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Developing and using subjective indicators of community quality of life: the case of Florence, Italy

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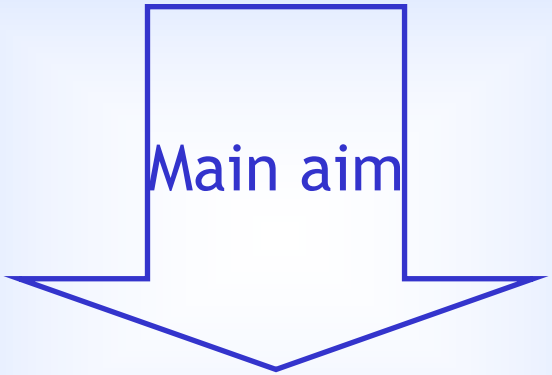
In 2003

The City of Florence (Italy) and the the University of Florence promoted a study on

the citizens' perception and evaluation of the quality of life in their city.



re-qualifying the city life through fair policies answering to residents' needs.

In this perspective

the study attempted also to

develop some particular indicators of quality of life

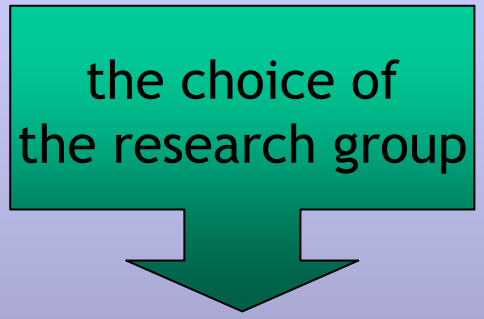
in order to

measure and interpret the levels of suitability of the living conditions that the city of Florence offers to its inhabitants

The conceptual model

Possible priorities

the individuals ⟷ the territory



studying the *interaction* between

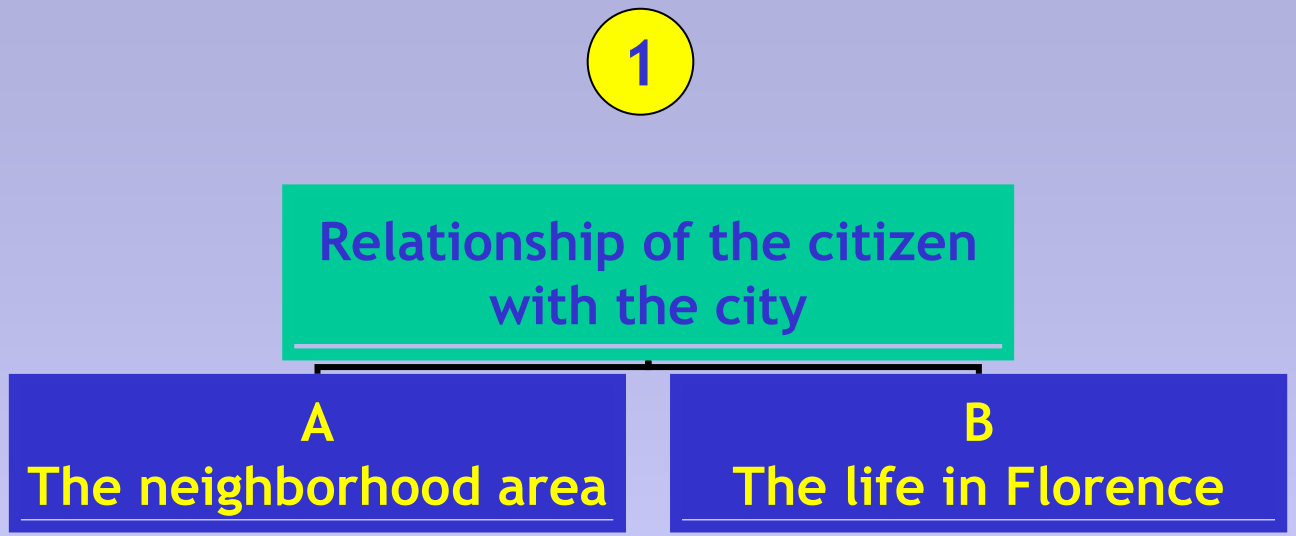
each individual and the urban environment

