam have elaborated. The dimensions of well-being are reported in both of the case studies as Health, Environment, Wealth, Leisure and Culture, Social Relations and Safety. While, for a local definition of liveability, the common elements that have been mentioned are Mixed opportunities, Proximity to facilities, Connectivity and Mobility and Community.

Most of these dimensions cover the same meaning for both cases, as it is possible to see in the previous paragraph. Nevertheless, some distinctions can be made. For example, the Health dimension shares the concepts of having physical and psychological abilities and feeling well

and emotionally fine. In the Dutch case, the condition of being independent has been discussed and then included in the general definition of well-being too. That probably comes from the particular cultural orientation in the Dutch society that mainly focuses on people's right to play their own choice and be independent from any specific ideology or cultural domain. In this regard it is possible to recognise important elements that the CA and the theory of Amartya Sen have introduced into well-being and quality of life literature.

The dimension that describes wealth situation represents other examples of not completely matching meaning. For the Amsterdam case, participants referred to Comfortable Material Situation while in Milan people considered Income and Job as the source to support life. That might be explained by a more unstable job situation in Milan where having a job means having economical comfort to face life necessities. Amsterdam has an economical situation that is much more robust and dynamic than in Milan and therefore people do not, on the whole, see having a job as "the" source of their wealth.

Differently from dwellers in Milano, they consider the Job as a separate domain from material conditions and it has an explanation that covers the meaning of having a job that could stimulate the individual and let him/her work in a good working environment. For the Dutch case study, a Job means a way of reaching professional realisation, while for the Italian case it is almost related to a source of wealth. This explanation can be supported by other outcomes of the Focus Groups. In the Dutch definition of well-being there is a domain that covers Freedom and Realisation, whereas in the Italian case any reference to such a field is totally absent. That confirms how much Dutch culture has embedded elements of self-independent and self-realisation in its society.

Looking at differences and similarities between the two definitions regarding local liveability, I can propose other remarks and results over this empirical analysis. The domain Social Community presents interesting comments. In Ex-Zona 9 the Focus Groups discussions confirmed the existence of a culture rooted in the recent local history. The condition of being part of the local community involved the sharing of these cultural elements. It frames the feeling of belonging to the local community with its own values. Several elements (discussed in the next chapter) defined the local culture and its social community. In Watergaafsmeer

the existence of the traditional culture is less persistent. Some elements of the original culture are still present but the incoming of a new generation of dwellers has made this cultural element less identifiable. A new community building process is taking place in Watergraafseer where new families, especially with young children, are moving to the neighbourhood and are settling their family life there. So the existence of Social Community in Watergraafsmeer is mainly related to this new phenomenon than the traditional one surviving in Ex-Zona 9.

Regarding the different acceptation in the Connectivity domain the Italian case refers to material and service conditions that could lead to good standards of mobility, such as having proper sidewalks, bike-lines, bus and tram stops, etc. But it also expresses a necessity that counts on a well-organised public transport system. In Watergraafsmeer those infrastructural conditions are already present. Therefore people recognised the opportunity to be able to move along proper pathways and using the transport system as a condition that has already positively influenced their liveability. Therefore, the Dutch meaning of the necessity of being connected with the city centre and the country-side is mainly seen in terms of having easy accessibility to the desired destination. Among those slight differences in the shared domain, substantial dissimilarities are present between the two definitions of well-being in the Milan and Amsterdam neighbourhoods. In the Italian, conceptualisation intervenes the presence of the Social Security dimension while in the Dutch one it is missing.

This element could be related to recent changings in the welfare system. Comparative studies on welfare state have shown that national welfare models have responded differently to the latest socio-economical changes (Zemmour 2010) The general welfare state provision is generally reducing its importance in all of Europe, but it is probably having a stronger impact in Italy then in the Netherlands. For this reason in the Italian case a general sensibility to the issue emerged.

The opposite applies to the dimension of Mobility and Accessibility and Housing, which belongs strictly to the Dutch definition of general well-being. The Housing system in the Netherlands has a relevant influence in citizens' home assignment and for that reason is mentioned explicitly as one of the well-being dimensions. In Italy this issue could be taken for granted since finding a pleasant home is mainly faced indi-

vidually and privately.

Moving to the local liveability in Milan, we found that Green Areas and having a Good Built Environment are elements that strictly influenced the quality of life in Ex-Zona 9. Whilst in Watergraafsmeer, people added extra elements with regards to Social Trust and Environmental Density. Those differences highlight the way in which dwellers perceive their needs and experiences and then how they psychologically value them. As better described below, the Focus Groups' participants have referred mainly to the good aspects that they value. For this reason those specific characterisations of the local liveability show peculiar and many different elements.

To conclude, with this first part of the research I delineated the reference concepts that people are using when talking about well-being and local liveability. The neighbourhoods that have been chosen in Milan and Amsterdam show results with very close similarities referring to the domains incorporated in the definitions. A reason can be found in the fact that they are influenced by similar urban conditions as shown in the case study presentation.

Domains that are not matching highlight peculiar differences that could be investigated in more depth. In doing so, contributing to improve the knowledge on how the process of perceiving and defining well-being works at a psycho-sociological level. My research contribution on this matter shows that people involved in the focus groups made references more so on the positive aspects, emphasising these relevant roles in providing quality of life. It is evident, for example, in the Ex-Zona 9 where the existence of the green area Parco Nord has influenced a lot on the choice to include access to natural environment in the well-being definition (Guerini et al. 2011). The same process has occurred in Watergraafsmeer, where the condition of having low building density has been considered as an important element that support conditions of well-being and local liveability because people are experiencing a good life while living in such a structured neighbourhood.

My investigation leads also to methodological aspects that could be an advancement in the understanding of how to deal with what matters most to people in a specific local community. By giving space of discussion to people that are living in the same neighbourhood, it is possible to understand which are the main needs and lack of provisions, but also to



recognise which are the aspects that people appreciate more than others. In these regards, the theoretical references of this research demonstrated its validity in the application procedure.

As an advancement in well-being and quality of life knowledge, it has been demonstrated that even when researchers work at the urban or local level, there is always a strong connection and dependency from the a general definition of well-being. That definition seems to be generally well known in the advanced institute of research, but as the research outcomes showed, there is always some peculiar aspects and conceptualisations that particularly characterized the context of the study. Therefore, if researchers do not take the context perspective into consideration, they would consider domains and data that do not represent correctly what matters most to people. The risk of failing in the application model is higher. Here I do not propose to translate the dimensions recognised by dwellers into any indicator, but it could be one of the further developments of this work. Moreover, the deliberative approach to well-being and quality of life makes it possible to define references for ethical statements that people express while talking and discussing about their everyday life in the local context. In this regard, this status quo comprehension would be useful to drive processes of decision making when policy-makers have to choose where to allocate recourses and new projects that aim to improve the quality of life of local dwellers.



## Chapter 5

# Families' Agency in Urban Life

In this chapter I present the most relevant and interesting outcomes of the interviews both at a methodological and empirical level. Considering the reliability of the proposed instruments of analysis, the empirical application shows a valid utility in framing the approach for the interviews, rather than proposing a structured grid with cells to fill one by one with data. That is true regarding my specific research aims. I should have collected a high amount of information for all the well-being dimensions and families that would have been unaffordable due to families' time availability. So, the template was not completely filled out with information coming from the interviews. But it has the merit to address adequately the discussion over the most sensitive topics that families wished to talk about.

Within this application of the grid, the instrument worked satisfactorily in collecting an explanation over families' agency and relation with the neighbourhood. At one point a parent selected a theme, I explored it thoroughly, investigating how they achieved functioning in said theme and what had been the constraints and the choices that addressed that kind of agency. The empirical results of the investigation presented a description of how a specific group in the society face urban constraints and opportunities in order to achieve a good life.

The research focuses on families with children under 18 years old who are living in the selected neighbourhoods. A series of data on the interviewed families are presented in Appendix 10. The families composed of parents with children, allowed us to consider different types of activities that include actions targeted not only for adults but also related to the young and children necessity. Families are represented through a

reference group that collects different oriented behaviours.

People put in action a variety of strategies to achieve the development and well-being of all the family's members. In a family there are parents who have to take care of their children but at the same time they organise their personal and professional lives. Therefore, when looking at family life development, it is possible to come across several types of choices and actions that influence a family's everyday agency. That implied the analysis of the strategies that a family carries out in order to ensure a proper life development for all its members.

Referring to the CA, it means reaching a situation of well-being and ensuring the quality of their local life. This second part of the research explicitly begins focusing on functionings that families have achieved living in the neighbourhoods during the time. The guidelines of my investigation rely on the reasons that have driven families' choices for specific functionings and the processes that have permitted their achievements. In particular, the analysis stresses the power played by the social and environmental constrains represented by the local context and the social community. In order to set the analysis as close as possible to the local reality, I framed the investigation on the results that come from the definition of well-being. They are my reference on framing the social, cultural and environment influences on individual and families lives.

Keeping the well-being dimension defined in the Focus Groups discussions on one hand and the urban elements of the CA in the other, I approached families' lives. An exploration of the capability set is also presented in order to try and understand if there are new possibilities and alternatives in the neighbourhood that families could adopt in order to enlarge families' opportunity to function. This means that I evaluated the existence of other ways or possibilities of acting and developing family life coherently with its values and orientation.

All the data gathered in the empirical investigation -also referring to the complementary analysis- has been examined whilst adopting two perspectives: a sociological approach and a geographical analysis. The results are presented on a theme-based structure, introducing the local neighbourhoods in comparative terms. As already described in the methodological chapter, for this empirical analysis I interviewed 40 families, 20 for each case-study. All the families have lived in the neighbourhood for at least three years and have one or more children between the ages

of 0 and 17 years old. For an overview of families' characteristics, refer to the methodological chapter.

## 5.1 A sociological view on Families' Agency

The social interpretation of the empirical data focuses on the characteristics of families' agency in the local community and on their relation with the neighbourhood. I present the empirical findings by themes with a case-study comparative prospective. In this section I describe families' agency by referring to several issues, including how families dealt with choosing to live in the neighbourhood and what their relationship is with the local culture and the community.

### 5.1.1 Why moving in

When a couple starts to build a family, the issue of where to settle and make a home often rises as one of their first concerns. That has become especially true when the family includes children. The general tendency, which explained why families decided to settle their life in the Ex-Zona 9, was mainly the fact that in most of the interviewed families one of the parents had been living in the neighbourhood previously with his/her family. Hence the area is already well known and appreciated by the experience of at least one member of the family. When neither one of the parents is from the neighbourhood, the family usually has some other relatives living in the area. This tendency is valid for families who bought their home or receive it from grandparents but also for families who are renting their apartment.

One of the reasons why it works equally for the latest situation is the presence of a cooperative association (Società Edificatrice recently called Cooperativa Abitare) that provides services for the local community, including renting opportunities as social housing condition.

*“I was lucky because my cousin, who is living in one of the apartment provided by the Cooperativa Abitare, suggested me to subscribe myself in the waiting list when I turned eighteen and now I have the opportunity to have this home and paying a very low rent” (M2).*

*“My parents and I lived in this apartment for a long time, then when I met my husband and we decided to marriage they bought a smaller*

*apartment at the second floor and we bought this. I know everybody in this building and we are all very kind between each other.”(M9)*

In Amsterdam families have different stories regarding the choice to settle in the neighbourhood, however, it is possible to highlight main similarities and trends. The area offers large apartments and houses that couples and parents usually look for especially when facing the prospect of expanding their families. One of the main reasons people move into the area is due to the availability of suitable homes in line with families' necessities.

*“Searching for a house all over Amsterdam, we discover that in that neighbourhood we could have a big house, as we wanted, for a cheaper price than in other parts of the city. The price for our house here was 50% less expensive than somewhere else. For that reason we chose to move in Don Bosco” (FG2).*

In the past the neighbourhood was mainly populated by elderly people, but in the last 15-20 years new families decided to move into this area.

*“I lived in Amsterdam South and I was single and I had an apartment on my own. Then I met my boyfriend and when I got pregnant the house was too little and we couldn't expand because buying a bigger house there was too expensive. And a friend of mine told me to look at Watergraafsmeer and Middenmeer. At first I said “No, Watergraafsmeer! I thought there are living only very old people there. But then, on a sunny Sunday we went biking in the neighbourhood and the only we saw only families with little children around. So I had a complete wrong idea in my mind about the neighbourhood”. (A4).*

The fact that the area is perceived as a “village in the city” encouraged many families to remain in Watergraafsmeer.

*“The reason because we moved was that I was waiting for my second daughter and we need for a bigger house, and we chose this area because it near the city but it's like a village where children can play outside and there're lot of facilities for them” (A10).*

In this regard, families' agency is characterised by the achieved functioning of being dwellers in a suitable place where they can develop a family with long-term perspectives.

### 5.1.2 Community values

The interviews have permitted me to gain certain knowledge over the local values that are present in the neighbourhood and its community. In Milan a local culture and a community identity have been maintained and shared between generations.

*“We like to participate in public events when they are organised in the neighbourhood, for example on the 24th of April -the Liberation Day in Niguarda- or other meeting that maintains the link with the local history. It's good if our children would absorb, or at least know about, the history and the spirit of this neighbourhood” (M7).*

This character is well preserved thanks to the presence of an aging population that is living in the area, particularly occupying the private social housing apartments. In Amsterdam the traditional culture is not so well perceived as it is in Milan. This is because new families are coming to live in the neighbourhood and imposing other values over the local context.

The families that have lived in Watergraafsmeer for a long time see the arrival of new dwellers as an effective change in the local environment but without too negative an effect. The new families are expressing their needs but are open to absorb and share the existent social spirit. New families also recognise as a positive, a value that encourages them to stay in the area, the idea of being surrounded by “people like you”. Dutch use the expression *ons soort mensen* OSM (people like us) to mean exactly this.

*“Now I say I'm living in Watergraafsmeer not in East anymore! The area is open, welcoming, and safe because I'm in touch with my neighbours. It's a different dimension. We say OSM (people like us) to describe the “zoo effect”; you know; at the zoo you have these fences and here it's like being surrounded by people like you. So for that reason it's a protected area and you want it for your family. It's a kind of village in the city. There's a good level of social interaction but not too much.” (A7).*

The acceptance and the will to absorb the local values and cultural background shaped the families' agency and affect their everyday life. Their agency depends on the opportunities to share a common culture that can produce the achievement of a feeling of belonging to the local community.

### 5.1.3 Local behaviours and ways of living

In both of the contexts generational changings happen. Not only regarding the culture and values but also in terms of neighbourhood provision and opportunity. In Watergraafsmeer the arrival of new families already set in motion context changes. For instance, the opening of new services that are children-oriented or simply an increase of opportunities provision for families such as cafes, shops and playgrounds.

*“When we arrived in the neighbourhood and we bought our house, we were surrounded by old people and a lot of small house were still rented houses and every time an old people left the house was sold. And now we are the old but there are LOT of young families with children below 10 y.o., but also families with teenagers children.” (A2).*

In Ex-Zona 9 in Milan, this process is evident but has no particular intensity. However, some first changings are apparent, especially in Bicocca area. In Ex-Zona 9 a relevant number of services and opportunities are elderly-targeted. Several facilities were established in the recent past and still provide service for the entire community.

*“Lot of people who were born in the area now are coming back to live here with their families. It's means that they liked the area more than in other part of the city. Yes... the opportunities in the area are quite dated -my daughter is going to the same school where my husband's mother worked as a teacher- and in general some infrastructures should be renewed in the recent future, but... for example the quality of the education in my daughter school is good and the teacher are very nice with the students. Well, the building is very decadent!” (M17).*

Another institution that is related to the dated community in Ex-Zona 9, is the important role played by Catholic parishes and in particular by parish recreation centres that represent opportunities for children and teenagers as a place where they can meet each other and socialise.

*“Children don't have so many plays where they can meet and play with friends. In summer they can go to the Parco Nord or to small gardens more close to home, but in winter or when it's raining there's no alternative to stay at home. The parish recreation centre is the only alternative, and my son goes there sometimes even if we aren't catholic.” (M5)*

These elements allow me to conclude that the families' agency differs between the two contexts. In Ex-Zona 9 the provision of adequate



services for families with children is not really present. That shows a limitation in terms of opportunities but also an environmental constrain. If we think to certain infrastructures that are missed in the neighbourhood, such as an adequate system that allows families to safely cross the streets or use their bikes to travel in the neighbourhood. In Watergraafsmeer it is quite the contrary, the transformation of the local provision is already on and the population can count on more family-targeted opportunities. Even if the process is not completely effective, I could affirm that in Ex-Zona 9 the families' agency is characterised by a more adaptive profile than the one in Watergraafsmeer where families can better orient their choices in relation to their needs.

#### 5.1.4 Developing life in the neighbourhood

Most of the families are hoping to stay in the same neighbourhood for the rest of their lives, both in Milan and in Amsterdam. Some may look for a nicer house (i.e. a little bit bigger or with a garden, etc.) but still in the same area.

