

**YOUTH HAPPINESS IN THE CITY:
Children's and Adolescents' Experiences of Happiness
in the Urban Environment of Lima, Peru**

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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University of Birmingham
February 2021

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness in urban contexts. As such, it sits at the intersection of three wider disciplines: children's geographies, urban studies, and geographies of wellbeing. Following an experiential and relational approach, the study focuses on the experienced, social, and significant features of the urban space for children and adolescents. Thus, it discusses the role of the city in terms of the physical environment and the emotional attachment to it. To do so, it employed a multi-methodological research programme conducted in Lima, Peru, between the months of March and July 2018. Methods included a qualitative stage comprising a 'draw, write and tell' activity (n=126) and a photo mapping activity (n=131), followed by semi-structured interviews (n=33). Also, a 3D Model building activity (n=20) and a participatory design workshop (n=20 children and 9 adults). Likewise, a quantitative in-school social survey was also applied (n=724). Participants were children, aged 8-11 and adolescents, aged 12-16 sampled from different socio-economic groups and geographical areas of the city. In addition, 29 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the local government, local practitioners, NGO representatives, and academics.

As a result, the thesis provides four key empirical findings: (1) Children's and adolescents' happiness can be conceptualised as fundamentally social, cutting across through all aspects of their everyday lives. (2) Children's and adolescents' experiences of urban happiness are likely to be mediated by four urban variables - sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality. (3) Urban spaces, providing experiences of happiness included parks, sport areas, streets, commercial and worshipping spaces; and (4) children's and adolescent's happiness in the city appeared to be moderated by context.

In addition, the thesis argues that considering the uniqueness of children's everyday experiences of happiness in the city is pivotal for developing more equitable and thriving communities for all. Thus, it outlines four actionable recommendations as guidelines for incorporating happiness into urban practice: (1) Urban spaces fostering happiness are clean and have adequate and sufficient suitable urban equipment. (2) Streets and lanes need to be kept in optimum conditions and well maintained to enhance children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the city. (3) Neighbourhood safety should be prioritised to amplify children's and adolescents' urban happiness; and (4) Urban spaces need to provide children and adolescents with opportunities to socially gather and play, key to their experiences of happiness.

By conducting empirical research in Lima, Peru, the thesis contributes to acknowledge the distinctive experiences of children and adolescents growing up in the socio-spatial segregated and fragmented Latin American urban context. Consequently, the study provided a valuable perspective on the region and the significance of levels of affluence, yielding insights for policy makers and urban practitioners seeking to translate happiness into urban policy and practice. Mainly, for those aiming to rethink the urban environment from a more child-friendly and human-centred perspective.

DEDICATION

*“El secreto para vivir una vida larga y buena
es vivir una vida feliz”*

*“The secret for a long, good life
is to live a happy life”*

Georgina Carozzi de Alfaro
(Grandma Georgie)
1926 - 2021

A mi Abuela Georgina, quien inspiró esta investigación
y quien ciertamente vivió una vida feliz

To Grandma Georgie, who inspired this research
and who indeed lived a happy life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped, contributed, and accompanied the process of this study and the writing of this thesis. First and foremost, I am thankful for all the children and adolescents who participated in this research. For those who took part of all or some of the activities I suggested, those who shared their drawings, their words, their photographs, their thoughts, and their ideas. More importantly for letting me get a glance into their everyday lives and allowing me to see and experience happiness and the city through their eyes. This research would not have been possible without their participation. Also, I am indebted to the headteachers and teachers who not only granted me permit to conduct my research but also helped me with needed coordination and logistics within. A special thanks goes as well, to all the local practitioners, NGO representatives and local authorities who were keen to be interviewed as part of this study. Their expertise contributed greatly to outline an overview of the urban landscape and challenges facing Lima.

I am also deeply thankful to my supervisors. Firstly, thanks go to Peter Kraftl and Sophie Hadfield-Hill, for introducing me to the fascinating world of the human geographies and more specifically to children's geographies. I still remember our first meetings and am particularly thankful for your guidance through the process of first getting to know the discipline and then finding my own voice within it. Also, your organisation, focused comments, encouraging support and speedy response has been key for completing this PhD. I would also like to thank Jessica Pykett for introducing me to the literature on relational wellbeing and encouraging me to engage with happiness debates I would not have rather found or considered.

My thanks go also to Shannon Barry, who kindly accepted to proofread this thesis providing and additional pair of eyes and an English native speaker review to this manuscript.

I would also like to give thanks to my Christian Life Communities (CLC), both in Peru and in UK, for keeping me grounded, always checking up on me, and accompanying all the process of this study with their presence and encouraging words. I cherish every meeting, every prayer and every social encounter (in the real and the virtual world).

Thanks also to all my friends in Peru, who in a way or another helped with this research. To Yulissa Rojas for providing me with contacts of schools. Also, to Tito Diaz, for putting me in contact with one of the remaining schools to complete my research. To Esteban Noriega and Cynthia Gutierrez for accompanying to my first presentations with the participants, and for serving as photographers during those sessions. To Carmen Icaza for kindly supporting me in conducting some of the workshops with children and providing her background as a schoolteacher to support to my fieldwork. To Alvaro Salazar for helping me setting up things during the participatory design workshop and for photographing part of the process.

To Soranch Valenzuela for supporting the participatory design workshop setting up process. Also, to her and Daniel Rivera for actively participating in the workshop as architecture and mental health experts correspondingly, and for spreading the word among their friends and colleagues. To Romina Beteta and Cynthia Zegarra, for their valuable friendship and unconditional support both in Peru and during their visit in UK.

My special thanks go to Liz and Derek Simmonds, my UK parents, who adopted me almost since the very beginning of this journey and have had nothing but words of praise, encouragement, care and love towards myself. Thanks, for all the flowers, supportive words, jam tarts and every single detail you always have with me.

I am deeply thankful to my parents, for always believing in me, even when embarking into this journey meant being away from home for so long. A special thanks for your constant support throughout every step of my life and regarding this study for being the best research assistants I could have asked for. I will always treasure cruising the city from north to south just for me to take photographs of all studied areas. The support in producing every, scaled tree, light post, bench, car among others for the 3d model building activities. For helping me setting up and photographing the process of the participatory design workshop. Infinite thanks for also supporting me with the survey data entry. It took us almost a month, but we got all the paper-based responses into the online database at last. To my Dad special thanks for always encouraging me to fly high and for being an example of love, kindness, responsibility, and care for others. To my Mom, unlimited thanks for the unconditional support, for always being there for all the love and laughs.

Most importantly, this journey and all what it entailed, personally and professionally would not have been possible without the love, support and dedication of my husband, Kevin Simmonds. My deepest gratitude to him who has been my strength throughout the process. I thank him, for believing in me through the ups and downs of this PhD. For pushing me to continue and getting it done. For his support with getting the online version of the survey up and running, and for sharing his expertise through the analysis of the quantitative data. For endless hours of conversations, for helping me crystalized my thoughts. For his ability to put things into perspective adding an alternative approach to why happiness really matters. Finally, for providing me with time, space and endless cups of tea during the last months of writing up. For his patience, love, care and for always making me laugh. I would not have produced this thesis without his support.

FUNDING AND PUBLICATIONS

This research was funded through a PhD scholarship awarded by the Peruvian National Council of Science and Technology – CONCYTEC (contract number 089-2016-FONDECYT-DE). Findings of this thesis have been presented at a number of international conferences and so have benefited from feedback, questions and further discussions. As a result:

- Aspects of Chapter 6 appeared **Alfaro-Simmonds, M. J.** (2021). Children experiencing happiness in the city In B. A. Searle, J. Pykett, & M. J. Alfaro-Simmonds (Eds.), *A Modern Guide to Wellbeing Research* (pp. 164-183). UK: Edward Elgar. Thanks go to Jessica Pykett and Beverley Searle for their comments and support.
- A brief overview of Chapter 6 has also been written into **Alfaro-Simmonds, M. J.** (2021). Felicidad urbana de niños y adolescentes en la ciudad de Lima: espacio público como generador de experiencias cotidianas de felicidad en niños y adolescentes. In *Ocupa tu Calle* (Ed.), *FIIU 5: Resiliencia Urbana. Tomo I: Artículos y Foto ensayos*. Lima: Ocupa tu Calle - Lima Como Vamos. As such thanks go to the editorial team and the organisation ‘Ocupa tu Calle’ for their comments on the piece.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CFC	Child Friendly Cities
CFCI	Child Friendly Cities Initiative
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child'
GUIC	Growing Up in the Cities
INEI	Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (National Institute of Statistics and Informatics)
LATAM	Latin America
MIMP	Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables (Department of Women and Vulnerable Populations)
OCDE	Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QoL	Quality of Life
SINEACE S	Sistema Nacional de Evaluacion, Acreditacion y Certificacion de la Calidad Educativa (Peruvian National System of Evaluation, Accreditation and Certification of Education Quality)
SWB	Subjective Wellbeing
UN- HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNCHS	United National Center for Human Settlements
UNCRD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHOQOL	World Health Organisation Quality of Life Assessment

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

I am writing this thesis at a compelling and decisive moment for urban research, policy, and practice and for younger urban dwellers. Currently, over 50% of the world's population lives in urban areas (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2018), and this population is progressively becoming younger. UN-HABITAT estimates that, by 2030, 60% of the urban population will be under 18 (UN-HABITAT, n.d.). As such, cities are currently being shaped by both rapid urbanisation and youth populations growing up in polarised contemporary landscapes, of both wealth, prosperity, and innovation, as well as poverty, inequality, and deprivation. In that sense, the urban context undeniably affects how children and adolescents explore, experience, shape, and relate to their surrounding environments on an everyday level. More specifically, it affects the extent to which they see those ordinary experiences as positively or negatively emotionally charged.

By attending to the ordinary and everyday lived experiences, scholars doing children's geographies have raised attention to the complex ways in which children's everyday lives are performed, shaped, and confronted by and with all those things seeming '*too obvious, too pointless, or too insignificant*' to become noticed (Horton & Kraftl, 2006, p. 71). What is more, discussions on children's everyday lives have shed light on the opportunities children's everyday environments and the larger national and global processes in which they are embedded provide to foster civic engagement and participation (Kraftl, 2013; Millei & Rautio, 2017). Following this lead, with a particular focus on urban environments, this thesis explores how young people experience cities on an everyday basis and how those experiences translate into happiness. As such, consideration of these debates is of particular importance to this research as children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness are not isolated events but rather sit at the continuum of events occurring in the ordinary.

It explores how children's and adolescents' experiences of urban space shape their individual and collective happiness. By interrogating the unique and intimate relationships young people forge with

their local environment (Bourke, 2016) and utilising an experiential approach to happiness, it demonstrates that the urban environment affects—positively or negatively—children’s and adolescents’ experiences of happiness in Lima. In doing so, it provides a novel perspective to both understand the city and approach urban policy, planning, and practice in a way that allows urban dwellers to flourish and cities to thrive.

The thesis lies at the interplay of three major, complex, and multifaceted areas of scholarship on cities, happiness, and children. Using an experiential approach, it explores these three interlaced strands of research within a Latin American context, providing an added layer of complexity and originality to the research. Previous research has independently addressed the relationship between cities and happiness, cities and children, and children and happiness (see, e.g., Bernini & Tampieri, 2019; Holder, 2012; Malone, 2017). However, the cities-happiness-children nexus has rarely been explored. The few prior studies attending this have focused their efforts on identifying children’s meaningful urban spaces (Rasmussen, 2004), analysing those spaces in contrast to urban objective measures (Kyttä, Broberg, & Kahila, 2012), exploring children’s urban environmental awareness in relation to their individual wellbeing (Ergler, Freeman, & Guiney, 2020; Ergler, Kearns, de Melo, & Coleman, 2017), and discussing specific urban features as enhancers of children’s happiness (Freeman, 2017). Critically, all of this work has taken place under a global north perspective. This thesis is a first attempt to address this gap and explore the varied ways in which these three subjects are intertwined. It is also, to my knowledge, the most robust, extensive, and detailed study undertaken in the region with children and adolescents regarding their experiences of both the city and happiness. As a result, this thesis also contributes to dislocating academic production from the Euro-American perspective (Roy, 2009), acknowledging the distinctive experiences of young people growing up in the socio-spatial segregated and fragmented Latin American urban context (Caldeira, 2001).

Cities are approached in this thesis not as economic, productive landscapes but rather as an array of urban, unequal territories and socio-cultural contexts constitutive of the everyday experience in which our lives are embedded and shaped. The thesis goes beyond the mere physical relationship with the urban environment. Instead, it focuses on (young people’s) perceptive experience of the built environment

(Berleant, 2010) and on the powerful emotions these experiences may evoke (Kenny, 2014). It grounds its analysis in children's and adolescents' subjective experience of space, paying attention to how the city is lived in and imagined by the (young) urban dwellers as particular users of the urban space on an everyday basis (Lindon, Aguilar, & Hiernaux, 2006). In doing so, it explores the emotional, embodied, intimate relationships children forge with the city (Wylie, 2007), particularly the ways this translates into pleasurable, enjoyable, happy experiences of and within the urban realm.

In terms of happiness, whilst acknowledging the complex, diverse, and multifaceted nature of the concept, the thesis goes beyond overly self-centred reported subjective measures (Atkinson, Bagnall, Corcoran, South, & Curtis, 2020) and follows Thin's (2012) understanding of happiness as essentially a social phenomenon. Thus, it puts forward the case that, for young people, happiness is not an individual occurrence but rather rooted in a more social experience that can be shaped, enhanced, or constrained by their local surroundings. In doing so, it emphasises the role of urban planning, design, and policy in shaping adequate urban living conditions for the experiencing of public happiness (Bartetzky & Schalenberg, 2011). As a result, the thesis acknowledges the ways in which our local surroundings affect varied aspects of our life, hence the way we experience happiness. Adopting an experiential perspective, rather than focusing on subjective or objective assessments of happiness, it follows a more relational approach (Atkinson, 2013; White, 2017). This provides an insight into the varied, individual and collective transactions young people establish with the urban space that affect their experiences of happiness. With regard to children, this thesis contributes to the sub-discipline of Children's Geographies which, following the New Social Studies of Childhood (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998), widely acknowledges young people as social agents and 'knowing' actors (Holt, 2011, p. 2). Thus, it successfully presents children's and adolescents' voices, in particular their opinions regarding their unique everyday intertwined experiences of happiness and place. To do so, it focuses on the many ways urban childhoods are simultaneously affected and affect the urban context in which their lives are embedded.

Considering the above, this study draws upon the perceptions of children and adolescents as residents of Lima, Peru, providing relevant insights into a variety of constructs and drivers of urban happiness. It argues that despite the numerous studies approaching the city under a happiness lens (see, e.g., Ballas,

2013; Bernini & Tampieri, 2019; Florida, Mellander, & Rentfrow, 2013; Papachristou & Rosas-Casals, 2019), linkages with the geographies of children are still a major research gap. In addition, these geographies remain under-researched in Latin American contexts and poorly considered in realms of policymaking in cities. The fact that, in Peru, there is no detailed policy addressing the evaluation, safeguarding, and development of either children's overall wellbeing or their protection and value of public urban spaces confirms that this is overlooked in current urban and policy agendas. Similarly, despite the proven linkages between the conditions of urban space and our overall wellbeing and happiness, the lack of reliable evidence and the existence of more urgent needs to be covered in Peru, such as elevated rates of poverty and inequality, make this an unmapped variable within the public agenda. The study constitutes a novel reference framework for the consideration of happiness as a reliable significant variable to achieve better urban conditions, cohesive communities, and thriving societies, not only in Peru but within the whole Latin American region.

1.2. Introducing Children's Geographies of Happiness

Guided by two important events, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) and the rise of the 'New Sociology of Childhood' (James et al., 1998; Qvortrup, Bardy, Sgritta, & Wintersberger, 1994), and sped up by the increasing prominence of children's position on the global political agenda (Horton, Kraftl, & Tucker, 2008) the sub-discipline of children's geographies has successfully '*give[n] children as a minority group a voice in an adultist world*' (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p. 7), addressing the many ways in which children perceive, experience, affect and are affected by space or spatial transactions. Furthermore, attention to young people's spatialities has served as a platform to cast light on, advance, and add value to research on young people's everyday lives (Horton et al., 2008). Furthermore, by exploring how emotions operate in children's everyday lives, the field of children's geographies has seen many of its contributions widely interwoven with those of emotional geographies (Blazek, 2019; Kraftl, 2013). In that sense, by acknowledging the significance of emotions embedded in the spatial, social, and everyday experiences of young people, the field of children's emotional geographies achieved recognition (Bartos, 2013; Bosco, 2010)

Together with the increasing attention to emotional geographies, the geographies of wellbeing and happiness have seen rising interest in wellbeing measurements and reliable evidence as a means of achieving more sustainable, human futures within policy and practice alike (Searle, Pykett, & Alfaro-Simmonds, 2021). However, little has been done to explore the geographies of happiness from the child's standpoint. In that sense, research sitting at the confluence of these multifaceted disciplines becomes highly significant, challenging, and foregrounding. Moreover, there is still work to be done in translating the concerns of children's geographies to more practical disciplines, such as planning, where children and adolescents are still not seen as a significant priority (Freeman, 2020).

Addressing this challenge by focusing on children's everyday urban spatialities, this thesis explores young people's use of and preferences regarding urban spaces under the lens of happiness. In doing so, it contributes to the ongoing debate regarding wellbeing within children's everyday geographies. Furthermore, by exploring the many ways children and adolescents experience happiness in their everyday urban environments, it provides valuable insight into the complex nature of children's emotional engagements with space and outline what can be introduced as children's geographies of happiness (see Chapter 2 for a detailed review of the literature).

1.3. Research Focus

Seeking to identify how and to what extent our living conditions affect children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness is a challenging task. It requires us to engage with historical multidisciplinary debates regarding happiness. Also, to have a clear understanding not only of what happiness means for young people but also how and where they experience happiness. Accordingly, this thesis deals with this task by exploring children's and adolescents' understandings and everyday experiences of happiness within the urban environment of Lima, Peru. In doing so, it discusses the positive and negative urban traits shaping, enhancing, or constraining children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness within a Latin American context.

Explicitly, the overarching aim of this thesis is:

To explore how children's and adolescents' experiences of urban space translate into those of happiness.

In doing so, it attends to three main objectives as listed in Table 1.1. The study answers three research questions emerging from each objective also outlined below. These questions serve as a structure for the empirical chapters of this thesis.

Table 1.1: THESIS OBJECTIVES
Source: Author

1. PICTURE	2. PLACE	3. PLAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To picture children's and adolescents' understandings of happiness as informed by their own cultural context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To place children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness within their local urban surroundings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To identify planning strategies for urban environments to enhance happiness not only for children and adolescents but for their neighbourhoods as a whole.

Attending to the first objective, the research explores the many ways in which young people in Lima 'picture' and understand happiness. In doing so, the thesis addresses the gap within both theoretical and empirical research concerned with children's and adolescents' concepts or understandings of happiness. By drawing together the growing, but still limited, research on children's happiness and wellbeing with empirical research undertaken within the study context, the research highlights the lack of and need for a clear understanding of how happiness is defined by both children and adolescents living in the contrasting socio-cultural and geographical contexts of Lima. Thus, it strives to acknowledge the effects of culture upon understandings and experiences of happiness (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004):

Research question 1: 'How do children and adolescents in Lima understand and construct the concept of happiness?'

As for the second objective, this thesis identifies the varied meaningful urban spaces in which children and adolescents 'place' their everyday experiences of happiness. As a result, the research addresses a further key gap in the literature by identifying the meaningful urban spaces in which children locate their

experiences of happiness and tracing how the built environment and urban context mediate and moderate these experiences. In doing so, it answers the second research question:

Research question 2: 'Where do children and adolescents in Lima experience and place happiness in the urban realm?'

Finally, for the purpose of addressing the third objective, this thesis uncovers young people's voices and views on their local urban surroundings. It does so by extending an invitation to use a happiness lens to 'plan' cities, districts, and neighbourhoods capable of enhancing happiness for young people and adults alike. By weaving together concerns and planning proposals, it provides reliable evidence advocating for happiness to be considered as a planning variable within a local context. Thus, it answers the third research question:

Research question 3: 'How would children and adolescents in Lima suggest changing or improving the city for enhancing their experiences of happiness in the urban realm?'

This thesis addresses these objectives and research questions by drawing upon an empirical research project conducted in Lima, Peru, in 2018 between the months of March and July. The combined mixed-methods dataset included a qualitative stage with 152 participants, comprising a 'draw, write and tell' and a photo mapping activity, followed by semi-structured interviews and a 3D model-making participatory design workshop. Also, a quantitative in-school survey with 724 respondents. In both cases, the sample consisted of children aged 8-11 and adolescents aged 12-16 years old from different social-economic groups and geographical areas of the city. In addition, 29 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the local government, practitioners, NGO representatives, and academics (see Chapter 4).

In summary, the thesis examines how the urban environment is perceived as a source of pleasurable experiences, thereby fostering happiness. Therefore, this thesis discusses the role of the city in terms of both the evidence of the physical environment and the emotional attachment to it in terms of sociability, safety, quality of the built environment, and accessibility. In doing so, it unveils how these positive emotional experiences shape urban children's and adolescents' identities, knowledge of, and attitudes

towards the city. As a result, it provides timely contributions that are valuable to academia, policy, and practice alike.

1.4. Thesis Structure

Considering the overall focus of the research, this thesis first provides a theoretical framework (Chapter 2), before describing the context of the study (Chapter 3) and the methodological approach (Chapter 4), informing the three empirical chapters on picturing happiness (Chapter 5), placing happiness (Chapter 6), and planning for happiness (Chapter 7). It wraps up the study with conclusions and suggestions for further research agendas (Chapter 8) (see Figure 1.1).

Following this first introductory chapter, *Chapter 2* provides the theoretical framework for the study. Divided into three main sections, the chapter consists of a literature review addressing the three main research strands guiding this research (see Section 1.1). Taking *cities* as a pivotal subject of research, the first section focuses on the linkages between cities and emotions, fundamentally looking into how the urban context has been studied under an emotional lens. The second section builds upon the first, exploring the affinity between cities and *happiness*. To do so, it first looks into the multifaceted and elusive nature of the term ‘happiness’. Subsequently, it provides an overall insight into how the built environment has been approached with regard to happiness. The third section then deals with the intimate and unique relationship between cities and *children*, seeking to outline the many ways young people use and experience the urban space. Also, by reviewing the literature concerning child-friendly cities, it critically discusses the possibilities and limitations of the child-friendly cities initiative and the extent to which they consider (or not) children’s and adolescents’ happiness within their guidelines.

Chapter 3 offers an illustration of the research context. As the study took place in a non-Western country, it first presents a general overview of the configuration of Latin American cities. Then, it provides an insight into the political, demographic, and sociocultural contexts in which the study participants were growing up. Finally, by relying on the voices of local experts, it uses empirical data to identify and depict the current challenges Lima faces as a city in terms of urban planning, design, and policymaking.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodological approach. It does so by describing the array of methods used for data collection, as well as the target population, ethical considerations, recruitment process, and analysis guidelines of each dataset. It describes a multimethodological approach to urban happiness that goes beyond subjective/objective measures typically used to understand the human-environment relationship. One that allows for the variability and temporality of children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness to be acknowledged and factored into the analysis. Subsequently, it also reflects briefly on the fieldwork experiences and challenges throughout both the data collection itself and the correspondent analysis of each dataset.

Chapter 5 is the first of three empirical chapters accounting for the first research objective and question. By contrasting relevant, but still narrow, literature mainly on children's lay understandings of happiness with empirical qualitative data, it provides insight into both similar and diverse young people's lay constructs of happiness. Through this, it seeks to '*picture*' participants' understandings of happiness, emphasising children's agency within their own lives and experiences and setting up the foundations for the following empirical chapters.

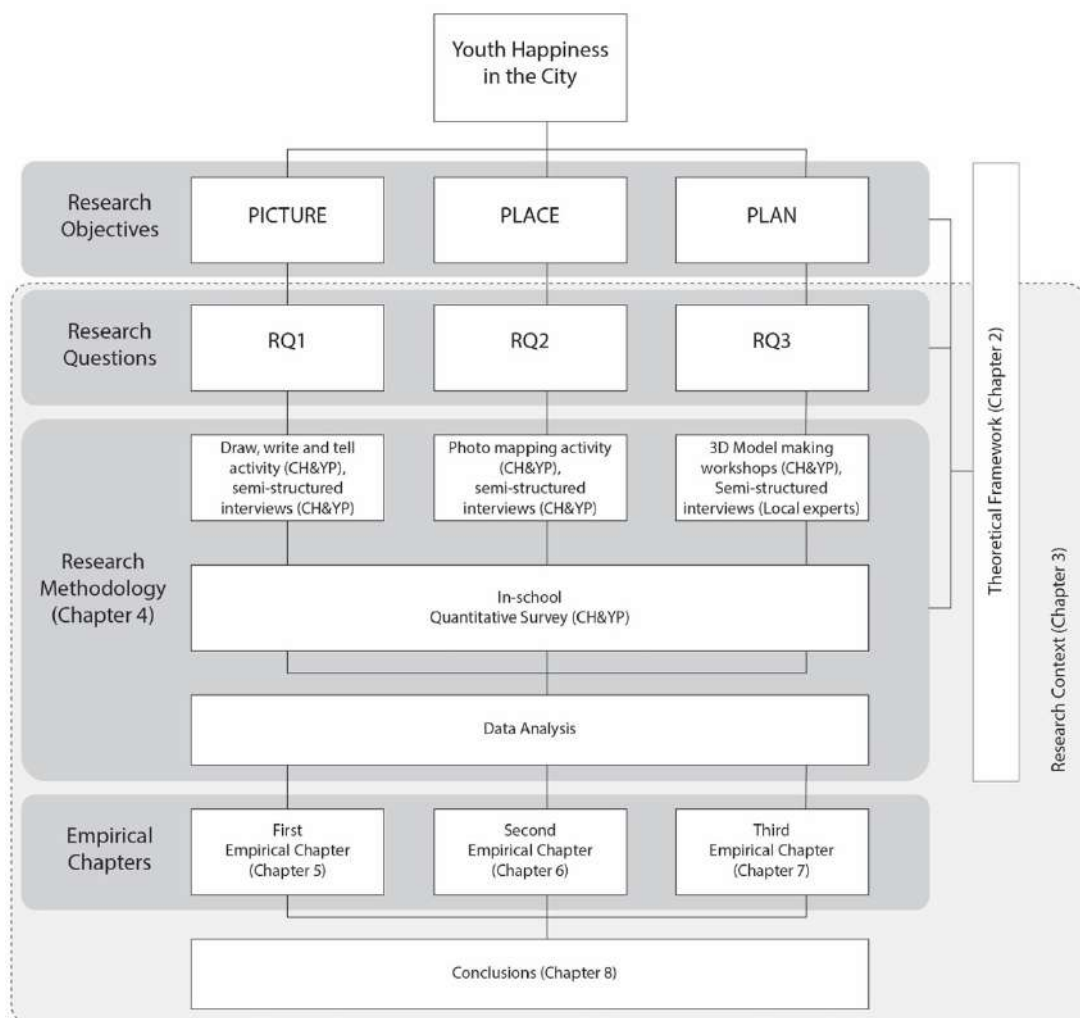
Chapter 6 addresses the second research objective and question. It builds upon the previous chapter, accounting explicitly for how young people's constructs of happiness reflect their experiences of the urban space. It first looks into a series of variables operating within children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness in the city, which serves as a useful framework for understanding what constitutes a happy urban place for children and adolescents. It then identifies the urban spaces in which young people in Lima '*place*' their experiences of happiness.

Chapter 7, the last of the three empirical chapters, attends to the third objective and research question investigating young people's concerns and priorities, offering actionable recommendations for enhancing—'*planning*'—happiness within the urban environment in Lima. In doing so, it validates children's and adolescents' expertise about their own surroundings and ability to not only critically assess the city but also to actively contribute to its rethinking. Weaving children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban space with local experts' opinions on the city, the chapter first unveils young people's concerns regarding their urban surroundings through a happiness lens, which sheds light on the

fragmented and unequal nature of the urban realm in Lima as the core challenge for incorporating happiness as a valid key variable within urban policy and practice. Further on, it outlines a set of recommendations with the potential of furthering the achievement of a happier city.

The final chapter of the thesis, *Chapter 8*, includes the conclusions of the study. Recalling the main objectives of the research, it highlights the key contributions of the study to spheres of both local and wider research, policy, and practice. Furthermore, taking the research context as an example, it introduces a priority mapping tool to provide an effective means by which to introduce happiness within urban policy and practice debates. This crucially provides a basis for translating theoretical and empirical research into practical, effective policymaking.

Figure 1.1: THESIS STRUCTURE
Source: Author



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This study brings together three major fields of study on cities, happiness, and children. The thesis attends to these major fields of scholarship in an interlaced way. It aims to identify the varied ways in which children and adolescents use and experience the urban environment and the conditions under which this relationship translates into positive emotions, more specifically happiness. As the introduction stressed, attending to these three strands of research—broad in their own ways—this thesis explores children’s and adolescents’ interactions with urban space, both physical and emotional. As such, this chapter reviews research of relevance to all three fields of study, providing a theoretical framework under which to explore what I am calling children’s geographies of happiness. Consequently, the contributions of studies made under the sub-discipline of children’s geographies are not discussed individually but rather transverse throughout the chapter.