defined in terms of three different levels

housing-space neighborhood space whole city

The questionnaire structure

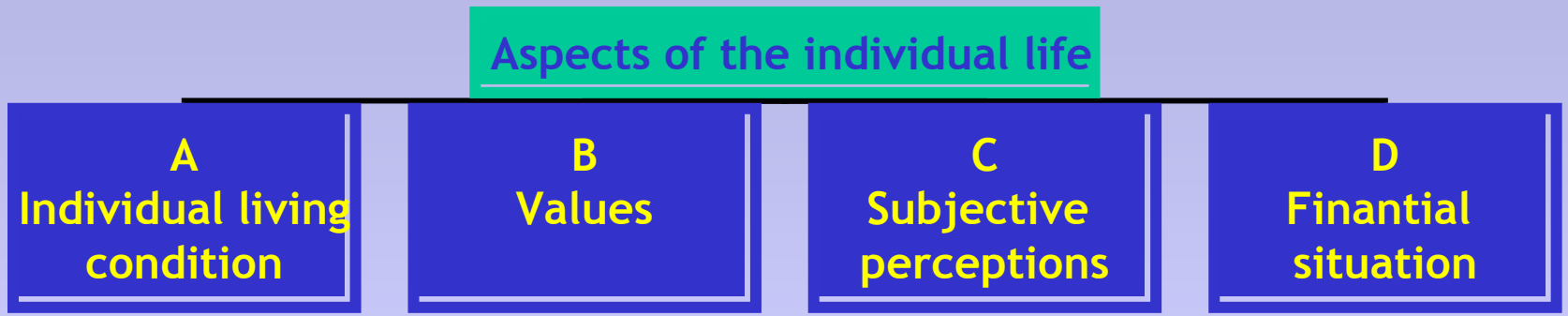
Two ambits



The questionnaire structure

Two ambits

2



Sampling design

Probabilistic stratified design

variables for stratification:

Area of residence (20 areas)

Age (7 groups)

Sex

1200 units

(280 strata)

Data collection

Two planned surveys

1

When → October-November 2003

Who → 1185 individuals

By → Paper-questionnaire

Data collection

Two planned surveys

2

Aims:

to update some individual information

to measure possible change in some subjective dimensions concerning city life

Data collection

Two planned surveys

2

When → October 2004

Who → The individuals that at the first interview accepted to be re-interviewed (694)

By → Telephonic-questionnaire

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

Some complex variables of the questionnaire structure required the definition of

a composite model

and

the collection of several items

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

- *The subjective image of the city*
- *The perception of the tourist dimension of the city*
- *The perception of the cultural dimension of the city*
- *The personal safety perception*
- *The evaluation of the district*
- *The territorial distribution of the public services*
- *The irregularity of the time required to cover the daily-route distances*

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

1

Definition and analysis of each synthetical indicator

dimensional analysis

to verify the dimensionality of the single indicators

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

1

Definition and analysis of each synthetical indicator

synthesis analysis

to synthesize the single indicators

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

1

Definition and analysis of each synthetical indicator

descriptive analysis

to describe the distribution of the composite indicator

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

1

Definition and analysis of each synthetical indicator

comparative analysis

to verify the discriminant capacity of the composite indicator

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

1

Definition and analysis of each synthetical indicator

validity analysis

to verify the validity of the composite indicator in terms of quality of life measures

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

2

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators: composite indicators

in order to obtain

few interpretable, functional and manageable indicators

Procedure for

Developing and using subjective indicators of qol in Florence

3

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

grouping analysis

by combining the composite and simple indicators

1

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The subjective image of the city

The analysis of the group of differential semantic scales (q. 25) confirmed the presence of 5 dimensions.

Five different indicators were defined

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The subjective image of the city

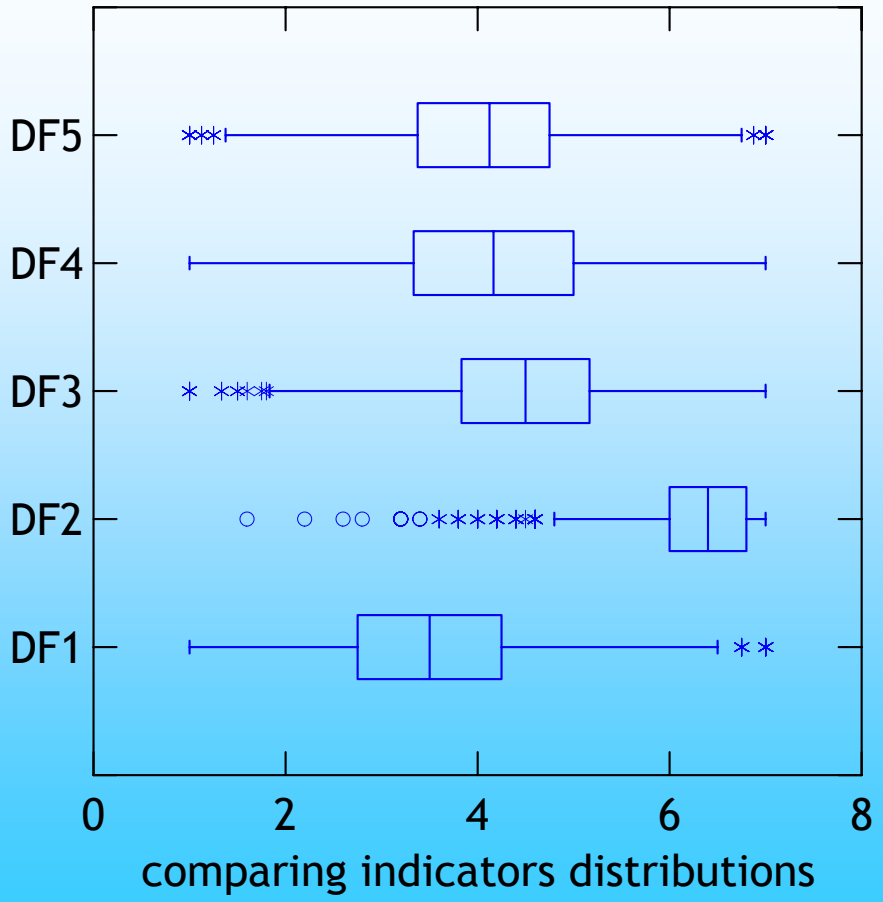
- organization
- uniqueness
- dinamicity
- hospitality
- liveability

scores ranging
from 0
(extremely negative image)
to 7
(extremely positive image)