*“If I could change my apartment I’ll do it for an other much bigger with more rooms and a garden but I won’t change the area. In reality I know it’s very difficult to realize that because here everybody would like to have this kind of home and there’s no much house available like this and of course they are very expensive” “having a nice house I think I will stay in this area for the rest of my life. The city is not so big and in 15 minutes by bike I’m in the city centre” (A1).*

In Amsterdam only a few families admitted that when their children become independent, they would like to move to the countryside to attain a more rural dimension of life. That result is probably due to the presence of a lower place-attachment than in the Italian case. Moreover, Italians are more focused on the achievement of a perfect type of home that usually is the main one for the most part of the family life. In the Netherlands there is not such a strong identification of the family with the place called home. These elements show a families' agency that will count on the local context and community for the coming future. Families will have a stable settlement in the neighbourhood and shape their life upon its characteristics. That is useful information especially for urban planners who have to think about the modification or the improvement of the area.

New development could be implemented and therefore enlarge the provision of the capabilities set at a families disposal. Extra research outcomes regarding the urban elements of the CA could be added here. I would like to conclude this section by making some references to an element that in many interviews showed off and I consider it of particular interest. It concerns the "list system" that deeply characterised the Dutch welfare system. In the Netherlands several public services are given an under the list-selection procedure. People who would like to receive particular public services must apply and be listed in the predisposed register. The position in the list permits the listed person to have the right to the service or wait till her/his turn comes. This system works for many public services, such as housing allocation, the schools and pre-school assignment, the parking-slot allocation in public space and it has been adopted for provisions provided by private market. Families are also listed for swimming lessons, musical instrument classes and other activities.

The population perceives this listing-system as a restrictive manner of offering certain activities. In their opinion it should be transformed or changed in a way that could provide more freedom and access. The Table summarises the outcome of this first investigation based on families' agency. The next section presents a complementary analysis that could provide information on understanding how families live in the urban neighbourhood.

CA CATEGORY	INVESTIGATED AT URBAN LEVEL	EX-ZONA9	WATERGRAAFSMEER	GENERALIZING URBAN FAMILY'S AGENCY
Functionings	Why move in	Family's relation and grandparents; housing accessibility	To be close to work and city centre; child friendly; housing accessibility	Finding accessible home; IT: Parents Attachment NL: Family self-development
Values	Community attitude	Rooted in the tradition and local history, Social Cohesion	Social Cohesion, Share same values, Some elements of the tradition	Social Cohesion within the neighbourhood; Past and traditional characters
Capabilities	Developing life	Housing Stability or Improvement (no area relocation); Enlarge Social Relation and Participation	Housing Stability or Improvement (no area relocation); Family's new activities, abilities	Permanent or long period stability in the area; IT: Social Integration NL: Family self-development
Choices	Behaviours implied in living in the area	Based on what already exist; Searching out-side; Bring what needed close to home	Based on what already exist; Searching out-side	Choices Adaptation/Oriented (IT: active in create new supply)
Opportunities	Local Provision as a whole	Traditional and aged supply of services; Trend to budget target	Traditional services supported by new family targeted supply.	Opportunities

Table 5.1: Result of the sociological investigation

## 5.2 A geographical view on Families' Agency

In this section I present a possible way of describing families' functionings through the analysis of the geographical and spatial component of the data collected during the interviews. This section also shows a possible geographical contribution to the proposed approach at the methodological level. From the interpretation of family's choices and their development plans, I looked at the possibility of categorising different types of agency, looking at how families' daily life is oriented in relation with social and environment constrains.

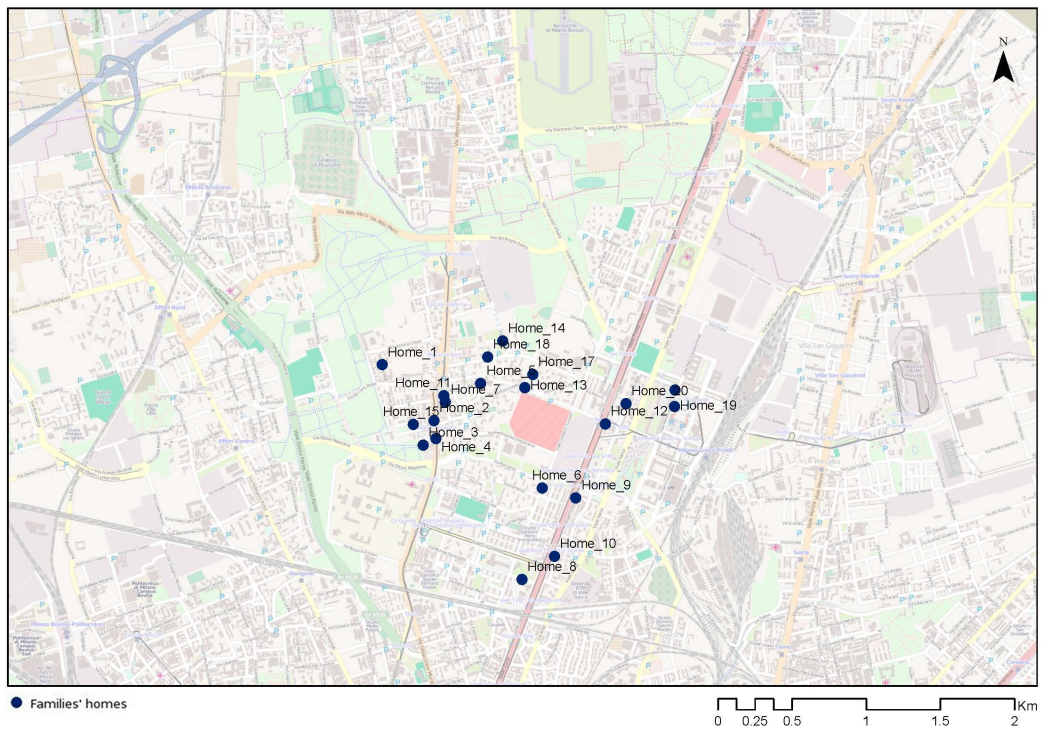
As a following step I tried to define scales of family's agency looking at the activity done at neighbourhood level or at the city level. This was carried out in order to understand which kind of functionings are achieved close to families' home and which, on the contrary, required more effort and the application of complex strategies to reach success. Families' functionings have been analysed, grouping the activities in 6 types of actions. These type of actions are related to:

- School
- Job
- Leisure
- Shopping
- Social Activities
- Sport

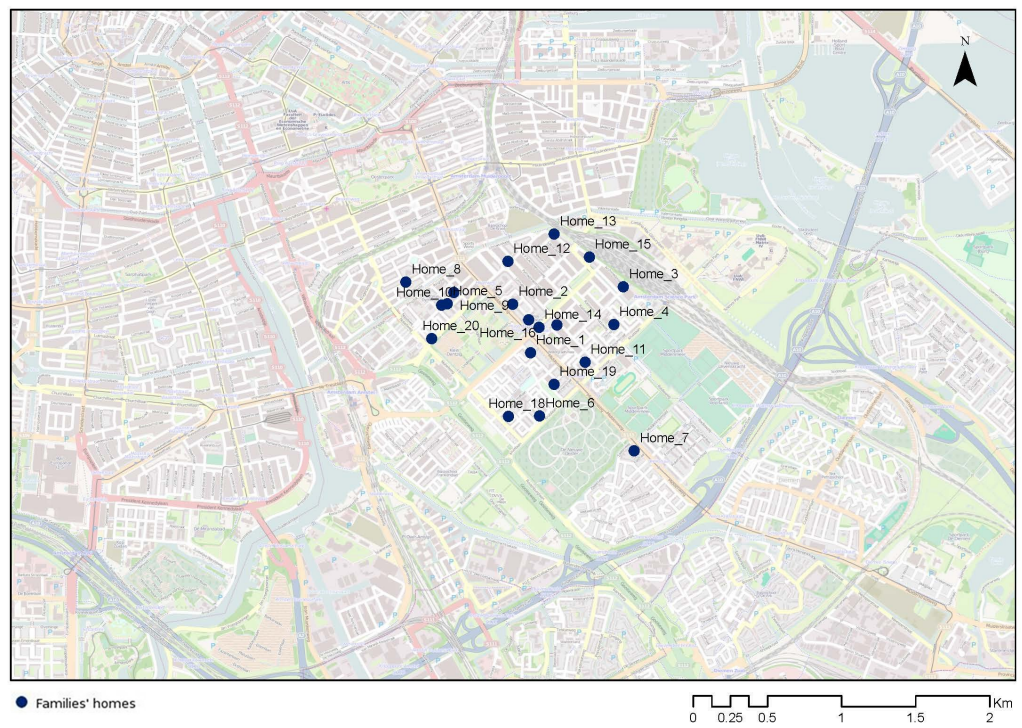
For this research I considered mainly those activities that are carried out in the urban context. Thus far families' functionings that are achieved outside of the urban area are not taken into consideration. The reasons may stand in the unaffordable scale required for the analysis but mainly for the fact that my first object of analysis was limited to the city scale. Information regarding those activities has been collected but solely with the specific aim of contributing to a better understanding of families lives in the urban context and especially in relation with the neighbourhood provision.

As a first introduction to the geographical analysis I introduce the map below. The maps show the home location of the families that took part in the research.

Families' location is spread in the portion of the urban space. All the parents explicitly express their feeling of belonging to the area due to daily and residential activities. Here I present three kinds of analysis; one



(a) Families's homes location in Ex-Zona 9



(b) Families's homes location in Watergraafsmeer

Figure 5.1: Case Study Families's homes locations

regards the existence of a shared conception of neighbourhood borders as most of the people recognised for their own area of living; the second highlights the presence of two kind of family's behaviour that differentiates their access to opportunities provision in the urban context; the third presents a multiple-scale of families' agency in the urban context that set conclusion on the time/space behaviour that families do for each of the activities taken as a reference in this research.

### 5.2.1 Neighbourhood Borders

The perception of families upon the neighbourhood plays a relevant role in defining the space of families' action. In order to better understand the elements included in this space of functioning, I focused on the geographical definition of neighbourhood boundaries. In this phase I analysed how local dwellers knew the neighbourhood and what they perceive are the physical borders on a geographical prospective.

During the interviews I asked families to define the limits and the extension of the space they feel as belonging to their area of living. Looking at the map for the Italian case-study it shows how families delimitate their neighbourhood area. It is possible to observe the coexistence of multiple definitions. Seven families refer to the same borders perception and this area could be taken as the main area delimitation of the neighbourhood. Even if this area is relatively large it does not contain the entire distribution of families' homes. Three of them are border-line and the other three are located outside of the shared neighbourhood delimitation. Those six families, whose homes are not included in the defined main area, have a proper neighbourhood delimitation that includes their homes and the area close to them as part of their living environment.

The reason for this exclusion could be found in the recent renewal of the Bicocca area that has been converted in a residential and multi-service zone from a previous industrial organisation. Therefore, dwellers that are not living in that area have not yet changed their perception upon the new Bicocca area and they still do not consider it as a place that they can use and take advantage for their family life development.

Analysing all the neighbourhood perception, all families' homes are included in at least one area. Physical segments delineate clearly some of the borders; the southern limit ends sharply near to the railway line that cuts the neighbourhood from the rest of the city.

The Enrico Fermi main street together with the other two streets Via Aldo Moro and Via Daniele Comboni represents the western boarder. They form the main northern boundary of the Ex-Zona 9 neighbourhood. The eastern delimitation is, on the contrary, not so well defined, even if the parallel stream of streets (via Suzzani, Via Fulvio Testi, Viale Sarca) represents the main environmental reference for the neighbourhood fracture. Although, the main area definition overlap with Via Fulvio Testi, the largest of these three streets, other interpretations of the neighbourhood boarders coincide with the other two streets (Via Suzzani and Viale Sarca). As far as it possible to see on the map the wider extension of the neighbourhood boundary includes a north-eastern area that coincides with the suburban part of Milan City and even some districts of other close Municipality as Bresso and Sesto San Giovanni. These results show how families' perception has an outgoing tendency instead of referring to the inner-city. All those elements highlight the urban space that local dwellers perceived as part of the Ex-Zona 9. It represents the context where families with their children play their everyday agency.

In Amsterdam, parents were also referring to the area that felt closest to their life activities. The combination of families' perceptions is shown in the map. A prevalent conception comes out due to physical boarders as big streets, railway line and canals. These elements shape the neighbourhood very clearly. All families included their own home in their neighbourhood delimitation and most of families' homes are in the main delimitation. Two exceptions for Home 8 and Home 7 are present. Some families referred to a wider area considered as part of the neighbourhood. They included the northern district that ends with Oosterpark and the western side that connects the neighbourhood with Amsterdam Amstel Station.

Families' perception of neighbourhood boundary is not univocal. The results confirmed how subjective bounds are, and how difficult it is to set a definition of neighbourhood that fits with dwellers experience rather than using administrative boarders. That has been true for both of my case studies because several neighbourhood delimitations coexist.

A general conclusion can be found by confronting the different extensions of the defined area in which families live. Environmental constrains and infrastructure such as streets, parks, canals, railways lines and squares are mainly identify as the vectors that shape the area per-

ceived as belonging to families living context. Though, those elements must be considered as limits that stop families' agency.