In order to do so, the chapter is organised into three main sections exploring how the topics of cities, happiness, and children have been debated in previous theoretical and empirical discussions, highlighting the gaps this study aims to address. As the focus of this thesis is fundamentally urban, the fields of study concerning cities cut across through all three sections. As such, section 2.2 looks into how cities and emotions are related. To do so, it first provides a brief outlook into how emotions are, fundamentally, a social response to the surrounding world. It then proceeds to explore the theoretical debates around emotional geographies, highlighting relevant literature from the fields of both urban and childhood studies. In doing so, it provides a theoretical background on emotions for then dealing more specifically with happiness as a positive emotion.

Section 2.3 follows by paying particular attention to the relationship between cities and happiness. In order to do so, it starts by reviewing the elusive and multifaceted nature of the term ‘happiness’, attending to its multidisciplinary conceptualisations and uses. In doing so, this section identifies how this thesis is approaching the term. It then discusses the extent to which happiness has been explored within the field

of childhood studies, identifying the main gaps and challenges that need consideration when studying children's happiness. The section finishes by looking at how the fields of happiness and urban studies have intersected in previous debates.

Section 2.4 looks at how the fields of study concerning cities and children are interwoven. In doing so, it attends to the unique and diverse relationships and experiences children establish with and within the urban realm. It then moves forward by looking at how cities and urban design and planning practitioners have attended to this relationship by critically discussing what child-friendly cities entail. Section 2.5 concludes this chapter by providing a brief overview of studies exploring urban childhoods and happiness within the Latin American region, emphasising how studies attempting to explore children's happiness and urban experiences are still limited.

2.2. Cities and Emotions

Without a doubt, cities ignite an array of emotions populating their streets and buildings. Thus, in order to fully grasp how cities operate, we need to consider the multitude of living experiences and emotions animating the built environment (Kenny, 2014). Among the social sciences, geographers in particular, have played an important role in exploring and recognising the role of emotions in shaping both the world (Wright, 2012) and people's experiences of *'being-in-the-world'* (Davidson & Milligan, 2004, p. 524). As such, geographical studies have contributed to identify the relevance of emotions at various spatial scales including, but not limited to, spaces of the home, the neighbourhood, and the city (Valentine 2001, Davidson & Milligan, 2004). Furthermore, they have highlighted the relational dimension of the interaction between emotions and space. This offers valuable insights into 'how environments, variously conceived, are encountered as sources of distress, pleasure and commemoration, sometimes intensifying exclusion and sometimes fostering well-being' (Bondi et al., 2005, p.8).

However, despite the pervasiveness of emotions, urban designers and planners have historically neglected incorporating emotional dimensions of urban living within their practice (Hoch, 2006). Yet, their practice plays a decisive role in determining how we relate to the world and how our identities are shaped within the urban context. As such, some contemporary planners have called for the consideration

of a planning practice sensitive to emotions and embodied affects, *'alert to the soft-wired desires of its citizens as it is to the hard-wired infrastructures; as concern with the ludic as it is with the city's productive spaces'* (Sandercock, 2004, p. 134). In order to tackle these it is necessary to define emotions and consider how emotional experience is revealed within the city, for all citizens, including for children and adolescents.

The current section furthers the discussion in this regard by looking first into how emotions have been defined within the social sciences. Likewise, it discusses the complexity between the relation of emotions and affect and, whilst acknowledging the extensive theoretical discussions around them, aims for a working definition of both terms. Subsection 2.2.1 deals with geographical approaches to emotions, identifying the main traditional strands of thinking that have informed the sub-discipline of emotional geographies. Furthermore, it investigates how the city has been explored with an emotional lens and shed some light upon the consideration practitioners involved in the production of the city should have regarding the emotional dimension of the urban environment. Subsection 2.2.2, completes this section by dealing with the emotional geographies of children. In doing so, it provides a narrower approach to how emotional experiences of space and place are intertwined with the wider context of children's lives and prove to be vital to the development of children's identities.

2.2.1. Emotions: A Social Response to the World

Without a doubt, emotions play a significant role in our lives. They are key to human existence, deeply linked to our lives, and inform every aspect of them. However, emotions are not necessarily noticeable and can be extremely difficult to quantify, describe, or map (Liz Bondi, Davidson, & Smith, 2016; Nielek, Ciastek, & Kopec, 2017). Using an emotional lens, people are able to provide countless perspectives to their understanding of the world. Their perceptions, activities, relationships, differences, commonalities, and everyday lives are embedded in a sensory, emotional, many times chaotic world. In that sense, it is through emotions that identities are forged, values and beliefs defined, and societies shaped (Anderson & Smith, 2001; Kenny, 2014; Wright, 2012).

Furthermore, emotions are socially and culturally constructed (Ahmed, 2014), conceived not at an individual level but more under the complexity of social experiences among and between groups of which the individual is a part (Kenny, 2014). They acquire value when in motion between individuals and collectives. As such, they are relational. They generate and are generated by encounters, situated between people, across space, and among and between space and social systems (Everts & Wagner, 2012; Wright, 2012). Joy, anger, fear, sadness, anxiety, happiness, and so on are not only individual but social responses to a diversity of components that affect the way we sense and relate to the world in time and space. Understanding emotions, therefore, requires at least an approximation of the concept of affect. However, the distinction between affect and emotion has been the subject of an extensive theoretical, multidisciplinary discussion that has seen geographers, among others, taking a variety of positions and even shifting them over time (Pile, 2010).

Whilst many times interchangeable, extensive theoretical discussions have been held regarding the relationship or non-relationship between affect and emotions (Pile, 2010). Yet, for the purpose of this thesis, I adopt affect and emotion as two concepts that are indisputably related. For that matter, I rely on Thrift (2004), who explains affect as a *'set of embodied practices that produce visible conduct as an outer lining'* (2004, p. 60) and emotions as a *'rich moral array through which and with which the world is thought, and which can sense different things even though they cannot always be named'* (2004, p. 60). In other words, this means conceiving of affect as an active bodily reaction to an encounter where the

context and environment play decisive roles and emotion as a subjective response to that encounter. In that sense, as a conjunction of perceptive and interpretative practices, attention to emotion may further our understanding of what the physical world really represents for us. Or, regarding this thesis, particularly what the physical urban environment means (e.g., inviting or frightening) for children and adolescents and how they relate to it. That is, for example, understanding the city as one providing positive social opportunities or as one which is limited or restricted (see Chapter 6).

2.2.2. Emotional Geographies

Almost twenty years ago, Anderson and Smith (2001) reflected upon the construction of the human world and how it is experienced and lived through emotions. To do this, they made a general call for a consideration of the '*emotional content of social relations*' (2001, p. 7) not only as something basically private but as something that might considerably permeate the wider public, cultural, and policy spheres. Their plea placed geography as a discipline following in the interest of emotions as a social phenomenon succeeding previous works written early in sociology (Hochschild, 1979; Hochschild, 2012) and anthropology (Lutz, 1988; Rosaldo, 1980). For many scholars, the editorial paper by Anderson and Smith (2001) constituted a defining moment towards a wider consideration of emotions in geographical research as '*ways of knowing, being and doing in the broadest sense*' (2001, p. 8).

Subsequent research became part of what is now known as geography's 'emotional turn', constituting a body of work critical of previous assumptions that emotions were not substantially relevant (Bondi et al., 2016), but also aiming to recover and bring forward some of those aspects of emotions already approached in early geography through different traditions. Bondi (2005) clearly recalls three pre-existing and sometimes overlapping strands of thinking that preceded the 'emotional turn'. Humanistic, feminist, and non-representational geographers provided valuable contributions and influential groundwork towards what we know today as the sub-discipline of emotional geographies.

Informed by phenomenology, humanistic geographers aimed to attend not only to how the individual relates to, experiences and feels spaces and places but also to demonstrate the capacity of places to induce emotions (e.g., David; Ley & Samuels, 2014; Relph, 2008; Seamon & Buttner, 2015). They argued for

an integrated appreciation of the human experience where emotions are attributed to the subjective self as a response to an external stimulus (Bondi, 2005). Alternatively, feminist geographers rooted for an understanding of emotions as a result of wider social relations. They argued that emotions go beyond the individual subjective experience and, rather, they are embedded in the social and physical environments. In order to do so, they relied not only on the emotional experiences of women in particular spaces and places (e.g., Koskela, 1997; Valentine, 1989) but also, on how emotions define overall gendered experiences of space and place (e.g., Probyn, 1993; Scraton & Watson, 1998). Furthermore, advocating for the difference between affect and emotion, non-representational studies added to the discussion a demand to include and value that which cannot be easily represented or understood. In that sense, they argued that the difference between these two terms lay precisely in their representability. Whilst emotions can be expressed, they emphasised the importance of looking into the relevance of inexpressible affects (Pile, 2010).

Despite their different approaches, these three pioneering traditions share a widespread understanding of emotions as an inherent aspect of human life and a common concern considering how they are related to our experiences of space and time (Bondi, Davidson, & Smith, 2005). Each strand of thinking contributes valuable insights toward a more relational understanding of emotional geographies (Bondi, 2005). What remains challenging is approximating emotions in such a way as to understand how everyday socio-spatial experiences translate into interiorised individual and collective experiences, providing a wider arena in which to identify how cultural, contextual, and socio-demographic aspects impart different nuances to this matter. As such, this study attends to this challenge by looking specifically into those emotions that constitute and shape everyday experiences of happiness for children and adolescents. In doing so, it aims to provide a wider understanding of how the urban context translates (or not) into both individual and social positive experiences.

i. Urban Emotional Geographies

With over 50% of the population living in urban areas, it becomes increasingly important to examine the ways in which the urban fabric affects urban dwellers' everyday emotional experiences. As a person's relationship with the environment is not only physical but also emotional (Burns, 2000), when imagining the city, it becomes intuitive to recall a combined bodily

'(...) experience of smells, sounds and moving bodies choreographing their own paths meeting and likewise non meeting as they sidestep one another, averting their gaze'

(Carter, 2010; as cited by McGaw & Vance, 2008, p. 65).

In this sense, whilst the built environment may be physical, it has the capacity to evoke powerful emotions within its streets and buildings (Kenny, 2014; McGaw & Vance, 2008).

Within the urban context, streets, parks, squares, as well as monuments, benches, and so on become a constituent part of the everyday experience. Both spaces and objects transcend the architectural and urban realm and merge into a perceptual experience, thereby translating a mere location into a life event (Berleant, 2010). Momentary as they can be, these subjective emotional encounters are deeply woven into the way people relate to their environment and manage to develop a feeling of familiarity and belonging within it. It is within them that the uniqueness of a city is found; its conditions, urban fabric, and socio-demographic contexts induce emotions in specific ways, becoming part of its inhabitants' identities (Kenny, 2014).

The city, diverse as it is, evokes different emotional states in its inhabitants (Van Den Berg & Ter Heijne, 2005). People's everyday lives evolve mostly within the local geographical environment where such emotional relationships take place, contributing to their sense of belonging, which is key to their well-being and identity (Parr, Philo, & Burns, 2005). Based on Probyn (1996), an extensive body of literature has focused on the emotional dimension of belonging, conceptualising it as the yearning for attachments to either people or places. Previous studies have explored, for example, encounters between refugees and more settled residents (Askins, 2016), emotional experiences and attitudes towards neighbourhoods (Den Besten, 2010), or the ways in which emotions contribute to children's development of social identities (Kustatscher, 2016). Geographers, in particular, stressed the embodied and emotionally salient

nature of being in urban places, explaining that belonging is an active emotional affinity relating the individual to both the physical and social environment that they inhabit and experience (Wood & Waite, Hall, 2013; 2011). Acknowledging the materiality of everyday life and its emotional correspondence acquires an additional dimension when discussing the city and the impact of its overall diversity on its inhabitants, who are compelled to negotiate their different experiences of everyday life within the varied territories that compose the city (Ley, 1981). However, equally important is the capacity of people to create their own socio-demographic territories in the city and, by extension, their ability to develop a sense of identity and comfort, even within the variety of overlapping urban scenarios a metropolis can provide. It is within these territorial niches that urban dwellers can enact some control and develop a sense of comfort that a vast city can fail to provide on its own (see Langer, 1984). This correspondence and capacity to shape varied territories acquires different levels of complexity when children's and adolescents' everyday lives as urban dwellers are the focus (see Section 2.4).

Everyday encounters, where affects and emotions manifest, often occur in day-to-day urban spaces. As such:

'Cities may be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect. Particular affects such as anger, fear, happiness and joy are continually on the boil, rising here, subsiding there, and these affects continually manifest themselves in events which can take place either at a grand scale or simply as a part of continuing everyday life.'

(Thrift, 2004, p. 57)

Local parks, markets, sport facilities, and local cafes, among others, facilitate social interactions and forms of emotional and embodied engagement. Affects and emotions are, therefore, a key element of cities, permeating almost every urban activity. However, they seem to have been neglected in urban studies due possibly to being considered distracting and far from rational (Thrift, 2004). Moreover, traditionally the urban form has been studied as static rather than dynamic and fluid. Complex as it is, the city has been traditionally defined to a great extent by architects as a collection of buildings, by economists as a site for standardizing trade practices, and by planners as a transit node (Burns, 2000). However, the notion of an emotional dimension to the perception of the individual's surroundings challenged previous objective and rational assumptions. As such, over a decade ago, researchers and urban practitioners

dealing with the production of the city started to look for new human-centred ways to understand and design the city (e.g., Gehl, 2013; Sim, 2019).

In the urban context, emotions bring people, places, and things together but also produce divisions, fragmenting cultures and societies (Wright, 2012). One of the main indicators of the emotional nature of the built environment is that of the diversity of emotions it can evoke simultaneously for different populations. Consideration of this feature demands that urban strategies recognise and value formal and informal practices and properly include the vulnerable, often overlooked, oppressed and silenced population. Within the city, public spaces often fail to represent how a community lives, acts, and relates to the city, neglecting the multiplicity of cultural practices that converge within it. By engaging in discussions about how we feel and live in the city, embracing alternative approaches to urban practices challenging historically, highly rationalised urban agendas (Schiefelbusch, 2010), and considering emotions in various contexts and living conditions, practitioners involved in the production and management of the city might increase their ability to understand and provide the kind of city people need. What is more, considering happiness as an urban goal might provide significant insight into planning and delivering more liveable cities.

ii. Children's Emotional Geographies

As mentioned before, emotions play a significant role in the way we relate to the world. In this sense, children are not an exception. Rather, children's emotional experiences are woven into wider aspects of their lives and, therefore, are constitutive of and constituted by the social, cultural, economic, and political landscapes in which they are embedded (Windram-Geddes, 2013). As such, childhood is as much a spatial construction as it is a social one (Holloway & Valentine, 2000b). Emotions, in that sense, are relational, shaping place experiences at an array of geographical scales. Hence, they are key for understanding children's lived experiences and constructs (Blazek & Windram-Geddes, 2013). An ongoing, growing body of literature sets the foundations addressing significant attention to the relevance of emotions in children's and young people's lives (Blazek & Kraftl, 2015; Hackett, Seymour, & Procter, 2015; Horton & Kraftl, 2009).

Only just more than a decade ago, the fields of emotional geographies and children's geographies became intertwined in a variety of ways. By placing attention on the socio-spatial dimension of children's and young people's everyday lives, studies exploring the geographies of children drew attention to an array of places featuring prominently in their day-to-day interactions (e.g., schools, parks, playgrounds, skate parks) (See Holloway & Valentine, 2004). Thus, they have challenged assumptions of children as in need of constant protection and supervision (Holloway & Valentine, 2000a). Also, of children's knowledge of space on local, national, and global scales (Kustatscher, 2016), correspondingly offering new insights regarding the emotional spaces of childhood (Joassart-Marcelli & Bosco, 2015). Responsive to the spatial and relational character of emotions, the field of children's emotional geographies achieved recognition for acknowledging the significance of emotions within the spatial dimension of children's and young people's social relations and everyday experiences (Bartos, 2013; Bosco, 2010), as well as for furthering the need for empirical research using children's perceptions and agencies as core to their analysis (Aitken, 2001; Skelton & Aitken, 2019; Valentine, 2004).

Children are more likely to relate to the space through the present moment in ways that produce a colourful range of emotions (Matthews, 1992; Tuan, 1977 (2011)). Yet, emotions are also constantly fluctuating between people and space (Bartos 2013). Thus, children's and adolescents' emotional perceptions of space are likely to depict a compelling dynamic of 'pulls and pushes' (Matthews, 1992: 203). In that sense, children, and adolescents, navigate through overlapping spatial constituents of their identities. Home, school, the street, the park, and the neighbourhood all come together to produce extensive knowledge about the local, national, and global spaces serving as background for meaningful everyday interactions, which are themselves permeated with emotions. As a result, these everyday interactions shape their identities, providing diverse forms of belonging (Kustatscher, 2016). Approaching urban neighbourhoods through an emotional lens can shed light upon how varied and unique forms of local belonging are developed among children's and adolescents' everyday lives (Den Besten 2010; Kustatscher, 2016). Correspondingly it contributes to understanding how these emotional and relational experiences as well as sense of belonging are possibly translated into children's and adolescents' citizenship identities (Wood, 2012).

By playing or hanging out, children and adolescents are '*practically and affectually involved with their surroundings*' (Pyyry, 2015, p. 109). Subsequently, they experience urban space in ways that matter to them, strengthening their intuitive knowledge of the city. Experiencing the city becomes habitual and engrained in their everyday (Pyyry, 2015). Accordingly, the emotionality of both children's individual and collective experiences of space and place will correlate with the significance and the specific preferences they attached to urban spaces. For example, research by Korpela, Kytta, and Hartig (2002), analysing the place preferences of children aged 8-13 years old in Finland, revealed a correspondence between positive feelings and places where socialising was possible (such as parks or sports fields), and negative feelings with secluded, hidden places where it was easier to be alone. Happiness, anger, pride, excitement, and fear might be evoked by different places, either solitary or social. These could evolve into memories conveying feelings of safety, privacy, awareness, and insecurity, among others, and provide a wider sense of empowerment and self-efficacy to children in both the present and the future. Children's emotional geographies provide an interpretative framework for connecting private experiences with the urban realm (Ho, 2009). Thus, exploring the frequently taken-for-granted everyday experiences of urban spaces allows for a better understanding of how children and adolescents affect and are affected by the built environment. Likewise, this provides valuable opportunities for exploring how young people's emotional experiences such as those of happiness are impacted by the urban realm. In that sense, following Horton and Kraftl (2006), engaging in more focused research into how and to what extent emotions matter to the spatialities of children's lives remains relevant and is an ongoing task. Likewise, it is also imperative to question if and how children's emotional geographies can contribute towards current urban debates aiming to reclaim the city for the people (see Gehl, 2013).

2.2.3. Summary

The city evokes powerful emotions. For this reason, understanding more about the relationship between emotions and the urban context is a central challenge for designing, maintaining, and managing inclusive, accessible contemporary cities. Considering emotional experience demands an understanding of how the city shapes and is shaped not only by the powerful but by every single one of its inhabitants.

Therefore, different groups are allowed to transform the territorial niches they navigate, with a particular set of skills and opportunities to shape the city and different opportunities to be shaped by it (McGaw & Vance, 2008). Furthermore, this section suggested that focusing on the emotional everyday experiences occurring in the urban context provides an alternative insight into how the city is embodied, the self is shaped, and the environment is appropriated. Understanding the social-emotional experiences involves also paying attention to the cultural and socio-demographic contexts, norms, and values that contribute towards the sense of belonging and familiarity with the local environment. By exploring the social happiness experiences of children and adolescents, this thesis aims to contribute to the discussion. Fundamentally, it seeks to highlight how the city is experienced and lived in a way that can foster positive emotions.

Moreover, this section opened the discussion about how public spaces—in their diversity, presence or absence—constitute a setting through which children’s emotions come together in particular ways. Likewise, children’s everyday use of the streets and local surroundings, their activities and behaviour, their patterns of leisure and academic activities, and the emotional connections they forged in the process are central not just to the way they conceive their environment but to the ways in which the city is shaped by and shapes their own identities as city dwellers (see Section 2.4).

2.3. Cities and Happiness

Attempting to understand how our experiences of the city translate into experiences of happiness is a complex task. Seeking to approach that task from within children's and adolescents' perspectives is even more challenging. Venturing in this enterprise demands wider discussions about what happiness is and under what circumstances we experience happiness (Alfaro-Simmonds, 2021). The literature on happiness is vast and becoming more popular. Handbooks, self-guides, manuals, as well as academic journals, research blogs, and scientific books all seem to be in agreement that happiness is something we need to understand and aim for. Previous studies exploring parental dreams and expectations for their children show 'happiness' or 'well-being' among the top mentioned categories (Peterson et al., 2014). From parenting blogs to more rigorous academic sources, many adults refer to happiness as an ultimate goal for their offspring.

This section sheds light upon these questions by looking into how and to what extent previous research dealt with questions around cities and happiness. To do so, subsection 2.3.1 starts by looking into the multi-dimensional elusive concept of happiness and traces it back to the main traditions that had informed its research: the hedonic and eudaimonic. Likewise, it discusses the complexity of the term and the way traditional research has used it interchangeably with terms such as 'subjective well-being' (SWB) as well as a variety of alternative concepts. In doing so, it describes my position in this regard and explains how happiness must be studied as a more expansive concept than subjective well-being. Furthermore, it looks into how children factor into happiness research, giving particular emphasis to its adult-centric framing. In addition, it looks into what attempts have been made to study it and which considerations, if any, we might need to take into account to conduct children's happiness research.

Subsection 2.3.2 discusses a more specific and narrow approach to children's happiness: urban happiness. It provides an overall insight into how the built environment has been studied in regard to its effects on happiness. This section deals mostly with the concept of 'quality of life', as this is the most related term to studies regarding happiness and cities. It finishes by offering an alternative approach to this subject based on some lessons from the Latin American region. This overview explores the concept of happiness and how intertwined it is with the urban environment. It also highlights the singularity of researching

children's happiness and discusses the need for approaching urban happiness studies through a child-centric framework.

2.3.1. Happiness: A Multi-dimensional, Elusive Concept

Broad philosophical debates have been held throughout history with the purpose of unravelling and tackling a common and widely acceptable definition of happiness.

'Unfortunately, the nature of happiness has not been defined in a uniform way'
(Diener, Napa, & Lucas. 2009, p68)

The concept of happiness is elusive, complex, and has too many nuances to be narrowed to one definition. The term 'happiness' is highly valuable in popular and commercial discourses. The diversity of its common usage and multiple meanings might vary over time and across situations, cultures and individuals, yet it provides relevance to some of the more important aspects of our lives (Thin, 2012). Alternatively, many academics have favoured the wider term 'well-being'. This is generally a more inclusive concept as it comprises objective and subjective well-being. The latter is commonly used as a synonym for happiness (Angner, 2010; Diener, 2009; Dolan, Peasgood, & White, 2008; Ryff, 1989; Veenhoven, 2012).

Studies on SWB use it as an umbrella term covering a variety of concepts from temporary moods to the overall judgement of life satisfaction and from depression to euphoria. As a concept, it tends to cover, among other phenomena, good feelings, sense of satisfaction, positive emotions, pleasure and even more aspiring matters such as meaningful and purposeful life (Diener et al., 2009; Thin, 2012).

Furthermore, research concerning SWB currently includes a range of studies using terms such as 'quality of life' (Møller, 2007; Zikmund, 2003), 'life satisfaction' (Góngora & Castro Solano, 2014; Rojas, 2007), 'happiness' (Brereton, Clinch, & Ferreira, 2008; Schwanen & Wang, 2014), 'positive affect' (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), 'welfare' (Taylor, 2011) and 'wellness' (Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008). The use of the term remains ambiguous, and its reference in the literature prevails mostly interchangeably (Angner, 2010; Frey & Stutzer, 1999; Veenhoven, 2012; Wicker & Frick, 2015) (for an overall comparison of this concept, see Table 2.1). This thesis, however, will not deal with this interchangeability

or the definitions that arise from them. Instead, it will approach happiness as an affective, social phenomenon that can form part of the wider term of SWB.

Table 2.1: TERMS USED INTERCHANGEABLY WITH SWB AND HAPPINESS

Source: Author based on selected literature cited in the table

Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •An individual's perception of their position in life, within a context they lived in. •Includes physical, social, cultural, and environmental conditions. •(WHOQOL, 1994)
Positive Affect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reflection on key positive experiences of the ongoing everyday experiences in people's lives. •(Diener, Napa Scollon, and Lucas, 2009)
Life Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Global cognitive judgement of a person's life conditions overall or under specific domains •(Diener, Napa Scollon, and Lucas, 2009)
Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The state of an individual regarding how he copes with its environment. •Includes feelings and health •(Broom, 2001)
Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •State of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing. not only absence of disease •Active process of becoming aware and making choices towards their own potential. •(Dunn, 1961)

The literature on SWB refers to the term as:

'how and why people experience their lives in positive ways, including both cognitive judgements and affective reactions' (Diener, 1984, p. 542).

Nevertheless, widespread agreement concludes that SWB is composed of three elements (Diener, Kahneman, & Schwarz, 1999; Haybron, 2001).

- Presence of positive affect (Hedonic pleasurable feelings)
- Absence of negative affect (Positive emotional condition with absence of painful feelings)
- Life satisfaction: happiness as being satisfied with your life, generally and within specific domains.

What is more, researchers exploring SWB as being interchangeable with happiness have historically approached happiness through two traditions: the hedonic tradition and the eudaimonic tradition. The first conceptualises happiness as a continuity of momentary experiences of pleasures (Kahneman, 1999)

with the presence of positive emotions and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). The latter is rooted in Aristotle's definition of happiness as comprising meaning and personal growth by living a good and virtuous life (Ryff, 1989) (see Figure 2.1).

However, whilst it is widely accepted that subjective well-being comprises a number of isolated variables, ongoing debate has focused on identifying which approach or which combined approaches may lead us to grasp a better understanding of what might be considered real happiness. From theoretical and empirical attempts to measure and study it, it is possible, however, to affirm that SWB individual assessments go through a progressive process involving affective and cognitive processes informing what a person might call happiness—from immediate situations to evoking feelings and finally to an overall life satisfaction evaluation (Diener et al., 2009). Studying happiness thus requires acknowledging the time courses and circumstances under which the assessment is being made. Figure 2.2 provides a model of the progressive process through which subjective well-being might be conceptualised in varied ways. As such, this thesis focuses on the affective process through which external events or immediate situations progress into evoking positive emotions—fundamentally how the surrounding urban environment (external condition) allows positive experiences to render into happiness.

As such, I follow Thin's (2012) suggestion to understand happiness as essentially intersubjective and social, though commonly conceived at an individual level. He argues that happiness is not only private but a social process, as we are, after all, social beings. He understands and explains happiness as an active, interactive, and ongoing constructive process of engaging with the world and making sense of experiences linked to diverse affective and cognitive mechanisms that, combined, turn pleasurable experiences into meaningful episodes within the narrative of our lives—therefore, not just a passive enjoyment that can be obtained ready-made. In doing so, he calls for attention to the '*meso-world of society – families, clubs, workplaces, community organisations, social movements, social networks and thematic institutions*' (2012, p. 15), which have not received as much attention in happiness studies as the individual from a micro level, and nations from a macro level. As an active process, Csikszentmihalyi (2020) describes it as 'flow', a state achieved through balancing challenges and capabilities, excitement and contentment. As such, for anyone trying to improve or promote happiness, it is essential to

understand that happiness is not a passive state. It requires us to favour enjoyment and to constantly weigh how much our lives make sense and satisfy us. Consequently, to concur on how to measure, promote, and assess happiness—or more specifically for the purpose of this thesis, children’s and adolescents’ happiness—we need agreement on how these key elements inform children’s lives and, more importantly, how children experience the active process of happiness.