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The subjective image of the city

- liveability
- hospitality
- dinamicity
- uniqueness
- organization



The subjective image of the city

observation

High level of criticism towards the city with regard to organization, dinamicity, hospitality, liveability is observed among

citizens that

- live in the center of the city
- carry on autonomous and commercial activities
- live alone
- have high standards of education

The perception of the tourist dimension

The analysis of the agreements to a group of 10 assertions (q. 20) allowed to define a perception score ranging

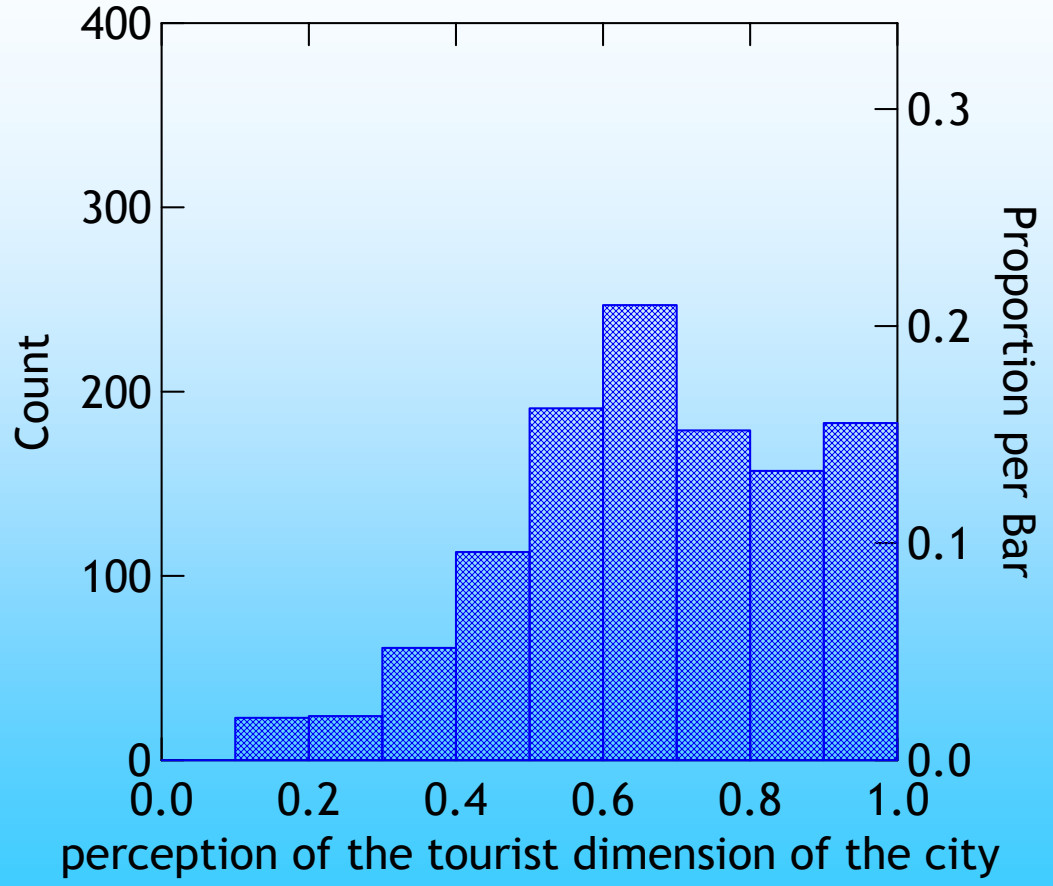
from 0

(maximum negative perception)

to 1

(maximum positive perception).

The perception of the tourist dimension



The perception of the tourist dimension

observation

The more critical attitudes are related to:

- high standards of education
- autonomous and commercial work
- living in the center area

The perception of the cultural dimension

The average of the levels of agreements

expressed with regard to a group of assertions (q. 22) concerning the offers presented by the city