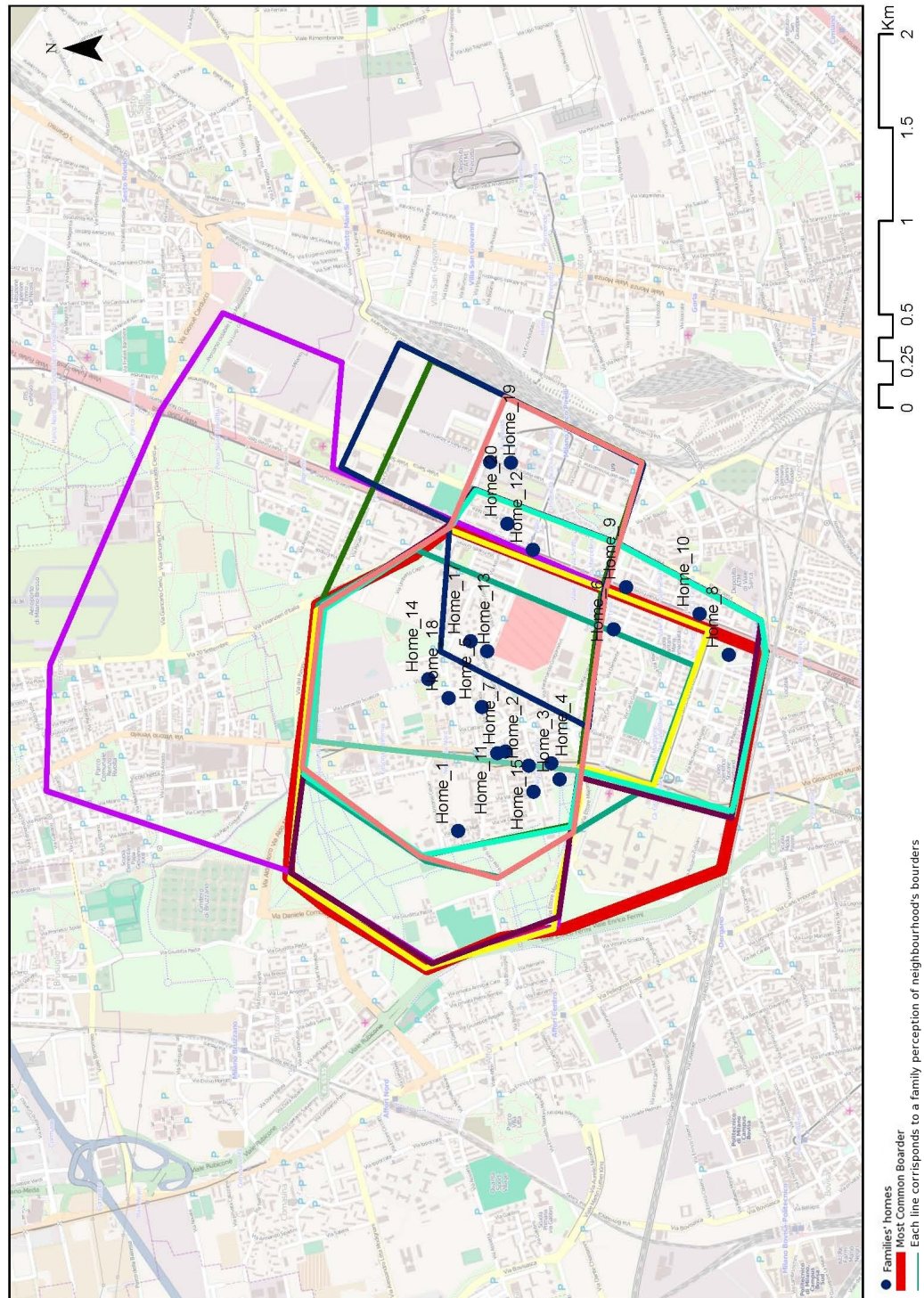


Figure 5.2: Families' Borders perceptions in Ex-Zona 9



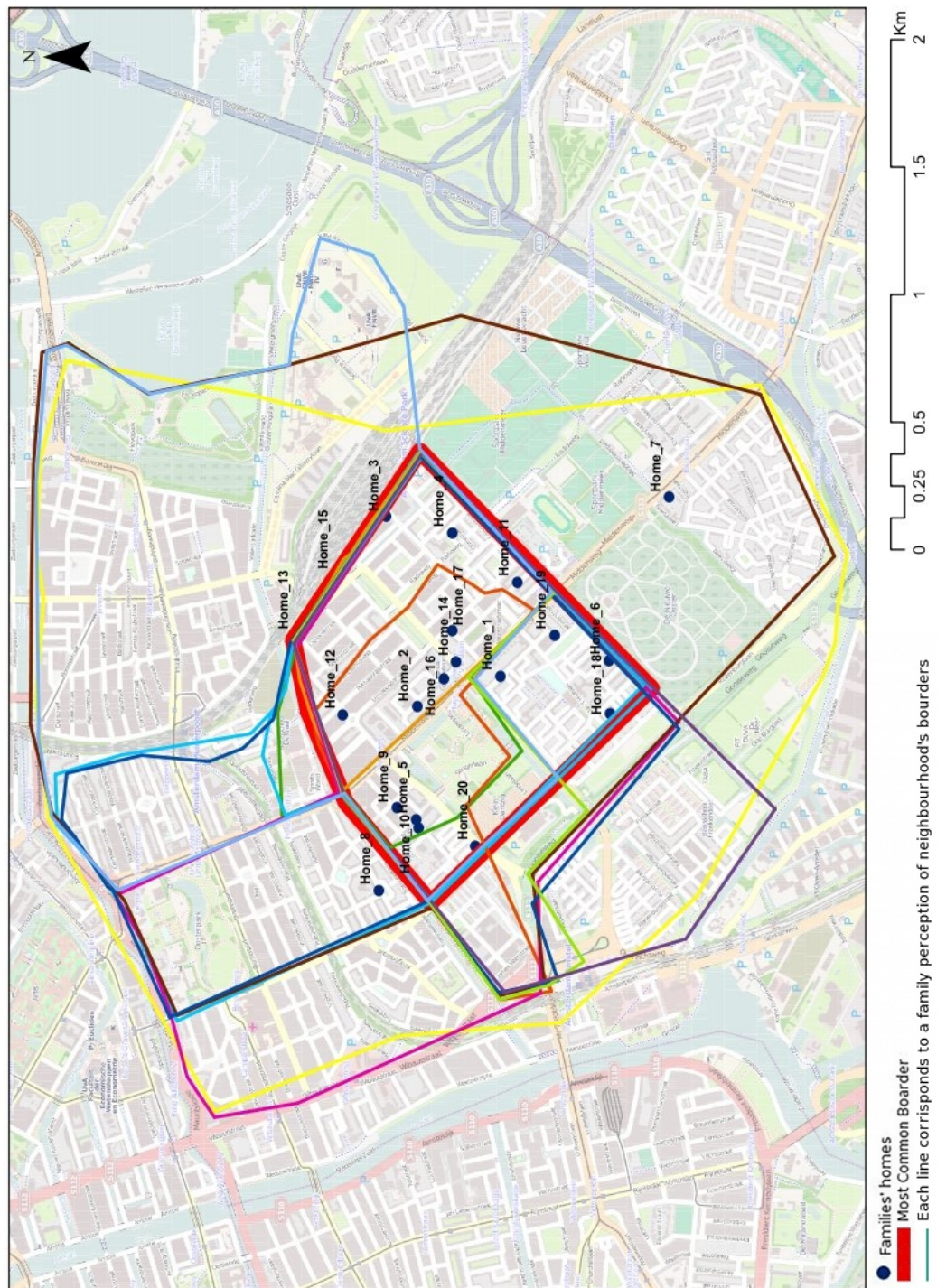


Figure 5.3: Families' Borders perceptions in Watergraafsmeer

Despite the existence of several bounds definitions it is possible to

highlight a most common delimitation of the neighbourhood. Although this is clearer for the Dutch case-study than the Italian one, where a series of parallel streets contend the eastern limit of the Ex-Zona 9 area. In both case studies a perception, including a large portion of the urban context are present. That is related to a wider families' confidence with the area due to specific activities that bring parents frequently to those parts of the city (i.e. specific activities such as children's drum lessons (A5) or physiotherapy treatments (M18) or because the family was living in the neighbourhood next door) and so far parents are still using and considering opportunity provisions that belong to that area. Those results highlight the strict relation that is occurring between neighbourhoods' boarders' perception and the areas that families' access while carrying out activities. While comparing the definitions of the neighbourhood boarders I observed a coincidence of elements that affect the delimitation process. As already cited, those referred to environmental constrains and infrastructure, such as streets, parks, canals, railways lines and square, mainly identify the vectors that shape the families' living context.

Each family's neighbourhood definitions always contains the family's home within the area, therefore the location where people are living can be properly taken as a reference point to analyse family's agency in the neighbourhood. The best share delimitation contains almost entirely the families' home distribution. This means that the interviewers recognised the majority of families' home as settled in the local context.

Few home-cases do not belong to the main neighbourhood definition and it is visible on the map. This is due to the decision to select families using a subjective criteria; families recognised themselves as dwellers that are living in Ex-Zona 9 or Watergraafsmeer. So for some families the space of living does not correspond with the space where other homes are located. This is an interesting result that shows how boarders are weak and depending on people's subjectivity. The main difference between the bounds definitions obtained in the two case studies is the extent of the area. In Ex-Zona 9 families agreed on a wider delimitation of the neighbourhood boarders then the definition of Watergraafsmeer area. That could refer to differences in city organisation; Milan has a sprawl structure, especially in its suburban areas, while Amsterdam maintains a very high, dense urban organisation.

When referring to wide neighbourhood definition we can see how in

Ex-Zona 9 the families' agency mainly faces the area outside of the city including the Parco Nord and other suburban service provision. In Watergraafsmeer there is a general tendency to refer to the city centre. A conformation of the latest is the evidence that parks and the green area located at the suburbs are not considered, not even in the widest area delimitation.

A general conclusion coming from this comparative analysis says that while thinking to develop or renew an urban area it should always be taken into consideration the phenomenon of borders' definition and how those meta-barriers are crossed by human activities and mobility patterns. These conclusions form a bridge with the next section, in which I tried to deal with the distinction in families' behaviour between the urban space and the neighbourhood.

### 5.2.2 Agency: Neighbourhood-Based vs City-Based

During the interviews with parents two different kinds of behaviours have emerged. These refer to ways in which families organised their members' activities in the urban context and to the strategy they enact in order to achieve opportunities they positively value for their families life development. The first type of behaviour could be defined as neighbourhood-based agency that entails a narrow mobility in the urban context. Such agency stands on families' preferences for opportunities provision that are relatively close to their home. The choice to adopt a neighbourhood-based agency is dependent upon several characteristics that can be summarised as follows:

- Be a part of the local community and share time and activities with other dwellers.
- Take advantage of opportunities proximal to families' home. Those facilities that are easy to reach are appreciated even if they provide higher cost or defect in variety.
- Contribute actively to maintain local opportunities and provide their sustainability in order to continuously be able to access them.

The second type of behaviour refers to a wide functioning area that defines a city-based agency. It covers a large part of the urban context

including some opportunities located outside of the city. Families address several values for this kind of agency as:

- The possibilities to access specific opportunities that are not or would not be never available in the neighbourhood.
- Be a part of the city society and take advantage of the anonymity that the city environment gives.
- Take advantage of the city centre's cultural and architectonic heritage.

Beside these two kinds of agency there are several activities that do not belong to the urban context that the interviews highlight precisely. Families refer to non-urban context for leisure and relaxing activities. Going outside of the city is a complementary functioning that has to be taken into consideration when addressing urban quality of life. This characteristic came out in the well-being definitions made by local communities and so far it is a confirmation that the city cannot be considered as an independent system but must be able to connect with the countryside and with natural environments.

Several families in both of the case studies described how they are usually going to locations outside of the city during the weekend in certain seasons. With regards to families' agency, it is not possible to identify families that fit perfectly with one of the two types of urban behaviour as previously described. Families adopt both these agency attitudes in different proportions, but referring to the interviews it is possible to make a differentiation. One type of behaviour focuses mainly on the neighbourhood provision and on what is in the proximity to their home. The other is based on a large environment that includes opportunities from the city as a whole.

Families who mainly adopt a neighbourhood-based agency are those with young children (0-4 years old) and those with teenager children (15-17 years old). The explanation is drawn from the fact that having young children reduced a lot of the capacity to move far away from home and children do not really take advantages of city provision. So, parents with children of 0-4 years old stay preferably in the neighbourhood and choose the opportunities that the local context offers. Contrastingly, families where the children are 15-17 years old referred mainly to a neighbourhood-based agency because parents do not need to follow their children's activities because they are already capable of independently

taking care of themselves. Parents then have fewer mobility activities to carry out and they turn their agency more to the neighbourhood context while their children tend to refer mainly to the city provision of facilities. Therefore neighbourhood-agency is mainly characterised by activities for young children and made by middle-aged parents (50-55 years old).

Families who adopt a city-based agency are typically those with children between the ages of 5 and 14 years old. When children turn this age, families choose to take advantages of opportunities provided by the city as a whole due to more specific offers that better fit families demands for both children and parents' life development. Generalisation based on families' education, income, nationality and parents' age have not been found. In the next paragraphs I present the data for each case-study. Adopting the distinction between neighbourhood-based and city-based behaviours, I decided to put on a map the destinations that families usually reach during their everyday activities. The general expectation was to find different spatial-outcomes looking at the distribution of the activities between families whom are neighbourhood-based oriented and those more city-based oriented. If families affirm to have an approach more neighbourhood-based I thought their activities should have been distributed in a tight circumference around their home and vice versa for the families that fit in the other behavioural type.

As one can see on the maps produced for Ex-Zona 9 and Watergraafsmeer, this geographical distribution is not shown. The maps reproduce a similar spatial usage of the urban context as shown in the map.