Figure 2.1: ELEMENTS OF WELL-BEING
Source: Author

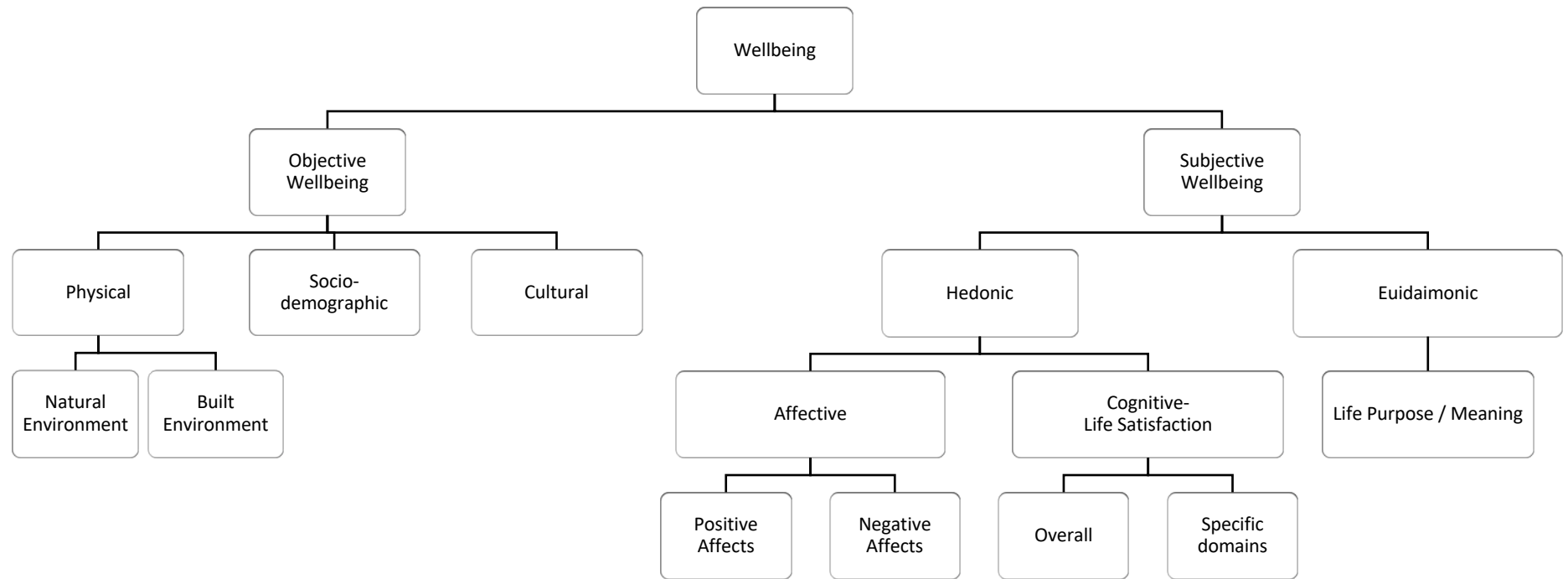
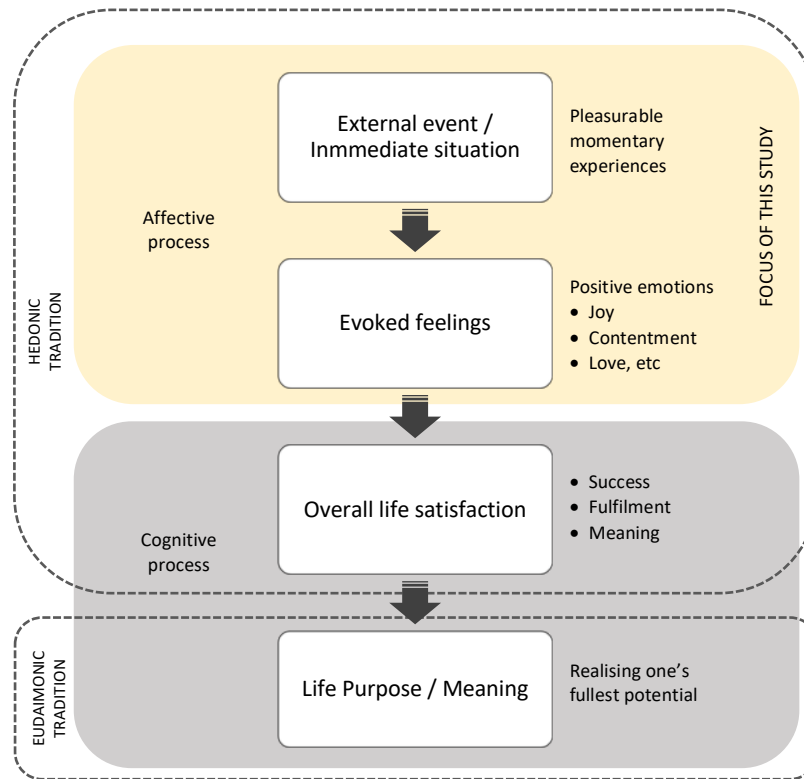


Figure 2.2: TEMPORAL STAGE MODEL OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING
 Source: Author adapted from (Diener et al., 2009, p. 80)



i. Happiness Research and Children

The high value and importance of happiness are indisputable, and its construct occupies a favoured position among researchers as it helps the aim of societal improvement. In exploring children’s experiences of happiness in the city, this thesis deals with children’s unique experiences of both happiness and the city. Correspondingly, this section accounts for how children’s happiness has been researched so far (a review on children and cities can be found below in Section 2.4). As such, empirical studies on happiness and SWB have traditionally targeted adults and, to a lesser extent, young people, adolescents, and children (Holder, 2012; Navarro et al., 2017). Overall, research on well-being, at least until the late 80s, had been informed and influenced by the conception of children as human-becoming or adults in formation.

Furthermore, research on children’s and young people’s happiness mostly followed the convention of using the term interchangeably with subjective well-being. Moreover, dominant studies regarding

children's subjective well-being have mostly proceeded through an adult-centric approach (Fattore, Mason, Watson, 2017), traditionally considering parents and guardians to be the most informed, relevant and appropriate voices in children's lives (Hayes, 2002). Subsequently, children's and adolescents' voices have been overlooked due to a belief in the lack of reliability attributed to their answers (Verhellen, 1997). As a result, empirical research attending to children's and adolescents' experiences of and perspectives on happiness is very rare. Consequently, policymaking and children's services became based on adult-orientated perceptions, attributions and understandings of children's and young people's subjective well-being (Fattore, Mason, Watson, 2008; Navarro et al., 2017).

Although interested in children's and adolescents' happiness and SWB, a number of assumptions have impeded the direct inclusion of children's voices in happiness research (Fattore, Mason, Watson, 2017). According to some scholars, this could have been due to developmental archetypes which silenced children's voices in research. Children's positionality would have been more an object of study rather than a subject (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; John, 2003; Qvortrup, 2005). However, with the appearance of the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (CRC) in 1989, its consequent development in the early 90s, and the emergence of the new sociology of childhood, an important shift towards research on and with children took place. James and Prout (2015, p. 8) explained it as follows:

'Children are and must be seen as active in the construction and determinations of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live. Children are not just the passive subjects of social structures and processes'

As for SWB research, this new approach meant a consensus on the necessity of acknowledging children and young people as experts on their own lives and experiences of SWB (Casas, Gonzales Navarro, & Aligué, 2013; Fattore, Mason, Watson, 2007). For this reason, the past two decades have witnessed an emergence of research focused on children's and young people's SWB. These studies have placed particular emphasis on exploring children's subjective reports on their own SWB (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, & Richardson, 2006). Others have made efforts to assess the validity of those measures, arguing that they do not *'truly translate children's thoughts on their own lives'* (Fernandes, Mendes, & Teixeira, 2012; K. A. Moore, 2020). Furthermore, studies attending to this critique sought to voice children's perspectives

regarding what means the most for their well-being (Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005; Wood & Selwyn, 2017). Attention to this approach has been particularly relevant in exploring children's views on their well-being in challenging times, such as the global pandemic and lockdown conditions that were occurring at the time of writing (Idoiaga Mondragon, Berasategi Sancho, Dosil Santamaria, & Eiguren Munitis, 2020). In addition, researchers exploring children's well-being have also involved children in describing what a 'good life' entails for them (Andresen, Diehm, Sander, & Ziegler, 2010; Oinonen, 2018). Moreover, particularly in the last decade, research on SWB has gained relevance and much more attention from both researchers and policymakers. However, this idea remains challenging for researchers, and therefore, there is still a gap in knowledge, specifically theories and frameworks for including children's voices when studying their happiness (Fattore, Mason, Watson, 2017). What is more, research studying children's well-being making explicit reference to happiness has been done using the term interchangeably with SWB. The elusiveness of the happiness concept (see Section 2.3.1) becomes even more complex when discussing children's and adolescents' experiences. Following, Ben-Arieh (2014) and Fattore, Mason, Watson (2017), any attempt to study children's happiness requires taking into account the following considerations:

- Children's present experiences, as well as how these present experiences will influence their future and their development.
- Children's living conditions and objective well-being, as their social and cultural realities, differ from those of adults in their lives and those conducting the research.
- Children's social agents' (e.g., parents, educators, paediatricians, social workers, etc.) perceptions, evaluations, and aspirations regarding children's lives.
- Children's perceptions, evaluations and aspirations regarding their own lives, constructed within, but also independently from, their interactions with adults. It has been proved that they may differ from adults and attach different meanings to particular experiences.
- Children's perceptions and value of time and living spaces gain relevance and complexity within the human development process.

Following this framework, this study explores children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the city by taking into consideration their geographical, socio-demographic, and cultural living conditions. In doing so, it is interested in understanding children's and adolescents' perceptions and aspirations,

specifically regarding their local surroundings. Due to time constraints, however, it does not attend to children as social agents and their perceptions of their lives, but it does explore adult urban practitioners' and local authorities' views on adequate living conditions for children growing up in cities.

Additionally, in the field of children's well-being, Frønes (2007) explains that studying children's well-being is much more complex than with other age groups, as children are constantly exposed to and confronted with different technologies, non-stop innovation, globalisation, and cultural change. Whilst not the focus of this research, references to these topics appeared to be woven into children's and adolescents' narratives. Thus, the findings of this study reflect transversally upon them.

Research taking into account children's perceptions as unique, but not mistaken, views of the world is becoming increasingly recognised (Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005). Several efforts to disentangle the complexity of children's and young people's conceptions of happiness and well-being are still emerging, yet, so far, much is still unknown regarding what they identify as happiness, which factors affect happiness, and what happiness looks like from their own personal perspectives (Fattore et al., 2008). Studies in this regard fall into one of two trends: the developmentalist or children's rights (OECD, 2009). The first focuses on children reaching developmental milestones, looking into behaviour, problems, deficits, and performances affecting their well-being. As such, it views the child as a '*work in progress*'. The latter recognises children's own experiences of well-being in the here and now and seeks children's insights into how they understand well-being and how they think it should be measured.

Research seeking children's and young people's views on their happiness has been mostly done in relation to specific environments (e.g., school, neighbourhood) (Koch, 2018; Moses, 2006; Stasulane, 2017), particular life domains (e.g., academic performance, social relationships, culture, health) (Holder & Coleman, 2007; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2017; Lu & Robin, 2004; Booker, Skew, Sacker, & Kelly, 2014; Kosher & Ben-Arieh, 2017; O'Higgins, 2010), and specific conditions (e.g., family income, parents' work) (Hong & Goh, 2019; Strazdins, Korda, Lim, Broom, & D'Souza, 2004). These studies succeeded in providing valuable insights into specific aspects of children's lives. Very few, however, dealt with the significance and complexity of the happiness experience for children and adolescents widely within their urban environment. As a result of the above considerations, an aim of this thesis is to identify

and understand, from multiple angles, the active happiness process from the vantage point of children in their urban contexts. Recognising the child's standpoint on happiness and urban happiness will provide a distinctive contribution that is likely to be significant for policymakers and practitioners attempting to improve the lives of children and the urban environments they live in.

2.3.2. Urban Happiness

Significant theoretical and empirical research has been made towards unravelling if, and to what extent, the environment affects the way we feel, in either a positive way or a negative way. Findings from previous studies suggest that where we live can indeed, affect our overall well-being and the way we behave (Florida, Mellander, & Rentfrow, 2013; Hartig, Evans, Jamner, Davis, & Gärling, 2003). As such, urban happiness attends to, the capacity an urban landscape has, to enable positive feelings and favourable perceptions of place for inhabitants and visitors (Pringle & Guaralda, 2018; Sepe, 2017b). Consequently, the concept of urban happiness, needs to be explored considering all, social, cultural, economic, and environmental variables (Ballas, 2013). Hence it is not a static concept, rather, one continually under transformation (Sepe, 2017a). In addition, like the concept of happiness, urban happiness is equally multifaced in nature (See Subsection 2.3.1). As such, it agglomerates happiness-related terms such as well-being and Quality of Life (QoL), among others. However, applying a quantitative paper-keywords analysis (see Newman, 2018), Papachristou and Rosas-Casals (2019) demonstrated, literature discussing aspects of happiness and the urban environment seemed to be mainly dominated by the concept of quality of life.

Key to the studies exploring QoL is the relationship developed between urban dwellers and their everyday urban environment (Pacione, 2003). Consequently, QoL can be widely understood as the satisfaction a person can gain from their surrounding conditions, both social and physical. These conditions are scale-dependent and are able to affect individual or group behaviour (Mulligan, Carruthers, & Cahill, 2004). As such, studies exploring QoL tend to explore both individual and environmental attributes that might affect, influence, and shape people's lives and happiness (Marans & Stimson, 2011). Findings on this strand of research have uncovered a number of geographical factors that influence people's levels of

happiness. Environmental quality, public spaces, green and outdoor recreational areas, social conditions, and spatial inequalities, to mention some (Alesina, Di Tella, & Macculloch, 2004; Cattell, Dines, Gesler, & Curtis, 2008; Douglas, Lennon, & Scott, 2017; Kent, Ma, & Mulley, 2017; MacKerron & Mourato, 2013; Thompson, 2013; Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

In addition, urban happiness research has progressively expanded from the macro geographical level approach to targeting urban and suburban metropolitan areas. Regions and countries have been measured, analysed, rated, and ranked (e.g., see Helliwell (2019) World Happiness Report, Jeffrey (2016) Happy Planet Index, OECD (2020) How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being), providing a macro-level analysis of what constitutes people happiness. Concurrently, studies undertaken on a more local level have contributed to identifying specific urban traits affecting citizens' everyday happiness.

Findings at a more local level have allowed for contrasting results, suggesting that urban happiness is context-dependent. As such, suburban and urban neighbourhood citizens within the same city might account for different levels of happiness (Adams, 1992). By contrast, happiness appeared to be greater in small rural towns rather than in large central cities (Berry & Okulicz-Kozaryn, 2011). Differences could be accounted for by density, heterogeneity, homogeneity, geographical extension, and different socio-cultural backgrounds.

To do so, studies attending to the '*person-environment relationship*', had typically either used objective or subjective measures (Pacione, 2003, p. 19). The former has frequently confined their analyses to secondary data available mostly from official country databases, including that of a census (Marans & Stimson, 2011). In doing so, both individual (e.g., income, employment rate, age, health, human capital) and environmental data (e.g., climate, education, health services, leisure opportunities, environmental pollution) have been extracted and analysed in view of establishing valid positive or negative correlations. Largely, research taking the objective approach has shed light on the incidence of factors such as housing standards, wealth, and urban deprivation upon personal happiness (Ballas, 2013). By contrast, subjective measures using social survey data have been popular among a body of multidisciplinary researchers principally aiming to collect primary data targeting individual's perceptions or evaluations of varied environmental aspects regarding QoL (Marans & Stimson, 2011).

Fundamentally, this includes asking people to rate their health, well-being, life satisfaction, and overall sense of happiness in relation to their ongoing conditions. In practice, under this approach, happiness is one of a number of indicators assessed to establish the extent and effects of the '*person-environment relationship*'. As such, previous studies suggest subjective measures can shed light upon the liveability conditions of the urban space (Adam, Ab Ghafar, Ahmed, & Nila, 2017). However, as objective measures can vary under individual characteristics such as gender, age, income, and cultural and contextual differences (Ballas, 2013), it has been argued that using both objective and subjective measures can provide a better and more holistic assessment of urban environmental quality and correspondingly urban happiness. Pacione (2003, p. 20) describes it as a need for looking into both '*the city on the ground and the city in the mind*'. However, whilst studies of QoL have provided significant insights towards understanding how the environment affects human happiness, these have extensively reported on adults' inputs. As such, children's and adolescents' urban happiness remains under researched (see Chapter 1). Nevertheless, by suggesting happiness is fundamentally intersubjective and social, this thesis argues a more than subjective/objective way to explore the human-environment relationship is needed. Therefore, whilst the methodology used in this study includes a social survey asking children and adolescents to rate their perceived urban happiness and their sense of overall happiness, it also uses a multi-methodological approach to attend to the varied ways in which children and adolescents relate with each other and with the environment (see Chapter 4). Hence, it argues that children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness within their urban surroundings are fundamentally relational (White, 2017).

In geography, relational well-being and happiness are defined as sitting at the interplay of physical and emotional interactions with space (Atkinson, 2013). As such, happiness is the outcome of the interaction between personal, social, and environmental ongoing mechanisms interacting at an array of scales. Consequently, the definition allows for an integrative, more inclusive social approach to well-being, blurring the line between the individual and the collective (White, 2017). In doing so, it understands well-being as a continuous process open to change over time (Atkinson, 2013). Hence, it is forged within the everyday. Happiness then is to be understood as an ongoing sequence of pleasurable moments rather than isolated events.

2.3.3. Summary

The concept of happiness is elusive, multifaceted, and has been used interchangeably with a variety of terms. However, by exploring the nature of this term, this section provides an overview of what happiness research entails. Considering this, it steps out of the interchangeable use of the term and suggests understanding happiness as social and intersubjective. Additionally, it explores research undertaken in the field of happiness studies regarding both children and cities. By reviewing previous research undertaken with children about their well-being and happiness, it discusses the gaps in the literature and the challenges of conducting happiness research with children and adolescents. In doing so, it acknowledges the added level of complexity needed to be considered when seeking to understand children's experiences of happiness.

The section then progresses onto looking at how cities and happiness relate. As such, it explores how urban happiness permeates the elusive nature of the term 'happiness' and the varied ways in which it has been approached. In doing so, it outlines both objective and subjective approaches used for attending to the varied ways in which the person is affected by the environment. However, this study suggests challenging that dichotomy by appealing to a more relational approach for understanding happiness. In addition, a key gap of interest to this thesis is the adult-centric approach that almost all the studies have taken. When attending to urban happiness, children and adolescents have rarely been included. In looking into how children and adolescents experience happiness in the city, this thesis aims to contribute to the discussion on young peoples' urban happiness. Fundamentally, this study aims to contribute to the literature of both children's and adolescents' overall happiness and, more specifically, children's and adolescents' urban happiness. By targeting children and adolescents under a relational and experiential approach, it argues that a different set of variables and determinants of urban happiness can be outlined. One that factors in the varied ways in which children and adolescents relate with the space on an everyday basis and might well shift the balance between what makes a happy city for children as opposed to adults.

2.4. Cities and Children

Children's and adolescents' presence in and use of the city seems to be progressively diminishing. At least in western societies, this has been raised as a concern (Tremblay et al., 2015). Literature exploring this matter has discussed how children's and adolescents' unsupervised outdoor activities are important for them to thrive and for neighbourhoods and cities overall (Brussoni et al., 2020). Without young people's presence in the streets, neighbourhood social fabric tends to deteriorate, cities continue to be car-dominated, and urban exclusion increases (Cook, Whitzman, & Tranter, 2015). Thus, cities become less human. Attending to this, the thesis calls for consideration of children's and adolescents' relationship with the city, their perceived urban happiness, and the current role of urban space in their lives.

This section aims to shed light upon these issues by looking into both how children relate to urban space and how this affects and shapes their everyday lives and potentially their experiences of happiness. In addition, it explores how cities are responding to children's and adolescents' need for safe and adequate spaces in the urban realm. In order to do so, it is divided into two subsections. Subsection 2.4.1 provides an insight into how the city is not only a mere scenography for children but a constitutive element of their individual and collective social development. By exploring the importance of the neighbourhood, it also highlights the relevance of the local, close-to-home surroundings. Also, it discusses the ways in which children and adolescents use the city and, correspondingly, how their perceived urban happiness is likely to be transformed by parental fears.

Subsection 2.4.2 continues outlining what a city needs to be more child-friendly. In doing so, it introduces and critically discusses the Child Friendly Cities Initiative. It goes further into exploring the benefits and limitations of participatory planning approaches involving children and adolescents. This overview explores the need for acknowledging children's and adolescents' experiences of the city as equal to adults' experiences. As well as this, it emphasises the need to listen to children and demonstrates how being willing to do this might be a challenge. Even more, if a happiness approach to urban planning is being taken.

2.4.1. Children's Experiences of the City

Cities are often imagined and described as complex systems of interconnected infrastructures and exhilarating social encounters. They are also usually positioned between dichotomised discourses of thrilling, exciting, and creative contexts and constraining, threatening, frightening, and diverse but not necessarily integrated environments. In this contrasting scenario, children and adolescents are immersed in an everlasting negotiating process for space and place and are also entitled to privacy, independence, and safety (Leverett, 2011). As a result, children develop agency, strengthen their sense of autonomy, and acquire risk assessment skills (Carroll, Witten, Kearns, & Donovan, 2015; Van Der Burgt, 2015). However, the ways in which these universal needs are provided and fulfilled are environmentally, socially, culturally, and place-specific (Ergler, Kearns, & Witten, 2016; Freeman & Tranter, 2011). Navigating between the spaces of the home, neighbourhood, or district, children's everyday experiences are regularly embedded in and affected by the city (Foley & Leverett, 2011). Likewise, their experiences are systematically shaped by the set of norms ruling space and time, as established and shared at home. (Christensen & O'Brien, 2003). As such, the city frames children's and adolescents' individual and collective identity whilst improving their sense of place and belonging (Canosa, Graham, & Wilson, 2018; Blazek, 2011; Christensen & O'Brien, 2003). What is more, in an increasingly globalised world, through both social and physical urban experiences, children and adolescents are exposed to hyper-diverse cities constantly shaping their sense of self, freedom, inclusion and their affective relationships with the space (Witten, Kearns, Carroll, & Asiasiga, 2019). This is particularly relevant in the case of Lima, a historically multicultural but divided society causing contrasting and challenging everyday emotional relationships with the urban realm (see Chapter 6).

Geographically, neighbourhoods are a primary component of cities. They are local spatial units within a wider urban area in which people live and interact. Also, they comprise a combined setting of housing, local services, and facilities upon which inhabitants rely and build their lives around (Freeman, 2010). Hence, their fabric sets the conditions under which individual and collective development occurs (Wheeler, 2013). Therefore, they play a fundamental part in children's lives (Freeman & Tranter, 2011; Kytta et al., 2018). Researchers doing children's geographies have extensively reported on this role,

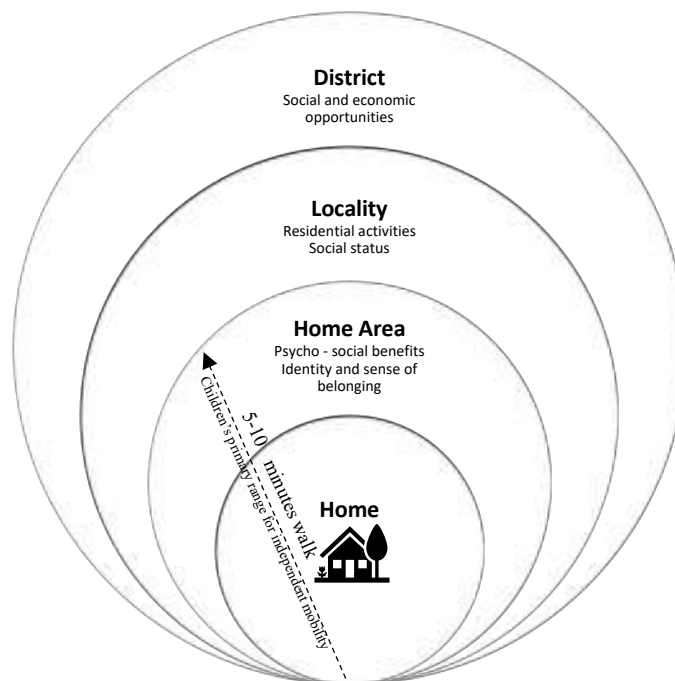
particularly as part of children's everyday lives. In doing so, they have discussed both the spatial and social nature of neighbourhoods. Previous studies demonstrate that they enable social contact, are essential as meeting places, and are key arenas for developing social networks (Freeman, 2010; Schnur, 2005). Consequently, the extent to which children and adolescents engage or do not engage with their neighbourhoods will enhance or lessen their independence, resilience, and social abilities (Carroll et al., 2015; Chaudhury, Hinckson, Badland, & Oliver, 2019). Different from adults, for whom neighbourhoods might just as well be supporting environments, for children, they are the main scenarios for their everyday experiences (Carroll et al., 2015). In doing so, these studies transversally engage with well-being debates by reflecting on the significant role the neighbourhood plays in children's lives (e.g., regarding physical activity or mental health). As such, it is likely that neighbourhoods also play a part in children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness,

Ideally, neighbourhoods should be places for developing social skills and competencies by interacting with adults, peers, and their surroundings (Lennard & Crowhurst Lennard, 1992; Moore, 2017; Witten et al., 2019). Likewise, it should be in the neighbourhood where they learn about society, how it operates (Malone, 2006) and how they fit within it. A place where they can progressively test their abilities before facing the vast puzzling nature of the city as a whole (Bartlett, Hart, Satterthwaite, de la Barra, & Missair, 2016; Christensen & O'Brien, 2003; Malone, 2017). Fulfilling these ideals depends on the availability and quality of the immediate environment and, in particular, of public spaces near the home. However, *immediate* and *near* are both broad concepts that can hold different meanings for different people. In that sense, for the purpose of this thesis, I rely on Kearns and Parkinson's (2001) multi-layered scheme through which they analyse the neighbourhood using three different scales: the home area, commonly within a 5-10 minute walking distance from one's home, followed by the locality and the urban district or region (see Figure 2.3). Under these scales, I will follow Freeman (2010) and discuss children's primary range of independent mobility (see Riazi & Faulkner, 2018), mainly in relation to the 'home area'. However, attending to the increased sense of freedom adolescents benefit from whilst growing up, I will widen the analysis when discussing their specific experiences of urban happiness. This follows an agreement on children increasing their range and reach in the public spaces as they grow up into

adolescence (Moore, 2017). Likewise, the thesis seeks to explore the contrasting way in which these scales expand or contract within different socio-economical and geographical urban contexts. Thus, it aims to identify how these scales enhance or constrain children's and adolescents' opportunities to experience happiness within the urban realm.

The importance of the neighbourhood and, more particularly, of the street and public spaces lies in how they engage with children's development. They play a key role in helping draw the boundaries between children, adolescents, and other youth (Matthews, 1992). It is through the experience of the street and public space that young people's aspirations come to inform the way in which they engage as adult citizens (Christensen, Hadfield-Hill, Horton, & Kraftl, 2017; Christensen & O'Brien, 2003). However, understanding children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban environment is a challenging and dynamic task. As such, it demands recognising an array of urban spaces beyond the home and school as important, potentially meaningful spaces for enabling children's independent mobility and social interaction, thereby allowing for happiness to be experienced (see Chapter 6).

Figure 2.3: MULTI-LAYERED NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHEME
Source: Author based on Kearns and Parkinson (2001)



Whilst the argument regarding the importance of neighbourhoods as key elements of urban life and social development remains strong (Bailey, Farrell, Kuchler, & Stroebel, 2020; Crow, Allan, & Summers, 2002), some researchers have questioned whether the urban-social connection is fading due to people's lives being enacted across multiple localities within the contemporary city (Kearns & Parkinson, 2001). Likewise, multiple studies have raised similar concerns regarding the extent and quality of children's experiences of the city. Children retreating from the streets and limiting their interaction with natural and open environments are some of the concerns raised by different researchers (Christensen & O'Brien, 2003; Peake & Rieker, 2013; Tremblay et al., 2015; Villanueva et al., 2014). Alongside the above, an increasing body of research has been documenting the rise of parental fear and consequently the adoption of overprotective measures to protect children from any risk or external danger. Traffic, strangers, and drug addicts being at the top of the list (Furedi, 2002; Jelleyman, McPhee, Brussoni, Bundy, & Duncan, 2019; Morrow, 2003). Rather than protecting children from danger, the outcome might well work against their development of basic survival and necessary skills to fully navigate the city (Cortés-Morales, 2020; Freeman & Tranter, 2011). Correspondingly, measures taken by parents who want to protect their children from harm, by restricting their children's explorations of the city are likely to influence the extent of children's and adolescents' opportunities to experience urban happiness.

What used to be outdoor exploratory play appears to be declining and replaced by a process referred to as the *domestication* of play—a way of describing how spaces and activities for children and adolescents have undergone a relocation from external, open spaces into enclosed, protected areas (Brunelle, Brussoni, Herrington, Matsuba, & Pratt, 2018; Hengst, 2007). Consequently, institutionalised spaces have seen their scope increased and diversified. As such, not only educational but commercial spaces have responded effectively to these needs and now consider indoor play areas as one of a variety of entertaining services they offer (Freeman & Tranter, 2011; Mckendrick, Bradford, & Fielder, 2000). Furthermore, another term—*insularisation*¹—has increasingly been used to explain children's experiences occurring in between the previous two - a way of illustrating the extent, complexity, and

¹ '*Insularisation is a term used to describe the fragmented experience of space by children in the present era*' (Leverett, 2011:12)

fragmented quality of contemporary children's urban experiences (Leverett, 2011; Zeiher, 2003). These new forms of experiencing the city have been criticised for promoting children's and adolescents' sedentarism and affecting both their physical health and overall well-being (Bento & Dias, 2017) likely reshaping children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness within the urban realm.

Following Woolcock, Gleeson, and Randolph (2010), this might be due to, among other reasons, poor neighbourhood, and residential design. Though problematic and in need of attention, critically, these concerns have been raised mainly from within the global north. Similar analysis within the Latin American region is still limited and yet to be fully assessed (see Subsection 2.5.1). Consideration of the specific nature of Latin American urban landscapes (see Chapter 3) might well confirm these findings or more possibly expand them. It is likely that exploring children's lives in Latin American cities will provide a broad and contrasting set of urban and social traits affecting children's everyday urban lives. As such, this thesis aims to contribute to that debate by exploring the key urban variable mediating children's experiences of happiness in Lima (see Chapter 6).

2.4.2. Cities for Children: Child-friendly Cities

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that children have the right to live free from harm in a clean environment that promotes and preserves their health and well-being, engaging in free play and age-appropriate recreational activities (UNICEF, 1992). With that in mind, the needs of children and adolescents regarding their environment must be recognised fully and taken into consideration to inform urban practitioners both in essence and method (Baraldi, 2003). To do so, participatory processes targeting the production of the city need to be seen with considerable attention in a way that recognises and appropriately utilises children's and adolescents' insights, imagination, and ideas regarding their urban surroundings and guaranteeing suitable living conditions (UNCHS, 1996). By acknowledging children's needs and concerns, the UN openly recognised the need for attention on building a world suitable for all inhabitants (UNICEF, 1996). They placed efforts in developing a network of competent local government bodies committed to ensuring that their public policies and strategies will prioritise and involve children in decision-making processes (UNICEF, 2004). As such, the child-friendly cities

(CFC) philosophy was fuelled by the conviction that, to successfully implement the CRC at a national and local level, children need to be acknowledged as active participants in developing sustainable communities. Therefore, they need to be provided with opportunities for contributing and voicing their thoughts (UNICEF, 1997). In summary:

A child-friendly city is a city, town, community or any system of local governance committed to improving the lives of children within their jurisdiction by realizing their rights as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In practice, it is a city, town or community in which the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes and decisions.