was calculated, ranging

from 0

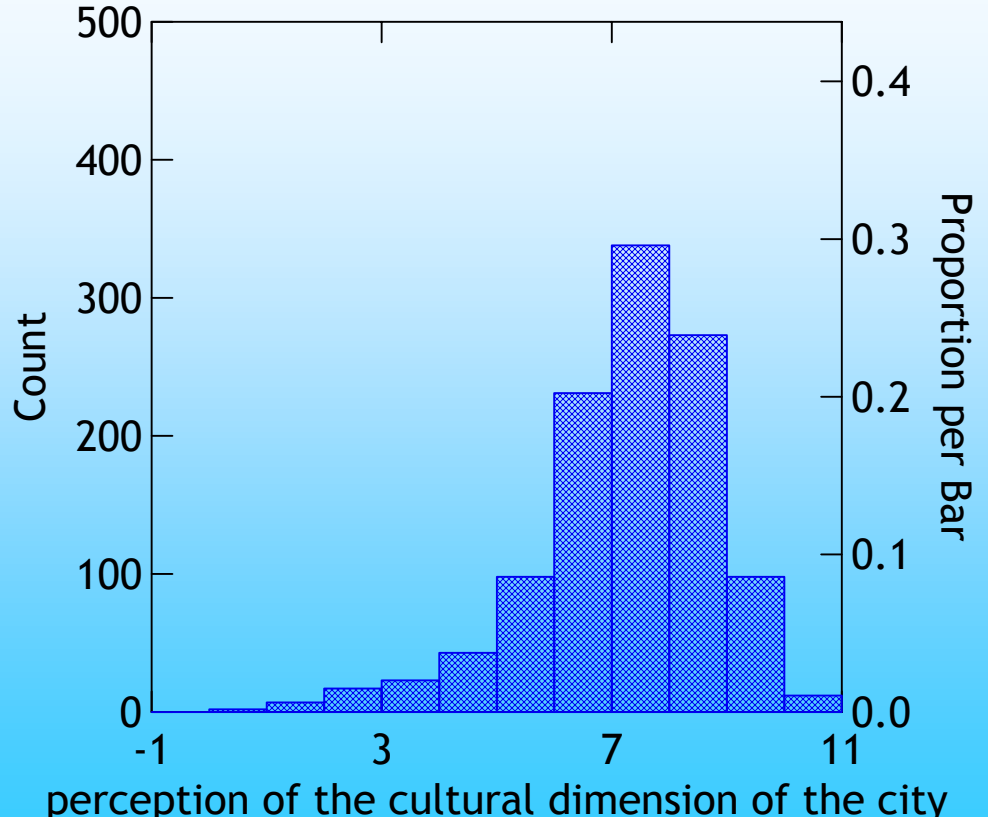
(maximum negative perception)

to 10

(maximum positive perception).

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The perception of the cultural dimension



Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The perception of the cultural dimension

observation

The level of perception is

- related to a stereotyped and fixed affective dimension
- related to the level of satisfaction for one's life in Florence (r=0.4)

The perception of the personal safety

The cluster analysis on perception (q. 18) with regard to

3 different urban contexts

2 different moments of the day

revealed that

the subjective perception of the safety changes is

a function of the moment of the day and not of the urban context.

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The perception of the personal safety

Two indicators:

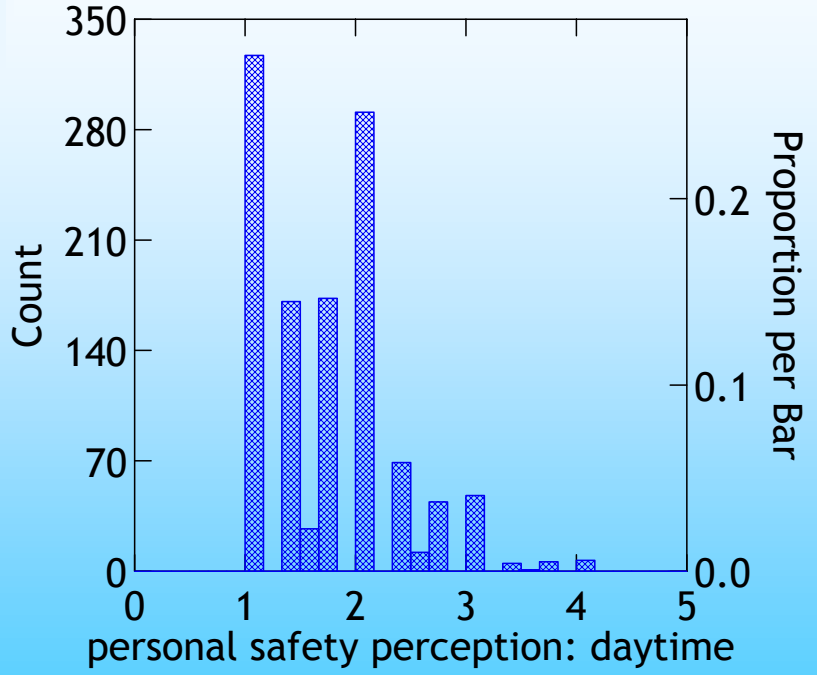
Daytime safety perception

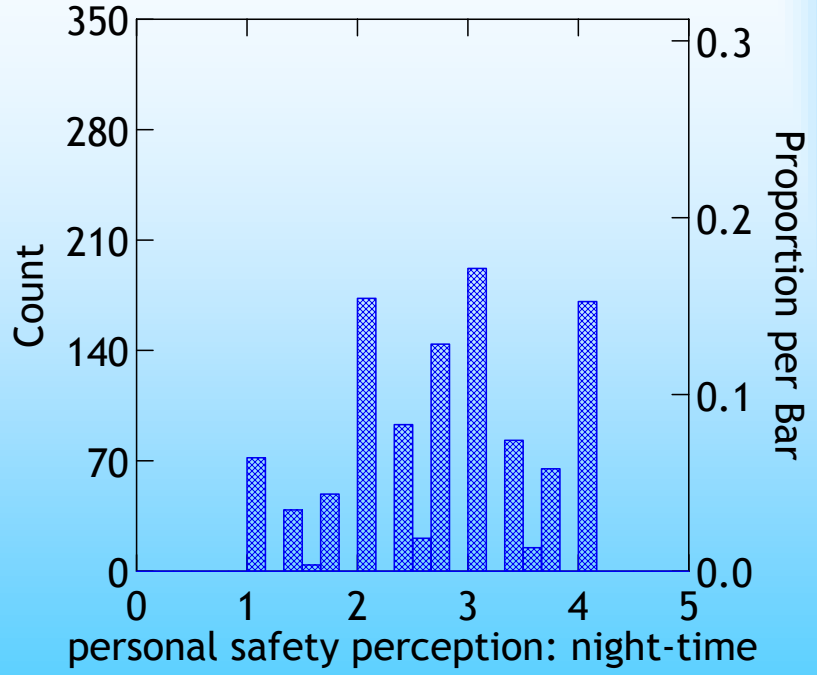
Night-time safety perception

scores ranging
from 1
(high security perception)
to 4
(high insecurity perception)

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The perception of the personal safety





The perception of the personal safety

observation

The level of perception is

- related to age
- not related to the satisfaction for one's life in Florence

The evaluation of the district

The dimensional analysis of the group of 20 single-items concerning differential aspects of the district life (q. 6) confirmed the presence of 5 dimensions.

Five different indicators were defined

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The evaluation of the district

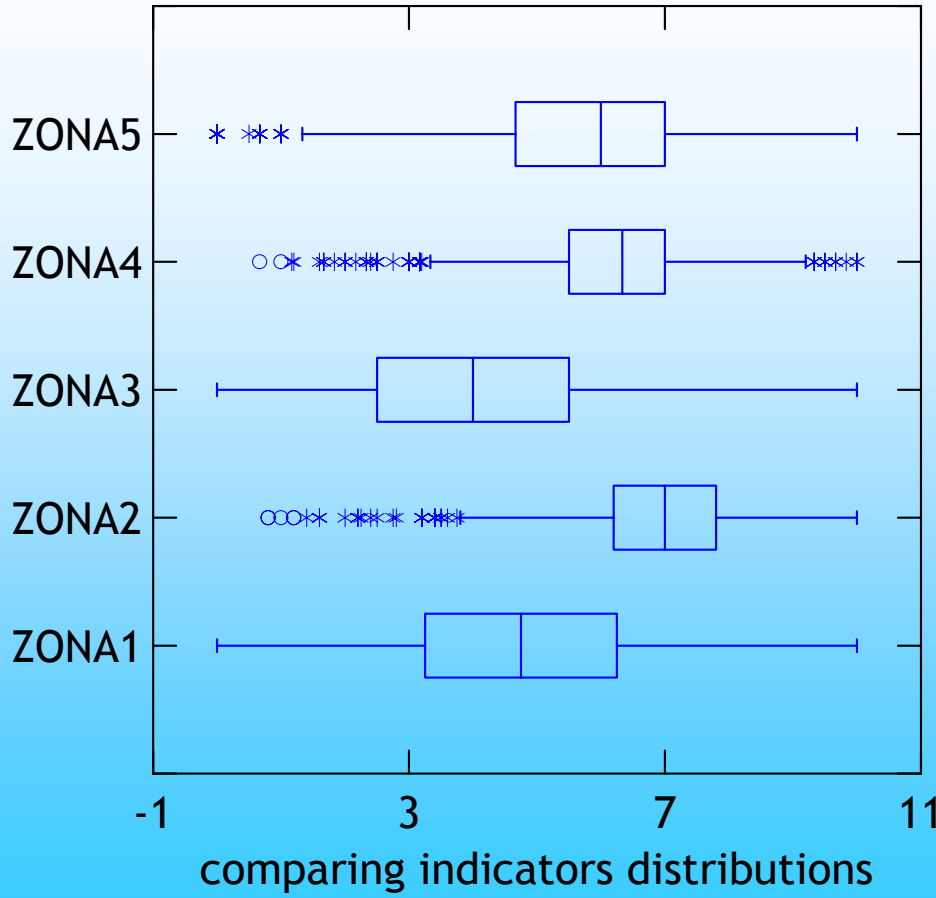
- traffic conditions
- presence of services
- road network condition
- urban environment
- urban green

scores ranging
from 0
(extremely negative evaluation)
to 10
(extremely positive evaluation)

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The evaluation of the district

- urban green
- urban environment
- road network condition
- presence of services
- traffic conditions



The evaluation of the district

observation

- Positive evaluation reported by young citizens
- Critical level of evaluation expressed by
  - ✓ citizens with high standard of education
  - ✓ single citizens

The territorial distribution of the public services

The interviewees reported how long they take to walk to some sites considered important in every-day-life (q. 8).

The territorial distribution of the public services

objective

To construct a perceptual map of the sites

The dimensional analysis allowed to define three levels of territorial distribution of the identified services.

Three different individual scores were defined:

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The territorial distribution of the public services

- extensive distribution

  (chemist's post-office, school, bus stop)

- zonal distribution

  (district center, local and supermarket, Police Station)

- variable distribution

  (family doctor, bank)

Mean of the reported minutes

The territorial distribution of the public services

observation

The perceived times are related to

- age
- residence area
- individual faith (the 3rd indicator)

The irregularity of time required to cover the daily-route distances

One of the components of the individual quality of life in an urban context is the use of the time.