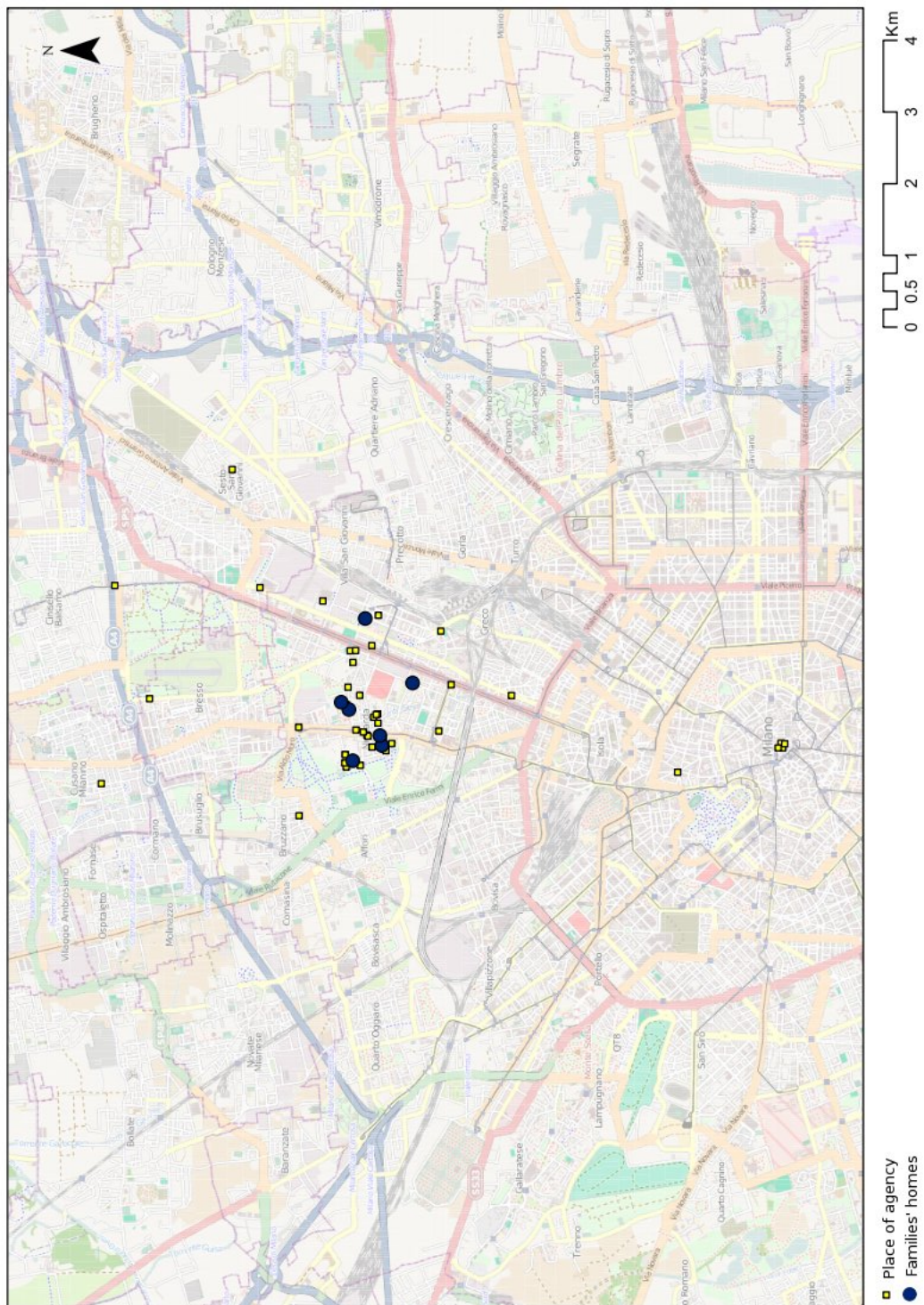


Figure 5.4: Neighbourhood-Base Agency in Ex-Zona 9

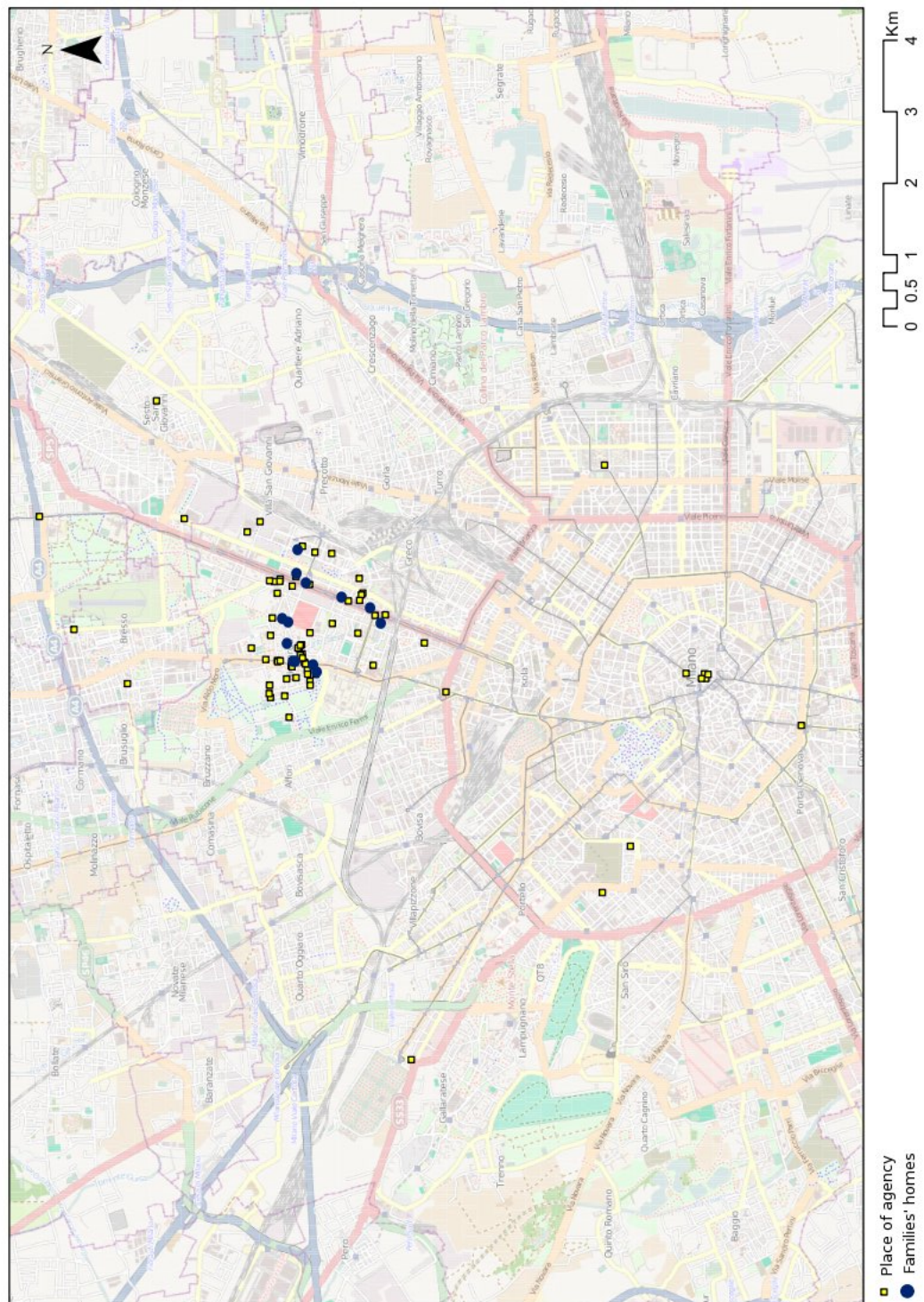


Figure 5.5: City-Base Agency in Ex-Zona 9

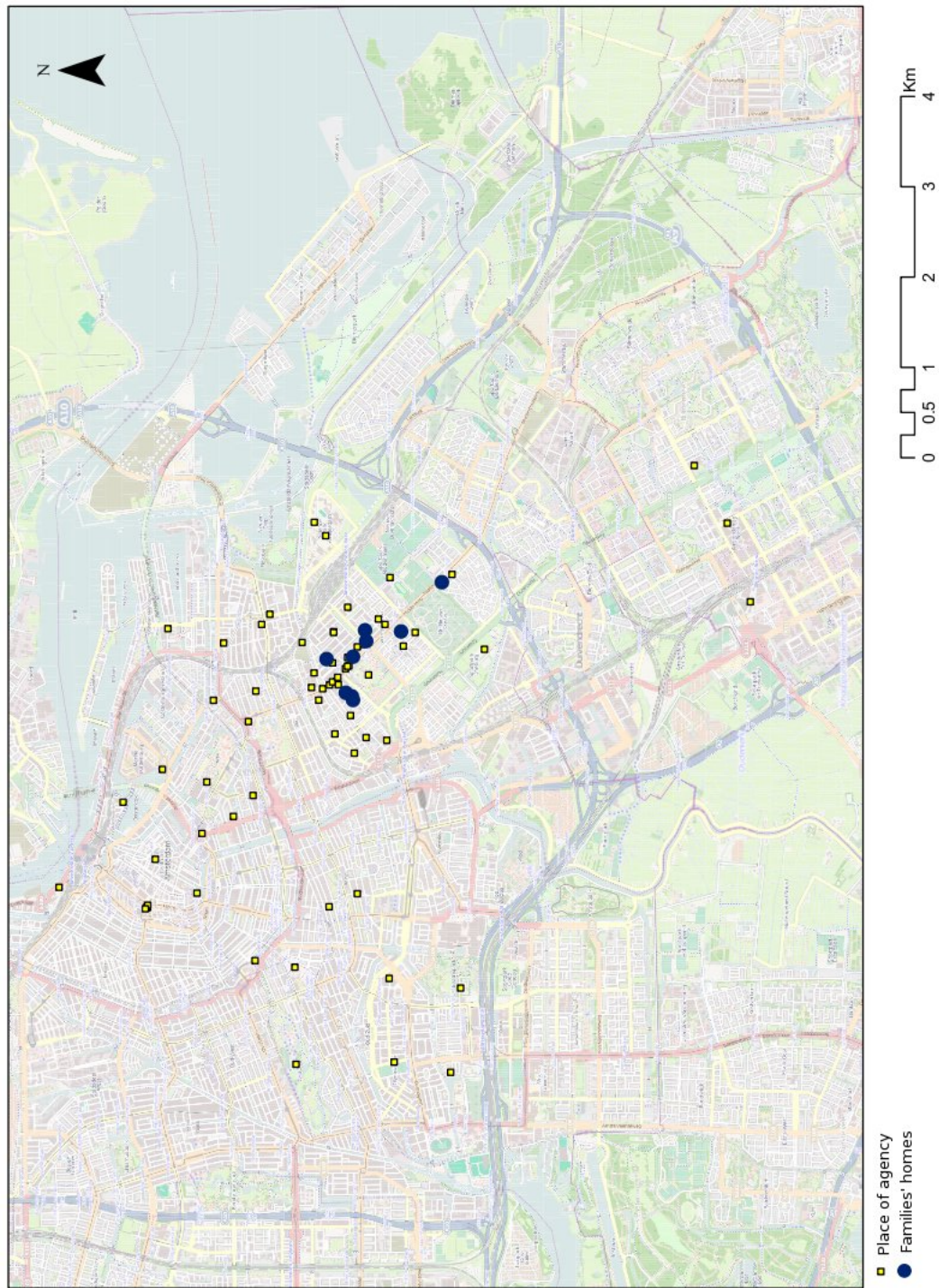


Figure 5.6: Neighbourhood-Based Agency in Watergraafsmeer



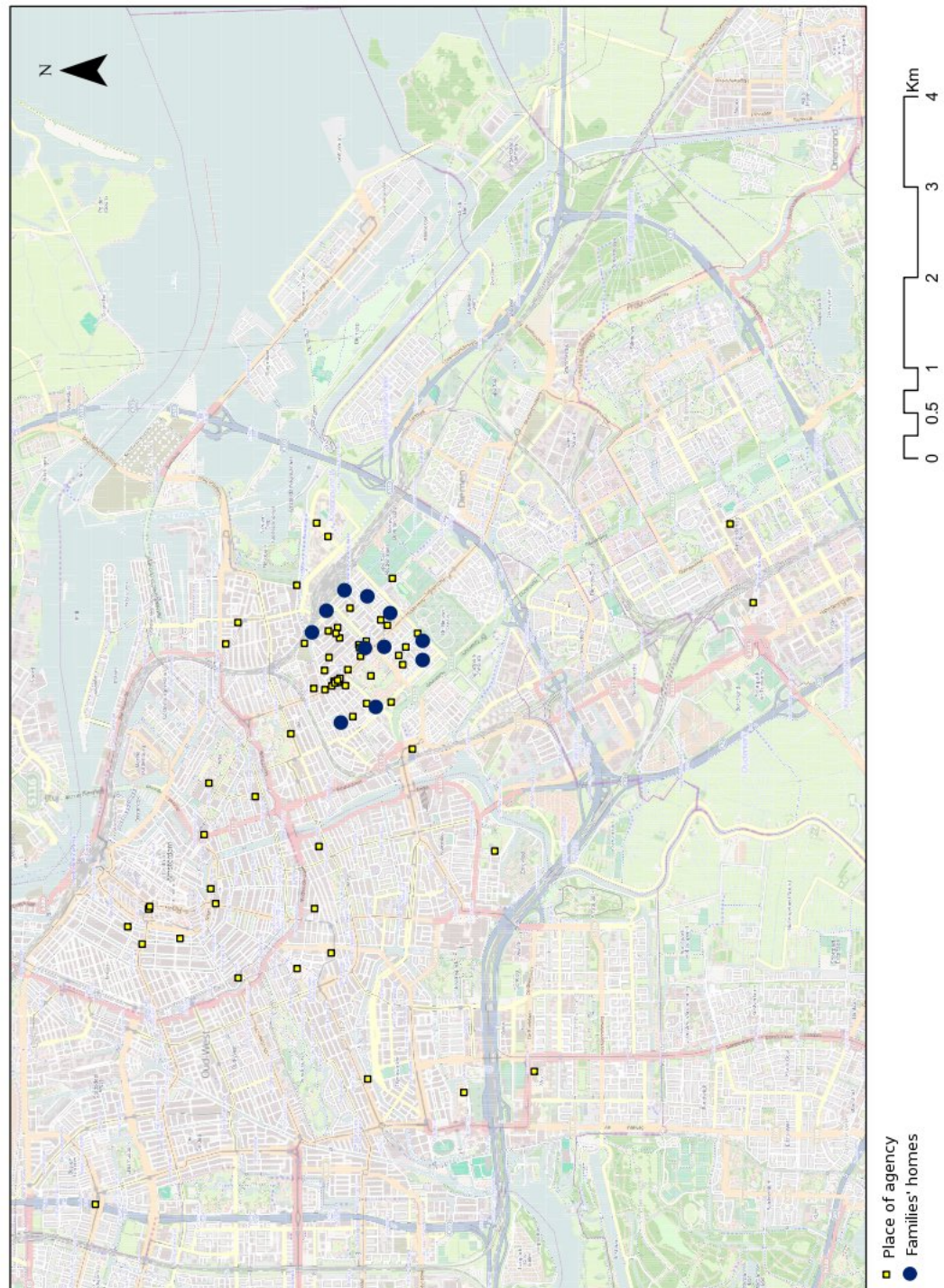


Figure 5.7: City-Based Agency in Watergraafsmeer

These findings reframed my hypothesis and address conclusions that discover how the city plays a relevant role in providing services for families. The neighbourhood does not represent an autonomous system for families' agency. When facing planning and development at the urban level that dynamic should be taken into consideration in order to provide the optimum provision of opportunities.

- Where to set a limit to the families' agency?

Looking at the previous maps and confronting them with the elaboration of the urban space reached within the maximum amount of time that families are able to spend for moving in the city, I am able to define a boundary to families' agency. To introduce families' accessibility to urban facilities I present two maps that show the space in each city, which families expressed to be able to reach it with their children without any problems.

Families in Ex-Zona 9 voiced that they can get to places and locations in the city in a time-range of 30 minutes using motor vehicle as public transport or car. In Watergraafsmeer, families mainly declared that they are able to reach any part of the city within 20 minutes biking. In the next map we can see that approximately all the activities carried out by families in Ex-Zona 9 and Watergraafsmeer are within the area that they explicitly are able and capable to reach without particular effort. In these terms, the capability of being mobile in relation to the time-cost is relevant information to consider when dealing with families' agency. It shows the area where families based their activities but also the urban portion in which they could find new opportunities and develop new functionings.

### 5.2.3 Families' Scale of Agency

With the information collected during the interviews I could differentiate families agency by type of actions, as introduced at the beginning of this chapter (Schools, Shops, Job, Sports, Social Interactions, Leisure). It was possible to analyse different scales of mobility looking at where families usually carry out their activities, such as taking children to schools, doing the groceries and general purchases, spending leisure time, having social interactions, doing sports activities, reaching their job location and others.

When addressing people's agency by focusing on their accessibility and mobility, we cannot refer to a mono-scale parameter that considers that an individual takes the same choice related to time/space costs for carrying out all his/her activities. Looking at the results of my research it is clear this is not true. Families access facilities differently, not only in terms of mobility means (i.e. car, bike, foot, public transports) but also in terms of time-cost and space-constrain. Those are peculiar characteristics of the urban context (i.e. wide street crossing, dark underground passage, tight sidewalk). All the most frequent activities done by families in the city have been geocoded, setting on a map the location where those actions are carried out.

Using a particular tool that allows networking analysis, it is possible to calculate the time and the distance that families take to go from their home to the destinations of most of their daily and weekly activities. Looking at families' agency it is possible to see different behaviours between the types of activity considered in this research. Putting together (by type) all the activities related to families' achievements in everyday life, it is possible to see how their agency is shaped in the urban context. This shape could define the footprint of families at the urban level. The following maps show the total medium distance for each kind of activity considered. A double mean of transport (bike and foot) has been taken into account. This modality allows comparing time distances and mode of travel. Looking at the maps it is possible to see that two different footprints exist.

The results show scales of activity with different priorities. In Ex-Zona 9 families are using the neighbourhood to carry out their life mainly preferably in relation to schools, leisure, shopping and sport. In Ex-Zona 9 schools are the first facilities that families usually reach easily, as they are close to home. It is related to the choice to go for a school located as close as possible to home and where other children from the same neighbourhood are going. In this way they can meet and grow up as neighbours. Leisure activities are accessible within a maximum range of 18 minutes by foot from families' homes and in majority that is due to the presence of the Parco Nord, which offers a wide and nice green area in the neighbourhood. Shop activities are done at quite a distant location from families' home (22 minutes) and it suggests that most of the activities that are in this group are done by car or public transport.

That entails that families must adopt more sophisticated strategies in order to access shopping services.