(UNICEF, n.d.)

Creating child-friendly cities is a wide multidisciplinary, iterative enterprise calling for an urban practice sensitive to children's diverse requirements and considerations, such as their recurrent preference for safe, clean, trustworthy neighbourhoods over vast cityscapes (Gleeson & Sipe, 2006). That is, a practice focused on the human rather than monumental scale where children, adolescents, and the wider community can thrive. Consideration of happiness as a systematised variable contributing to the development of CFC has yet to be fully considered. This thesis aims to contribute to this discussion by exploring children's and adolescents' assessments and recommendations for building child-friendly happier neighbourhood and cities (see Chapter 7).

Launched in 1996, The 'Child Friendly Cities Initiative' (CFCI) is currently calling for building cities capable of enhancing children's lives by transforming their urban environment and societies. Cities committing to its aims are called to engage in a practical process to actively include, work with, and invest in children (Gleeson & Sipe, 2006). Likewise, also in 1996, the 'Growing Up in the Cities' (GUIC) Project convened by UNESCO set up the foundations for incorporating children and adolescents in urban planning. As such, it was identified by the CFCI as a reference model for aiding cities to commit and begin the process towards becoming child-friendly cities (Malone, 2006). The project, spanning from 1996 to 2005 and assessing over 30 cities, aimed to evaluate and understand children's experiences of the urban realm. Also, to impact municipal practices and urban policies through the inclusion of children's views on their built environment in eight representative cities or areas undergoing rapid urban change.

As a result, the GUIC provided a framework for assisting local governments, and community-based and non-government organisations, in policy development for cities aiming to be more child-friendly. In doing so, a multicultural set of children's urban quality of life indicators was produced (see Table 2.2). The present study takes this framework into consideration as a foundation upon which to develop a survey of children's and adolescents' perceived urban happiness, used as part of its methodology (see Chapter 4).

Furthermore, the GUIC project verified that, disregarding time and space, children and adolescents highly value the public realm due to the opportunities it provides for establishing and developing social encounters and relationships. Then and now, children value nearby places to play and hang out with friends, recreation centres, safety, absence of noise, and cleanliness. By contrast, traffic, violence, litter, pollution, and lack of places for meeting or playing were identified as areas for improvement and intervention (Chawla & Malone, 2003; Lynch & Banerjee, 1977). An additional valuable outcome was to prove that children can provide a set of valuable variables to evaluate their urban surroundings in a way that echoed their everyday experiences, as opposed to the standard economic and social indicators extensively used (e.g., life expectancy, average income, health access, education level). These findings have been shared by many other studies dealing with children's likes and dislikes of the urban environment (Elsley, 2004; Laatikainen, Broberg, & Kytta, 2017; O'Brien, Jones, Sloan, & Rustin, 2000; Woolley, Dunn, Spencer, Short, & Rowley, 1999). However, consideration of happiness as a variable and as an outcome of children's and adolescents' assessment of urban spaces remains limited.

Child-friendly cities are bound to provide children and adolescents with adequate urban spaces allowing for play and physical activity, fostering social relationships, encouraging active transport, and promoting independent mobility (Kytta et al., 2018). As such, the neighbourhood, district, and city need to reflect children's and adolescents' desires and experiences in a way that embraces the inevitable complexities of their different ages and levels of maturity. Similarly, urban spaces need to take into account the opportunities they provide for children's happiness encounters with others and within the space.

Table 2.2: QUALITY OF COMMUNITY LIFE FROM CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES.
 Source: Author adapted from Chawla (2002) and Swart Kruger (2001) as cited by Chawla and Malone, 2003

	POSITIVE INDICATORS	NEGATIVE INDICATORS
COMMUNITY VALUES	<p>SOCIAL INTEGRATION Children are welcome and appreciated in the community</p> <p>COHESIVE COMMUNITY IDENTITY Community with clear boundaries and positive identity</p> <p>TRADITION OF SELF-HELP Community building through mutual aid organizations</p>	<p>SOCIAL EXCLUSION Children feel unwelcome and harassed in their community</p> <p>STIGMA Residents feel discriminated for living in a place associated with poverty</p>
AMENITIES AND QUALITY OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	<p>SAFETY AND FREE MOVEMENT Children can count on adults for protection and walk free and safe</p> <p>PEER GATHERING PLACES Safe accessible places to gather</p> <p>SAFE GREEN SPACES Safe, clean green spaces available</p> <p>VARIED ACTIVITY SETTINGS Children can follow up personal interests (sports, play)</p>	<p>VIOLENCE AND CRIME Children are afraid to walk outdoors due to crime and violence</p> <p>LACK OF GATHERING PLACES Lack of safe places for children to gather</p> <p>HEAVY TRAFFIC Streets taken over by cars and dangerous traffic</p> <p>TRASH AND LITTER Presence of trash and litter in the environment. Sign of adult neglect for the environment.</p> <p>LACK OF VARIED ACTIVITY SETTINGS Lack of interesting places or things to do</p> <p>BOREDOM Children express high levels of boredom and alienation</p>
BASIC NEEDS MET	<p>PROVISION FOR BASIC NEEDS Basic services are met (food, water, electricity, health and sanitation)</p> <p>SECURITY OF TENURE Family members have legal right over the property either by ownership or rental agreement.</p>	<p>LACK OF PROVISION FOR BASIC NEEDS Basic services are not met (food, water, electricity, health, sanitation)</p> <p>INSECURE TENURE Children suffer anxiety for fear of eviction, which discourages commitment to better community</p> <p>POLITICAL POWERLESS Children and their families feel powerless to improve their conditions</p>

Cities, however, have traditionally been shaped by a structural age inequality (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). As such, they have been designed without further consideration of children's or adolescents' needs or experiences (Carroll, Witten, & Stewart, 2017). Yet, children's and adolescents' citizenship rights favour their active participation in decisions concerning their environment (Carroll, Witten, Asiasiga, & Lin, 2019; Horgan, Forde, Martin, & Parkes, 2017). Findings from previous research suggest young people are qualified to inform urban design and planning outcomes in a way that adequately meets their needs (see Bishop & Corkery, 2017). Children and adolescents are, however, in a singular negligible position in that regard. Even when consulted and engaged in participatory processes, they rely on adults for their opinion to reach decision-makers and policy spheres (Christensen, Mygind, & Bentsen, 2015). Moreover, whilst disciplines such as children's geographies have contributed widely to understanding and considering young people's lives in urban planning practices, urban design and planning practitioners are still keeping children and adolescents on the margins (Freeman, 2020).

The literature on children's participation has critically problematised the reciprocity that should define dialogues between adults and young participants (Badham, 2004). Young people are likely to take part as a group, contributing to their treatment as separate from adults (Percy-Smith, 2006). In addition, framing children's and adolescents' contributions as '*voices*' might be considered informative and more of a one-way communication process rather than a dialogue (Birch, Parnell, Patsarika, & Šorn, 2017), hence diminishing its value. Alternatively, researchers advocating for participatory projects with children and adolescents discussed that reciprocity might properly occur in the process of '*designing together*'. As such, design is a '*situated social process*' (McDonnell, 2012, p. 61) that naturally lends into exchange and dialogue.

Furthermore, those working on CFC are increasingly arguing that both urban practitioners and the public realm can indeed positively affect and help improve children's health and well-being (Brown et al., 2019; Gill, 2008). As such, typically, these studies discuss well-being in reference to physical and mental health. Consequently, there is a lack of clarity about what well-being fully entails for CFC. Literature on CFC which makes direct reference to happiness appears to be using the term interchangeably with well-being (Krysiak, 2020; Van Vliet, & Karsten, 2015) (see Section 2.3). However, the role of cities in children's

and adolescents' experiences of happiness (understood as social and relational) is yet to be fully addressed. This thesis addresses this gap by seeking to understand under which circumstances children and adolescents experience happiness in the city and how the built environment informs, affects, and shapes those experiences (see Chapter 6).

2.4.3. Summary

Children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of the city are complex and respond to a variety of sensory, cognitive, social, and environmental stimuli that should be taken into consideration within urban studies and practices. Although not attending to happiness directly, this section has examined the ways in which the urban environment affects and is intertwined with children's everyday individual and social experiences. In doing so, it has explored the role of the neighbourhood as children's and adolescents' immediate local surroundings. Also, it has brought to attention the new ways—*domestication of play and insularitation*—in which children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban environment are being shaped or re-shaped as a response to parental concerns. Whilst attending to valid concerns, these ways of inhabiting the city reflected on children's relationships with the city from a western perspective. Moreover, the correspondence between these ways (and others) of inhabiting the city with children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness is yet to be explored. This thesis aims to contribute to this debate by looking specifically into what circumstances and in which urban spaces children and adolescents in Lima experience happiness.

In addition, this section also played attention to the ways in which cities are attempting to fully recognise children's and adolescents' rights to actively participate in discussions regarding their environments. It did so by exploring the child-friendly cities and the framework arising from one of the foundational studies exploring children's participation in urban planning. In doing so, it critically discussed how the planning practice is mainly still keeping children and adolescents on the margins. As such, the collaboration between young people and urban design and planning practitioners remains limited and poses a challenge. However, in those occasions in which children's and adolescents' participation is being encouraged, the process and outcomes are worth studying. What needs further exploration is the extent

to which real, structural changes are being made as a result of young people's participation. In addition, what is also worth considering are the conditions under which the dialogue process between young people and adults successfully translates into actionable recommendations and real initiatives.

2.5. Latin American Cities, Happiness, and Children

Contemporary Latin America, though globally interconnected through economic, political, social, and cultural networks, remains a dynamic and varied region facing profound and ongoing changes within its own politics, economies, and societies. Thus, while cities in the region are diverse, they are a natural reflection of this: globally connected but internally polarised, facing high levels of poverty and social inequalities (Bosco & Jackiewicz, 2016). As such, while it remains important not to generalise, studies exploring urban Latin American inevitably face the common challenge of dealing with the particular historical, economic, and social traits shaping cities through both formal and informal processes (see Chapter 3).

'Latin America's cities present the beauty of extreme contrast: design and dysfunction, control and chaos, the vast and the very small, the distant past and the distant future' (Biron, 2009:3). Latin American cities are thus characterised by a sense of space as both sheltering and threatening. This thesis seeks to further explore this paradoxical landscape by examining how spaces of happiness could be recognised as part of this mix.

Within this context, studies exploring children's urban experiences in the region, although increasing, remain limited. However, those available provide a valuable yet incomplete insight into the particularities of children's urban experiences in the region. On the other hand, studies looking into the social and economic development of the region have also informed research exploring happiness, providing an alternative approach to urban happiness studies.

This section tackles both topics and aims to provide an account of what and how these have been studied within the region so far. As such, Subsection 2.5.1 explores the extent and varied ways in which urban

childhoods have been studied in the region. Subsection 2.5.2 follows on exploring happiness research in the region, introducing an alternative, more human-centred, approach to the geographies of happiness.

2.5.1. Urban Childhoods in Latin America

Despite the considerable amount of work undertaken by several NGOs with children, young people, and families in Latin American cities, the academic literature regarding their experiences of the city remains somewhat limited. In 1998, Duncan Green published 'Hidden Lives: Voices of Children in Latin America and the Caribbean'. His main objective was to portray and give voice to children living in Latin American cities. Although limited by reflecting only on the lives of poor children, the book made a great effort in depicting the urban challenges facing children in the region. As such, Green uncovered the ways in which the lives of children living in Latin America are constantly affected by significant issues of poverty, inequality, economic development, corruption, and discrimination (Green, 1998).

Almost two decades later, these challenges remain in the region, making them part of the everyday contexts children and adolescents grow up in. Efforts to explore urban childhoods in Latin America can be categorised in two strands of research: those following Green's (1998) lead in exploring the so-called 'street children', and those who have expanded the focus of their research to include more diverse childhood experiences from a myriad of perspectives. Regarding the first, researchers placed particular emphasis on eliciting children's and adolescents' perceptions of what living or working in the streets means. However, whilst portraying the adverse conditions of street living, these studies highlighted Latin American young people's constructions of identity and relationships with the urban environment. Schmidt and Buechler (2015) explored children's views and safety perceptions on living in the streets of Honduras. Participants in their study provided significant insight into how living in the streets can be perceived as safer than staying in, for example, more abusive environments such as their homes. Ursin (2011) explored young homeless people's experiences of home. Attending to the socio-spatial lives and narratives of former street children in Brazil. The findings of these studies revealed that children living in the street established a sense of autonomy, safety and belonging, enabling them to 'feel at home' whilst living in the streets. Also, Bromley and Mackie (2009) explored the everyday conditions of child traders

in the city of Cusco in Peru. Similarly, whilst acknowledging street dangers, shortage of playtime, and education disruption, participants reflected on the positives. They described positives such as enhanced self-esteem, confidence, and enjoyment due to economic development. In addition, varied studies have explored migrants and rural children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban realm (Azaola, 2012; Bromley & Mackie, 2009; Calestani, 2012; Punch, 2007; Rizzini & Lusk, 1995; Winton, 2005).

The second strand of research exploring more widely children's and adolescents' urban lives in Latin America goes beyond street urban childhoods to more varied childhood experiences. These include, for example, studies exploring citizenship identity formation in Mexico (Herrera, Jones, & Thomas De Benítez, 2009; Ongay, 2010) or living in poverty within the urban slums in Argentina (Machado, Mantiñán, and Grinberg, 2016). Their analysis shed light upon how the adverse conditions of this urban context shaped the participants' identities, empowering them to pursue better living conditions. Similarly, Salgado (2013) explored children's views on urban inequalities in precarious areas in Santiago in Chile. More recently, Marques, Müller, Kanegae, and Morgade (2020) have been exploring children's lives and understandings of space in Brazil. By looking into children's everyday walks, their study shed light upon the kind of relationship children living in contrasting urban scenarios established with places, people, and the urban environment. Also, Cortés-Morales (2020) explored young children's corporeal everyday mobilities, and Carr, Abad Merchán, and Ullauri (2020) attended to children's everyday experiences of an urban area previously hit by natural disasters. Their study involved participative methods with children and provided recommendations to help create more effective child-centred strategies to reducing risk exposure. Similarly, participatory approaches were used by Börner, Torrico-Albino, Nieto-Caraveo, and Cubillas-Tejeda (2017) for the purpose of exploring young Mexican people's perceptions of environmental risks and engaging them in community interventions towards more sustainable communities. Whilst these studies contribute to furthering the agenda of children's geographies in Latin America, they have yet to explore children's and adolescents' experiences of urban happiness. A gap to which this thesis seeks to attend.

Furthermore, in Latin American countries, as in many others, children's rights to participate have been ratified and included in national legislation and agendas. In addition, following the recommendations

outlined by the CFCI, so far, 5 out of 20 countries² in the region (Peru among them) have shown willingness to actively engage children and adolescents in local government and planning practices to being recognised as child friendly. However, efforts being made across the globe differ widely between developing and developed countries. High-income nations have been placing emphasis on rethinking the physical environment towards making streets safer and more accessible for children and adolescents. By contrast, developing countries have focused primarily on ensuring access to basic needs such as food, water, health, and sanitation (Malone, 2006). By seeking to identify challenges and barriers facing urban happiness in Lima, this thesis will explore how these differing conditions shape happiness.

In addition, although there have also been efforts in the region to incorporate children's participation in urban design and planning practices, these remain limited, unpublished, and as isolated events. In this regard, the OCARA network³, established by Architect Irene Quintans (Quintans, 2016), is the best known effort in the region. This network includes an online database of initiatives to build child-friendly cities in Latin America, and encourages networking across private or public organisations. These initiatives include that of Mendivil, Diaz, Huarcaya and Plaza (2014), reporting on a study undertaken in six early childhood institutions in Lima. The research reflects children's dreams and opinions regarding their city. In summary, there is evidence that research in Latin American cities on children's experiences of urban space is advancing, yet there is still a long path to be taken in order to be able to provide children and adolescents with cities that not only meet their basic needs but also provide safe and sustainable environments which enhance their urban experiences and thus nourish their happiness.

2.5.2. Happiness Research in Latin America: An Alternative Approach

Previous studies exploring happiness within geographical contexts had argued that cultural context (Lu & Gilmour, 2004; Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004) as well as language (Veenhoven, Ehrhardt, Ho, & de Vries, 1993), might provide different nuances to people's experiences of happiness. The type of

² Countries include Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Peru.

³ See www.redocara.com

society in which people live may influence both their constructs and levels of happiness (Ballas & Dorling, 2013). This might be the case in Latin America.

Within the macro geographical level approach to research regarding happiness and the environment, some paradoxes have emerged. The main one is the 'Easterlin Paradox', stating happiness does not rise with income. The argument behind this is that income matters when basic needs are not met; however, when this condition is fulfilled, happiness and income are no longer in a linear relationship (Easterlin, 1974). Based on this, happiness economics research argued that, overall, wealthier people are happier than poor people. However, based on research conducted in Peru and Russia, Graham and Pettinato (2002) contested this. They identified a phenomenon, now called that of '*happy peasants and frustrated achievers*' (Graham and Pettinato (2002) as cited in Graham, 2009, p. 151), an apparent paradox where very poor people rate higher in happiness than wealthier people. Reasons behind this are likely to be '*higher natural levels of cheerfulness*' or adapted and downward expectations (Graham, 2009: 152). Happiness across Latin America (LATAM) appeared to fit with this phenomenon.

Moreover, following commonly used income and social indicators, happiness should not rank as high in Latin America as it usually does in global rankings. A mid-income region, rating high for income poverty and income inequality, generally ranks high in terms of happiness levels. Latin-Americans report overly high satisfaction and affective state levels. According to current happiness research in the region, what lies behind this, is that people in Latin America are much more than mere consumers, and their happiness emerges from many other factors beyond income (Rojas, 2016).

As such, the Latin American region provides an opportunity to better understand a myriad of factors that might be relevant for happiness. Research in Latin American reveals that income and social indicators might not be enough to assess LATAM happiness (Rojas, 2016). Recurrent studies discuss issues such as non-materialistic values, the role of family ties, social cohesion, and social fragmentation, among others. (Beytia, 2016; Millan, 2016; Mochon Morcillo & de Juan Diaz, 2016; Yamamoto, 2016).

Consequently, it has been argued that happiness research in LATAM might have the ability to provide a more human-centred insight into happiness studies. However, whilst this might be the case regarding the adult population in Latin America, studies concerning children's happiness in the region are yet to be

explored. So far, limited attempts include studies exploring children's drivers of happiness in Argentinian vulnerable social contexts (Greco & Ison, 2014), children's happiness in schools in Mexico (Cubas-Barragan, 2016), and children's and adolescents' concepts of happiness in Brazil (Giacomoni, Souza, & Hutz, 2014; Hoher Camargo, Wathier Abaid, & Giacomoni, 2011). Following this, I argue happiness research with children and adolescents in Latin America is of critical importance as it can provide a different perspective into the complexity of the region. Thus, shed light upon a more relational, social approach to what experiencing happiness means. This thesis aims to address this gap by exploring not only how children experience happiness overall, but more specifically, how the singularity of Latin American urban contexts (see Chapter 3) favour or limit those experiences.

2.5.3. Summary

Studies exploring urban Latin America face the challenge of interpreting a dynamic, contrasting scenario that can both entice or disenchant city dwellers. Within this context, this section has firstly provided a brief account of how happiness and urban childhoods have been so far explored in the region. Thus, it has reviewed the literature exploring children's geographies in Latin America, highlighting it remains limited. It provides an opportunity to further understand the many ways in which children's and adolescents' lives are shaped by the particularities of their cities. In addition, it has also explored the extent of children's participation within urban planning processes in the region. Whilst some attempts are being made, the systematisation and dissemination of those experiences is still a pending task. Secondly, this section has also provided an account of the contributions being made by studies exploring happiness in the region. As such, it has identified a more social, human-centred approach to understand happiness within the region, that go beyond income and social indicators. Overall, the section has highlighted a gap in studies within the region which explore children's and adolescents' constructs and perceptions of happiness.

2.4. Summary and Conclusions

The aim of this research is to explore how children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban space render happiness. As such, this chapter has outlined the theoretical framework that will guide the development of this thesis in exploring children's geographies of happiness. As emphasised in the introduction, this chapter has attended to the three main strands of research interwoven in this study: cities, happiness, and children. This chapter discusses how these three major fields of scholarship have been extensively researched on their own and in relation to one another, but rarely have they been all interwoven. In addition, critically, debates and previous research reviewed in this chapter have been undertaken from, largely, a western perspective. As such, this chapter suggested that undertaking research from the Latin American perspective might contribute to broadening the search on all three areas of literature considered in this chapter.

By interweaving these fields of research, this chapter highlighted the multidisciplinary essence of this study. It also emphasised the need for reaching an agreement on how the key elements of the environment inform and relate to children's lives if urban happiness is to be assessed and promoted. In doing so, this chapter challenged the subjective/objective measures typically used for interrogating the human-environment relationship. As such, it recognised the variability and temporality of children's experiences of happiness (see Chapter 5), arguing for a more relational approach (see Atkinson, 2013; White, 2017) and consequently allowing for a more in-depth understanding of the social and intersubjective nature of children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH CONTEXT

3.1. Introduction

Placing cities as a pivotal research subject, the previous chapter attended to the theoretical framework outlining this research. It did so by discussing the complex nature of cities in relation to emotions, happiness, and children. Also, it introduced some insights regarding the sociable and relational nature of Latin American cities emphasizing the contributions so far, to happiness and urban childhood studies from within the region. Building upon that, this chapter introduces the context of the Latin American urban landscape, placing emphasis on the case of Lima, the capital of Peru, where the empirical research took place. Divided into three main sections, the chapter provides an overview of the overall urban scene in Latin America and specifically in Lima.

Throughout the three sections, it explores the unique qualities of Latin American cities, attending to their urban fabrics, what lies behind them, the structural features within, and the challenges facing them today. Section 3.2 addresses the high levels of urbanisation in the region as compared to other parts of the world. This serves as an introduction to discuss how and under what circumstances cities in Latin America have developed. Section 3.3 illustrates the case of Lima, building upon the previous section and introducing the particular urban traits defining the city. By attending to the city's political division and its demographics, it identifies the specific areas attended to in this study. Finally, it closes the section by discussing the challenges facing Lima, both overall and, in particular, regarding happiness as an urban variable of progress. It does so by relying on the voice of local practitioners interviewed as part of the empirical study (further details about the conduct of these interviews can be found in Chapter 4). Section 3.4 finalises the chapter by looking at the Peruvian national policy currently attending to children and adolescents in Peru and the main problems shaping the lives of young people in Lima.

3.2. Latin American Cities

With over 80% of its population living in urban settlements, Latin America is currently the most urbanised region in the world, only comparable in levels of urbanisation to Northern America (United Nations, 2018a). The region is closely followed by Europe or Australasia with a rate of urbanisation of over 70%. By contrast, urban dwellers in other regions like Africa and Asia represent just over 40% and 50% of their total populations (United Nations, 2018a). The contemporary urban scene in Latin America is the aftermath of an array of industrial and economic advancements developed within the region (Rodgers, Beall, & Kanbur, 2012). The introduction of industrial manufacturing beginning in the 1930s, as opposed to more traditional ways of production and consequent migration processes, prompted a process of rural-urban imbalance, setting the foundations for progressively reshaping the regional urban landscape into what we know today (Alvarez Alonso & Ignacio Hernandez, 2019; Valladares & Prates Coelho, 1995). The region witnessed a process of rapid urbanisation, gradually transforming the cities once considered 'cities of hope' (see Pineo, 2018 / 1998) into a more negative landscape spanning from the 1940s and 1950s theories of 'over urbanisation' into the current more predominant perception of Latin American cities as 'cities of walls' as branded by Caldeira (2001). This means cities that are highly polarised and spatially divided by income inequalities.

Ignited by migration, Latin American urban centres soon portrayed a common unequal landscape reflecting the growing tensions between the dominant and working classes, still persisting today (Rodgers et al., 2012). As a result, and perhaps to be expected, cities in the region have seen crime and inequality operating in an interconnected, fluctuating way since the early '90s and beyond (Fajnzylber, Lederman, & Loayza, 2002). The raised levels of insecurity were soon reflected in the configuration of the cities, adding an additional level of urban segregation to the already divided urban scene. By building high walls, enclosing streets, and setting up surveillance technology, cities in Latin America were soon once again re-shaped by gated communities, privatised housing developments, and fortified neighbourhoods. As a result, Latin American urban development has fostered often erratic and uncoordinated policies and practice initiatives targeting just fragments of the cities, rather than attending the urban landscape as a whole sociological unit (Rodgers et al., 2012), consequently aggravating socio-spatial polarisation and effectively perpetuating urban fragmentation.

3.2.1. *The Centre - Peripheral Dichotomy*

A significant share of Latin American's rapid urban growth and development has historically and is still informally occurring at the periphery of its cities (Inostroza, 2017). By settling in varied environmentally non-appropriate areas such as sloppy hills and riverbanks, migrants arriving in its cities have progressively shaped the peripheries of Latin American urban landscapes (Fernandes, 2011). Historically acknowledged as spaces for the poor, they depict early scenes of informal, irregular occupation permanently being built and rebuilt (Bähr & Mertins, 1993), significantly outweighing the development of the formal city (Abramo, 2012). In doing so, this established what can be seen as a spatial dichotomy between the urban fabric produced in the peripheries against that of more formal urban areas.

The peripheral city followed a concentric and discontinuous settlement pattern circumscribing and going beyond the existing urban outskirts (Ortiz & Morales, 2002). As a result, two different types of urban tissues are interwoven, assembling contrasted, highly unmanageable cities. The process of peri-urbanisation unfolded the development of the squatter settlements phenomenon, or what is known in Latin America as *barriadas*, *favelas*, *villas miseria*⁴. Slums have been a recurrent theme within urban studies in the region, leading to key considerations for Latin American urban development (Rodgers et al., 2012). Understood as a natural consequence of the sequence of migration waves from the countryside (Lewis, 1959), they were seen during the '50s as what potentially kept Latin American cities steps behind from modernisation or further development (Gugler, 1982). This led to the consideration of shanty town dwellers as those poor, sitting in the margins, or 'marginal' populations, rarely capable of actively participating in the city's construction (Kowarick, 1980). Latin American cities were consequently extensively perceived as constituted by two interconnected scenarios: the modern, progressive areas—typically at the centre—and the peripheral, problematic, and left-behind areas (Kruijt & Koonings, 2009). This marginality, which people passively accept being under and staying poor, has been extensively contested. Empirical studies undertaken in the late '70s and early '80s in major Latin American cities, including Rio de Janeiro (Perlman, 1979), Mexico City (Lomnitz, 1977), and Lima (Lobo, 1982), opened the debate concerning the so-called 'informal economy' (De Soto, 1989) proving

⁴ Depending on the country squatter settlements take different names. For e.g. *Barriadas* in Peru, *Favelas* in Brazil, *Villas Miseria* in Argentina.

that, whilst in a different way, those sitting in the margins were actually a major force shaping Latin American cities in different directions.

One of the many downsides of this formal-informal dichotomy has been the continuous presence of high levels of insecurity, coincidentally reported to be mostly originated in urban slums and generalised over the city (Moser & McIlwaine, 2004). Arguably, by the 21st century, violence had become a feature proper of shanty towns, mainly enforced by youth gangs (Jones & Rodgers, 2009), widening social, spatial, economic and political segregation within Latin American cities and reinforcing, even more, the peripheral-central dichotomy. As a result, challenges facing Latin American cities differ considerably from those facing the more developed global north. Besides rapid urbanisation, urban segregation, and increasing levels of informality, the cities are also confronted with a lack of or deficient basic infrastructure, environmental pollution, precarious political structures, lack of reliable data, short-term perspective, and corruption, among others (Irazabal, 2009).

3.3. Lima: An Uncontrollable Oil Stain

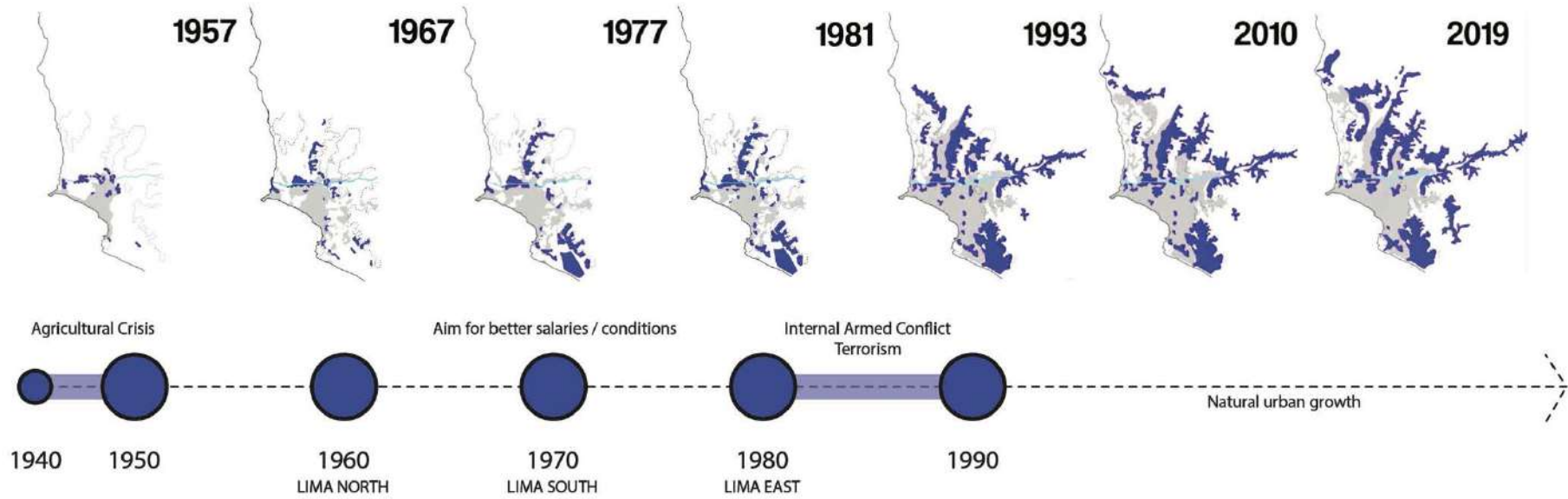
Equivalent to cities such as Paris, Bangkok and, more locally, Bogota, Lima holds a population of just above 10 million inhabitants (United Nations, 2018a) and is currently one in six megacities in Latin America (United Nations, 2018b). It is also the capital and the most occupied city of Peru, almost 15 times bigger than the second-most occupied city in the country, accommodating practically a third of the country's population. Facing the Pacific Ocean, it is the second city in the world to have been built upon a desert after Cairo. It covers an extension of almost two and a half thousand square kilometres (2,673 km²), with a density of almost 3,600 inhabitants per km² (Lima Como Vamos, 2019). This is similar to Berlin, one of the most densely inhabited cities in central Europe and around triple that of Beijing, listed among the top ten largest cities in the world (Alfaro-Simmonds, 2021).