The irregularity (maybe more than the length) of the mileage times can represent a disturbing element in every-day-life.

The irregularity of time required to cover the daily-route distances

The irregularity is frequent in a city where short and little spaces contrast with the high density of population composed also by commuters and tourists.

The irregularity of time required to cover the daily-route distances

Each respondent reported the

minimum and maximum amount of minutes

with regard to the daily route to go to work or to school (q.10).

The irregularity of time required to cover the daily-route distances

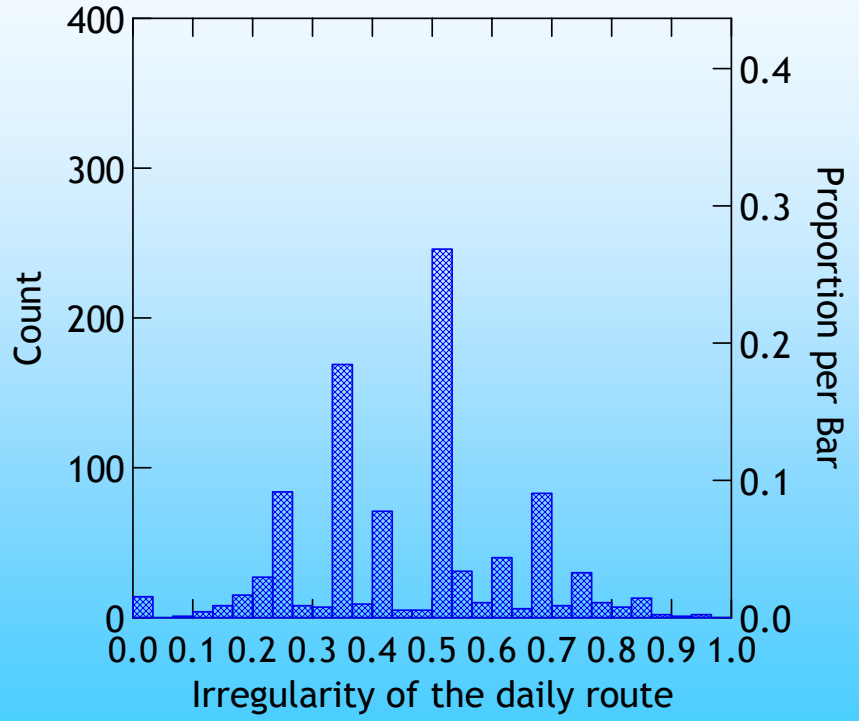
$$irregularity \cdot index = \frac{\max(time) - \min(time)}{\max(time)}$$

ranging
from 0
(no irregularity)
towards 1
(maximum irregularity)

0.5 =
the time of the daily-route can double

Definition and analysis of the subjective indicators of qol in Florence

The irregularity of time required to cover the daily-route distances



The subjective image of the city

observation

The **greatest irregularity** among citizens

- using the **car**
- living in **peripherical** areas

The **greatest regularity** among citizens

- using the **bicycle**
- living in the **centre**

2

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators: composite indicators

The described synthetical indicators were submitted to

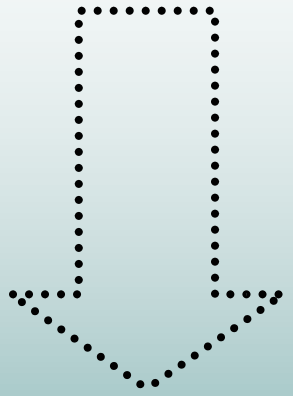
principal component analysis

additive tree analysis

cluster analysis

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators

4 dimensions were identified



4 individual scores were calculated

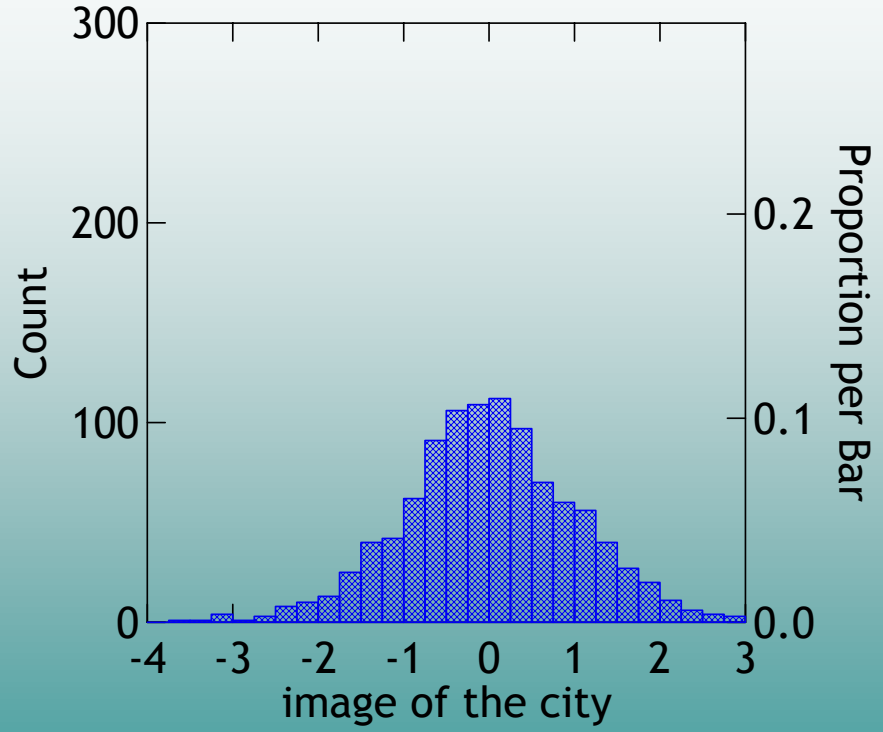
wo indicators did not aggregate with any dimension:

perception of tourist dimension

irregularity of the daily route

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators

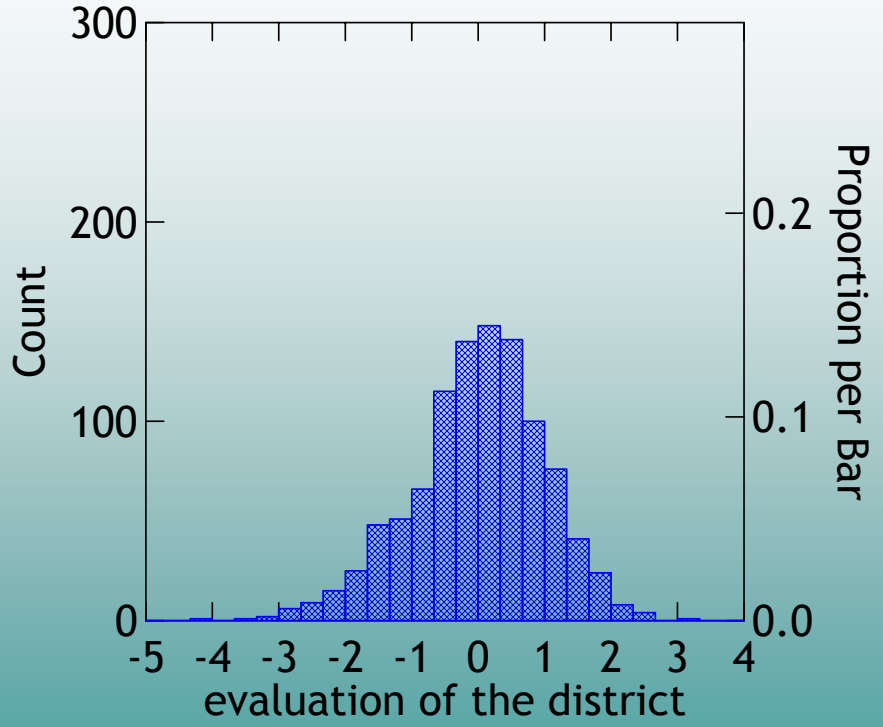
a) image of the city



• organization (0.78) • dinamicity (0.77)	• liveability (0.78) • perception of the cultural

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators

b) evaluation of the district

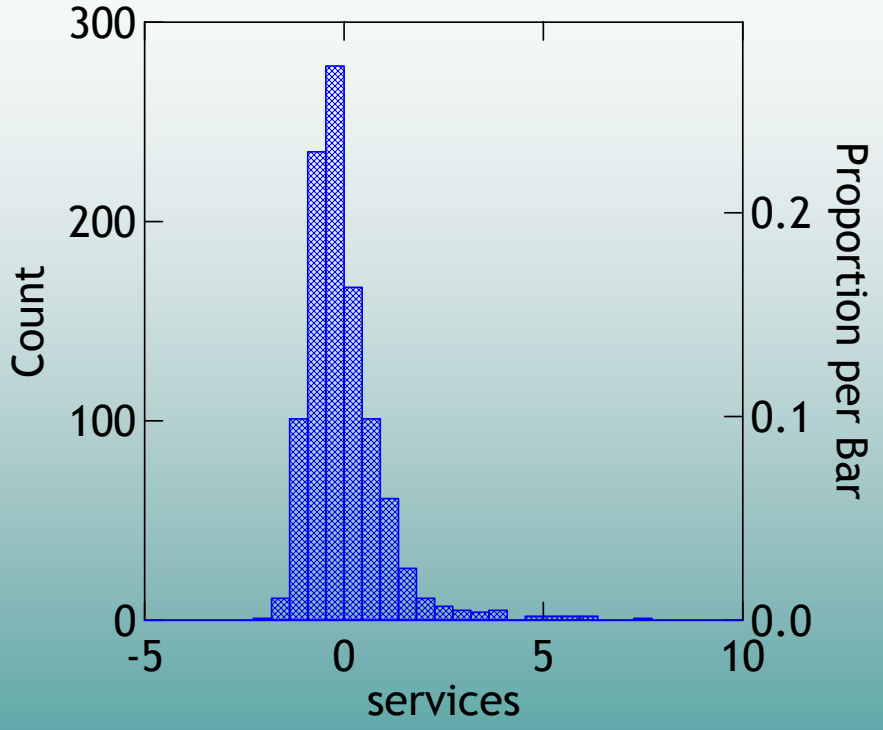


- traffic condition (0.67)
- presence of services (0.57)