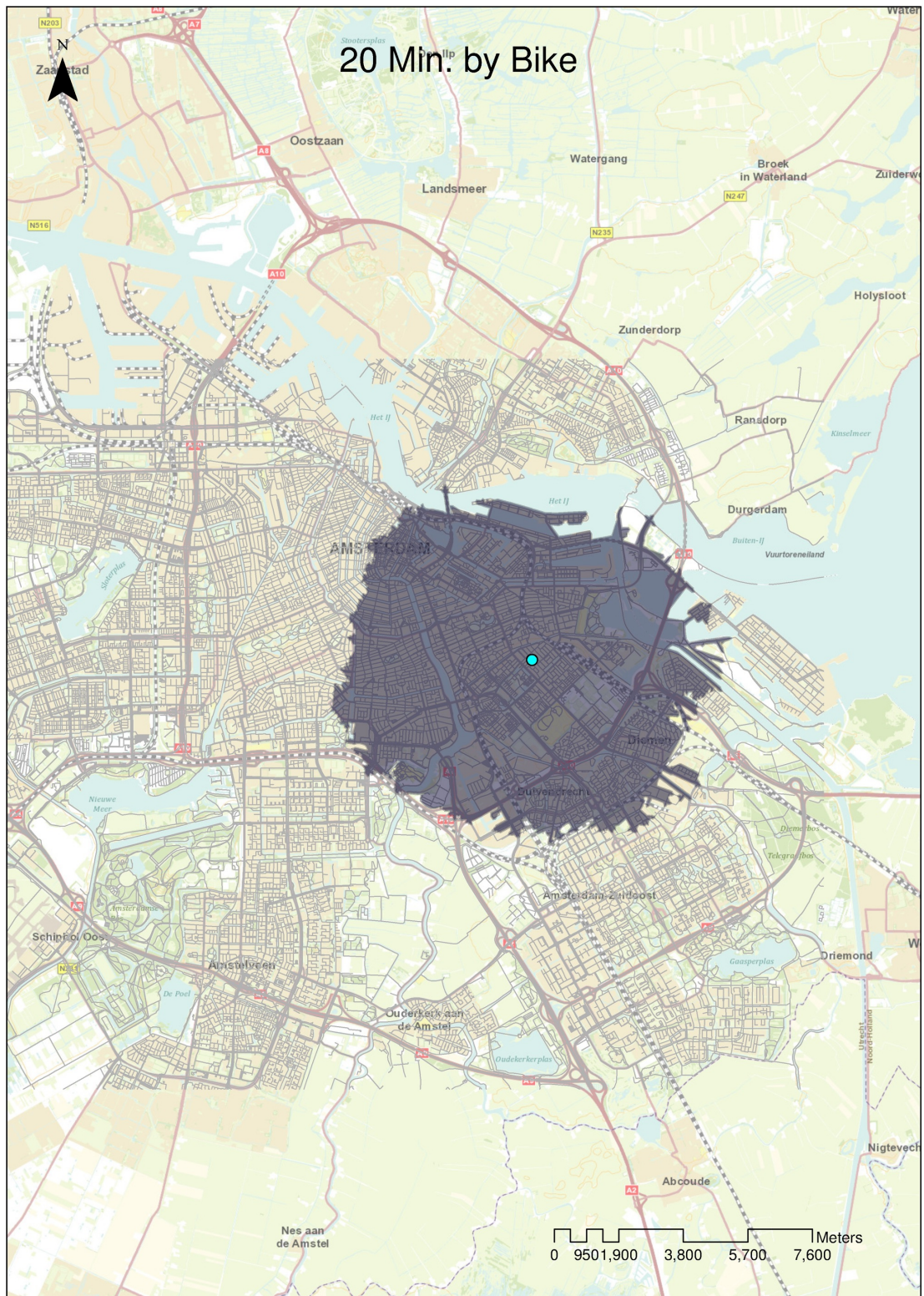


Figure 5.8: Urban area covered in 20 Minutes biking

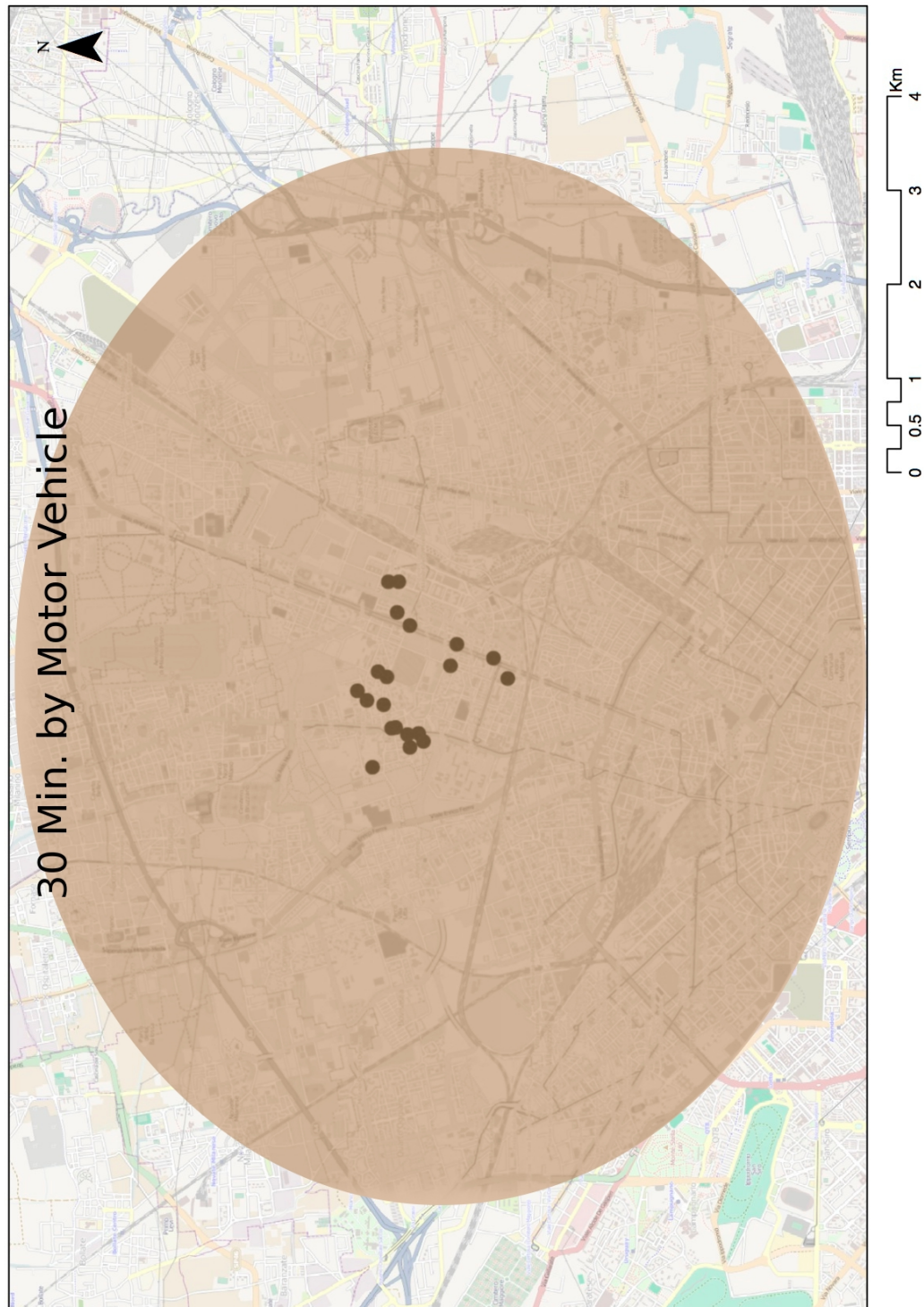


Figure 5.9: Urban area covered in 30 Minutes by Motor Vehicle

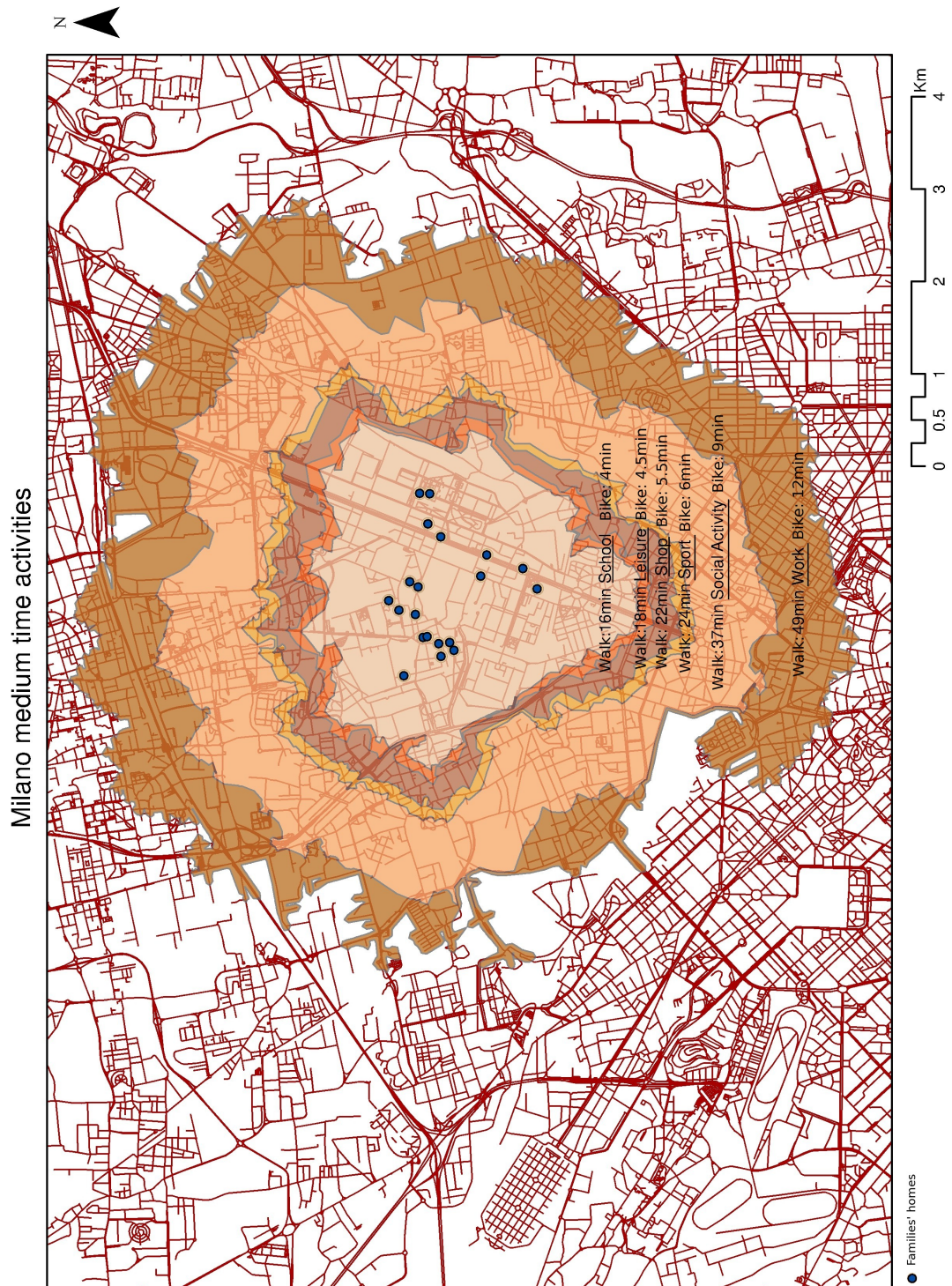


Figure 5.10: Scale of Families' Agency in Ex-Zona 9

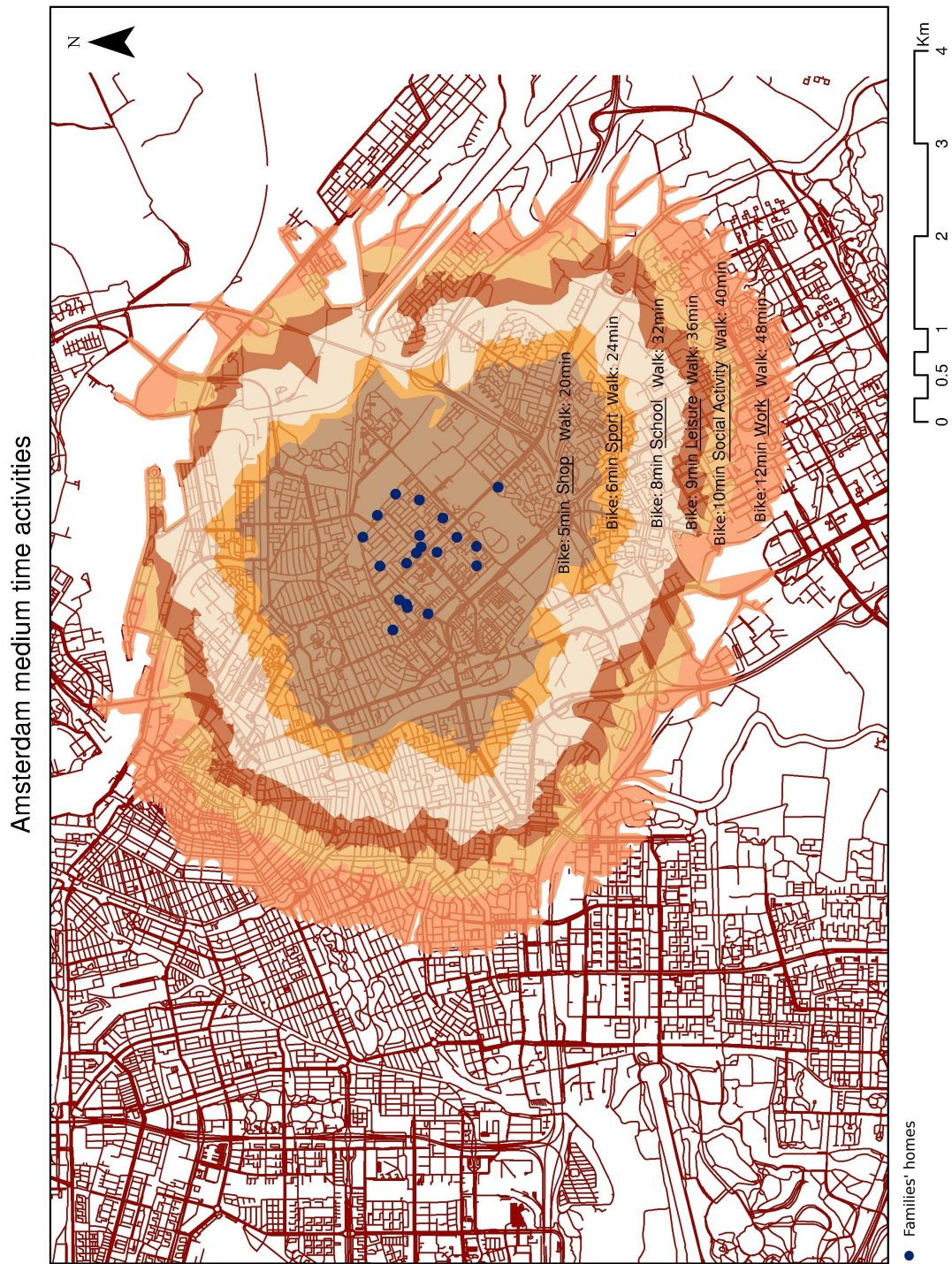


Figure 5.11: Scale of Families' Agency in Watergraafsmeer

In Watergraafsmeer the activities priority produces a scale that takes

count of shopping, sport, school and leisure. Shops are the closest places to the home and in families reach. There is basically a very consistent amount of shopping activities that offer a local provision of services in the neighbourhood. Sports activities and playing fields are the second set of locations that families reach more easily; then Schools and Leisure activities. Even if they presented in a different order, it is still possible to find all these activities as the first four actions that families carry out in relation to home distance.

An interesting outcome is that in both of the contexts the activities for social encounter and for job reason obtained the same position in the scales of families' agency. That is a remarkable result that could be developed.

Job activities are always difficult to evaluate because people do not have a single place where they work, some people work from home or outside the city or change destination day by day. So it was not possible to take job accessibility at the city level for all of the families interviewed. However, I could take into consideration some activities related to job in the urban context. The high distances between home and job are mainly due, in the Italian case, to a widespread urban environment, while in the Amsterdam case, a more dense environment allowed families to achieve functionings.

Results lead to the conclusion that Italian families must confront their achievements with an urban context that requires the actualisation of complex strategies and the Watergraafsmeer context seems to be more adequate for families' life and offer a better connection with the whole city and its services provision. By analysing families' footprints, it is possible to face the existence of different scales that address families' mobility. That is due to dissimilarity in the neighbourhoods' provisions and therefore to different urban context characteristics. Other dissimilarity can be found between the Italian and the Dutch case studies. They regard means used by families' mobility, distances and trajectory in using the city. In Watergraafsmeer almost every member of the family take the bike when leaving home. Only two female parents do not use bikes to move around. In Ex-Zona 9, few families use bikes to reach their destinations. Most of them switch between walking and taking public transport.

As already shown, Dutch families move into the city a maximum range



of 20 minutes when biking, while Italian parents consider 30 minutes still a reasonable time to spend in accessing city-places. However, the general conclusion produced by the two scales of families' agency can be taken as an urban phenomenon that happens in residential areas. Further researches could confirm these statements.

### **5.3 Urban Families' Agency: a trait of city life**

Families' agency has been investigated under sociological and geographical aspects producing positive outcomes that led to interesting conclusions.

At the methodological level the evaluation over the proposed grid of analysis to investigate urban agency under the CA framework addresses the validity of the instruments. The interviewers adequately understood the translation of the theoretical elements of the CA at the urban level and the outcomes have been significant for the current empirical investigation. As further applications of this method, I would suggest the use of such a grid just for single or double themes of analysis in order to be able to focus more deeply in the understanding of specific urban functionings and agencies. The method used to analyse the information in the geographical prospective has been effective too, providing a meaningful elaboration of the data.

At the empirical level, the outcomes related to the understanding of families' agency allows us to address conclusions on the relation between urban context and the achievement of a good quality of life.

The sociological investigation shows how families live in the city. They achieved a home and as a value-related character, they try to be locally integrated into the community, share a common culture and develop a feeling of belonging with the neighbourhood. Looking at future choices and alternative capabilities to be undertaken, they choose to invest in a long-term settlement in the neighbourhood and in time will probably need and look for new opportunities in their area of living. In strict relation to families orientation, they could play two different types of behaviour; one more adaptive on the local provision that they are offered by the urban context, and the other one more oriented to a specific aim of achievements, such as doing a particular sport or certain recreational

activities or attending specific schools with particular programs.

The geographical investigation produces interesting outcomes in relation to environmental perception and use of urban space. Analysing the definition of the neighbourhood borders we understand how people can easily cross boundaries. In Ex-Zona 9 we see a general tendency to refer mainly to other close towns outside the city, while in Watergraafsmeer they are more city-oriented. Relating to families' agency we discovered that being more neighbourhood oriented than having a city attitude is more on the parents perception than a real expression of activity preference. City results to be a unique space of action. Families' agency represent an important remark to take into consideration in planning and policy making solutions.

Limits of families' agency are discovered and seem to adequately respond to families' destination. Families play their agency into the urban context, adopting different priorities that can be considered when defining a scale of agency. Those scales show how job and social encounters are usually activities that families do in a large range of space and not specifically close to home. What they choose to do at a comfortable distance from their home are mainly activities related to children's schools, leisure time, shopping and sport practices. All this information can help in the understanding of how families live in the city and provide important knowledge to professionals that could develop or take into account how to better perform with regards to urban quality of life in the city.

# Conclusion

In this final chapter I present conclusions on three different outcomes of this work. First I discuss the contribution of this approach to Quality of Life Studies in urban contexts; second I express a conclusive evaluation of the experimented method of analysis; third I present the empirical findings and the results of the comparative investigation.

## **Approaching QoL in cities**

Define and understand what qualifies quality of life and human well-being is a complex task. An effective way to produce appreciated outcomes seems to be shrinking the focus on a specific reality with a defined theoretical frame of reference. The intention of this research was to adopt the Capability Approach developed by Amartya Sen and colleagues as the driving theory of conceptualized human well-being and evaluate quality of life in European cities.

The conception of well-being and quality of life has been addressed through a deliberative process with local community involvement. Then those notions have been investigated thanks to the translation of the CA category (as functionings, capabilities, agency, values, choices and freedom) in a suitable declination for urban analysis.

The original application of the proposed method of research steps forward in Quality of Life Studies, opening new directions to a people-centred evaluation of human lives in cities. The former could be considered the most innovative contribution of this work, more than its empirical results. In particular, thanks to the model based on the CA, this method allows a deeper level of knowledge on the quality of urban life in respect to the ones reached adopting other approaches and methods of analysis, that I experimented during my education period and research activities in this field of study.

Combining the deliberative definition of local values with the invest-

igation of real opportunities and strategies, put into action by families in their every day life, has permitted to approach the local context and its dwellers with the right lens and to put into focus evaluations and dynamics over families' quality of life. As defined in the introduction of the research design, this approach adopted relative perspective while focusing on the local possibility to express judgements on human condition of well-being. The theoretical notion is then used in an absolute perspective to address well-being and quality of life through the interpretation of families' agency in the context of living.

The effort to understand elements that address a good life has additionally faced in this work a relative conclusion. This is not a sign of failure, but a definitive condition that seems to be unavoidable in all researches investigating subjective dimensions. Quality of Life Studies should critically locate themselves within that frame.

As a first step, recognizing what matters to people and which type of moral evaluation they apply over the elements of a good life was a useful context to frame the socio-cultural environment. Based on those results the investigation of the process of agency, from the functioning status quo till further developments in capabilities achievements, has improved the knowledge on families' attitudes, behaviours and perspectives. Those results have permitted conclusion on quality of life, highlighting the level of complexity entailed in the strategies and solutions that families have to play in everyday life in order to carry out what they have reason to value. In this perspective this approach doesn't look at the urban provision of services or at the satisfaction of people who are living in a neighbourhood.

Neither resources quantity nor individual satisfaction really express how people are living in cities. Adopting the CA declination at the urban level we are able to go deep in the understanding of what quality of urban life consists (or defect) of. For those reasons this approach is different both in terms of theoretical statements and in methodological applications. Outcomes will also differ as consequence.

Coming more close to the practical contribution of the current work it's possible to define conclusions on the methodological and the empirical aspects.

## Methodological Statements

At the methodological level it's possible to evaluate how the proposed method of investigation has performed applying its instruments in the selected case study.

- I) The first methodological part proposed to carry out Focus Group Discussions in order to produce a deliberative definition over the meaning of well-being and quality of life shared in the specific context of analysis. Looking at the data gathered and at the processes involved, it was a useful method in line with the means and time-schedule imposed by this research. The Focus Groups worked positively without particular problems. Predictable obstacles in the organization slowed down the research implementation, adding extra costs in terms of time-consumption and resources.