Following the description of Latin American cities above (see Section 3.2), Lima is the outcome of a demographic boom that occurred during the 20th century. The concentration of industrial manufacturing led to progressive commercial and economic development and, consequently, significant improvements in education, work, and health services. It also translated into lower mortality rates and better apparent living conditions as opposed to those in the countryside. As a consequence, the city attracted

uncontainable migrations from the highlands to the coast, rapidly re-shaping its urban fabric. More recently, during the '80s and '90s, this process was also due to the displacement of the rural population fleeing the internal armed conflict ignited by terrorist groups (see Meza, 2006). From the year 2000, migration rates decreased substantially. The '*conquer of the city*' by rural migrants is now part of the urban history of the city. Hence, their offspring and following generations are to be considered fully Limean. Yet by arrogantly calling them '*migrants*', the city failed for a long time to acknowledge their cultural diversity as a strength rather than something to be ashamed of (Vega Centeno, 2009). Favourably, this seems to be changing.

Consequently, Lima, still a young metropolis, encompasses an underdeveloped urban fabric (Vega Centeno, 2009). As outlined for overall Latin American cities, its urban landscape portrays an overly segregated city (Pereyra, 2006) and displays both a formally consolidated centre and an informal peripheral city that keeps growing without following any urban planning strategy. As a result, Lima keeps spreading like a an '*uncontrollable oil stain*' (Avellaneda, 2007: 107), an analogy also used to refer to other Latin American cities' urban growth processes such as Santiago, Chile (see Münzenmayer, 2017) or Sao Paulo (see Bógus & Pasternak, 2019) (see Figure 3.1). This urban growth has been followed by loss of agricultural land, the over-dependence on vehicle transportation (both public and private), the loss and transformation of public spaces from open urban spaces to commercial areas, and social segregation (Ducci, 1998; Cruz-Muñoz, 2020). It is within this urban scenario that a great part of the country's population (30% of which are children and adolescents) lives, survives, adapts, copes, and grows up. Yet, despite these structural characteristics, children and adolescents might have an alternative and, in many cases, overall positive urban experience (see Chapter 6).

Figure 3.1: LIMA – Urban Growth
 Source: Author based on (i.mappin, 2019 based on Barreda, n.d.)



3.3.1. Not One but Four Limas: Territorial Division and Studied Areas

Lima is considered the political, cultural, financial and commercial centre of the country. It is politically divided into 43 districts, each with autonomy and its own political authority to decide upon its local budget and urban priorities. However, due to its widely extended territory, its ongoing growing population, different social fabrics, and complexity, the city's metropolitan area has been divided into four areas for better territorial, social, and economic understanding and management oversight (SINEACE, 2017) (see Figure 3.2). Originally suggested by Rolando Arellano, a local market research consultant, Lima is currently studied not as a centre with surrounding peripheral satellites, but as a multicentre city consisting of four territories transforming the city in equal partnership: Lima Centre, Lima North, Lima South, and Lima East (Arellano, 2019).

Each of these four areas presents significant differences in population, demographic composition, urban management, provision of green areas, safety and security, to name a few. The total population of the city is slightly unevenly distributed. Whilst Lima Centre holds 20% of the city's inhabitants, the peripherals (Lima South, Lima North and Lima East) accommodated 21%, 29%, and 30%, respectively. Regarding young people, 20% of the city's total population is represented by children and adolescents between 3 and 16 years old. In more detail, children and adolescents in Lima Centre represented 18% of its total population. Likewise, 20% of Lima South and, equally, 21% of Lima North and Lima East were children and adolescents (see Table 3.1).

On the other hand, in terms of socio-economic composition (out of 5 levels, from A to E), Lima Centre allocates families mostly belonging to level B. the peripheral Lima South, Lima North and Lima East, on the other hand, similarly accommodate families mostly within level C (see Table 3.2). This thesis is based on empirical research undertaken in three of these four areas: Lima Centre, Lima North, and Lima South. Together, the three selected areas hold 70% of the total population in Lima, of which 20% corresponds to children and adolescents, and provide a mixed sample in socio-economic terms.

Figure 3.2: MAP OF LIMA – 4 territories, 43 districts – Studied areas highlighted
 Source: Composition and Photographs by Author



Table 3.1: LIMA – DEMOGRAPHICS: Total Population / Children and Adolescents Population / Socioeconomic Level

Source: Author based on Lima Como Vamos (2019) / SEL based on APEIM (2018)

* Chosen studied areas

** The study was undertaken with young people between 8 and 16 years old.

*** As defined by the National Peruvian Code for Children and Adolescents /

Children are considered between 0 and 11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12 and 18 years old

		LIMA CENTRE*	LIMA SOUTH*	LIMA NORTH*	LIMA EAST	TOTAL LIMA	
TOTAL POP.	TOTAL POPULATION	1,872,172	2,001,024	2,665,753	2,779,733	9,318,682	
	% TOTAL LIMA	20%	21%	29%	30%	100%	
CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS***	TOTAL CH&A	333,969	407,718	570,873	584,062	1,896,622	
	TOTAL CH&A POPULATION (3 to 16 y/o)						
	% TOTAL AREA POPULATION	18%	20%	21%	21%	20%	
	3-5 y/o	CHILDREN POPULATION 3-5 y/o	70,847	89,975	128,403	131,595	420,819
		% TOTAL AREA POPULATION	4%	6%	3%	5%	5%
	6-11 y/o**	CHILDREN POPULATION 6-11y/o	141,051	174,700	245,160	251,808	812,719
		% TOTAL AREA POPULATION	8%	12%	7%	9%	9%
	12-16 y/o**	ADOLESCENTS POPULATION 12-16 y/o	122,071	143,044	197,311	200,659	663,084
% TOTAL AREA POPULATION		7%	10%	5%	7%	7%	

Table 3.2: LIMA – DEMOGRAPHICS: Socioeconomic Level

Source: Author based on APEIM (2018)

* Chosen studied areas

		LIMA CENTRE*	LIMA SOUTH*	LIMA NORTH*	LIMA EAST	
SEL	AVERAGE SEL	AVERAGE POPULATION IN SEL A	15%	1%	1%	6%
		AVERAGE POPULATION IN SEL B	41%	14%	21%	17%
		AVERAGE POPULATION IN SEL C	30%	49%	44%	40%
		AVERAGE POPULATION IN SEL D	12%	29%	29%	29%
		AVERAGE POPULATION IN SEL E	3%	7%	6%	9%
	PREDOMINANT SOCIOECONOMIC LEVEL	B	C	C	C	
AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME	AVERAGE FAMILY MONTHLY INCOME (US \$)	US\$ 1,902.12	US\$ 1,190.70	US\$ 1,266.17	US\$ 1,335.10	
	AVERAGE FAMILY MONTHLY EXPEND (US \$)	US\$ 1,289.86	US\$ 888.78	US\$ 932.71	US\$ 965.00	

In addition, these three areas were chosen for contrasting purposes due to their urban and geographical differences. Regarding surface extension, for example, whilst Lima Centre occupied almost 148 km² of mainly flat urban surface, Lima North and Lima South each covered almost 900 km², compiling both flat and hilly surfaces. Likewise, whilst Lima Centre contained above ten thousand km² of green areas, Lima South only held around three thousand km², whilst Lima North, situated in between, contained just above six thousand km² of available green areas. This means an average green area per inhabitant of 6.25 m² for the case of Lima Centre against 3.17 m² and 5.27m² for Lima South and North, respectively. Other significant differences include produced waste, average police surveillance per inhabitant, and average annual budget held by the local council. On the latter, Lima Centre is capable of allocating as much as

almost 220 US\$ per inhabitant from tax collection, against 91 US\$ and 132 US\$ received by Lima South and Lima North (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: LIMA – COMPARABLE URBAN FEATURES
Source: Author based on Lima Como Vamos (2019)
** Chosen studied areas*

		LIMA CENTRE*	LIMA SOUTH*	LIMA NORTH*	LIMA EAST	TOTAL LIMA
LAND SURFACE	SURFACE KM2	147.90 km2	852.90 km2	857.40 km2	814.30 km2	2672.50 km2
	INHABITANTS / KM2	12,658.36	2,346.14	3,109.11	3,413.65	421,259.55
	GREEN AREA KM2	10,301.06	3,051.70	6,319.75	6,753.16	26,425.68
	AVERAGE GREEN AREA / INHABITANT (m2)	6.25	3.17	5.27	3.42	4.90
AVERAGE BUDGET	ANNUAL BUDGET (THOUSANDS US \$)	US\$ 410,744.30	US\$ 242,733.35	US\$ 263,755.23	US\$ 308,666.92	US\$ 1,225,899.80
	BUDGET / INHABITANT (US \$)	US\$ 219.39	US\$ 91.06	US\$ 131.81	US\$ 111.04	US\$ 131.55
WASTE	PRODUCED WASTE (ton/year)	819,104.70	763,898.00	1,065,297.90	818,292.00	3,466,592.60
POLICE SURVEILLANCE	TOTAL POLICE OFFICERS	3,539	1,654	2,425	2,756	10,374
	AVERAGE HAB/POLICE	529	1,210	1,099	1,009	898
	TOTAL POLICE REPORTS	41,464	18,189	29,902	31,973	121,528

3.3.2. Urban Challenges in Lima

Besides structural urban traits shared mutually with other Latin American cities, Lima has been forged by improvisation, lack of long-term vision, corruption, and opportunism (Castillo-Garcia, 2020). The city's urban landscape is one of unfinished buildings, unsafe streets, abandoned plots, and depredated valleys. On top of that, the recent real-estate boom in the early decade of the 21st century had placed urban planning and city development in the hands of private investors rather than in those of the community (Castillo-Garcia, 2020). Additionally, placing happiness at the centre, practitioners and experts interviewed specifically for this study (for details on data collection, see Chapter 4) agreed on four main threats against building a city that might encourage happiness: fragmented social identity, absence of planning, inefficient management, and lack of supporting evidence.

Above all, practitioners agreed that one of the most threatening challenges Lima faces as a city is its fragmented social identity. Urbanist Wiley Ludeña, sociologist Natalia Bolaños, and architect Lucia Nogales, coordinator of a civil organisation working to improve cities by recovering unused public spaces, explained it more clearly. They discussed citizenship as the essence of city-building and the absence of a strong citizen identity—that is, people not feeling necessarily connected to or a part of Lima.

Consequently, there is no commitment to its improvement, which in return strengthens structures of inequality and perpetuates urban fragmentation.

'The city, before being a physical territory, is a space where human beings live. In that sense, a city without citizens does not exist as a city. What happens now is the city has more individuals, less citizens. It has become a segmented, discriminatory space. A space that plays against the construction of society and of a city where everyone can feel good, respected, let alone, happy.'

(Dr. Wiley Ludeña, Urbanist, Lecturer, Ph.D. in Engineering)

'The main problem lies in our identity. City identity or identity as citizens from Lima. Rather than community building, we are growing to be individualistic. It is me and you, us and the rest. For thinking about happiness at a city level, I believe we need to think in terms of community building, promoting union, sense of community. Reduce inequality in all terms, economic, gender, everything. To promote happiness, we need to be able to set and follow common goals in which everyone can believe.'

(Natalia Bolaños, Project Coordinator for NGO Sumbi)

'For starters, I think the biggest challenge is related to the Limean identity. We all know Lima is a fragmented city; therefore, there is a perception that Lima is not a continuous city, rather a compilation of isolated territories. That makes working for improving the city a more complex and arduous task. Any proposal needs to be thought specifically for each of those isolated areas with varied dynamics depending on the income level of the neighbourhood. In high-income areas, there is competitiveness in terms of replicability. Each district wants to be original and pioneering in what they propose. In low-income areas are the deepest social concerns, like if you suggest the need for urban equipment, there is resistance due to considering it might not be used by the community, rather by drug addicts and drunks. In general, there is no sense of community as a city.'

(Lucia Nogales, Architect, Coordinator of 'Ocupa tu Calle')

Interviewed experts in Lima also discussed the overall absence of planning as a big pending task for the city. Sociologist Pablo Vega Centeno, Vanessa Lainez from the Bernard Van Leer Foundation, and architect Antonio Bonifacio described it as almost inexistent. They argued that local authorities worked without a long-term vision. Instead, they dedicated their time to improvise on what will give them more votes or act upon emergencies through uncoordinated interventions. For any significant change to be done, including the inclusion of happiness as an urban goal, they suggested an integrative effort was

needed to establish a coherent vision and set up clear guidance on how to achieve it, public and private stakeholders considered.

'The main issue is planning. Currently, the local governments seem to have no plan at all. They act upon intuition, pressure, emergency and with disconnected interventions. If you want to think on happiness in the city, you need a plan that considers it as part of its vision. In that way, you can identify actionable interventions from different perspectives but aiming for the same goal.'

(Vanessa Lainez, Programme Coordinator Peru,
Bernard van Leer Foundation)

'One top main priority is identifying where we are going as a city. Currently, it seems, local authorities are not fully interested in looking in that direction; instead, they are focused on short-term interventions that can be completed on time and can gain them visibility, popularity, and votes. There is no political interest in planning. That means thinking with a medium- to long-term approach, and not something one can necessarily do in one period of governance (4 years). We need to outline some kind of public policy setting up clear guidance for the next, let's say 20 years or so. And then we need to ask every candidate to commit to it.'

(Dr. Pablo Vega Centeno, Lecturer, Ph.D. in Sociology)

'The problem is the lack of planning, more specifically the complete absence of it. Much is done, but nothing is planned. We keep trying to integrate what the private real estate sector does with isolated projects. As Lima is so big and different, the main sort of planning some mayors do is to identify where to put a park or some other public service. Those are, at the end, immediate solutions without a future plan. They only serve for the major to say he did something during his term.'

(Antonio Bonifacio, Architect, Project Manager for Arquitectonica)

However, planning is strongly related to management, which was the next priority challenge according to the interviewed experts. As they described it, inefficient management was what historically and politically lay behind structural differences between geographical areas. Architect Milton Marcelo Puente discussed how managing the city implied recognising the diverse social, cultural, and topographical contexts of Lima, addressing both their similarities and differences for better urban management. He argued that we need to understand the varied ways the city is experienced, particularly if happiness is the goal. Architect Lucia Nogales and urban activist and lawyer Augusto Rey, former Metropolitan Lima's

city councilman, commented on the current political and geographical division. They described it as disarticulated, inefficient, and even as a perverse system whose outcomes perpetuate inequality.

'The challenge lies also in managing the city. Authorities, city planners, urban designers can suggest and build enough and appropriate public spaces, parks can be greened, roads can be improved, but what is done is normally disconnected from its social context. We need to understand Lima has different geographical realities. Managing the "horizontal" Lima differs from managing the "vertical" Lima built in the mountains. For incorporating happiness as a goal, we need to listen and understand the different experiences people have of the city.'

(Milton Marcelo Puente, Architect and lecturer)

'The challenge is to work more as a united city. I found very rare the current political distribution in 43 districts with 43 majors, each of them with autonomy over their districts. The challenge is managing the city in an articulated way.'

(Lucia Nogales, Architect, Coordinator of 'Ocupa tu Calle')

'The political and geographical division of Lima is completely unreasonable, is inefficient and discriminatory. The fact that it is a city with 43 districts, each one with absolute autonomy to do what they see fit is perverse. Not only because it means there is no territorial unity but also because it means each district can offer as many public services as the money they can collect. Consequently, you have districts like "San Isidro" (part of Lima Centre) beginning the year (2018) with an average budget of 1,100 dollars per inhabitant and on the other end districts like "San Juan de Miraflores" (part of Lima South), one of the largest and more populated districts in the city with an average budget of 65 dollars per inhabitant. The result is an economic and social gap that keeps deepening all the time.'

(Augusto Rey, Metropolitan Lima's city council former councilman)

On top of the three main challenges previously discussed, interviewed experts referred in particular to a lack of supporting evidence or measurable data to advocate and consider happiness as a goal for the urban environment. Vanesa Lainez discussed the need to understand what is happening using real data as a key point for any city planning and management approach, including a happiness approach. She also pointed out the lack of interest from local governments in actually collecting usable data. Despite recognising the value of happiness, former Vice Minister of Housing and Urbanism, Jorge Arevalo, highlighted the need for closing gaps in basic needs before integrating a happiness variable into ongoing urban programmes. In addition, Jorge Muñoz, the city's current mayor, argued that the lack of supporting measurable data makes it complex to include happiness within any political discourse. He referred to

voters as not necessarily ready to follow a happy city agenda without previous results to prove its importance. Consideration of these views provides valuable insight towards a local rationale regarding urban happiness in the city.

'First, even before planning, is knowing. If we want to plan for happiness, we need to know what is currently happening. I think there are many gaps in Peru where the data is missing or inexistent. The local governments, in many cases, are not interested in collecting the data, let alone actually knowing. Decision-making processes are not taken based on data but on intuition. Many times, you provide services but do not know if they are actually responding to the people's demands and needs. Without data, you don't know if what you are offering is adequate.'

(Vanessa Lainez, Programme Coordinator Peru,
Bernard van Leer Foundation)

'I believe we need measures. If understanding happiness is a challenge itself, then how do you measure it? How do you incorporate a happiness indicator to the current measurements? How do you integrate happiness measures into the ongoing programme's expected outcomes? I think we are still focusing on closing gaps related to basic needs as to start thinking on an additional variable to include. It is relevant, but as a country, we are not there yet.'

(Jorge Arevalo, Peru's former vice-minister on housing and urbanism)

'For considering happiness as a key factor, I particularly believe we would need metrics for proving it is an important element to build upon. In a way in which everyone can understand it. If I am honest, I believe voters might be shocked by an opening discourse advocating first for happiness. However, if we work on initiatives that in return provide happiness to the population, then it is easier to understand what lays behind.'

(Jorge Muñoz, Metropolitan Lima's current mayor)

All challenges considered, the interviewed experts agreed that the way forward for rethinking the city with happiness in mind was to take a more human approach towards the urban environment. Architect Lucia Nogales argued that we need to understand how people are actually using the city rather than assuming, guessing, or simply copying what is working in other cities. The current mayor, Jorge Muñoz, discussed the urgency of placing people at the centre of any project for the city. He highlighted the necessity of involving everyone in building a better Lima. Architect Antonio Bonifacio, using his expertise, interestingly suggested approaching the design of a city for happiness as one approached a shopping mall

or hotel architectural project. That is, considering the experiences of people within the space to be fulfilling, enjoyable, comfortable, and ultimately happy.

'I would suggest a more human or inclusive design. We need to first observe and understand how the city is actually working. How the people actually use the urban space. Observing instead of assuming.'

(Lucia Nogales, Architect, Coordinator of 'Ocupa tu Calle')

'Lima is a complex city and faces multiple challenges. I would say maybe on top of everything, the main challenge is an intangible one. This is placing people at the centre. Of course, we have varied problems to solve, traffic, safety, waste management, but what needs to come first is acknowledging the richness of its people. We need to encourage each other to be willing to move Lima forward.'

Jorge Muñoz, Metropolitan Lima's current mayor

'Designing a city for happiness needs not to be a sum of isolated elements, Rather think on the idea of proposing a circuit of spaces and experiences. Take a hotel or a shopping mall, for example—both complex architectural projects, where you intrinsically do that. When you design a shopping mall or a hotel, you need to design thinking your ultimate goal is for people to be comfortable and happy within. You think in everyone. On the spaces for children to play, for adolescents to gather, for adults to enjoy. Whilst they are happy, they are going to enjoy the space. That kind of project referred to a sequence of experiences, it is not fully about getting people to buy or just staying in a room. You need to think about different services and accessibility. You need to consider establishing a good relationship with the street, in a way that you can smoothly transit from the street to the shopping mall, hardly noticing the change. Imagine a city enjoyable in that way where the outer, public space flows into the private and vice versa. You need to think about how the people are going to experience it.'

(Antonio Bonifacio, Architect, Project Manager for Arquitectonica)

In light of these highlighted challenges, it appears happiness is far from being a priority within either the urban policy or planning agenda. Attention to the views expressed by local practitioners and authorities allowed for a better understanding of the current, local urban landscape. As such, they provided valuable insights towards building a local rationale regarding happiness as an urban variable of progress. On the basis of what the local experts shared, it became evident that happiness is not an urgent urban need. Instead, the city and overall country have more pressing issues to attend to, such as closing the gap in terms of basic needs. However, playing with the scenario where these are met, the consideration of happiness becomes somehow relevant but in need of supporting evidence. In addition, consideration of

this data unveiled an underlying awareness for a needed shift. By listening and systematising children's and adolescents' views on the city and their experiences of happiness within, this study demonstrates young people's perspectives of Lima, resonated with what the local practitioners expressed. Yet, participants in this research found opportunities and ways to incorporate urban happiness assessments into actions for improving and building better neighbourhoods (see Chapter 7). It seems that, for happiness to be considered part of the urban agenda, it must acknowledge the human nature of cities.

3.4. Policy on Children and Young People

Peru subscribed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990, committing to comply with these international regulations regarding children and young people to what these circumscribed. Following this, later in the year 2000, Law No 27337 was approved, outlining what is now called the '*National Code for Children and Adolescents*' (see Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000). The aim of this law was and still is to guarantee children's and young people's rights and equal access to education and health services, as well as their rights to a safe environment. However, strategies and policies regarding young people in Peru have changed considerably over the last 20 years. The importance given to policies concerning young people changed with each government. Outlining a national plan took experts posted in local offices many years to outline. Yet, due to the lack of political interest and congressional support, it did not make it to the national agenda. As a result, there is still no national strategic plan nor a clear national focus on the benefit of children or young people. Moreover, the varied independent stakeholders working on youth policy in the country are far from being a network (Centro de Desarrollo de la OCDE, 2017). Instead, there have been unarticulated efforts from the education, employment, or health departments that, although related to the younger population, do not necessarily target children and young people specifically.

Among these, there have been a set of different action plans for children and adolescents sketched by the Peruvian Department of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP). Leading up to the country's

Bicentennial Independence anniversary⁵ to be celebrated in 2021, the latest and current plan was approved in April 2012, tracing different goals to be achieved by that milestone year. Its aims were to prioritise progress and human, sustainable development for all Peruvian inhabitants—in particular for children and adolescents—providing Peru with solid foundations free or almost free of inequality gaps by 2021. Considering the extent of socio-economic gaps in terms of poverty, lack of health services, poor living conditions, lack of education, and, consequently, *overall wellbeing*, it fundamentally focused on providing the younger population with appropriate access to health and education services, as well as increasing *Quality of Life* among their families and communities. Also, it pledged to provide healthy and safe environments free of violence and with extended opportunities for children to exercise their agency (MIMP, 2012). Following this, by 2019, poverty and inequality affecting children and adolescents successfully dropped from almost 34.3% in 2012 to 26.9%. However, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, poverty affecting this age group appeared to have taken a massive step backwards, rising to 39.9% nationally and up 32.8% in the case of Lima by the end of 2020 (UNICEF Peru, 2020). This is almost back to square zero.

Besides inequality, the action plan for 2021 identified literacy levels, exposure to child labour, malnutrition, and bullying as ongoing problems affecting children. On the other hand, problems affecting adolescents included school dropout, bullying, anaemia, obesity, drugs, pregnancy, and gang involvement (MIMP, 2012). All of these problems were traced as affecting children's and adolescents' *overall wellbeing*. Children's and adolescents' *happiness* was not explicitly addressed. On top of that, those living in Lima are also exposed to rising levels of insecurity, inadequate public transport, corruption, and deficient waste management (Lima Como Vamos, 2019). In addition, they lack opportunities for participation and to exercise their agency. Their involvement, when considered, is understood as passive communication rather than active cooperation. Despite isolated experiences, overall, local government place little or no effort in involving children and adolescents in community and public affairs. As a result,

⁵ The Bicentennial Independence Anniversary to be officially celebrated on July 28th, 2021, will commemorate 200 years since the Proclamation of Independence. It memorialises the emergence of the Peruvian Republic and the breaking of all ties with the Spanish monarchy. Up to July 28th, 1821, Peru was considered a Spanish colony.

this reinforces the negative view that young people have towards politics and institutional organisations (Centro de Desarrollo de la OCDE, 2017).

Only recently, sparked by recent political events leading to social unrest and young people raising their voices⁶, has the country begun to raise awareness of the importance of Peruvian youth for national development (see Bicentenario Peru 2021, 2020). Yet, not specifically regarding their wellbeing or happiness. However, regarding children's happiness—or, more specifically, subjective wellbeing—there is a lack of reliable sources compiling data regarding this variable across age, gender, and population among young people. In this regard, the most complete database is the one called 'Young Lives' (*Niños del Milenio* in Spanish), a longitudinal study tracking the impacts of child poverty across 12,000 children in four countries over 15 years, Peru included. Researchers measured the impact of poverty on children's socioemotional dimensions across time, subjective wellbeing among them. Their findings identified an array of parameters affecting children's subjective wellbeing. Exposure to violence, lack of adequate nutritional conditions, and access to education were reported among these (Young Lives, 2018).

3.4. Summary and Conclusions

By observing the urban landscape of Latin America and Lima, this chapter has provided an overview of the research context. By discussing historical events, demographics, and urban socio-economic traits as well as issues of segregation, urban fragmentation, and insecurity, it has illustrated the urban conditions shaping and affecting children's and adolescents' lives and everyday experiences of happiness in the city. In addition, by identifying the studied areas within Lima, it provided an overview of the contrasting scenarios and urban geographies in which the empirical research took place, highlighting the opportunities for attending to the varied and diverse ways in which the same city can produce an array of many different ways and places to experiences happiness.

6 The two weeks between November 9th and 21st, 2020, witnessed several massive mobilisations of mainly young people claiming for democracy to be defended. These emerged in response to the impeachment of former president Martin Vizcarra. The process behind this decision was branded unconstitutional and as a coup orchestrated by the opposition leaders sitting at the National Congress. The aftermath involved an unknown number of injured young civilians and the death of two young leaders. By the end of this period, a new transitional president was elected out of the congress representatives with the aim of calling for democratic elections in the short term. Elections were announced to be celebrated on April 11th, 2021.

The chapter stressed the socio-economic and cultural profile of Latin America and Lima as diverse, complex, multicultural, informal, and fragmented. It attended to the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation as a specific trade of urban development, allowing for informal and formal modes of urban production to coexist and equally contribute to the shaping and re-shaping of the city. Hence, affecting children's and adolescents' lives. In addition, despite being appealing to local practitioners, by noting the challenges facing the city overall and specifically regarding happiness as an urban variable, it rapidly confirmed that happiness, let alone children's happiness, is not currently mapped within the local urban policy and practice. The thesis demonstrates instead that the city affects and informs children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness. Consequently, it contributes to driving attention to happiness as an urban variable that can be assessed and distilled into practical recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS: DOING CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES OF HAPPINESS

4.1. Introduction

Having set the theoretical framework for this thesis (see Chapter 2) followed by the introduction of the research context (see Chapter 3), this chapter discusses the methodological approach of this study. Divided into six sections, it introduces the multi-methodological approach for doing children's geographies of happiness, producing datasets that holistically address each of the main objectives of this study. Section 4.2 first explores the rationale for employing a multi-methodological approach, including both qualitative and quantitative elements. Section 4.3 attends to the sample and recruitment process, highlighting the advantages and challenges of doing in-school research. Sections 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 present the methods employed, the processes under which each was applied and analysed, and the challenges encountered in their application. Section 4.7 discusses the ethical considerations and highlights the power imbalances I faced while researching children in school settings.

4.2. Multi-Methodological Approach

The data collected comprised both a qualitative and a quantitative dataset. The former included task-based methods in the form of drawing, photography, mapping, and model-making activities, as well as more traditional research techniques such as semi-structured interviews with children and adolescents and local experts and practitioners. On the other hand, the quantitative dataset used an in-school social survey. The qualitative methodology was designed to correspond and attend to the three main objectives of this research. Subsequently, it was organised in a way that allowed for knowledge to be progressively built by and with the participants within 6 sessions spaced across 8 weeks (see Figure 4.1). This allowed each method to address each objective independently whilst also providing data cutting across at least two objectives.