- urban environment (0.83)
- urban green (0.78)

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators

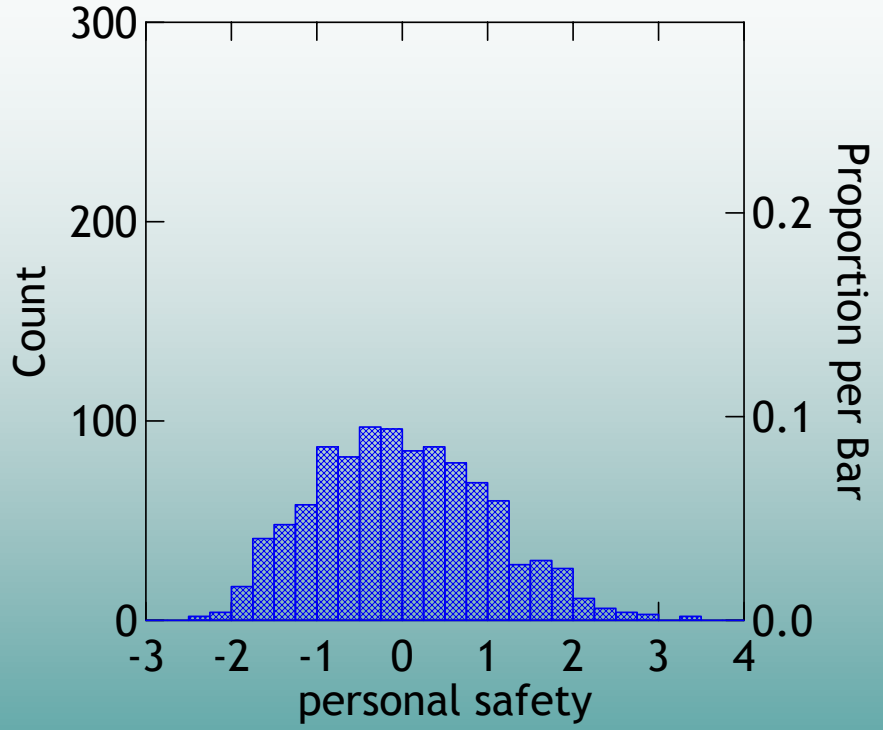
c) services



•extensive distribution (0.82) •zonal distribution (0.84)	•variable distribution (0.67) •evaluation of the presence of

Aggregation of the synthetical indicators

d) personal safety



- personal safety perception: daytime (0.86)
- personal safety perception: night-time (0.88)

3

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

The cluster analysis identified

4 typical profiles

taking into account:

composite indicators

synthetical indicators (not considered in aggregation process)

simple indicators of happiness and satisfaction for the city

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

subsequently

The multiple correspondence analysis

helped to better describe the identified groups

taking into account:

residence area
profession
sex
family
standard of education

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

1. the satisfied group

n = 442

high level of happiness

high level of satisfaction for one's life in Florence

high level of satisfaction for the district

positive image of the city

good evaluation of the district

high level of perception of personal safety

mostly men

being part of enlarged family context

carrying on a white-collar activity

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

2. the critical group

n = 303

mid-low level of happiness

mid-low level of satisfaction for one's life in Florence

mid-low level of satisfaction for the district

mid-low image of the city

mid-low evaluation of the district

mostly singles and young couples

high standard of education (degree)

carrying on managerial or autonomous activity

living in central city area

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

3. the satisfied-with-little group

n = 364

mid-low level of happiness

mid-low level of satisfaction for one's life in Florence

mid-low level of satisfaction for the district

mid-low image of the city

mid-low evaluation of the district

low level of perceived personal safety

mostly women

people living far-off the centre

Identification of typical profiles of citizens

4. the integrated group

n = 76

mid-high level of satisfaction for one's life in Florence

positive image of the city

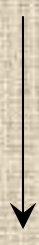
high appreciation for the presence of the tourism

regular time in daily-route distances

mostly elderly people (especially couples)

Conclusions

From the methodological point of view



The atypicity concerns

the operational definition

not necessarily

the conceptual definition

Conclusions

From the methodological point of view

The proposed approach allows

to measure the defined ambits

to explore the connection of the different levels of
he indicators also with other individual characteristics

Conclusions

From the policy point of view

The aggregation analysis suggests that the requirement to find syntheses has to take into account the risk of excessive synthesis (in presence of multivariate characteristics)

Conclusions

From the policy point of view

The effort to perform deep analyses (exploring the presence of significant individual profile)
can be recompensed by valuable and significant interpretation

Conclusions

From the Florentine point of view

The interviewed citizens have shown to have a general positive relation with their city in terms of both perception and evaluation

Conclusions

From the Florentine point of view

Two particular individual profiles:

elderly people has a particular positive relation with he city

singles (with high standard of education and an exacting job) have a difficult relation

Conclusions

From the Florentine point of view

The need to have up-to-dated information:

opportunity to build a system allowing periodical data collection

at the present time, this opportunity is under discussion within the Florentine research group