Fortunately, the procedures have been carried out successfully and in line with the expectations. One of the most remarkable contribution of the proposed method of investigation is the capability to reveal elements of the ethical dimension that address individual's choices and values.

A deeper understanding of the visible phenomenon in the society was thus possible. In fact, the deliberative approach to well-being and quality of life makes possible to define references for ethical statements that people express while talking and discussing about their everyday life. There are always some peculiar aspects and conceptualizations that characterized the context of study that researchers should not ignore. Therefore, if they do not take the context perspective into consideration, they would consider statements and data that do not represent correctly what matters most to people. Moreover, this method would be useful to drive bottom-up and participative processes in decision making.

When policy-makers have to choose where to implement projects that aim to improve the quality of life of local dwellers, they should consider listening to what people and stake-holders have reason to value for themselves.

- II) The second part offered an urban application of the CA that has been able to decline general theoretical concepts when investigating aspects of the urban life. The methodological procedure proposed the

analysis of the CA category developed for the urban level, combined with the dimensions included in the local definition of well-being and quality of life.

This methodological attempt doesn't come without possibility of critiques especially in relation to its extent. However its formulation could be an opening path along which to improve better application of the CA framework to analyse cities and urban realities. In this specific application the evaluation of the proposed grid of analysis addresses the validity of the instruments.

The interviewers adequately understood the translation of the theoretical elements of the CA at the urban level and the outcomes have been significant in relation with the empirical investigation. Trough the referring instruments of analysis wide series of data have been collected.

The sociological focus provided an effective way to describe how families' urban life is shaped in the context of living while the geographical exploration has been able to show the relation between families' agency and the space of action in the city.

### **Empirical Statements**

At the empirical level several outcomes have been produced and they have been described more deeply in the last two chapters. In the conclusive section I present data generalizations based on main outcomes.

- I) The results coming from the Focus Groups definition of well-being have confirmed the existence of a strong connection and dependency between the general definition of human well-being and the meaning of local liveability. One of the relevant empirical results of this work shows that quality of urban life includes references to the general definition of human well-being. This finding remarks the importance of adopting the most comprehensive and peculiar definition of well-being and quality of life in order to not leave out significant elements during the investigation.

The comparison over the local definition of general well-being and local quality of life between Ex-Zona 9 and Watergraafsmeer shows a overall tendency to refer to some common dimensions. In conclusion they could be taken as important elements that address quality

of urban life. These common domains are: Health, Social Relations, Job, Income, Safety, Environment, Mixed Opportunities, Proximity to facilities, Connectivity and Community. However the specific meaning of some of these domains do not coincide completely as explained in Chapter 4. For this reason peculiar investigation of what matters most to people results to be suitable if we want to approach the field with the right knowledge.

This research could highlight how in the Dutch neighbourhood there is a sophisticated conception of what made a life well lived. Elements as freedom and realization as well as the possibility to express one's professionalism are elements that enrich the definition. In the Italian case study it is less constructed on immanent elements. Here, the notion of well-being refers to tangible elements and a more based approach is shown (i.e Job is seen as an source of wealth instead of being a performance of professionalism). A suggestion coming from the analysis above, aimed at researchers and practitioners is to keep into consideration how dwellers perceive their own well-being, including its relation with the context of life while defining city plans.

- II) The second part of the investigation produced outcomes that are related to the understanding of families' agency. The analysis allows me to address trait of families' urban life focusing on their functioning and capabilities in the urban context.

The sociological investigation shows how families are living in the city and which type of actions they play in order to achieve a good quality of life and families' life development. The comparative results show similarities on how families focus on housing achievement and try to be locally integrated into the community, share a common culture and develop a feeling of belonging with the neighbourhood.

Looking at future choices and alternative capabilities to undertake, they choose to invest in a long-term settlement in the neighbourhood with the possibility to re-settle if new opportunities of relocation will come but with a preference to remain in the same area. In strict relation to families orientation, they could play two different types of behaviour; one more adaptive on the local provision

that are offered by the urban context, and the other one more oriented to a specific aims of achievements, such as doing a particular sport or certain recreational activities, attending specific schools with particular programs or pushing professional improvements.

Different traits distinguish the two case study. In Ex-Zona 9 families play their functionings choosing to be maintain themselves near to their parents, while in Watergraafsmeer families function more in relation to professional or self-development. Those attitudes characterized differently the way in which families look at possibility to develop their life. In the Italian case families are more oriented on stabilizing increasing social relation and support while in the Dutch case personal development and professional improvements represent the families' aims for the future. The geographical investigation produces interesting outcomes in relation to environmental perception and use of urban space.

Analysing the definition of neighbourhood borders we understand how people can easily cross boundaries. In Ex-Zona 9 we see a general tendency to refer mainly to other close towns outside the city, while in Watergraafsmeer they are more city-oriented.

Relating to families' agency I discovered that playing a neighbourhood oriented behaviours or having a city attitude is more a parents' perception rather than a real expression of destination preference. Behaviour's bounders are present but not at the neighbourhood scale.

As shown in this research, limits of families' agency emerged looking at families' action destinations. Families play their agency into the urban context, adopting different priorities definable in a scale of agency. Looking at the results, those scales show how job and social encounters are activities that families usually do in a large range of space and not specifically close to home. What they choose to do at a comfortable distance from their home are mainly activities related to children's schools, leisure time, shopping and sport practices.

Comparing the two scales of agency similar results in terms of time expenditure suggest the existence of a common trait in families' agency. Further investigations over this issue look promising.



Concluding with some generalization, the research has permitted an interpretation on Quality of Urban Life in both of neighbourhoods. The Ex-Zona 9 presents a certain level of quality of life that families perceive and enjoy positively. This is achieved performing strategies that give families the access to informal community support when public services are not present (i.e in relation to childcare), the capacity to overcome the limits of the aged provision of services presented in the area, and the possibility to use means of transport to move in the local context when there is the necessity of covering long distances.

In Watergraafsmeer there's also a certain level of quality of life perceived and shared by local families. Differently this grade of good life is achieved performing strategies that allow families to have a suitable place to live and find where to settle families home, overcoming the high demand and costs of housing in Amsterdam. Moreover the need to share similar values with the local community and established good spirit of living together to shape a sort of neighbourhood's belonging, and to have access to most of the activities desired overpassing the institutional barriers, as the system of lists or drains that regulate most of services (schools, sports lessons, parking permits, housing allocations, etc.) is evident.

Referring to the different kind of analysis proposed in this work, I can argue that in Ex-Zona 9 the quality of urban life shows its limit of expansion in the geographical interpretation of the data rather than in the sociological one. Solving mobility and infrastructure deficiency in families' life could improve the quality of life and its development. In Watergraafsmeer the compact spatial organization of the city geographically supports better families' life development.

On the contrary the sociological analysis stress that a good life could be strengthened providing a more open access to services provision. For the Italian case the sociological characterization of families, such as culture, lifestyle, identity and values, has played a positive role on defining and explaining the quality of life in Ex-Zona 9. In the Dutch case the geographical elements and the city conformation have established good conditions of living and a positive level of quality of urban life.

These latest conclusions bring the attention to the contribution of those two different type of analysis: sociological and geographical interpretation are a suitable combination to study Quality of Life in cities and they should be implemented in conjunction with each other. If the

sociological statement “what happens depends on where it happens” is true, the spatial component should not be ignored in any sociological research, and especially in Quality of Life Studies when focusing on city.

As final conclusion, the quality of urban life refers to people’s evaluations and judgments that are locally based on the specific cultural background present in the context. General dimensions could be taken as recurrent elements but their specific interpretation and other more peculiar traits should be investigated.

Cities result to be a homogenous space of action for families who live in city. Their agency defines limits in urban accessibility depending on time-cost and on the type of means available. Bounders and limits are set in relation to families’ mobile capability and to their agency direction/orientation. Thus, agency could be defined here as a sociological behaviour as well as a geographical tendency of using the space. All the contributions emerged within this research could stimulate further implementations and developments.

Regarding the anankastic level, as I introduced it in the research design, this work is not ready to propose immediate, technical statements to point out solutions or strategies to assess better condition of living. Others analyses and investigations are needed to reach this goal. However, this work could provide general guidelines for urban policy decision and for policy making, about how to approach the urban context and its social community. For example urban policies or projects aiming to reduce or remove the geographical constrains that affect negatively the families’ agency in Milan will increase the accessibility to families’ capability set, and thus their opportunities to develop a good life. In Amsterdam there are constrains which reduce the open access to services provision. A new definition of public and private organization might reduce the gap between having high standard in capabilities set and the limited freedom available in achieving them. Seeing tangible and useful applications of this work will be a satisfactory compensation to all the time and efforts spent for the creation of this project.

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# Appendix



# Appendix 1

## FOCUS GROUP STRUCTURE & GRID

(Watergraafsmeer case-study)

Let's start. The FG agenda is:

- introduction of myself and the research
- the aim of the FG
- some rules
- round table presentations

I'm Michela Guerini. I'm doing a PhD research that aim to discuss the meaning of well-being with you and to delineate its definition since there's a lot of definitions with different specifications ambiguity. For example at the national level well-being is define in terms of health, housing, leisure, social inclusion, durable goods, mobility, holidays and sport, but other institutions add some more elements other restrict the list, so there's no a clear definition Aims and Rules for this FG:

- aims to stimulate the debate, so I'll facilitate the discussion,
- we'll use post-it as a interactive way of framing our discussion.
- keep focused (1 h, + breack)
- maintain momentum
- get closure on questions;
- I record the meeting and taking some notes to have material to work on

Please introduce yourself one by one to the other people. (add info if necessarily)

I ask you to think on the concept or definition of well-being and to write your consideration on a post-it: when you speak about wellbeing, **what do you refer to?**

1. *what is this difference? NEEDS, QOL, POSSIBILITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, SUSTAINABILITY*
2. *what are **the most important aspects in life that have an influence on your well-being as citizens in Watergraafsmeer?** Think about it: we allow perception, opinion, belief, attitudes,....write it on the post-it.*
3. *what are **the most important aspects in life that have an influence on your ill-being as citizens in Watergraafsmeer?** Think about it: we allow perception, opinion, belief, attitudes,....write it on the post-it.*
4. *Does **these elements complete the w-b –ill-b framework?***
5. *Do **we miss something?***
6. *What about those dimension that didn't appear in this frame? We skip.. do you think we should put them in the framework in order to measure properly the w-b in the area?*

## Appendix 3

### Outcomes: Project "City, Well-being and Poverty" promoted by FLA

#### Combination of composites (min-max normalized) and related poverty (wellbeing) profiles

	Physical dimension	Economic dimension	Social dimension	# poverty profile	Corresponding description (short)
Centro Storico	1,000	0,446	1,000	1	Well equipped, both in terms of basic and aggregation/ assistance services; reduced poverty / inequality.
Greco-Zara	0,323	0,359	0,143	4	Well-equipped, both in terms of basic and aggregation/ assistance services; high inequality/ poverty
Venezia-B. Ayres	0,602	0,171	0,080	3	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; high poverty / inequality
Vittoria-Romana-Molise	0,296	0,099	0,137	3	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; high poverty / inequality
Tiamese-Genova	0,411	0,083	0,107	3	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; high poverty / inequality
Magenta-Sempione	0,450	0,261	0,105	3	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; high poverty / inequality
Bovisa- Dergano	0,075	0,177	0,044	6	Not well equipped (both with basic and aggregation/ assistance services), high poverty / inequality.
Affori-Bruzzano-Comasina	0,000	0,806	0,155	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
Niguarda- Ca' Grandia-Bicocca	0,224	0,944	0,339	1	Well equipped, both in terms of basic and aggregation/ assistance services; reduced poverty / inequality.
Monza- Padova	0,089	0,253	0,049	6	Not well equipped (both with basic and aggregation/ assistance services), high poverty / inequality.
Citta Studi- Argonne	0,379	0,417	0,000	3	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; high poverty / inequality
Feltre- Camiata- Ortica	0,041	1,000	0,363	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
Forlanini- Taliedo	0,047	0,446	0,525	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
Corvetto- Rogredo-Vigentina	0,055	0,447	0,120	7	Not well equipped, both in terms of basic and aggregation/ assistance services; low poverty / inequality.
Chiesa Rossa- Gratosoglio	0,068	0,463	0,210	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
Barona- Ronchetto Naviglio	0,073	0,640	0,189	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
Lorenteggio- Inganni	0,121	0,579	0,049	2	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; low poverty / inequality.
Baggio- Forze Armate	0,009	0,906	0,167	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
San Siro- QT8- Gallaratese	0,120	0,000	0,046	3	Well equipped with basic services, lacking services for aggregation and assistance; high poverty / inequality
Vialba- Certosa- Quanto Oggiaro	0,077	0,471	0,342	8	Well equipped with services for aggregation and assistance, lacking basic services; low poverty / inequality.
<b>Thresholds (median values)</b>	<b>0,104</b>	<b>0,446</b>	<b>0,142</b>		

## Appendix 2

### Methodological Setting of the Interviewing Grid

CA concept	Questions	Conditions of well-being (example of domains)							
		Transport	Environment	Sociality	Leisure	Job	Education	Health	
Opportunities	Which goods, services and conditions establish well-being?								
	Do you use/frequent each Opportunities?								
Ability (individual conversion factors)	<b>NO - why?</b>	Limits: impediments to develop capabilities							
	Personal factors: Which personal factors do NOT enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?								
	Social factors: Which social factors do NOT enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?								
	Environmental factors: Which environmental factors do NOT enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?								
	<b>Yes - why?</b>								
	Personal factors: Which personal factors do enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?								
	Social factors: Which social factors do enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?								
Environmental factors: Which environmental factors do enable you to use/frequent each Opportunities?									

CA concept	Questions	Conditions of well-being (example of domains)						
		Transport	Environment	Sociality	Leisure	Job	Education	Health
<i>Functionings (achievements)</i>	Which aims/purpose/motivations do you use/frequent each Opportunities for?							
<i>Capabilities (ability to achieve)</i>	What do opportunities allow you to obtain as a person?							
<i>Values</i>	Which values/considerations address your actions?							
<i>Freedom</i>	Which conditions allow you to rich each Functionings? Do you miss any type of freedom?							
<i>Choices</i>	Why (which choices) do you use/frequent each Opportunities?							



# Appendix 4

## De Staat van de Stad, Amsterdam V

### Ontwikkelingen in participatie en leefsituatie

The State of the City, Amsterdam V; Developments in participation and life situation

Afb. 12.1 Rangorde van stadsdelen naar participatie, leefbaarheid en de leefsituatie-index<sup>2</sup>, 2008

	ondernijfs (citoscore)	werk	welvaart	sport	uitgaan	actief in vereniging	sociale integratie (versus sociale isolatie)	politieke interesse	gezondheid	sociale cohesie	school en heel (versus verloedering)	rapportcijfer woonomgeving	inzet buurt of stad	leefsituatie-index
Centrum	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	106
Westerpark	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	101
Oud-West	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	108
Zeeburg	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	105
Bos en Lommer	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	100
De Baarsjes	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	102
Amsterdam-Noord	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	98
Geuzenveld-Slotermeer	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	97
Osdrorp	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	102
Slotervaart	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	101
Zuidoost	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	98
Oost-Watergraafsmeer	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	103
Oud-Zuid	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	107
Zuideramstel	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	104

- relatief veel participatie op dit terrein, score hoger dan gemiddeld voor Amsterdam
- gemiddelde participatie op dit terrein, score rond het gemiddelde voor Amsterdam
- relatief weinig participatie op dit terrein, score lager dan gemiddeld voor Amsterdam

Afb. 12.2 Rangorde van woonmilieus naar participatie, leefbaarheid en de leefsituatie-index<sup>4</sup>, 2008

	werk 5	welvaart	sport	uitgaan	actief in vereniging	sociale integratie (versus sociale isolatie)	politieke interesse	ervaren gezondheid	sociale cohesie	school en heel (versus verloedering)	rapportcijfer woonomgeving*	inzet voor buurt of stad	leefsituatie-index
centrum en centrumrand	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	107
verbinding	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	101
welgesteld stedelijk	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	108
transitie	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	96
vergrijsde tuinstad	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	99
dorp en Amsterdamse suburb	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	106
transformatie	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	105
water en groen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	111
moderne stad en compacte vernieuwing	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	105

- relatief veel participatie op dit terrein, score hoger dan gemiddeld voor Amsterdam
- gemiddelde participatie op dit terrein, score rond het gemiddelde voor Amsterdam
- relatief weinig participatie op dit terrein, score lager dan gemiddeld voor Amsterdam

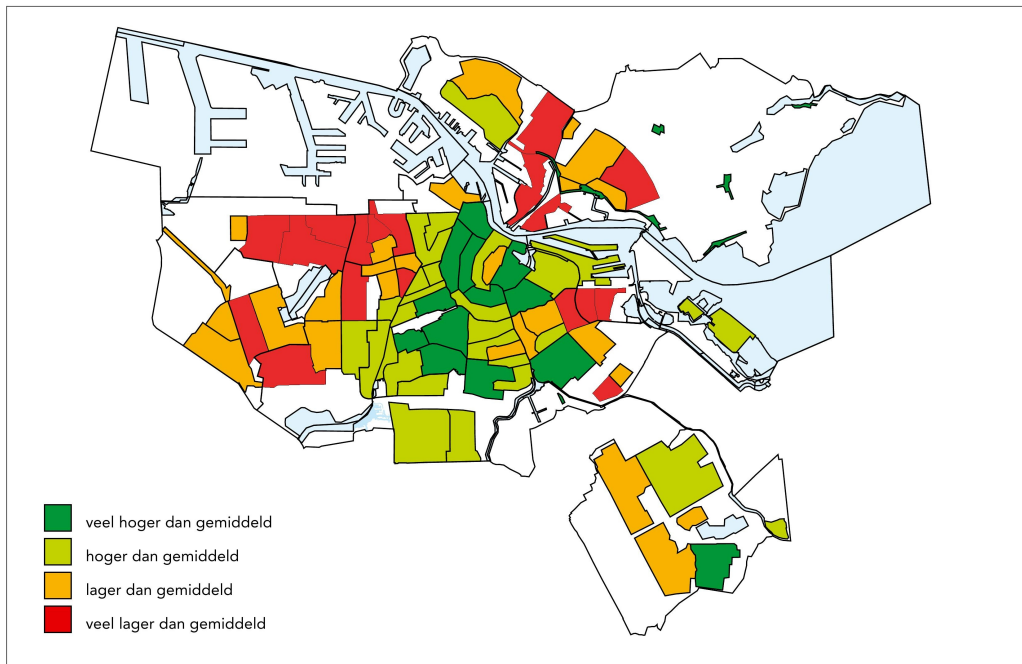
\* Minimaal verschil in gemiddeld rapportcijfer van 0,5 of meer.