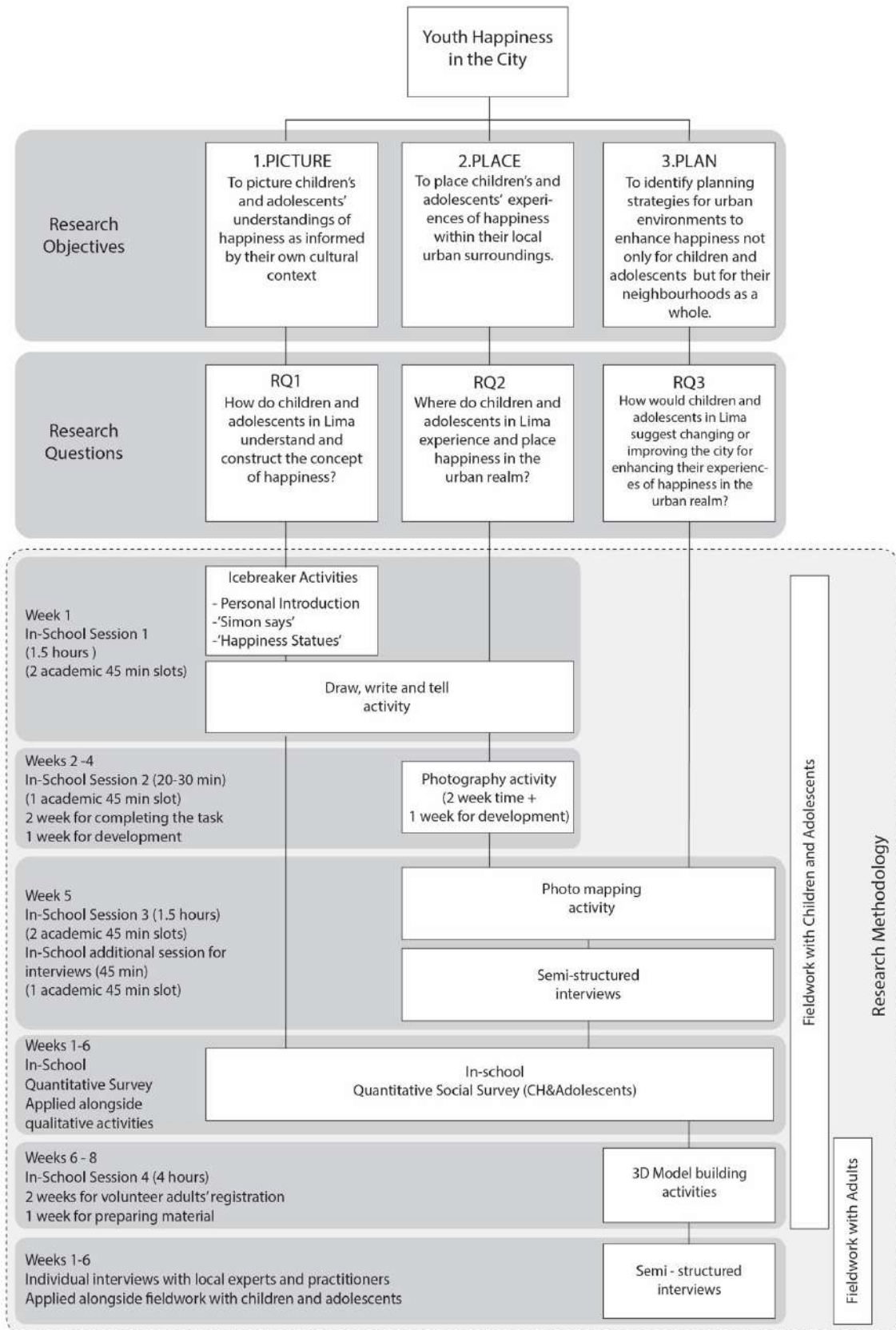
Qualitative methods included a 'draw, write and tell' activity (see Subsection 4.4.2), a photo-mapping activity (see Subsection 4.5.1), and a 3D model-building activity (see Subsection 4.6.1). The outcomes

of the first method provided sufficient data to answer the first research question and set up the foundations for attending the second objective. Correspondingly, the outcomes of the photo-mapping activity addressed the second objective whilst providing initial answers to the third research question. Finally, the outcomes of the 3D model-building activity built upon the results of the previous methods, providing answers to the third research question. On the other hand, the quantitative dataset (see Subsection 4.6.2) cut across all three objectives, complementing the qualitative dataset.

In doing so, the research programme captured children's and adolescents' voices on both their experiences of happiness and those of the city in a holistic way. By relying on the set of skills children and adolescents naturally possessed according to their age, the methods were selected in a way that favoured children's engagement without relying only on verbal or written communication (e.g., using drawing, photography, and model-building activities).

Doing research with children and adolescents calls for a consideration of the extent of their abilities and competencies according to their age, whilst at the same time not patronizing them. It appears this can be effectively achieved by using a multi-methodological approach combining both suitable research techniques for children and more traditional research methods (e.g., interviews as used with adults) (Punch, 2002). As such, by using a combination of task-based methods (e.g., drawing methods) and more conventional 'adult' research techniques, this thesis sought to provide varied avenues of communication for children and adolescents to share and convey their knowledge (see Langevang, 2009; Prout, 2002). In doing so, it strives firstly for full recognition of children's and adolescents' values, views, and experiences within their own perspective. Second, it acknowledges the multifaceted nature of happiness which, typically, tends to be studied through a combination of methods (Crivello, Camfield, & Woodhead, 2008). Finally, by looking into the varied constructs, experiences, and perceptions of happiness and place, it allows for the exploration of the many ways in which the context may or may not affect children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness.

Figure 4.1: MULTI-METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH – Research Objectives/Questions and corresponding research methods
 Source: Author



4.3 Sample and Recruitment

Data collection was undertaken in school settings which proved useful for a myriad of reasons. By engaging with heads and teachers, the research and the recruitment process were received more positively. Consequently, considered more trustworthy by parents and encouraging students' participation (Bruzzese, Gallagher, McCann-Doyle, Reiss, & Wijetunga, 2009). This proved particularly useful in a city like Lima, with high levels of insecurity, citizen fear, and overall distrust (Lima Cómo Vamos, 2015). Also, as the research methodology entailed a sequence of different stages, in-school recruitment provided added reassurance of participation continuity due to school being compulsory for children and adolescents (R. Bartlett et al., 2017). In addition, being a known environment, it contributed towards children's and adolescents' comfort whilst participating in the research. Lastly, it allowed the researcher to successfully meet and exceed the expected quota for participants at each stage of the research (Mishna, Muskat, & Cook, 2012).

Two stages were considered in the recruitment process: the first engaging the schools and the second recruiting the participants. In all three studied areas, the aim of the research was to recruit at least two schools: one private, one public. Preferably comprising both primary and secondary levels.

4.3.1 School Recruitment

Whilst doing school-based research can prove to be beneficial, it can also be challenging. An intrinsic difficulty lies in identifying and successfully approaching the varied parties involved in providing entry into the school environment and access to the students. Gaining approval and consent from school authorities at different levels can be time-consuming and costly (Mishna et al., 2012; Powers, 2007). However, once gained, it proved to be beneficial and worthwhile. Once the access is granted, it is key to identify and establish a relationship with a designated member of staff who can serve as an intermediary for any further organisation. Typically, any logistics, such as scheduling and day-to-day operations of both the school and the research will be done through this person (R. Bartlett et al., 2017). Whilst access was granted in all cases by either the school head or the assistant head, the people serving as intermediaries were either teachers or administrative staff.

School recruitment took place during the summer holiday period, between January and February 2018, prior to the beginning of the school year, usually mid-March.

Schools were selected based on their size (in, e.g., student population) and accessibility. The research target population aimed for participants attending from third-year primary to fourth secondary levels (equivalent to year 7 to year 11 in the British Education System). As such, regarding size, I shortlisted schools in each studied area comprising at least two sections per level of study (an average of 15-20 students per section). This had two purposes. Amplifying opportunities for successful recruitment and guaranteeing the school, lessons would not remain partially empty. As for accessibility, the location of the school was considered in terms of easiness of access for mobility and safety purposes. Following these criteria, the Peruvian national school database available online (see MINEDU, n.d.) was searched. Correspondingly, a list containing contact information of those schools meeting the size criteria was extracted. Additionally, to meet the accessibility criteria, this was later refined by cross-looking into their local addresses via Google Street View. Schools were then approached following the listed order and selected on a first come back / first recruited basis.

Initially, heads or assistant heads were contacted via phone. These calls aimed to provide a general overview of the research, gauge interest in participation, and finally book an appointment for a more in-depth face-to-face explanation. The response to this approach was varied. Whilst some schools responded positively, setting up an appointment almost immediately, others asked for a formal letter to be attached and sent to their school coordinator office via email. A third group asked for a formal letter to be posted to their offices.

In total, 36 schools were approached: 3 in Lima North, 8 in Lima South, and 25 in Lima Centre, proving to be the most challenging area to engage with. Out of them, *8 schools were successfully recruited*, committing to participate in the research: 3 public and 5 private schools. 6 out of the 8 agreed to take part in both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research, while the other 2 signed up for participation only for the quantitative stage (see Table 4.1). Successful recruitment was due to the personal meetings held with heads and school authorities after the initial calls and the emails sent. As for the schools to which physical letters were sent, none responded, not even after follow-up calls.

Recruited schools comprised both primary and secondary levels, yet their students' population was varied in size. The biggest accounted for a student population of over 1,000, whilst the smallest comprised a student population of just over 200 (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.1: SCHOOL RECRUITMENT – Stage of the research committed to participate

Source: Author

** Chosen studied areas*

		LIMA CENTRE*	LIMA SOUTH*	LIMA NORTH*	TOTAL SAMPLE
SCHOOL RECRUITMENT	SCHOOLS APPROACHED	25	8	3	36
	TOTAL SCHOOLS RECRUITED	3	2	3	8
	SCHOOLS TAKING PART IN QUAL. RESEARCH	2	2	2	6
	SCHOOLS TAKING PART IN QUANT. RESEARCH	2	2	2	6

Once recruitment was confirmed, I became familiar with each school's every day schedule and any programmed events, the schools' break schedules, and all mandatory local holidays (L. S. White, 2011). To do so, I asked the teachers to provide every day timetables and/or collected from bulletin boards displayed at the school's entrance for parents' communications. In addition, as an initial approach, setting up a meeting with the teachers in charge was proposed to the school's correspondent authority. The aim was to provide details about what the research entailed in practice and, if feasible, to ask for their collaboration. The possibility of using possible outcomes of the research, such as maps and models, for their teaching purposes was also suggested. Support with designing, integrating, and conveying those potential lessons was also offered. This, however, was not an option for any of the schools due to the teachers' time constraints. Only a quick, informal, introductory chat was possible with four of the teachers. Although not as detailed as proposed, this proved quite useful throughout the research, as they served as an extended link with the participants.

In total, out of the 8 recruited schools, 133 participants took part in the qualitative stage of the research whilst 724 participated in the quantitative stage (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.2: SCHOOL RECRUITMENT – School details per case study area and methodological stage committed to participate in.

Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

Note: School names have not been used or mentioned across the empirical chapters

MAIN DETAILS	SCHOOL NAME	LIMA CENTRE*			LIMA NORTH*			LIMA SOUTH*	
		SANTA URSULA	VILLA MARIA LA PLANICIE	6050 JUANA ALARCO	TUPAC AMARU 3055	LA FE DE MARIA	LOS OLIVOS COLLGE	FE Y ALEGRIA 24	LOS CAMINANTES
	LEVEL	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY	PRIMARY / SECONDARY
	FUNDING SOURCE	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	PRIVATE	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
	NUMBER OF PUPILS PRIMARY	486	243	1,345	960	342	137	740	84
	NUMBER OF PUPILS SECONDARY	313	556	1,868	990	263	90	641	190
	NUMBER OF CLASSES PRIMARY	21	8	46	26	12	8	24	9
	NUMBER OF CLASSES SECONDARY	15	20	58	28	10	6	20	5
QUAL. STAGE	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH CONDUCTED	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
QUANT. STAGE	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH CONDUCTED	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES

Table 4.3: SCHOOL RECRUITMENT – Number of students recruited per methodological stage

Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

Note: School names have not been used or mentioned across the empirical chapters

		LIMA CENTRE*			LIMA NORTH*			LIMA SOUTH*	
		SANTA URSULA	VILLA MARIA LA PLANICIE	6050 JUANA ALARCO	TUPAC AMARU 3055	LA FE DE MARIA	LOS OLIVOS COLLGE	FE Y ALEGRIA 24	LOS CAMINANTES
QUAL. STAGE	PRIMARY CHILDREN RECRUITED	10	-	-	36	-	7	4	21
	SECONDARY PUPILS RECRUITED	8	-	6	14	-	3	10	14
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS PER/SCHOOL	18	-	6	50	-	10	14	35
	TOTAL SAMPLE QUAL STAGE PER AREA	24			60			49	
	TOTAL SAMPLE QUAL STAGE	133							
QUANT. STAGE	PRIMARY CHILDREN RECRUITED	23	20	-	31	-	-	110	63
	SECONDARY PUPILS RECRUITED	13	58	-	-	222	-	157	27
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS PER/SCHOOL	36	78	-	31	222	-	267	90
	TOTAL SAMPLE QUANT STAGE PER AREA	114			253			357	
	TOTAL SAMPLE QUANT. STAGE	724							

4.3.2 Children's and Adolescents' Recruitment

Children aged 8 to 11 and adolescents aged 12 to 17 were recruited for this study.⁷ Recruitment with students was carried out in various ways following each schools' internal procedures. Prior to providing access to the students, the schools committed to participating in the *qualitative stage of the research* raised some concerns. They discussed the time length of each research phase, the specific days and time of the day for the research sessions, and the number of students to be taken out of specific lessons. Regarding the time issues, the research, as outlined to the schools' authorities, was designed for data to be collected progressively within school hours over a span of three sessions, accounting for a total of three and a half hours. Each session was planned considering time breaks and contingency time (see Figure 4.1). However, authorities across different schools suggested the research sessions be distributed within academic hour slots of 45 minutes each, rather than regular hours. As a result, it was agreed for the research to be undertaken within up to six academic hour slots. Following this, a schedule was prepared, subscribed to, and shared with the teachers and those in charge. Whilst this was not an ideal scenario, the research design proved to be flexible enough to be adapted to slightly shorter sessions. The first five sessions were prioritised for the task-based elements to be completed by the participants during each time slot, as originally planned. An extra session was allocated for individually selected interviews to be completed.

As for the number of students to participate in the research, two different scenarios were dealt with—both with different outcomes, proving to have a major influence over the number of actual participants. 3 out of 6 schools conditioned the research to be conducted on a whole-class basis. They argued, in that way, no student would be missing lessons, and instead, they will all be engaged in similar activities. This posed a challenge in terms of time, execution, and logistics. Rather than working with small manageable groups, this meant working with larger groups of up to 30 or even 40 participants per session. The conditions were accepted, but in return, I asked for the form teacher to support the session and assist with the participants when needed. This, however, was both an advantage and a challenge allowing for

⁷ As defined by the National Peruvian Code for Children and Adolescents. Children are considered between 0-11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12-18 years old (See Law No.27337 - Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000).

power imbalances (see Subsection 4.7.3). Assistance was given by the form teachers in keeping the class organised, and in attending to specific issues such as the need for more or different materials. Any research-related question, however, was addressed to me. This allowed for the research programme to be conducted as originally planned. The other three schools opted for a completely different approach. Less concerned with students skipping lessons, they randomly invited 20 to 30 students from different levels to a meeting where they could learn about the research. In this way, they left their participation open for the students to opt in or not. In these cases, although the immediate response was overall positive, just half or less of the assistants effectively participated in the research.

In both cases, I was allowed initial brief access to the students for the purpose of introducing myself, explaining the research, and describing what kind of activities it entailed. This was an opportunity to make clear this was a voluntary, not graded activity. Also, to point out they were entitled to either participate in every activity, participate in one or some activities, opt in and later decide to opt out, or not participate at all. Optional participation was emphasised in all cases, particularly in schools where a whole-class approach was taken. In addition, a letter explaining the research in detail was handed to them, and all questions were answered. By the end of each briefing meeting, students were asked about their interest in participating and a consent form (see Appendix 2) was distributed for them and their parents to fill in and sign if interested.

Attending to these two school-suggested approaches for recruitment, overall, 232 students signed in for participation in the qualitative stage of the study. Out of this number, only 133 provided their consent forms completed and adequately signed by both their parents and them (see Table 4.4). In practice, all 232 were allowed to actively participate, so they did not feel in any way excluded, yet for purposes of analysis, only data produced by those 133 providing signed consent was used. Data without consent was marked, separated, and discarded before analysis. This number, however, varied across activities as in-class participation relied mainly on the students' assistance to school on the scheduled days (see Sections 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6 for participant number at each phase).

Table 4.4: RECRUITED PARTICIPANTS – Qualitative Stage
 Considers only participants who provided sign consent forms.
 Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

** As defined by the National Peruvian Code for Children and Adolescents .

Children are considered between 0-11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12-18 years old

(See Law No.27337 - Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000)

*** No boys were recruited for the qualitative stage in Lima Centre. Schools that agreed to participate were only-girls schools

		LIMA CENTRE*		LIMA SOUTH*		LIMA NORTH*		TOTAL SAMPLE
		GIRLS	BOYS***	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	
QUALITATIVE STAGE	CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS (AGES 8-11)**	10		14	12	22	21	79
	ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPANTS (AGES 12-16)**	14		13	10	9	8	54
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED PER GENDER	24	-	27	22	31	29	133
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED	24		49		60		

4.3.3 Local Experts and Practitioners Recruitment

The research programme also gathered data from members of the local experts in urban policy and practice. Widely this included architects, urban designers, local authorities, NGO representatives, and local academics. Further analysis proved key to seek local experts' and practitioners' own views as they provided a first-hand approach to the challenges facing all: the city, children's and adolescents' involvement in urban practice as active agents and the use of happiness as a measure of progress.

With a background in architecture—having been involved in the building industry and having experience as an undergraduate architecture lecturer—recruitment was based initially on previous contacts known to meet the established criteria. This allowed for setting up the first set of interviews. The recruitment process was then supported by references provided by the first contacted group. As for members of the local government, they were contacted via their official communication channels. These included office emails and phone numbers published online and also their official social media accounts. Similarly to the school recruitment process, a letter comprising details of the research, objectives, and scope of the interview, and the way in which the information was to be used, was sent to all contacts prior to setting up an appointment. In addition, at the meeting and before commencing the interview, all interviewees were asked to sign a consent form for being their voices and/or videos to be recorded, their photographs to be taken, and names and job titles to be quoted in further dissemination. In particular, it was important for them to acknowledge that, due to their professional roles, their opinion would be unlikely to be

anonymized (see Appendix 2e). In total, an array of 29 local practitioners agreed to take part in the research (see Table 4.5). Interviews were held between March and July 2018, alongside conducting the research with young participants (for a detailed list of interviewees, see Appendix 4b).

Table 4.5: RECRUITED PARTICIPANTS – Local Practitioners
Source: Author

TYPE OF ORGANISATION	NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES
NGO	9
RESEARCHER / ACADEMIA	8
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	6
ARCHITECTURE / PRIVATE PRACTICE	3
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER	3
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	29

4.4 Addressing Objective 1: Picturing Happiness

The first objective of the research, ‘to picture children’s and adolescents’ understandings of happiness as informed by their own cultural context’, was addressed by a combination of two task-based activities. The first was a short introductory icebreaker activity to allow initial engagement between the researcher and the participants and to get the participants to think about happiness in a playful way. This was then followed by a ‘draw, write and tell’ activity the main research method for successfully approaching this objective. Beginning the data collection process with a familiar task such as drawing allowed for participants to relax and fully dive into producing vibrant, colourful images pertaining to what was asked of them. In doing so, children and adolescents could provide significant insight into how they were constructing the concept of happiness (see Chapter 4). This was the starting point for engaging in further activities: placing happiness at the centre within their own perspective without imposing any predefined concept or adult perspective on the theme. This subsection addresses these two methods in detail.

4.4.1 Icebreaker Activities

A key task for any researcher working with children is to create a climate of trust between the participants and the researcher (Christensen, 2004). The aim is to avoid children perceiving the researcher as some sort of known authority. The key is to step aside from any authority figure, like teachers, parents, or guardians (Horstman, Aldiss, Richardson & Gibson, 2008). To do so, the researcher must keep in mind, fieldwork success lies in defining this relationship from the offset. This means letting the children know that, within the research activities, their opinions are as valid and valuable as those of adults, something particularly relevant when research is designed to be conducted in varied stages. As such, a recommended initial approach is to let children know the researcher in a friendly way. To do so, the researcher can start by introducing themselves by their first name or sharing their academic and life story briefly. This provides children with the researcher's credentials and reasons for being there and allows for children to ask as many questions (about the research or the researcher) as they may need to ensure their trust (Hortsman & Bradding, 2002).

Following this, as a first activity, I introduced myself and the research, carefully adapting my language to the different groups. I shared with them why I was there, what activities we were going to do, and most importantly, why their opinions were important to me. This was also an opportunity for them to briefly introduce themselves and ask further and more detailed questions regarding myself or the research.

Questions were mainly personal, seeking to know more about my relationship status, spoken language, and—the most common, to my surprise—my nationality. Children commented, *'You do not look Peruvian'*. As for research-related questions, participants were mostly interested in knowing the reason and purpose of the study. They were also eager to know how I was going to use their drawings and photographs and if they were going to be graded or get any benefit from participating in the research (see Table 4.6). I explained I aimed to use their drawings and photographs to understand their views and thoughts about happiness and the city. Also that adults can learn from listening to children's experiences and ideas. I mentioned one benefit was for them to share their thoughts and ideas about the city and their neighbourhoods. I described it as a role exchange. They get to teach me new things, and I was yearning

to learn. They seemed to like that answer. I added that they were not going to be graded and reminded them that participation was voluntary and not schoolwork at all.

Table 4.6: ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY – Common initial questions
Source: Author

PERSONAL QUESTIONS	
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP	<i>'Are you married?'</i> , <i>'Do you have a boyfriend?'</i>
NATIONALITY	<i>'Where are you from?'</i> , <i>'Are you from Peru?'</i>
SPOKEN LANGUAGE	<i>'Do you speak English?'</i> , <i>'Show us.'</i>
RESEARCH-RELATED QUESTIONS	
PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH	<i>'Why are you doing this?'</i> , <i>'What is a Ph.D.?'</i> <i>'Can I do that too?'</i>
RESEARCH METHODS	<i>'Are you going to interview all of us?'</i> , <i>'Are you uploading the videos to YouTube?'</i> , <i>'Can you give us the photographs you are taking?'</i>
OUTCOME OF THE RESEARCH	<i>'Are our drawings going to be graded?'</i> , <i>'Are you giving us any certificate of participation?'</i> , <i>'Will participating help me obtain a scholarship on my own?'</i>

Following the questions, participants (both children and adolescents) were filled with anticipation. Children, however, topped up that feeling with excitement, whilst the adolescents seemed more sceptical. In the case of children, a couple of more active icebreaker exercises were also used. One was a kind of 'Simon says' activity. Participants were asked to stand up, follow my commands, and shadow my actions. I asked them to raise their hands, jump, freeze, and show their best smile. A second activity was one I called 'happiness statues'. Children were asked to walk around the classroom and stay still in different requested poses when indicated. Requests included: 'stay still as if you are tired', 'as if you were surprised', 'as if you are angry', and finally 'stay still as if you have had the best day ever and you feel very happy about it' (see Figure 4.2). Fundamentally these activities had two aims. Allowing children to settle down by releasing some energy and getting them indirectly to start thinking about happiness. In the case of adolescents, this was more done as a natural progression from our initial conversation. In both cases, these activities set the ground for introducing the following data collection activities.

Figure 4.2: ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY – ‘Happiness Statues’

1. ‘Stay still as if you are tired’ (Participants and form teacher)
2. ‘Stay still as if you are angry’
3. ‘Stay still as it is the end of the day and you have no homework’
4. ‘Stay still as if you are very happy’

1.



2.



3.



4.



4.4.2 Draw, Write, and Talk about Happiness

Through visual conception, drawing, and talking about the emerging images, children are allowed an alternative channel (different towards) for expressing their deep-rooted emotional thoughts. Due to its playful essence and their reliance mostly on visual language, ‘this research method is especially suitable for work with children and youth across a variety of backgrounds and cultural contexts’ (Lerat, 2013, p. 12). Participatory drawing provides varied opportunities for easily channelling alternative perspectives and nuances that verbal-only methods may overlook (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2016). Through drawings, young people and, more specifically, children allow their inner emotions, untold relationships conflicts, and hidden occurrences to be depicted (Malchiodi, 2012). In addition, Engel (1995) mentions that children’s drawings may help understand familiar and unfamiliar events happening at home, in school, in the local neighbourhood, and the public space.

Drawing gives children the potential to explain their ideas in a familiar way (Angell, Alexander, & Hunt, 2015). By providing them with control over their expressions (Nic Gabhainn & Kelleher, 2002), it facilitates their abilities to talk, particularly about experiences that are difficult to describe (Stafstrom, Rostasy, & Minster, 2002). Also, it helps to target children’s lived experiences and own perspectives of the world (Desjardins & Wakkary, 2011). Through children’s drawings, their contexts, including their resources as well as their social and cultural surroundings and understandings, can be acknowledged (Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009). In addition, it makes it easier to understand children’s complex and abstract ideas about what they are being asked (Lerat, 2013; McWhirter, 2014) and provides opportunities for children to organise their ideas before sharing them (Driessnack, 2006). Furthermore, drawing enables a better communication channel with the researcher as well as reinforced trust and interest in children (Maire Horstman et al., 2008).

Proven to be effective, ‘draw and write’—and its improved variant ‘draw, write and talk’—has been used within a variety of disciplines and related topics for eliciting answers from children, at least for the past four decades (Angell et al., 2015). By using this method, previous scholars have been able to explore children’s ideas and thoughts about, for example, fear Driessnack (2006), pain (Pope, Tallon, Leslie, & Wilson, 2018), and their affective relationships (Sunderland & Armstrong, 2017). Also, Honkanen,

Poikolainen, and Karlsson (2017) explored children's definitions of well-being in relation to certain places in their residential areas. Participants were asked to draw both a nice place in the suburb where they lived and a situation that made them happy. Collective discussion with the participants around the drawings helped to develop different perspectives about the research theme. Likewise, the UK-based organisation 'Young Lives' has been using this method, among others, to identify self-reported aspects of child wellbeing in contexts of poverty and specific risks. Within a longitudinal study conducted over 15 years (2000 – 2015), children were asked to 'picture in their minds' and draw a child they knew in their community who they thought of as experiencing wellbeing (Crivello et al., 2008, p. 60). This study, following the lives of 12,000 participants in Ethiopia, Peru, Vietnam, and India, provided valuable insight into the varied ways in which children described what meant 'doing well' or not.

By using the 'draw, write and tell' technique, this study aimed to illustrate children's understandings of happiness, informed by their own cultural contexts and experiences. Out of all 133 participants recruited, only 126 participants took part in this stage (see Table 4.7). They were asked to work in groups of 4 or 5 participants each (this meant, in some cases, there were up to 9 groups in parallel). For this purpose, groups were suggested by the form teacher. This was particularly useful for enhancing collaboration and avoiding personal conflicts. Groups were then given an A1 (84 x 59 cm) plain sheet of paper, pencils, erasers, as well as a choice of coloured markers per group. On top of what was offered, many children chose also to use their own colour pencils. Materials were selected to provide a safe, familiar and clear boundary-receptive medium (Seiden, 2001), controlled and familiar instruments that allow for the development and redevelopment of different ideas by allowing the creator to erase and redo their ideas. Also, colour pencils, markers, crayons, and oil pastels exist in the controlled end of the spectrum and grant decisive and committed strokes as they cannot be erased (Driessnack, 2006). The usage of colour must be understood as culturally based, used arbitrarily by children (Malchiodi, 2012).

Table 4.7: DRAW, WRITE AND TALK ABOUT HAPPINESS – Number of Participants

Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

** As defined by the National Peruvian code for children and adolescents.

Children are considered between 0-11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12-18 years old
(See Law No.27337 - Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000)

*** No boys were recruited for the qualitative stage in Lima Centre. Schools that agreed to participate were only-girls' schools

		LIMA CENTRE*		LIMA SOUTH*		LIMA NORTH*		TOTAL SAMPLE
		GIRLS	BOYS***	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	
DRAW WRITE AND TELL	CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS (AGES 8-11)**	7		14	12	15	23	71
	ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPANTS (AGES 12-16)**	17		13	10	9	6	55
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED PER GENDER	24	-	27	22	24	29	126
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED	24		49		53		

Sparked by the icebreaker activities, participants were asked to take some minutes to think and individually picture ‘How does a happy person look?’ and to discuss their ideas within their groups. This supposed a process of exchange and negotiations that was natural to some but presented challenges to others (this is discussed later in this subsection). Following this process, groups were then asked to make a drawing to answer that question. Within the process, additional questions were asked. These included: ‘What is the name and age of the character they were drawing?’, ‘What things make that character happy?’, and ‘Where is that happy person located?’ Once the drawings were completed, groups were asked to present their drawing to the researcher (see Figure 4.3).

This stage of the fieldwork aimed to fundamentally address the first question. However, the additional questions provided their drawn characters with context and personality, enhancing the participants’ narratives. Also, having additional prompts introduced during the drawing process facilitated and provided extra confidence for children to talk about their drawings in the following ‘tell’ stage. Each presentation was structured in the format of a semi-structured interview so that their narratives and main ideas remained clear. Prompting children’s narratives through a set of standardised questions helped to produce comparable data. Participants, however, were asked to share as much information as they wanted about their depicted characters (see the full set of questions in Appendix 3a).

The whole session, including both icebreaker and ‘draw, write, and tell’ activities, was planned to last a maximum of two academic hours (1.5 hours) and was recorded mainly through photographs. Interviews

were video recorded, transcribed in their original language (Spanish), and later translated into English. Given that the drawings and interviews were done in groups, participants' answers within each group were then woven into each other in the context of short stories, providing depth and granularity to their drawings. This proved useful for getting a better insight into each group's fictional character. In addition, all responses were grouped and classified using qualitative content analysis for the purposes of identifying common themes, classifying them into categories, and establishing emerging patterns (see Assarroudi, Heshmati Nabavi, Armat, Ebadi, & Vaismoradi, 2018). In addition, the drawings themselves were observed and analysed for identifying emerging common shapes, symbols, and patterns resonating with participants' narratives (See Haring & Sorin, 2014; Kellog, 1969; Malchiodi, 2012).

Whilst a familiar technique for children and adolescents, applying it particularly in whole-class settings was not done without challenges. In the case of children, although already acquainted with collaborating in groups in varied situations prior to drawing, there was a needed short period of negotiation between the members of each group. These included issues ranging from what and how to draw their character to who in the group would be best suited to draw it. In almost all cases, this took around 5 to 10 minutes, after which they all seemed into the task. Some groups, however, had more personal conflicts, not agreeing on what to draw (e.g., a boy or girl, a child or adult) and, in some cases, not allowing some members to participate fully. The argument was that some members were better at drawing and painting than others. These cases were addressed individually. Attempting to compromise, participants in these groups suggested to either split the group (into smaller groups) or to attend to the task in more than one way (e.g., they will draw a boy and a girl, or they will draw groups, allowing each to provide personal input into the drawing). In all cases, this was allowed by the researcher, with the only consideration noted being the limited time.

Figure 4.3: DRAW, WRITE, AND TALK ABOUT HAPPINESS

1. Draw, 2. Write, and 3. Talk

Source: Photographs taken by Author

1.



2.



3.



Figure 4.4: DRAW, WRITE, AND TALK ABOUT HAPPINESS – Addressing challenges

1. Attending to the task as suggested – most of the groups worked collaboratively,
2. Attending to the task differently – some groups drew a boy and a girl,
3. Attending to the task differently – some groups drew groups.

Source: Drawings made by participants

1.



2.



3.



4.5 Addressing Objective 2: Placing Happiness

The second objective of the research, *'To place children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness within their local urban surroundings'*, built upon the first set of methods and was addressed by a photo-mapping activity and, correspondingly, follow-up interviews. Continuing with a task that was different from usual school activities enhanced engagement with the research and provided excitement and anticipation due to the cameras not being digital.

The full method included three stages to grasp a full overview of the participants' experiences of happiness in place: a first stage for participants to act as photographers, a second for them to map the locations of their photographs, and a third stage for some participants to be individually interviewed about the content of their images. In doing so, the children and adolescents successfully provided an insight into the many ways in which they relate to their local surroundings and highlighted an array of places within the urban fabric, enhancing their experiences of happiness (see Chapter 5). This subsection outlines this method in detail. It discusses the process for each stage, the analysis, and the unexpected challenges of its application.

4.5.1 Photo-Mapping Activity and Follow-Up Interviews

Photo elicitation refers to the use of photographs in research interviews. Images evoke inner and deeper elements of the human psyche. Hence, using this method, different kinds of information might be evoked, distinct to only verbal data (Harper, 2002). On the other hand, photographs offer a way of enriching existing interviewing methods, especially when working with children (Collier, 1986). Conducting traditional interviews with young participants can be particularly challenging as struggling to communicate their ideas may lead to frustration, whilst simply talking about what they know might cause them to become tired and bored. Including photographs within the interviewing process has the potential to fight these situations (Cappello, 2016). In addition, asking children to work with cameras and photographs helps them to get engaged. As it is not a usual activity for them, it helps to promote genuine curiosity about the research (Matthews & Tucker, 2000). Similar to the drawing activities, photography can be considered a visual language that, in combination with words, enables children with the

opportunity to communicate in different, non-verbal ways (Einarsdottir, 2005). Furthermore, photo elicitation may help adult researchers to gain insight into different nuances of children's and adolescents' everyday lives that may not be reached using conventional interviews (Leonard & McKnight, 2014).

Explored by researchers working with young people, many variations and strategies have come out of using this method. Previous studies have attended to, for example, children's and adolescents' attitudes towards their neighbourhoods, the meaning of growing up in the city, the usage of the internet and mobile phones, as well as their knowledge of the problems and troubles of their urban surroundings (Leonard & McKnight, 2014). Likewise, young people have been asked to depict aspects of poverty, school, home, neighbourhood, and global environmental contexts (Michaelson, McKerron, & Davison, 2015). Studies exploring different aspects of children's wellbeing have also applied this method. Whiting (2015) looked for an insight into children's perceptions of their long-term wellbeing. Ten children aged 9 – 11 years old were given disposable cameras and were asked to take photographs of the activities they enjoyed the most. Likewise, Honkanen et al. (2017) gave disposable cameras to 16 participants aged between 2 and 16 years old, asking them to *'photograph places where they spent time and in which they feel good, as well as situations which produced a sense of feeling good'* (2017, p. 196).

By applying this method, this study aimed to record children's preferences for urban spaces in relation to their everyday experiences of happiness. The purpose was to use photographs as input for a follow-up discussion regarding participants' experiences of happiness within the urban space. In doing so, this research also intended to identify the characteristics of the urban fabric that may or may not inform children's and adolescents' such experiences. For this phase, out of 133 participants originally recruited, 131 took part in this activity. They produced 491 photographs, out of which 466 were used in this study (Lima North n=181, Lima South n=237, Lima Centre n=48). 25 were discarded due to lack of clarity, being family photographs or not being related to the purpose of this research (see Table 4.8). Consent forms initially signed by parents and participants included them giving express permission for photographs to be kept and used for research purposes or academic publications. This allowed children to keep ownership and control over their photographs (Alderson, 2000). Once developed, they were free to take any photograph they did not want considered out of the study. Building on the first stage of the

research, participants were asked to photograph spaces within their own neighbourhoods or local surroundings where they spent time and felt and experienced happiness. Instructions were given considering participants would be acting as photographers rather than appearing in the photographs. However, many chose to ask their parents to take the photographs for them so they could appear in the scene, and some took selfie-like photographs. As a result, some of the participants are depicted in the developed photographs. This, however, has no relation whatsoever to gender or age. As such, the collection of photographs included those depicting only spaces and those depicting either girls or boys, children, or adolescents.

Table 4.8: PHOTO-MAPPING ACTIVITY – Number of Participants / Photographs taken

Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

** As defined by the National Peruvian code for children and adolescents.

Children are considered between 0-11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12-18 years old
(See Law No.27337 - Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000)

		LIMA CENTRE*	LIMA SOUTH*	LIMA NORTH*	TOTAL SAMPLE	
PHOTO MAPPING ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS - CHILDREN**	19	25	55	99
		TOTAL PARTICIPANTS - ADOLESCENTS**	3	24	5	32
		TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	22	49	60	131
	NUMBER OF PICTURES	TOTAL PICTURES - CHILDREN	38	168	165	371
		TOTAL PICTURES - ADOLESCENTS	10	85	25	120
		TOTAL PICTURES	48	253	190	491
		TOTAL PICTURES USED IN STUDY	48	237	181	466

Furthermore, the aim of the research was to get an insight into the participants' relationship with their urban surroundings. The scope of the research sought their experiences of chosen urban spaces within the city. Hence, more familiar and even controlled environments such as their house or the school were noted not to be included due to them not being public spaces. Also, it was emphasised that photographs should be taken within their local everyday environments. They were explicitly advised not to ask their parents to take them to specific places particularly far from home. This was to ensure that the photographs would reflect their everyday activities and experiences rather than isolated ones. Follow-up discussions with participants, particularly from Lima Centre, unveiled a slight disconnection with the

urban space and a more important role of the home as a place for experiencing happiness. This is considered within the analysis and is developed in Chapter 6.

Considering the number of participants, and due to limited budget, both children and adolescents were organised in groups of 4 or 5, according to living proximity. Subsequently, each group was provided with a 24-shots disposable camera. 44 cameras were distributed and collected on average two weeks later. Form teachers assisted with this task. They volunteered to remind the participants to return the cameras and to collect them. Participants were advised to be responsible with the cameras, yet they were also reminded that no responsibility was to be charged upon them if they were broken or lost. Both children and adolescents were equally reminded that cameras were given to them under a sense of trust, and they were recommended to write their names on them to increase their sense of responsibility and engagement with the research (see Figure 4.5). A few participants inquired about the possibility of using their parents' mobile phones or their own. This was accepted, but they were asked to send the photographs to their teacher's email. This was to minimise contact with the researcher outside the field. Also, communication with their teachers via email was not a new task. Teachers collated these files, printed them, and handed them in alongside the cameras. Once collected, the cameras were taken to be developed, and the photographs were used as input for a follow-up mapping activity with all participants and semi-structured interviews with selected participants. For the latter, participants were selected based on the typology of the photographed spaces. The aim was to get a more detailed insight into what the photographs represented and how place-based experiences of happiness might differ or coincide from one participant to another. For this purpose, before the follow-up interviews, I reviewed the photographs and outlined an overall list of types of photographed spaces. Among these were local small and big parks, sports areas, shopping malls, supermarkets, markets, and religious spaces. As such, for each group of participants, I chose at least two participants, one girl and one boy, whose photographs included those types of spaces. In addition, some participants volunteer to be interviewed. Their eager participation was very welcome.

Figure 4.5: PHOTO-MAPPING ACTIVITY – Disposable cameras as labelled by participants
Source: Photograph taken by Author



With the photographs developed, participants were asked to identify and pinpoint the locations where these were taken on a map. For this purpose, they were either provided with an individual A4 or a bigger A3 format printed Google map. Each school area included, as reference points, the school (identified with a star icon) and each of the participants' houses. Addresses were collected for this purpose through the consent forms. By mapping their photographs, participants successfully provided sufficient data to address the second objective of this research. In doing so, they located both common and unique urban spaces in which they experience happiness (see Figure 4.6). That is, they were successful in *placing their experiences of happiness*. The information contained on the map served as input for the elaboration of consolidated maps per area outlined in Google Maps. All participants were encouraged to share informally what types of places they were mapping within the mapping session. Their answers were recorded as part of the field notes and used during the analysis process. This enriched and complemented my initial classification of spaces outlined before the activity.

In addition, to get a more detailed insight into what the photographs represented, 33 selected participants were invited to follow-up interviews. These were held at the school and video recorded with previous parental permission. Videos were used instead of voice recording only to have a recollection of what parts of the photographs were pointed at during the interviews. The videos were transcribed and translated afterward. Interviews successfully provided a deeper understanding of the photographs themselves, their reasons for being taken, and insight into what made those spaces places for happiness. For analysis

purposes, all valid photographs were also scanned and classified using qualitative content analysis. Photographs were classified according to the type of urban spaces they portrayed. In addition, maps were analysed in terms of frequency and distance. Findings were then compared to and complemented those obtained from the survey (see Section 4.2.4 below).

Whilst engaging and successfully addressing the second objective of this study, this fieldwork stage faced two main challenges. The first related to a technical issue, to some extent expected. Being disposable cameras, not all the photographs taken were favourably developed. This demanded managing participants' expectations and attempting to explain the technicalities behind them not having all or some of their photographs. Fortunately, it was the case with only a very small number of participants. In these cases, the form teachers helped communicate this to the parents and asked them to send photographs of their children in urban spaces. Participants facing this impasse were able to elaborate their maps based on the photographs sent by their parents and printed by the teacher. In this way, no participant was left out. However, these photographs and maps were not considered for analysis purposes due to them not having been taken for the purposes of the research. An additional challenge was faced during the mapping phase, particularly when working with the younger children. In many cases, it was the first time they had been placed in front of a map, so additional guidance was needed. When the activity was undertaken within a whole class setting, those in need of guidance were instructed to raise their hands, and I approached every one of them as many times as needed. A bigger map was printed and presented on the board at the front of the class, so general guidance was given using this resource as well.

Figure 4.6: PHOTO-MAPPING ACTIVITY

1. and 2. Materials given included printed map, markers, coloured labels, photographs developed and label by participant,

3. Children photomapping 4. Adolescents photomapping 5. Photo map

Source: Photographs taken by Author



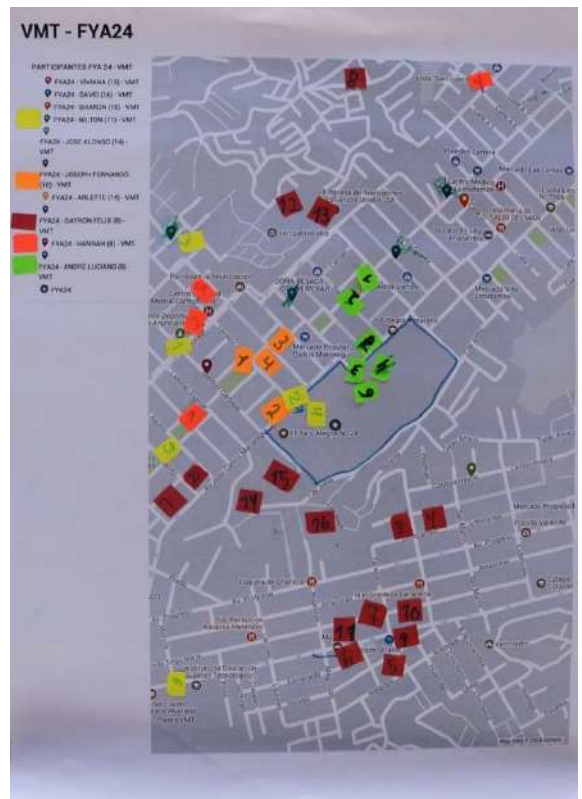
3.



5.



4.



4.6 Addressing Objective 3: Planning for Happiness

The third objective of the research, ‘To identify planning strategies for urban environments to enhance happiness not only for children’s and adolescents’ but for their neighbourhoods as a whole’, built upon the previous set of methods and was addressed by interweaving findings from three different methods:

- A quantitative social survey
- A participatory design and 3D model-building activity
- Semi-structured interviews with local experts and practitioners

The first, a quantitative social survey, was applied in schools with children and adolescents. The second, a participatory design, 3D model-building activity, was undertaken with a mixed audience of children, adolescents, and volunteer adults. The third, semi-structured interviews were done with invited local experts and practitioners. Interviewed local experts were invited to participate in the 3D model-building activity. Whilst some initially accepted, due to time constraints, ultimately none of them took part in the activity. Adults participating in this activity were professional volunteers that signed up following advertisement of the activity on social media (see Appendix 5).

By acknowledging the participants’ unique experiences of their local surroundings and the city, the first two methods explored how children and adolescents perceived and assessed the city. It also interrogated their understandings of the city and provided a valuable insight into how children and adolescents attend to key priorities within their neighbourhoods. Interviews with local experts allowed for comparing and contrasting children’s and adolescents’ responses with those of adults. The findings emerging from these three datasets auspiciously set the foundations for outlining strategies for better and thriving urban environments for young and for all. That is, it highlighted varied ways to approach urban planning under a happiness lens (see Chapter 7). This subsection delves into these methods in detail, describing how they were applied, analysed processed. It also discusses the main challenges within.

4.6.1 Models of Happy Cities

By inhabiting cities, we are in permanent interaction with the built environment and its constitutive elements: buildings and urban spaces. Likewise, as we experience the city first-hand, regardless of our expertise, we are perfectly capable of influencing our local community and, by extension, our urban environment (Golden, Webster, & Butterworth, 2009). Children and young people are not exempt from this experience. They have a unique understanding of the space and the built environment and are experts of their own needs (Moss, 2006; Uttke, 2010). If given the opportunity, they can be acknowledged as capable, creative designers on all scales of space, from the city to their local streets. Also, if allowed, they can take responsibility and action to shape their own environments, helping make them better places - transforming plazas, parks, and streets (Uttke, 2012).

Participatory design is a method of attending to the engagement of varied stakeholders and design practitioners in a shared creative process adding value to the design outcome (M. L. Bartlett, 2014). Through the use of varied techniques, including focus groups, workshops, and model making activities (Yamauchi, 2012), it aims to answer the question *'how do you want to live?'* (Golden et al., 2009). Something concerning all members of the community. In this regard, young people are normally eager to be consulted and to play a part in design processes, including identifying the nature of a problem, thinking in terms of their needs, outlining drawings, model-making, testing, and modification (Golden et al., 2009; Nicholson, 1972). Using design and model-making as a tool enables both adults and young people to work together (Uttke, 2012), facilitating the communication between them and enhancing the listening process (Birch, Parnell, Patsarika, & Šorn, 2016; Clark, 2011). As a result, typically, children and adolescents challenge preconceptions and approach any situation from a direct, honest, outspoken perspective (Birch et al., 2016; Golden et al., 2009).

Additionally, by providing a tangible outcome, model-making is an enjoyable collaborative process. It is particularly useful to study how the built environment is perceived or what is desired, allowing innovative solutions to emerge. Both the outcome and the process itself serve as a point of reflection, a representation of the imaginary, and an instrument of experimentation (Vocialta, 2014 / 2015). Through using a participatory design approach, young people have been consulted, for example, on the quality of

and what they dream for their schools, their use of space within their spare time, and their play areas, among other things (Kränzl-Nagl, 2010). Being asked to collaborate and provide suggestions for enhancing their everyday spaces, such as the school or neighbourhood, children and adolescents had proven their ability to draw on themes of health, restoration, and their desire for safe social spaces for learning and play (Bartlett, 2014).

The current study aimed to acknowledge children and adolescents as key and active community experts and be acknowledged by the local community. For this purpose, following the previous photo-mapping activity, a participatory design, 3D model-building workshop was designed and advertised across all participants. The aim was to bring children, adolescents, and adults together to discuss and develop ideas for urban spaces capable of enhancing both their happiness experiences and those of their community.

Participation for this follow-up activity was voluntary for children and adolescents, but places were limited due to time and space available. As for adults, recruitment was done via social media. An advert outlining the details and purpose of the workshop was published on Facebook alongside a Google Forms link for potential participants to register their interest (see Appendix 5). Following this, prior to the workshop, all registered participants were emailed, confirming their participation and providing additional details on the aim of the research, the programme for the day, the venue, and references on how to get there.

The activity also aimed for the local wider community of each area to be involved (e.g., community leaders, local authorities, local practitioners). However, at the moment of this study (Mar – Jul 2018), Peru was in the midst of local political campaigns for the next district and regional mayors to be elected. Hence, involving local authorities and community leaders was not a viable option.

In addition, congregating both children and adults to participate in a half-day workshop proved to be challenging due to conflicting agendas. The only viable option for the adults interested in participating was for the participatory design workshop to be done on a Saturday. On the other hand, schools sought venues to guarantee parents a safe, accessible, known environment accepted hosting the activity only within working days and school hours. Only one school in Lima South agreed to accommodate the workshop on a Saturday morning. Taking this into account and aiming to amplify the outcomes of this

fieldwork stage, two different 3D model-making activities were held, with a total of 49 participants. One was a whole-class (n=20) individual 3D model-making activity conducted in Lima North within school hours, only with children. The second was a participatory design workshop conducted in Lima South with a total of 29 participants. 9 of which were adults and 20 children and adolescents (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9: MODELS OF HAPPY CITIES – Number of Participants

Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

** As defined by the National Peruvian code for children and adolescents.

Children are considered between 0-11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12-18 years old

(See Law No.27337 - Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000)

Note: Due to time constraints, no model making activity was conducted with participants from Lima Centre

3D MODEL BUILDING ACTIVITY - INDIVIDUALLY BUILT	LIMA NORTH*	
	GIRLS	BOYS
CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS (AGES 8-11)**	12	8
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED	20	

3D PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WORKSHOP - COLLECTIVELY BUILT	LIMA SOUTH*	
	GIRLS	BOYS
CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS (AGES 8-11)**	3	1
ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPANTS (AGES 12-16)**	10	6
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED PER GENDER	13	7
TOTAL CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED	20	
ADULT PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED	9	
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS (CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS)	29	

The first whole-class individual 3D model-making activity conducted in Lima North was possible because one of the form teachers was keen for her students to participate. She managed to organise her class and allocate school hours' time for me to conduct the workshop with 20 of her students. I took this as a pilot run to try out the suggested materials and observe the participants' engagement. As a result, 20 A4-sized 3D models of happy urban spaces were designed by children (see Figure 4.7). The second model-making activity was a fully participatory design workshop conducted in Lima South with 4 children, 16 adolescents and 9 adults, the latter being voluntary professionals from related disciplines such as architecture, education, and sociology (see Table 4.9). Distributed in five mixed groups, the outcome was five different models of happy cities.

Figure 4.7: 3D MODEL MAKING ACTIVITY – Whole class individual 3D model making activity
1. and 2. 3D Model Making process, 3. and 4. Participants showing their 3D models, 5. Finished 3D models
Source: Photographs taken by Author

1.



2.



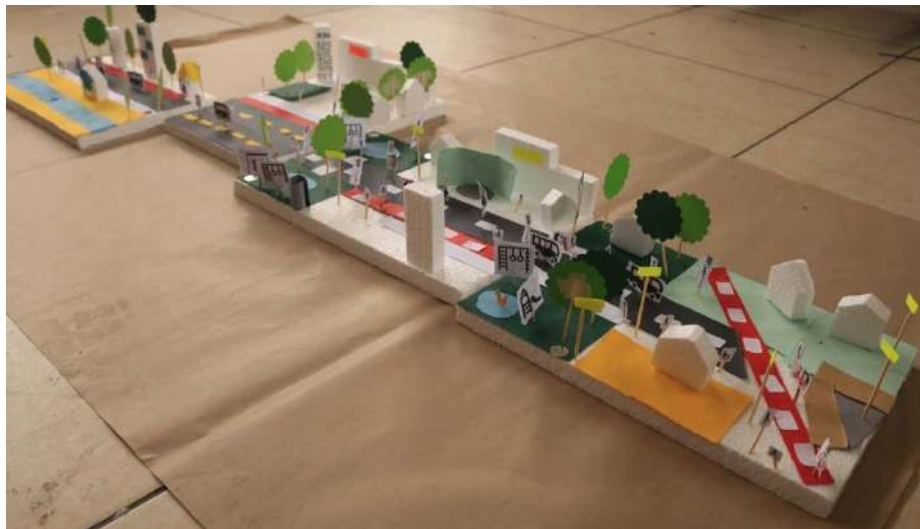
3.



4.



5.



On the day of the workshop, registered adults were asked to arrive half an hour before the children to register, sign consent forms (see Appendix 2f), and receive introductory instructions (see Figure 4.8).

They were advised on particular considerations regarding working with children. They were asked to approach children and adolescents as equals and as experts with valid opinions on the subject. Also, to be prepared to get rid of any preconceived idea and open their minds to the possibility of being changed and challenged by the children's and adolescents' opinions (Birch et al., 2016). Finally, they were invited to 'play' and remember that no idea is wrong or impossible. Their role was more of a 'background role', encouraging and empowering children's and adolescents' ideas, as well as helping them in a technical capacity, where necessary, with building the model. Seeking the perspective of adults supported the recognition and repositioning of children and young people as equal knowledge producers. It created a context in which it was possible to exchange roles.

Figure 4.8: PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WORKSHOP IN LIMA SOUTH – Participants' registration

Source: Photographs taken by Author

1. Registration Table, 2. Adults' registration, 3. Children registration, consent form being signed by parent



Once the children arrived, all participants were arranged in groups of 4 young participants and 1 or 2 adults. Every group received a file containing different colour construction paper and a box containing models of different elements representing varied urban equipment. To start modelling their ideas, they were given an A1 size (84 x 59 cm) polystyrene base, scissors, paste bars, and different elements. These elements included: buildings, roads, bike roads, pedestrians' roads, green areas, water representation, concrete areas, dirt areas, lighting, trees, bushes, pedestrians, bikers, cars, busses, traffic lights, traffic signs, playground equipment, benches, waste bins (see Figure 4.9)

Figure 4.9: PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WORKSHOP IN LIMA SOUTH – Building Materials

1. List of Materials provided, 2. Materials provided

Source: Photographs and table by Author

1.

ELEMENTS	MADE OF
BUILDINGS	Polystyrene different sized blocks
ROADS	Dark grey construction paper strips
BIKE ROADS	Red construction paper strips
PEDESTRIANS ROADS	White construction paper strips
GREEN AREAS	Green construction paper strips and squares
WATER (RIVERS OR POND)	Blue construction paper strips and squares
CONCRETE AREAS	Grey construction paper squares
DIRT AREAS	Brown construction paper strips and squares
LIGHTPOSTS	Toothpick with yellow sticker
TREES AND BUSHES	Toothpick with green bush shape
PEDESTRIANS	Printed pedestrian clipart pasted to a toothpick
BIKERS	Printed bike clipart pasted to a toothpick
CARS	Printed car clipart pasted to a toothpick
BUSSES	Printed bus clipart pasted to a toothpick
TUK -TUK	Printed tuk-tuk clipart pasted to a toothpick
TRAFFIC LIGHTS	Printed semaphores clipart pasted to a toothpick
PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT	Printed playground clipart pasted to a toothpick
BENCHES	Orange rectangular stickers
WASTE BINS	Gold circled stickers

2.



They were all reminded of the research project and the aim of the workshop. Following this, they were given some minutes to introduce themselves, get familiar with their work area, and given materials. Then they were asked to think and build up a model attempting to answer the question, ‘how does a happy Lima (city) look like?’ Groups were given 2 hours to complete this process. Once finished, groups were given a 10-minute break. The session came to a close with a ‘show and tell’ type of presentation held by each group. Children and adolescents were empowered to explain their ideas, to be complemented by the adults if needed. Each group was asked to talk about their ideas, describe their model, explain what they aimed to represent and why they considered it a representation of a happy city. To finalise, I asked if there was anything else any of the participants wanted to share. This included comments on the

experience of the workshop itself. Children and adolescents discussed that it was a weird but great experience for them to take the lead in a group involving adults. Practitioners attending reflected on the experience and discussed with surprise the ability and ideas of the young participants. I concluded by recalling the main ideas that had emerged and thanking everyone for their attendance and participation.

Figure 4.10: PARTICIPATORY DESIGN WORKSHOP IN LIMA SOUTH – Process
1. Getting to know each other, 2.,3., and 4. Building process, 5. Presenting 3D Models, 6. Finished 3D model



All models were photographed in detail for analysis purposes, and the presentations were video recorded, transcribed, and translated. The actual models were left for the school to be used as teaching material. This was a request by the school head, which I happily agreed to. Photographs of the models produced

individually in the first workshop were inserted in AutoCAD, and the areas of their different surfaces were measured (see Appendix 6 for details on this procedure). This included parks and play areas, sports areas, and streets. The aim was to contrast the proportion of the areas suggested by the participants against the proportions of the existing surfaces in the city. On the other hand, photographs of the models produced in the participatory design workshop were analysed alongside the transcriptions of the corresponding presentation. Common themes were identified, and a composition of images and actionable recommendations was prepared as output (see Chapter 7).

4.6.2 Perceiving Happiness within the City: Quantitative Dataset

Previous studies using both objective and subjective measures had already proved happiness of urban dwellers could be affected by the quality of their urban environment (see Chapter 2). Spatial components of happiness have been particularly noticed by health geographers (Kearns & Collins, 2010). Former research has mainly explored how urban features such as green and open areas (Kothencz, Kolcsár, Cabrera-Barona, & Szilassi, 2017; M. P. White, Pahl, Wheeler, Depledge, & Fleming, 2017), walkability, mix used neighbourhoods and safety (Lucchesi, Larranaga, Ochoa, Samios, & Cybis, 2020), neighbourhood trust (Appau, Churchill, & Farrell, 2019), among other things, can affect our emotions positively, due to their potential to provide pleasurable experiences and social opportunities. However, empirical evidence associating varied urban traits with adults' happiness or subjective wellbeing (SWB) remains limited (Goldberg, Leyden, & Scotto, 2012; Pfeiffer & Cloutier, 2016), and that of children has hardly been explored (Freeman, 2017).

Valuable contributions include Leyden, Goldberg, and Michelbach (2011), whose study explored the explicit associations between the urban environment and SWB. They used self-reported data collected throughout 10 different metropolitan cities to explore quantitatively the linkages between the built environment and citizens' SWB. In doing so, they identified indicators such as perceived number of green areas and sports facilities, perceived sense of aesthetics in the city, pride in one's city, and perceived accessibility to all cultural, leisure, and commercial amenities, such as sufficient stores, cinemas and museums, and availability of public transport. In addition, they investigated citizen perceptions on government services related to health, education, and safety both during the day and at night. Further

relevant studies included Wang and Wang (2016), who explored spatial disparity according to life satisfaction in China. Cao (2016) sought to understand the linkages between the built environment, residential satisfaction, and life satisfaction in Minneapolis, using perceived and objective measures. Ettema and Schekkerman (2016) explored both objective and subjective attributes of the urban environment on the component of SWB in Utrecht. In addition, Kent, Ma, and Mulley (2017) explored the effects of both objective and subjective measures on all three components of SWB, positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction, and Sepe (2017) explored urban elements providing either happiness or sadness to urban dwellers.