**Afb. 12.4** Rangorde van herkomstgroepen naar participatie, leefbaarheid en de leefsituatie-index<sup>6</sup>, 2008

	werk	welvaart	sport	uitgaan	actief in vereniging	sociale integratie (versus sociale isolatie)	politieke interesse	gezondheid	sociale cohesie	inzet buurt of stad	leefsituatie-index
Surinamers	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	98
Turken	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	96
Marokkanen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	95
overige niet-westerse landen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	97
westerse landen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	106
autochtonen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	105

- relatief veel participatie op dit terrein, score hoger dan gemiddeld voor Amsterdam
- gemiddelde participatie op dit terrein, score rond het gemiddelde voor Amsterdam
- relatief weinig participatie op dit terrein, score lager dan gemiddeld voor Amsterdam

**Afb. 11.1** Tevredenheid met de buurt, 2007 (rapportcijfers)



bron: DW/Wonen in Amsterdam

## Appendix 5

### Domains applied in the project *Benessere Equo e Sostenibile* (BES) promoted by the National Italian Institute of Statistics (ISTAT)

#### Ambiente

L'ambiente nel quale si vive condiziona fortemente il benessere dei cittadini. Dalle risorse che alimentano la produzione e l'economia, al piacere che ci dà il contatto con la natura il benessere umano è inestricabilmente legato e dipendente dall'ambiente. L'ambiente deve essere considerato il nostro capitale naturale che influenza il benessere umano in molteplici domini sia direttamente attraverso le risorse sia indirettamente attraverso i servizi. La più avanzata conoscenza scientifica e l'accresciuta "coscienza ecologica" hanno messo in luce come le tipologie di produzione e consumo, l'uso di risorse ed energia, l'offerta di servizi possano modificare le condizioni dell'ambiente in misura rilevante. Il dominio si basa su indicatori che forniscono una valutazione dello stato dell'ambiente in Italia, dei servizi ecosistemici, della qualità percepita e misurata dell'ambiente in cui vivono i cittadini, con particolare riferimento all'ambiente urbano.

#### Salute

La salute è una dimensione essenziale del benessere individuale. Essa ha conseguenze che impattano su tutte le dimensioni della vita delle persone e in tutte le sue diverse fasi, modificando le condizioni di vita e condizionando i comportamenti, le relazioni sociali, le opportunità e le prospettive dei singoli e, spesso, delle loro famiglie. Riconoscendole una caratteristica multidimensionale, l'OMS (1948) definisce la salute come la capacità dei soggetti di essere in equilibrio con se stessi e con il proprio contesto e di godere, quindi, di un "completo benessere fisico, mentale e sociale" e non soltanto come assenza di malattia. Sul piano del diritto, l'art. 32 della Costituzione Italiana riconosce la salute come un "diritto fondamentale dell'individuo e interesse della collettività". Gli economisti la definiscono un "bene meritorio", cioè un bene ritenuto fondamentale per lo sviluppo e la crescita economica e culturale di una società civile. A fronte dell'evoluzione favorevole dello stato di salute della popolazione nei decenni, i progressi ottenuti non hanno

interessato equamente tutti i cittadini creando (o perpetuando) per alcune dimensioni più che per altre, diseguaglianze tra individui, gruppi sociali e territori in appropriatezze ed esiti perversi. Le principali dimensioni di questo dominio sono misurate attraverso indicatori riguardanti: le condizioni oggettive e soggettive di salute e di benessere fisico e mentale; i fattori di rischio.

### **Benessere Economico**

Le capacità reddituali e le risorse economiche non devono essere viste come un fine, ma piuttosto come il mezzo attraverso il quale un individuo riesce ad avere e sostenere un determinato standard di vita. Un'analisi del benessere economico fa riferimento al reddito, alla ricchezza, alla capacità di consumo, ma anche ad alcune dimensioni di benessere materiale che tali strumenti permettono di acquisire (condizioni abitative, possesso di beni durevoli, ecc.). Inoltre, non può limitarsi allo studio dei livelli medi o mediani degli indicatori scelti, ma deve necessariamente dar conto della disuguaglianza della distribuzione e redistribuzione delle risorse nella popolazione: un più alto livello di reddito nazionale può essere conseguito a prezzo di una maggiore disuguaglianza, di una maggiore insicurezza economica o rinunciando a raggiungere obiettivi di politica sociale, come ad esempio la riduzione della povertà. La misura del benessere economico non è quindi la “semplice” misurazione della capacità del sistema economico italiano di crescere, ma anche della sua capacità di trasformare la crescita economica in un aumento di equità e sostenibilità, attraverso l'analisi del sistema economico, delle politiche redistributive e dei loro effetti sulle famiglie. Istruzione e

### **Formazione**

L'istruzione è una risorsa personale fondamentale per conseguire e gestire il benessere.[1] I percorsi formativi hanno un ruolo fondamentale nel fornire agli individui le conoscenze, le abilità e le competenze di cui hanno bisogno per partecipare attivamente alla vita della società e all'economia del Paese. Inoltre livelli di competenze più elevate possono migliorare il benessere delle persone anche in domini come la salute, la partecipazione sociale e la felicità personale. Molti studi mostrano che le persone con alti livelli di istruzione vivono più a lungo, partecipano più attivamente alla vita della società, hanno livelli di fruizione culturale più elevati, commettono meno crimini e hanno bisogno di meno assistenza sociale. Il percorso formativo è un percorso continuo che deve coinvolgere tutto l'arco della vita: dai bambini in età prescolare fino alla terza e quarta età. Questo dominio misura quindi: stato e

livelli di istruzione e formazione delle diverse fasce di popolazione (con attenzione anche ai bambini in età prescolare); i livelli di competenza acquisiti, con particolare attenzione ai livelli di competenza della popolazione in età adulta. Il dominio misura anche in senso più esteso le forme di fruizione e partecipazione culturale.

### **Lavoro e Conciliazione tempi di vita**

Il lavoro costituisce l'attività basilare di sostegno materiale e di realizzazione delle aspirazioni individuali. La piena e buona occupazione è uno dei parametri principali della stabilità economica, della coesione sociale e della qualità della vita. Se l'occupazione svolge un ruolo centrale nel proteggere le famiglie dalla povertà, la disoccupazione di lunga durata è una delle cause della povertà con conseguente deterioramento degli standard di vita. Obiettivo di questo dominio è misurare sia la partecipazione al mercato del lavoro sia la qualità del lavoro (così come raccomandata dall'Organizzazione Internazionale del Lavoro) qualificando i diversi segmenti dell'occupazione in relazione alla stabilità del lavoro, al reddito, alle competenze, alla conciliazione degli orari tra tempi di lavoro, personali e familiari, alla sicurezza del lavoro e nel lavoro, alla partecipazione dei dipendenti alla vita dell'impresa /ente /amministrazione, alla soddisfazione soggettiva verso il lavoro.

### **Relazioni Sociali**

L'intensità delle relazioni sociali che si intrattengono e la rete sociale nella quale si è inseriti non solo influiscono sul benessere psico-fisico dell'individuo, ma rappresentano una forma di "investimento" che può rafforzare gli effetti del capitale umano e sociale. La famiglia costituisce un luogo di osservazione privilegiato delle relazioni, insieme alle altre forme di relazione e di reti: dai rapporti di amicizia e di lavoro, di comunità e di vicinato, all'impegno nel pubblico e nel volontariato. Gli indicatori considerati nel dominio riguarderanno anche la fiducia interpersonale.

### **Sicurezza**

La sicurezza personale è un elemento fondativo del benessere degli individui. Essere vittima di un crimine può comportare una perdita economica, un danno fisico e/o un danno psicologico dovuto al trauma subito. L'impatto più importante della criminalità sul benessere delle persone è il senso di vulnerabilità che determina. La paura di essere vittima di atti criminali può

influenzare molto le proprie libertà personali, la propria qualità della vita e lo sviluppo dei territori. Anche la tematica della violenza è strettamente legata alla sicurezza personale e alla qualità della vita. Il dominio misura le caratteristiche e le dimensioni dei fenomeni criminali e della violenza con particolare riguardo a quella domestica; le conseguenze della violenza e della criminalità subita; la percezione della sicurezza e la preoccupazione dei reati; la considerazione del territorio in cui si vive dal punto di vista della criminalità (il degrado socio ambientale osservato)

### **Benessere soggettivo**

Questo dominio intende misurare il benessere percepito dalle persone rilevando opinioni soggettive sulla propria vita. Queste informazioni soggettive forniscono un'informazione complementare a quella fornita dai dati oggettivi che sono estremamente utili a misurare la qualità complessiva della vita degli individui. Sia dalla consultazione effettuata in Gran Bretagna dall'ONS che dall'analisi dei pesi forniti da coloro che hanno consultato il My Better Life Index dell'OCSE, è risultato che la valutazione del benessere soggettivo è considerato dai cittadini uno degli elementi di maggiore importanza nella valutazione del benessere.

### **Paesaggio e Patrimonio Culturale**

Il paesaggio, la ricchezza e la qualità del patrimonio artistico, archeologico e architettonico fanno dell'Italia un Paese unico al mondo. Il diritto alla bellezza e la tutela del paesaggio non sono un'attività 'fra altre' per la Repubblica, ma una delle sue missioni più proprie, pubblica e inalienabile per dettato costituzionale e per volontà di una identità millenaria.

L'articolo 9 della nostra Carta fondamentale, recita: "La Repubblica promuove lo sviluppo della cultura e la ricerca scientifica e tecnica. Tutela il paesaggio e il patrimonio storico e artistico della Nazione". La consapevolezza di possedere, dover custodire e valorizzare un patrimonio culturale ricchissimo, frutto di arte e scienza, espressioni della genialità umana, individuale e collettiva sono un obbligo per lo Stato ma appartengo anche alla coscienza e all'identità culturale di ciascuno di noi. Questo dominio cerca di considerare questi elementi misurando quindi la presenza del patrimonio storico, artistico, culturale e paesaggistico; la tutela; l'uso da parte della popolazione. Misura anche l'attrattività economica dei territori in base alla presenza del patrimonio culturale e paesaggistico come fattore che genera produttività e richiamo verso la classe creativa nazionale e internazionale.

## **Ricerca ed Innovazione**

Ricerca, innovazione e tecnologia danno un contributo fondamentale allo sviluppo sostenibile e durevole, tanto più importante in un'economia, come quella italiana, che mostra un pesante ritardo in un contesto che attende risposte alle sfide del cambiamento economico, demografico e sociale. Per approfondire la comprensione del progresso di un paese sarà necessario individuare un set di indicatori nelle aree di Ricerca & Sviluppo, considerando l'attività di ricerca pubblica e privata la capacità innovativa delle imprese, la ricerca dell'efficienza nell'uso delle risorse e il livello di dotazione e competenze elevate in ambito tecnico-scientifico, anche considerando gli indicatori di Europa2020.

## **Qualità dei Servizi**

L'analisi del benessere e delle opportunità di progresso richiede una valutazione della dotazione infrastrutturale e dei servizi riletta alla luce della loro funzionalità ed efficienza, del grado di utilizzo, delle misure di accessibilità, della qualità del servizio generato, dell'eventuale congestione. Le stesse infrastrutture sociali incidono decisamente sulla qualità della vita della popolazione e retroagiscono sulla opportunità del territorio. Si tratta di valutare le condizioni della dotazione di infrastrutture e servizi, ponderata rispetto alla sua funzionalità di alcuni ambiti strategici, quali mobilità, comunicazione, energia, servizi idrici, servizi per l'infanzia, servizi per gli anziani, servizi per persone con disabilità, servizi sanitari.

## **Politica e Istituzioni**

Oggi più che mai i cittadini richiedono trasparenza dalle loro istituzioni. La qualità del processo di decisione politica è essenziale per la fiducia nelle istituzioni della democrazia. Apertura e trasparenza migliorano i servizi pubblici e riducono i rischi di frode, corruzione e cattiva gestione dei fondi pubblici. Una società coesa esiste solo se i cittadini hanno fiducia nelle loro istituzioni e nella pubblica amministrazione. L'opportunità di esprimere un'opinione politica e di partecipare al processo decisionale è importante per la qualità della vita. Il dominio misura le forme ed i modi della partecipazione politica, la presenza nelle istituzioni e nei luoghi decisionali delle donne e dei gruppi meno rappresentati, il livello di fiducia dei cittadini verso le istituzioni, la qualità della giustizia.

# Appendix 6

## Domains applied by National Dutch Measurement on Well-being

Reference: **J. Boelhouwer, (2010), Wellbeing in the Netherlands. The scp life situation index since 1974, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (scp), The Hague**

For the most part, the scp based its choice of domains on the oecd list, and moreover, this choice shows many areas of overlap with generally-accepted standards of what is important (as laid down in the Constitution). However, in due course a number of changes were made in the domains that make up the life situation index. There is no master plan for describing the life situation, and the substantiation of this concept changes over time. Nevertheless, this does not automatically mean that the 'issues of the day' are unquestioningly followed, but it does mean that attention for a specific aspect at a given moment does not always have sustainability value. Moreover, we do not rashly proceed with the implementation of new concepts and domains because considerable added value can be obtained by following the life situation in the course of time.

The life situation index has comprised eight domains since 1997:

- health;
- housing;
- mobility;
- holidays;
- socio-cultural leisure activities;
- (social) participation/social isolation;
- ownership of durable consumer goods;
- sports.

The difference between this and the original six domains is largely due to the idea that the situation in which people find themselves must be disconnected from the evaluation on the one hand and its determinants on the other. This substantive consideration resulted in evaluative as well as determining indicators being left out of the index. So, education and work have no longer been included in the index since 1990, although they are regarded as resources for the life situation (together with income and health).

### Health and housing

*Health and housing* are two domains that can be found in the Constitution as well as in the oecd list. In addition, they are domains that will probably only be disputed by a very few people, because they are fairly basic elements of a welfare state. After all, good health and satisfactory housing may be regarded as basic conditions for a reasonable standard of living in Dutch society.

### Mobility

Although *mobility* is viewed as a component of the life situation, it does not occur in the Constitution or on the oecd list. The oecd admittedly devotes attention to travelling time to and from work, but mobility is more broadly interpreted in connection with the life situation. Having a car is considered to be an indicator for a good life situation because a car increases the options for mobility. Mobility is important for instance for maintaining social contacts and for recreational activities. However, the negative aspects of driving a car, such as the effects on the environment, are not taken into account. The prevailing idea to date has always been that the



## Appendix 7

Data used in the FLA project Research in Milan - 2010

WB Indexs	Sub-domain	Data	Year	Zones*	Data refer to
<i>Physical WB</i>	Housing and environment	Crowding Index	2001	20	n house rooms, n family components
		Average rental fee/month (bilocal)	2006	point	
		Sale price/square meter	2006	point	
	Infrastructures and Services	Environmental Criticality Index	2008	20	air quality
		Public Green Availability	2008	9, 20	
		Educational Facilities	2006	20, 180	nursery, preschool, primary, media, college, university
		Health Facilities	2009	20, 180	hospital, clinic, health practice/office
		Sporting and cultural facilities	/	20, 180	theatre, cinema, museum, sport centre
		metro and rail stops	2009	urban, 20	metro, rail stops
		Tram stops	2009	urban, 20	
		Private Parking and Interchange	2009	20	public and private owners
		Commercial Facilities	2006	20	large-scale retail trade, bank
<i>Economical WB</i>	Inequality	Gini Index	2006	9,20,180	population income (total and netto)
	Poverty	Poverty Diffusion Index	2006	9,20,180	population income (total and netto)
<i>Social WB</i>	Sicurity	Local police stations	2006	20,180	local police, state police, civil police
		Pharmacies	2009	20	
	Assistence	Guardians, social keepers	2008	9,20	
		Minors, families centers	2009	9, 20	
		Disable centers	2009	9,20	
		Mental Health centers	2009	urban, 20	
		Elders	2009	9,20	
	Social Relation	neighborhood Stores	2008	20	bookshoop, bar, tabacco, minimarket, foodshoop, bakery, grocery
		religious centers	2009	urban, 20	
		youth aggregation centers	2009	9, 20	
		Associations	2009	9,20	associations regularly registered at the municipality
	Cultural Aggregations	Spacial sport fields	2009	9,20	play ground, volley/basket, bowls (for elder)
Cultural centers		2006	20, 180	cultural centers, neighborhood Libraries	

\* Data are based on city zones= 9-district, 20-neighborhood, 180-local unit

## Appendix 8

### Domain and data used in the the Dutch Staat van der Staad Amsterdam - *Ontwikkelingen in participatie en leefsituatie*

welfare	life situation index	2006, 2004	stads
residents' opinion	Satisfaction with neighborhood	2007, 2005	stads, buuren
	Social component problem areas	2007	buuren
Focus area	Focus Areas Environment	2007	buuren
safety	objective safety index	2007,6,5,4,3,	stads, buuren
	subjective safety index	2007,6,5,4,3,	stads, buuren
Public areas and parks, sports and recreation	Layout of the residential	2009,2007, 2005	stads, buuren
	Design of the landscaping	2009,2007, 2005	stads, buuren
	Cleaning streets and sidewalks	2009, 2007, 2005	stads, buuren
	Cleaning landscaping	2009, 2007, 2006	stads, buuren
	Cleaning play equipment	2009, 2007, 2007	stads, buuren
	decay	2007, 2006, 2005	stads, buuren
	beauty Degrees	2009, 2008, 2007, 2006	stads
	Maintaining streets and sidewalks	2009, 2007, 2005	stads, buuren
	Maintenance landscaping	2009, 2007, 2006	stads, buuren
	playing facilities maintenance	2009, 2007, 2007	stads, buuren
	housing density	2008, 2007	stads, buuren
	landscaping	2007	stads, buuren
	Bedrijfsterreinen	2006	stads, buuren
	recreatieterreinen	2008	stads, buuren
	Sports facilities per 1,000 resident	2008, 2007	stads, buuren
	community centers	2008, 2007	stads
Number of restaurants per 10,000	2008, 2007	stads, buuren	
Number of cafes per 10,000 resident	2008, 2007	stads, buuren	
Number of snack bars per 10,000	2008, 2007	stads, buuren	
Number of coffee shops per 10,000	2007	stads, buuren	
Sports	2006	stads	
association	2006	stads	
Arts and culture			
Environment and Water			
Transport and infrastructure			
urban development			
Public order and safety			
resources			
corporate and governance			
Education, youth and diversity			
Care			
Economics and port			
Work and Income			

## Appendix 9

### Data on Participants in the Focus Groups in Ex-Zona 9

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Family	Job	Location	Vulnerability
<b>Fernanda</b>	Female	53	Italian	Divorced	Self-employer	Niguarda	
<b>Cristiano</b>	Male	32	Italian	Single	Employee	Niguarda	
<b>Angela</b>	Female	30	Nigerian	Married	-	Prato Centenaro	Unemployed & Minority group
<b>Gabriele</b>	Male	25	Italian	Single	Student	Prato Centenaro	
<b>Lorenzo</b>	Male	65	Italian	Married with children	Retired	Prato Centenaro	
<b>Silvia</b>	Female	46	Italian	Married with children	-	Niguarda	Disable
<b>Anna Maria</b>	Female	63	Italian	Married	Retired	Niguarda	
<b>Alam</b>	Male	48	Banglades	Married with children	Seller	Bicocca	Minority group
<b>Maria</b>	Female	55	Italian	Married with children	Volunety worker	Niguarda	
<b>Luigi</b>	Male	40	Italian	Single	Self-employee	Bicocca	

## Data on Participants in the Focus Groups in Watergraafsmeer

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Family	Job	Location	Vulnerability
<b>Ella</b>	Female	35	Dutch	Married	Public agency	Middenmeer Noord	Pregnant
<b>Julie</b>	Female	42	Dutch second generation Surinamese	Married 2 children 13- 15 y.o.	Self-employer	Linnaeusparkbuurt	
<b>Joke</b>	Female	50	Dutch	Married 2 children 14-16y.o.	Social worker	Middenmeer Noord	
<b>Henk</b>	Male	74	Dutch	Married	Retired	Don Bosco	
<b>Bart</b>	Male	45	Dutch	Married 2 children 14-16y.o.	School director	Middenmeer Noord	
<b>Marianne</b>	Female	68	Dutch	Married - No children	Housewife	Linnaeusparkbuurt	Not totally physically mobile
<b>Ineke</b>	Female	57	Dutch	Single - no Children	Early- Retired	Middenmeer Zuid	
<b>Marie</b>	Female	32	Dutch	Married - No children	Educational Freelance	Middenmeer Zuid	
<b>Pit</b>	Male	52	Dutch	Lived 20 y. in South Africa	Single Artist	Tuindorp Frankendael	
<b>Abdul</b>	Male	22	Moroccan	With parents and 2 brothers	Worker at supermarket	Tuindorp Frankendael	Minority group

## Appendix 10

### Data on the Interviewed Families in Ex-Zona 9

#### M1

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: House available to buy, loved the area

Where does family come from (background): Prato-centenaro; he's born in Niguarda. She's from Legnano

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Village-town, neighborhood relations, children friendly, green area

Will family move (or would like to): No.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 4 y

#### M2

Why family moved in Zona 9: Because they got a house from the Housing Cooperative (renting)

Where does family come from (background): From Zara -

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Social relations with neighbors and around. Safety. There are opportunities for basic needs.

Will family move (or would like to): No.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 6 y

The Cooperative plays a relevant role in improving the quality of life of their clients. It organizes several opportunities (dinner, party, events, services, discount). New families are coming in the area but they are less involved in the social life of the cooperative.

### M3

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Born there

Where does family come from (background): Niguarda

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Social relations,

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 24 y

There's a lot of chinese shops coming in the area, and they are taking the place of old shops. The quality is decreasing

### M4

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Already had a home.

Where does family come from (background): She's from Giambellino-Inganni. He was born in Niguarda

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Parco Nord, all the services, social relation, Associations, children friendly

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 12 y

Who don't have children maybe has less opportunity to be close to the neighbourhood.

For social relation there's no specific place in the neighbourhood. We meet in friends' house.

## M5

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Had a house with garden

Where does family come from (background): She's from Niguarda. He's from Pordenone

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): It's nice for green, houses. They miss Café/pub, shops, social and cultural activities

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 14 y

The neighbourhood is very livable and offers base supply. After a day spent outside for working we don't go out of the neighborhood. Few daycare because the population is growing due to new buildings.

## M6

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: She's living there because they has the house left from parents.

Where does family come from (background): They lived in via Rapallo. He's from Palermo. She's from Prato Centenaro.

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Good opportunity, friendly, close to center, social relation

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 21 y

The neighbourhood help children to develop they autonomy because they can experience the area without too many problems.

## M7

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Found a nice house with garden and hortus – rural atmosphere

Where does family come from (background): She's from Greco, He's from Macmaon (Milano)

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Village, civil sense (historical memory).

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 8 y

The neighbourhood provides something and we take advantage of what is here. But if not we look outside. Ex. Schout a Bresso. Niguarda has a strong community sense – historical value (conciseness).

## M8

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: She was born Niguarda. He's from Cremona but working in Milano

Where does family come from (background): There.

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Village, children friendly. She misses green area close by-traffic on the street

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 15 y

Social relations go beyond children school friends and families. Week-end outside to Cremona where they supply the main grocery-shopping. For everyday activity the family choose what is close and available in the neighbourhood.



## **M9**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Nice neighbourhood and close to Husband's family

Where does family come from (background): He's from there. She's from Gratosolio (MI)

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Periferical area but very close to the center, good transports, shops, . . . village, social connection, no anonymity.

Miss social place and activities.

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 22 y

There's no special place for children to meet friends. The area is downgrading in terms of activity. If we want an activity or opportunity the family goes out of the neighborhood, but also they use what is there if in line with their standard.

## **M10**

Why family moved in Zona 9: Close to parents and owned an apartment

Where does family come from (background): They moved from an other house in the area, he's from there.

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Community, social relations, opportunities

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 21 y

### **M11**

Why family moved in Zona 9: They were looking for a single house. They didn't know the area.

Where does family come from (background): He's from Turin. She's from Perù

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Village, community, social relations,

Will family move (or would like to): no

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 4 y

### **M12**

Why family moved in Zona 9: Had an apartment close to her family

Where does family come from (background): Family from Cinisello.

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Good services, and transports.

Bad: environment polluted, s

Will family move (or would like to): Yes, only for a place less affected by trafficjam in Niguarda vecchia.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 13 y

Family look at the neighbourhood and then they choose what they need even out-side (i.e. theater lessons).

### **M13**

Why family moved in Zona 9: To be close to parents (to assist them)

Where does family come from (background): 6 y in New-York DC. In Milan she's from Ticinese. He's from Niguarda

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Suitable for families with children. Miss public transport for local movement & safety for children to move alone. Buildings not so nice archtec- esthetically

Will family move (or would like to): No. I love the neighbourhood

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 9 y

Niguarda is a neighbourhood that represent the whole society where you find all kind of people (from disadvantaged to rich families). In America was more getto

#### **M14**

Why family moved in Zona 9:

Where does family come from (background):

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements):

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

#### **M15**

Why family moved in Zona 9: Having a good house.

Where does family come from (background): I was living here with my partner then they divorced and she stayed. Area is coming cleaner.

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): She like biking and there are some dangerous path. Area is safe

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: B\_15

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 15 y

## **M16**

Why family moved in Zona 9: He bought the house in 1998 so the house was available

Where does family come from (background): Segrate (town, more green)

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements):

Will family move (or would like to): Yes. Something more friendly for families

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 9 y

At the beginning living in the neighborhood was horrible because she was at home and with no connections. Everything is far away from home (20 mins by foot). The neighbourhood is not suitable for families, more for companies, the University. Bussero school is in a very bad building but nice teachers.

## **M17**

Why family moved in Zona 9: He had a house from the Cooperative (private Social Housing)

Where does family come from (background): She's from Milano. He's from Niguarda

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Green, community, social control, no anonymity

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 9 y

### **M18**

Why family moved in Zona 9: They had the opportunity to enter in her parents house. Then they divorced and now she's living alone.

Where does family come from (background): She's was born in Niguarda. The family moved from Bresso

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Quite, there's all what she need. Social relation. The area should have more pub, café

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: B\_18

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 10 y

### **M19**

Why family moved in Zona 9: Looking for a big house for family. Nice project

Where does family come from (background): He's from Roma-She's from Milan- From Sesto S. Giovanni

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Nice new area (bicocca), good opportunities at social level.

Will family move (or would like to): No

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 12 y

The family looks for what is there, but they have tried to build up the opportunity. The area of new Bicocca is considered middle-high class.

### **M20**

Why family moved in Zona 9: She owned a house there, close to parents

Where does family come from (background): She's from the area. He's from Monza

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Like the area: green, nice buildings, no dormitory-area. Good area. Misses cultural activities and social events.

Will family move (or would like to): Yes, but only to move away from Fulvio Testi street. No area

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 11 y

There're not so many shops around their house anymore. GAS for shopping. Social relation with other families from the Church community.

## Data on the Interviewed Families in Watergraafsmeer

### A1

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Having family we stopped (after travelled a lot) for job reason in Adam. To be close to Jaap and bigger house

Where does family come from (background): From the East of NL – house in West (45m<sup>2</sup>) –rent a place (4-5 y) –buy in Helmostraat (4-5y) than the actual one.

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): The street had very old population (in 4y) what is happening in Mid is coming also in Jerusalem. This area was not the best area in W, but now is coming. Community, Village

Will family move (or would like to): No. Our dream house. Never in the city center

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood:13 y

Safety = the area is safe. The relation with it is with no panic. 6 times burglar inside house.

## **A2**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Finding a spacious house in Amsterdam and close to work

Where does family come from (background): Amsterdam; she's from Suriname born in Jordan, oud Zuid, West: together Ziud

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): HOFFIE, community, quite and green area.

Will family move (or would like to): No.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 19 y

## **A3**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: We moved here for the big house opportunity

Where does family come from (background): No because it's nice area and it's close to everywhere

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Social environment, spacious environment,

Like more social mix

Will family move (or would like to): safe

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 18 y

## **A4**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Big house to buy

Where does family come from (background): East part

Will family move (or would like to): Child friendly, village

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 3 y

## **A5**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Searching a house; fallen in love with the house and the environment (ownership) – they knew a little bit the area.

Where does family come from (background): Oosterdorp; westerpark

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Environment (square, park, village feeling)

Will family move (or would like to): No house it's too wonderful

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

I don't like white or black area – I like mixed area. Here there's no problem with few.

Around here when old people died then new families are coming buying their house. Sense of belonging to this community. They also organize a street-dinner on the sidewalk.

## **A6**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Possibility to have a house to rent there

Where does family come from (background): Amsterdam west

Will family move (or would like to): Green, quite, easy out of city for working

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 5 y



## A7

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Lottery through the social housing company - -(Renting)- friends live there

Where does family come from (background): Amsterdam zuid

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Betondoorp& W =Child friendly neighbourhood – cozy, village, playground&green

Will family move (or would like to): In a better house, more close to the center (w)

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood:2 y

## A8

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Find a house spacious was difficult, they got it close to W (Renting)

Where does family come from (background): Outside of Amsterdam, countryside, then Italy for 3

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Safe environment, good people, families

Will family move (or would like to): Yes, more outside the city

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood:4 y

## A9

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Big house with garden, school,

Where does family come from (background): Outside of Amsterdam, south of NL (village)

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Village, environment open-spacious,

Will family move (or would like to): No.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

How long does family live there? 5 y

### **A10**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: House exchange – renting

Where does family come from (background): City center: Jordan, Rijnburg – but from Haarlem (quite town)

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): OSM (but maybe too white); village dimension (environment & relations); no-anonymity  
- movie; forest (natural place)

Will family move (or would like to): No, the place&house is what they want

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood:17 y

One nation with different kind of people. We are a good family, because me and my husband are both working, but my children must see that other people can't go skiing like us every years." My children think that is normal".

### **A11**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer:

Where does family come from (background):

Will family move (or would like to):

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

## **A12**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer:

Where does family come from (background):

Will family move (or would like to):

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

## **A13**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer:

Where does family come from (background):

Will family move (or would like to):

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

## **A14**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer:

Where does family come from (background):

Will family move (or would like to):

Activities: See dataset & maps

Bourders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

## **A15**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: There was a change to get this house through friend (renting)

Where does family come from (background): Mother lived here from 5 to 5 y.o – then in the Zuid, West, Center

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Before it was a poor neighbourhood with folks people- now academics&artists- village

Will family move (or would like to): No, because the house/price is too good

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 5 y

## **A16**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Knew it's a nice area for children – her family is living there – (ownership)

Where does family come from (background): Amsterdam East

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Parks closed by, quite, nice shops, playground, house big

Will family move (or would like to): No.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood:7 y

## **A17**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: House with 2 parking-licenses, close to green area and close to work (was Utrecht) (ownership). garden

Where does family come from (background): Overtoom area in Amsterdam

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Area focused on children – without kids you are lost (out), trees, open environment, social openness to mum.

OSM, openminded, high educated /but down to earth vs Zuid) village,

Will family move (or would like to): No.

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 8 y

## **A18**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer:

Where does family come from (background):

Will family move (or would like to):

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

## **A19**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: Bigger place (ownership); children facilities; parks;

Where does family come from (background): Indischebuurt,

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Green, child facility

Missing pub/café/place for meet friends/ (this is not Amsterdam) organic food- icecream shop – fast food (Turkish-surinamese) – kindergarden available (waiting list)

Will family move (or would like to): Maybe to Denmark

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

This is not Amsterdam: when you see cozy street, black people, that Amsterdam, here is not Amsterdam. It's a sleeping city. You have to reach at least Muidenport to be in Amsterdam.

## **A20**

Why family moved in Watergraafsmeer: For working reason and the area was suggested by relocation services (mexx)

Where does family come from (background): London, Middenmeer (Coppernicusstrass),

What does family like/dislike of the area (main elements): Quite, peaceful,

Having more connection with your own nationality

Will family move (or would like to):

Activities: See dataset & maps

Borders: See maps

Socio-demographic data: See dataset

Years in the neighbourhood: 5 y

## *Doctor Europaeus* Mention

The Confederation of European Union Rectors' Conferences (today EUA - European University Association) has drawn up a common "European doctorate" brand. This designation can be added to a national doctorate which was obtained fulfilling conditions regarding co-supervision, assessment by an international jury, multilingualism and mobility of the graduate.

With this thesis I obtain the *Doctor Europaeus* Mention that certifies the international european recognition of this PhD thesis.