Research dealing with similar linkages between varied urban attributes and children's happiness recalls that of Ergler, Kearns, de Melo, and Coleman (2017) who, drawing on qualitative methods, looked into children's perceptions and environmental awareness as related to their individual wellbeing in Auckland. Likewise, Laatikainen, Broberg, and Kyttä (2017) and Kyttä et al. (2018) explored the attributes of the built environment perceived as appealing across different ages. They used a public participation GIS survey to collect opinions from participants in the Metropolitan Area of Helsinki and Tokyo.

Considering the aim of this research '*to explore how cities are experienced and how those experiences translate into emotions*', this multi-methodological research programme also included a quantitative survey exploring children's perceptions of happiness on a myriad of urban attributes and accounted for self-reported measures of personal happiness. Following Leyden et al. (2011) and conducting a comparative review of varied global studies measuring national, community, city, and child wellbeing and happiness (for the complete list of studies reviewed see Appendix 7), a set of 7 domains, 19 key factors and 45 attributes were identified and incorporated into the survey design (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: SEEKING CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF HAPPINESS WITH THE CITY
 Domains incorporated in quantitative survey
 Source: Author

DOMAIN	KEY FACTORS	ATTRIBUTE ASSESSED
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	APPEARANCE	CITY APPEARANCE NEIGHBOURHOOD APPEARANCE STREET APPEARANCE
	PUBLIC SPACE	PARKS AND PLAY AREAS SPORT AREAS SQUARES STREETS AND ROADS PEDESTRIAN LANES CYCLE LANES
	URBAN EQUIPMENT	BENCHES LIGHTPOSTS RUBBISH BINS BUS STOPS
	CLEANLINESS	STREET CLEANLINESS WALL CLEANLINESS STREET SMELL
	NOISE	NEIGHBOURHOOD NOISE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	NATURE	TREES GREEN AREAS FLOWERS
	WATER	WATER BODIES HOUSE WATER
URBAN MOBILITY	MOBILITY	TYPE OF MOBILITY
	TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT	DISTRICT TRAFFIC TIME SPENT IN A CAR
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	SOCIAL CONEXIONS	FREQUENCY OF PLAYING / GATHERING OUTDOORS TIME SPENT PLAYING / GATHERING OUTDOORS
	SENSE OF BELONGING	SENSE OF DISTRICT BELONGING
	COMMUNITY CARE	COMMUNITY CARE FOR OTHERS COMMUNITY CARE FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD APPEARANCE
	LOCAL AUTHORITIES	LOCAL AUTHORITIES CARE
SAFETY	SAFETY PERCEPTION	SAFETY WALKING IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD AT NIGHT SAFETY WALKING IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD OVERALL NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY OVERALL DISTRICT SAFETY INSECURITY AS A PROBLEM SENSE OF INSECURITY
TIME USAGE	OUTDOOR FREQUENCY ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY ATTENDING PARKS FREQUENCY ATTENDING SPORT AREAS FREQUENCY ATTENDING SQUARES FREQUENCY PLAYING IN THE STREET
OVERALL WELLBEING	OVERALL HAPPINESS	OVERALL HAPPINESS
	IN-SCHOOL HAPPINESS	IN-SCHOOL HAPPINESS
	SOCIAL HAPPINESS	SOCIAL HAPPINESS
	SENSE OF FREEDOM	SENSE OF FREEDOM

In addition, the questionnaire, both paper-based and online, was designed taking into consideration the following criteria:

- a. Time length: The survey needed to be completed within a school classroom setting and one hour slot.
- b. Assistance: The questionnaire was designed to be completed by children as young as 8-years-old with little or no assistance.
- c. Ease of completion: The survey needed to be easy to complete allowing for minimum disruption for teachers in class.






The starting assumption was to consider participants might have no previous knowledge of completing a questionnaire. Secondly, having a simple questionnaire was absolutely necessary to gain cooperation from the schools.

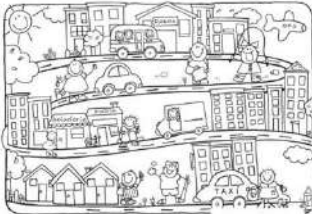
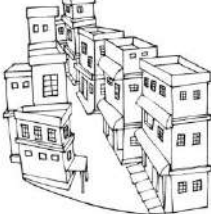

However, whilst the original intention was to create a short ten-minute questionnaire quick for children and adolescents to complete, upon reviewing the literature and narrowing down the included urban attributes, it became clear that a longer questionnaire would be required. The length was extended to no longer than twenty minutes so it could still be comfortably completed within a regular class. In practice, this worked well for the schools as they could allocate the full class slot where necessary, allowing the teacher to advance with other tasks if needed. A ten-minute questionnaire would still have disrupted a class session and required the teacher to fill the remaining time. A pilot was conducted with a small group of 10 participants (5 children and 5 adolescents) at the beginning of the fieldwork to confirm the length was not a problem and to make sure the language was clear. Also, to make sure the length of the questionnaire did not give the feeling of being tested. The results of the pilot were positive. Participants taking part in it noted the survey was longer than they imagined, but it was easy to fill in. They commented being asked to tick boxes makes it easier to fill in.

The survey was designed using simple, clear language, including related images to separate each section as an incentive and aid to better young children's understanding of what each section entailed (see Figure 4.11). All but three questions were for participants to rate their happiness regarding varied urban attributes. A five-point Likert scale was used throughout the questionnaire. This provided a measure of sensitivity without being too complex for children to complete. The scale allowed for each attribute to be

assessed from very happy to very sad. Face emoji icons were used to make it very clear to children what the scale meant. The icons were particularly important for the younger age groups and helped avoid wrong ratings being given by mistake (see Figure 4.11)

Figure 4.11: PERCEIVED HAPPINESS SURVEY – Example of aid images used in the survey and Emoji, Likert type scale

APPEARANCE: How does the city looks and feels?						
How happy are you with ...	 VERY HAPPY	 HAPPY	 NEUTRAL	 SAD	 VERY SAD	I DON'T KNOW / I DON'T WANT TO ANSWER
8. The way your city looks like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The neighbourhood / district where you live in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The way the street you live in looks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		
CITY	NEIGHBOURHOOD	STREET

The use of simple, clear language, sections separated by images, and the use of ‘happiness emoji icons’ were all designed with the youngest children in mind, knowing it would then work with older children. This was not an easy task, as the questionnaire needed to be clear without being patronising for older children. Feedback was sought from participating teachers before using the questionnaire with their classes. Different ‘age’ versions of the questionnaire were considered, but teachers’ feedback was consistently positive, and the same version was used for both children and adolescents. In addition to seeking children’s and adolescents’ perception of the city, the questionnaire also included summary metrics such as overall happiness, school, friends, and sense of freedom. Reasons for including these were both for the possible results and further analysis purposes. Three open-ended questions were also included at the end of the questionnaire (see Appendix 3d for a full version of the questionnaire). This sought from children quick one-word or short responses, attending to the three objectives of the research (see Chapter 1). Open-ended questions asked participants what words come to mind when thinking about

happiness (see Objective 1), what places they related to happiness (see Objective 2), and what they would suggest changing to make their neighbourhoods happier (see Objective 3).

In all cases, prior to administering the survey, consent was sought from the parents or carers (see Appendix 2b and 2c). Depending on the agreement with the school, a letter was sent either to specific group classes or in a more general way to all students between 8 and 16 years old who attended the school. The survey was administered only to those who gave consent. Form teachers helped with filtering this. The survey was designed and disseminated both on paper and online based in accordance with the particular infrastructure capabilities of each school. Those paper-based surveys were completed then manually entered into the online version for further easy access and analysis.

As for the analysis, data was first revised for completeness, and any incomplete sets of responses were removed. Out of 836 entries, 724 were considered valid (see Table 4.11 for participants quota). In addition, particular attention was given to the demographic questions such as age, gender, school year, and studied area to ensure consistent base sizes when analysing the finding by subgroup. Where possible, incomplete classification data was added, e.g., gender based on the child's name and studied area based on the school batch. The classification data could not be completed in a few cases, and the questionnaire was excluded from the analysis.

Table 4.11: QUANTITATIVE DATASET – Number of Participants

Source: Author

Source: Author

* Chosen case study areas

** As defined by the National Peruvian code for children and adolescents.

Children are considered between 0-11 years old / Adolescents comprised those between 12-18 years old

(See Law No.27337 - Congreso de la Republica del Peru, 2000)

Note: Due to time constrains, no model making activity was conducted with participants from Lima Centre

		LIMA CENTRE*		LIMA SOUTH*		LIMA NORTH*		TOTAL SAMPLE
		GIRLS	BOYS***	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	
QUANTITATIVE STAGE	CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS (AGES 8-11)**	43		76	97	15	15	246
	ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPANTS (AGES 12-16)**	71		85	99	114	109	478
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED PER GENDER	114	-	161	196	129	124	724
	TOTAL PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED	114		357		253		

The data was then coded. This involved adding code fields to group sets of responses (e.g., location of the school into the three geographical areas and school years into either primary or secondary level). At this stage, the open-ended responses were also coded. This involved first translating then coding, creating code frames by content similarity. The code frame was continually reviewed as it was being developed, with codes split into categories or subcategories and combined to best describe the responses. The final stage involved reviewing the code frame and the frequency of responses. Codes with a high frequency of responses were checked to see if they could be split further. This and the preceding step resulted in a clean and fully coded set of data that could be analysed and contrasted with the qualitative dataset. In addition, for all but open-ended questions, a set of data tables was created, showing the overall results and a breakdown by the demographic questions. Question responses were grouped and added to the tables to aid in interpretation, e.g., combining ‘quite’ and ‘very’. The findings were then converted into charts, a process consisting of multiple variations and iterations to arrive at optimal ways to visualise the data and communicate its meaning. This helped understand the story within the data and showcase the key variables to focus on in more detail.

The questionnaire aimed to map and prioritise urban attributes by identifying how important they were to children and adolescents and to measure their happiness with them. However, as the list of urban attributes grew, it quickly became apparent they would either need to be cut, or another approach would need to be used. The decision was taken to keep the list of urban attributes and derive their importance

by correlating each attribute with the measure of overall happiness. Correlations were calculated for each subgroup, creating a set of derived importance metrics by geography, gender, and age group. The results were compared with the qualitative feedback for broad consistency that the approach was sound. Deriving importance in this way helped keep the questionnaire length manageable and the participants engaged.

4.6.3 The Local Expert Perspective

The main aim of this study was to seek children's and adolescents' views and experiences of happiness and the city. However, as the urban space is constantly changing, it is valuable to include the local experts' and practitioners' perspectives in projects involving children and adolescents. This allows acknowledging their expertise and can provide a general overview of the context under which the research is being undertaken (Clark, 2010; Clark & Moss, 2005). In addition, it presents the opportunity for local practitioners to come across children's and adolescents' varied perspectives regarding the city and establish an ongoing dialogue between children and adults (Clark, 2010). Moreover, it helps to achieve two main outcomes. First, it highlights the extent of practitioners' skills, expertise, and willingness—or lack thereof—to engage with younger populations as equal stakeholders in community building (Dimoulias, 2017). And second, it provides significant insight into how knowledge produced by children and adolescents can be translated and effectively communicated to the wider public (Eubanks Owens, 2017).

Following this, alongside the fieldwork with children and adolescents, the research programme included conducting semi-structured interviews with local government and NGO representatives, local experts, policymakers, and academics. Interviews sought the experience of practitioners who either actively advocate for and participate with children in planning and designing urban environments or those who, within their everyday practices, intervene in the shaping and reshaping of the city in ways that may affect the lives of young people. In total, 29 local experts agreed to participate (see Subsection 4.3.3 for the recruitment process).

Interviews were scheduled progressively as practitioners were approached and agreed to take part in the research. Interviews took place in convenient venues for the participants, mainly their offices or nearby cafes. As mentioned before, prior to commencing the interviews, participants were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to be named in the writing of this thesis or other publishable material emerging from this research (see Appendix 2e). Interviews lasted for an hour on average and were fully recorded. Additional notes were also taken during and after each interview when necessary. Topics covered included a brief description of their role, expertise, and the organisation where they work, the relationship between their role with the urban environment and the extent to which it included working with children. Also, it asked for their opinions regarding the city's public space, the main urban challenges facing the city, and the impact of the urban environment upon children's happiness. Moreover, it explored their understanding of happiness and their relationship, if any, between happiness and the city. Finally, it sought their views on incorporating happiness as a measure of urban progress and the challenges facing the city for this to happen (see Appendix 3c for a copy of the full questionnaire).

Seeking the perspective of local experts, this study aimed to recognise their expertise in their fields of practice but under a happiness lens. Their discussions allowed me to depict the context challenges these research findings might encounter. Equally, I was interested in the extent to which the practitioners' views and perspectives supported children's knowledge production to generate comparable and contrasting analysis between everyday experiences of the city and everyday urban practices. Discussions with practitioners and local experts included dialogues within and beyond their specific expertise. Participants were asked questions on their field of expertise, their views on public space in the city, happiness, urban happiness and happiness as a factor for urban change, seeking or involving children's and adolescents' views in their practice, local urban policy, and challenges for the city.

Interviews with practitioners and local experts provided them with an opportunity to reflect on their own contextually specific professional practice. In many cases, the interview prompted them to think about the city and its corresponding effects on younger populations from a different perspective. Whilst questions regarding their field of expertise appeared to be easily answered, questions regarding happiness challenged them to think about the term itself within both their personal/community lives and their

professional practices. The following excerpt from one of the interviews brought it to life. The interviewee, an architect with expertise involving and working with children in design projects, faced a question about defining happiness nervously. She smiled at the question and asked for time to think about it and, once she got it, she answered:

Researcher: 'Carolina, and how would you define happiness?'

Carolina: 'mmm (takes time), well (smiles), that question! (smiles again), let me see (takes time), Ok! I believe happiness is an array of moments making you feel well. Providing certain emotions and positive, personal satisfaction'

Excerpt from interview with
Arq. Carolina Linares – Manager in Aula Peru

Once done, interviews were fully transcribed, translated, and coded under seven categories correspondingly classified under the three main subjects of research of this study: cities, happiness, and children (see Table 4.12). Analysis of practitioners' interviews illustrated the value of public and private organisations in establishing policy/practice/research relationships to increase children's and adolescents' visibility and knowledge production. In addition, contrasting local practitioners' and participants' views within the analysis proved valuable in identifying how young participants' views and personal experiences strongly resonated in varied ways with what practitioners explained within their own expertise.

Table 4.12: LOCAL EXPERTS' PERSPECTIVE: Interviews' coding
 Source: Author

	INTERVIEW CODING	THEMES INCLUDED
CITIES	USE OF URBAN SPACE	PUBLIC SPACE IN GENERAL CHILDREN IN PUBLIC SPACES RANKING LIMA'S PUBLIC SPACES
	QUALITY OF URBAN SPACE	PUBLIC SPACE QUALITY GROWING UP IN LOW QUALITY URBAN ENVIRONMENT
	LIMA	ABOUT LIMA ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES CHALLENGES FACING LIMA DESIGN VS PUBLIC POLICY
HAPPINESS	OVERALL HAPPINESS	HAPPINESS DEFINITIONS CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS VS ADULT'S HAPPINESS
	URBAN HAPPINESS	HAPPINESS AS AN URBAN DESIGN CRITERIA SOCIOECONOMICAL EFFECT ON HAPPINESS HAPPINESS SOCIAL EFFECTS HAPPY PUBLIC SPACES HEALTH, HAPPINESS AND PUBLIC SPACES
	CHALLENGES FOR CONSIDERING HAPPINESS	BARRIERS ON CONSIDERING HAPPINESS AS A MEASURE OF PROGRESS SOCIAL CHANGES NEEDED FOR BOOSTING HAPPINESS INVESTMENT PRIORITIES CHANGES NEEDED FOR BOOSTING HAPPINESS URBAN DESIGN CHANGES NEEDED FOR BOOSTING HAPPINESS PUBLIC POLICIES CHANGES NEEDED FOR BOOSTING HAPPINESS
CHILDREN	CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' AGENCY	IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' AGENCY CHALLENGES WORKING WITH CHILDREN OR COMMUNITIES GIVING VOICE TO CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE PERUVIAN CONTEXT

4.7. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are crucial to conducting any research with children. Conducting research in an ethical way is not a one-time occurrence; rather it is an ongoing responsibility for allowing all stages of the research to be conducted in a reflexive way, allowing children to feel safe, protected and recognised (S. K. Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). Children and adolescents participating in research need their voices to be heard, respected, and valued. As a framework for attending to and doing ethical research, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) identified two different aspects for consideration: that of '*procedural ethics*' and that of '*ethics in practice*'. The first involves both getting approval from ethics and review committees and boards initially and then seeking consent from participants. On the other hand, ethics in practice refers to ethical considerations that could possibly arise in the everyday practice of conducting research (2004, p. 263). These considerations are particularly necessary to address when doing research with children and adolescents, who are typically considered vulnerable. This subsection reflects on both dimensions as considered and attended to in this study.

4.7.1 Procedural Ethics on Doing Research with Children

Any student or staff member in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) needs to seek ethical approval from the correspondent university board (Morrow, 2012). Following this, and in fulfilment of the University of Birmingham's Code of Practice for research, ethical approval was sought from the university board in October 2017 for research that was planned to begin in March 2018. This was to allow sufficient time for the committee to respond and, if necessary, to attend to any raised issue. However, full ethical approval for the research was only granted in mid-April 2018. This slightly impacted the data collection schedule, making it necessary to reduce the number of model-making design workshops, suggesting that the combined audience (children, adolescents and practitioners) be reduced from 3 to 1. Concerns raised within the process were mainly related to providing more clarity by using language appropriate for children in the information letter, consent forms, and survey addressing participants. The words '*perceptions*' and '*public space*' were particularly noted as being complicated for younger children. The first was replaced by '*thoughts and views*', whilst the latter was replaced by '*places outside your house or*

school'. In addition, the possibility for children to become upset when discussing their happiness was also raised. The research attended this in two ways. First, I did not question any children personally about their happiness experiences. When discussing the term during the qualitative stage, it was at all moments discussed through drawings depicting imaginary characters. The survey, however, did include the question 'how happy are you'—yet, by being anonymised, this did not pose a problem. In addition, the possibility of this happening was discussed with the school's liaison person. In the case of this happening, it was agreed with all schools that the form teacher and a counselling team were to be involved. This, however, was not an issue during any stage of the research, remaining a hypothetical scenario.

Regarding the quantitative stage of this study, the issue concerning consent for taking part in the survey was of considerable attention. As a method, it was designed to be applied within school-time and within a school environment. Outlined as an anonymous questionnaire, it was suggested that consent should be sought from the school's authorities, acting in *loco-parentis*, which is a well-extended practice for conducting surveys with children (Harris & Porcellato, 2018). This allowed for all the students meeting the age criteria (8–16-year-old) in each school to complete the survey to the extent that they wanted to, fully authorized by the educational institution. In doing so, it amplified the extent of the data collection. However, the ethical review did not accept this suggestion and requested for parents to be asked to give consent on their children's participation in the quantitative stage of the research. This had a significant impact on the available time and number of responses collected. It was, however, attended to by the research, and a letter inviting students to participate in the survey was sent to parents for signing consent. Only those whose parents had signed it were provided access to and allowed to answer the questionnaire. Having an in-school person acting as an intermediary proved ultimately valuable in this case.

After getting ethical approval from the university ethical board, and for commencing the data collection stage, consent was sought as suggested and approved by schools and all participants involved. In the case of the children and adolescents willing to participate, consent forms were sought to be signed by their parents or guardians and also by them. Previous research encourages this practice to endorse children's and adolescents' own agency (Crane & Broome, 2017; Dockett & Perry, 2011). For this purpose, consent forms were written using age-appropriate language to assist children's understandings. Depending on

the access granted by the schools and the research stage, children and parents were provided the appropriate form. All of them included the option for participants to agree or not to their drawings and photographs being used in research publication and wider dissemination (Teti, 2019). The consent form stated participants' personal data was to be anonymised, and pseudonyms were to be used for quoting their interventions. Also included a declaration that the research did not mean exposure to any kind of risk or harm and that participants were entitled to withdraw their participation and their contributions at in stage just but letting me or their form teacher know. Four variations of the consent form were prepared:

- Consent form for students attending schools in which only the qualitative stage was granted authorization to take place (see Appendix 2a).
- Consent form for students attending schools in which both stages, qualitative and quantitative, were granted authorisation to take place (see Appendix 2b).
- Consent form for students attending schools in which only the quantitative stage was granted authorization to take place (see Appendix 2c).
- Consent form for students willing to take part in the model-making activity (see Appendix 2d).

4.7.2 Ethics in Practice whilst Doing Research with Children

Doing research with children demands that the researcher be particularly attentive to and reflective about the potential risks the study might entail. Visual and task-based methods are a particular concern, as there are not many ways to anticipate either the outcome or the varied ways in which the task can appear to participants. Drawings or photographs can provide unexpected insight into an array of children's or adolescents' experiences not being sought by the study (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Copes, Tchoula, Brookman, & Ragland, 2018; Punch, 2002). The attentiveness and reflexivity of the researcher might help when anticipating potential risks and when preparing to act on these risks. The following excerpt from an informal conversation with one of the participants might shed light upon this. Despite not being in an interview, whilst drawing, one of the participants engaged in a conversation with me. She started sharing her thoughts on what she was drawing but rapidly began to talk about her family and how she felt within it. Her body language revealed that this was not a particularly happy situation. Whilst her constructs of

happiness were derived from the drawing exercise; this was a moment that demanded reflexivity on the field. I decided to redirect the attention of the conversation to the drawing itself rather than incentivizing further sharing. Furthermore, I shared my concerns with the classroom teacher so she could keep an eye on and follow up on the student if needed.

Lia: I am drawing a girl. She is happy when doing all the things she likes

Researcher: And what is that she likes?

Lia: she likes drawing, singing, dancing, and writing poetry. Everything related with art.

Researcher: That sounds very interesting. And how often does she get to do these things.

Lia: Almost every day, after school. She likes doing it, she feels happy. Or rather she doesn't ... (stopped talking)

Researcher: She feels happy doing art? Or she doesn't?

Lia: She feels lonely, she gets bored, she does not like to be at home. Her family is normally too busy, nobody has time for her.

Researcher: I see, but she is still happy sometimes. Right? Like in your drawing?

Lia: yes, yes, sometimes she is happy.

Fieldwork Notes

In context, tension had been building up, and Lia's discomfort was clear in her body language. She talked whilst looking at the paper, she lowered her voice, and she diverted eye contact. Reflecting on being ethical on the ground, and after discussing my concerns with the form teacher, I found out that Lia was already seeing the school counsellor, proving that my decision to attend to Lia's body language and not prompt her to continue sharing was an appropriate one. Doing research with children demands that the researcher be attentive to and caring towards the participants. In many cases, this means that caring about the participants comes before any potential data.

4.7.3 Power Imbalances when Doing Research with Children in School Settings

When conducting research with children, issues of power imbalances are likely to occur (S. Phelan & Kinsella, 2011). This is likely to happen when doing in-school research and even more so in whole-class settings. Children might feel familiar with the environment and inherently fall into a teacher-student dynamic where they feel they are going to be graded and need to be on their best behaviour (Burke, 2005). Hence, adopting strategies for allowing a more horizontal relationship between researcher and participants is critical to elicit genuine responses rather than pleasing ones. In the course of this research, this appeared to be an ongoing challenge. Worth noting it was more needed to reiterate this to the form teacher rather than the students themselves.

When approaching potential participants for the first time, teachers or authorities in charge asked me how I should be introduced to the students. I explicitly responded that they do not use any additional title but my name. Those who chose to follow my request introduced me by saying '*we have a guest today*', '*someone wants to tell you something*', or '*the lady visiting today wants to share something with you*'. In a way, this set up the ground for me to establish and shape the relationship from the start in a more balanced and equal way. In other cases, I was introduced as '*Miss Alfaro*', '*we have a guest teacher today*' and even as '*Frau Alfaro*' (in a Spanish-German school). This posed an initial challenge as explaining to the participants that we were to work on an equal basis spawned the need for them to ask their form teachers if they were actually allowed to address me only by my name (Kirby, 2020). Whilst they finally agreed to call me by my name, by conducting the research in classroom settings, I was always positioned in a role with some degree of power, despite efforts to prevent this. Strategies included wearing informal clothes as opposed to more formal, teacher-like ones, allowing them to ask as many questions as they wanted about me (see previous section), using more friendly language rather than authoritative language, and constantly reminding them that they were not obligated to participate, and they were not going to be graded and could opt out if they decided to. Something that helped deter the imbalance was to provide an overview of the whole session at the beginning of each one and ask them if they agreed with what I was suggesting. In all cases, they seemed to appreciate being asked about this.

4.8. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter introduced a toolkit of methods used to research children's geographies of happiness. The methodology proved to be flexible and adaptable to varied local contexts and variations in children's everyday dynamics. The diverse methods used were progressively complementary, with the strength of one method building upon the knowledge produced by the previous one. This proved useful for the process of analysis and for developing an overall coherent narrative for this thesis.

Likewise, I privileged visual and creative methods for promoting the engagement of the participants whilst also including more traditional 'adult' methods to avoid being patronising and particularly to achieve a balance that can easily be adapted across different age groups. Considering that research with children in school settings in Peru is hardly done beyond the disciplines of education and psychology, the researcher usually is part of the school staff and already known to the participants. Using 'hands-on' creative methods was particularly useful in a context in which I was easily positioned as a guest or an outsider. Attractive, 'out of the routine' methods helped to engage both the participants and the form teachers in enhancing their teaching practices. This chapter also addressed the ethical challenges encountered both prior to and during the fieldwork. In doing so, it demonstrated the flexibility of the suggested methods and the demand for adaptability required particularly for doing research with children and young people.

CHAPTER 5

CHILDREN PICTURING HAPPINESS

5.1. Introduction

Children's and adolescents' happiness have a significant value not only for young people themselves but also for parents, educators, policymakers, national and local governments, among others. Consequently, international organisations and government bodies keep developing new and more accurate ways to understand and discuss '*what drives children's happiness*' and '*what can we do to support children's happiness*' (see, e.g., The Children's Society, 2019; UNICEF Innocenti, 2020). Yet whilst these attempts keep setting the ground for research on key factors on children's and adolescents' happiness and subjective wellbeing (SWB), little has been done to address *how children define or construct the concept of happiness*. What is more, traditionally, SWB measures have not been based on defining or understanding how participants conceptualised wellbeing. Instead, studies assessing SWB have typically left its definition open to subjective interpretations and self-report mechanisms (where participants are asked, e.g., *All things considered, how happy are you with your life?*). Thus, being noted in some studies as a gap in the wellbeing research agenda (Alexandrova, 2017). This chapter attends to this gap by investigating the multiple and diverse ways in which children and adolescents in Lima understood and defined happiness within their experiences. In doing so, it helps narrow the current literature by discussing what children and adolescents mean and value when they discuss happiness. Relying on children's cognitive capacities towards more powerful and broad-minded explorations (Gheaus, 2015), this chapter addresses the first objective of this study by answering its correspondent research question:

'How do children and adolescents in Lima understand and construct the concept of happiness?'

Previous studies made efforts to categorise specific domains or themes emerging from seeking children's perspectives on their wellbeing or happiness (Hoher Camargo, Wathier Abaid, & Giacomoni, 2011; Kapoor, Rahman, & Kaur, 2018; López-Pérez, Sánchez, & Gummerum, 2015; Navarro et al., 2017). Also, they attempted to establish multiple connections between the identified domains (Gabhain & Sixsmith,

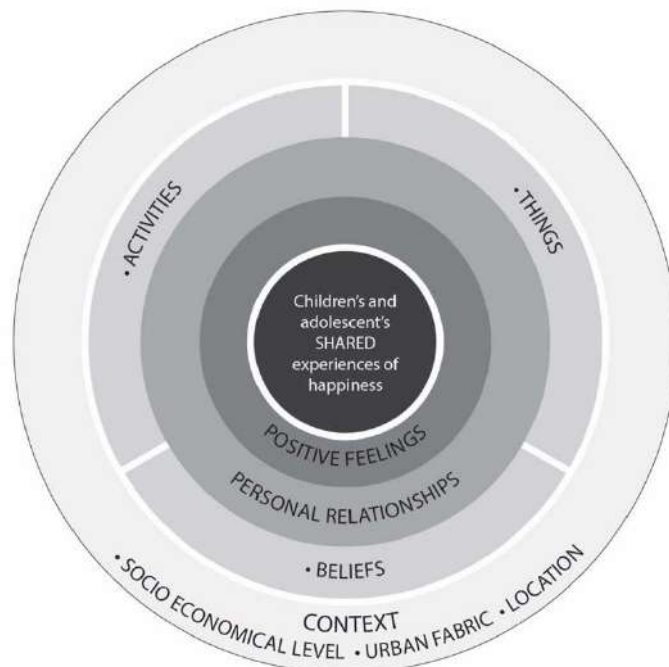
2005), yet without success. The result has been a number of lists comprising domains and subdomains that do not seem to be connected. Instead, I suggest any attempt of identifying categories of wellbeing must be understood under the multidimensional perspectives of the human being and be interwoven. Consequently, I argue that an interconnected model of children's constructs of happiness is needed to unveil the complexity behind their experiences, an approach rarely attempted in previous studies. To my knowledge, only Fattore, Mason, and Watson (2008), exploring overall wellbeing from the child's standpoint, suggested an integrated model of children's wellbeing, acknowledging the multifaceted character of the concept. Though a highly valuable approach, it focuses on overall wellbeing rather than specifically on happiness and the experiences within, as I proposed. Therefore, it could not be applied directly to this study and a new model—developed in this thesis—is needed.

Considering this and supported by qualitative and quantitative empirical data, this chapter introduces a multi-layered model of children's understanding of happiness. By identifying and organising participants' constructs, it provides an overall insight into the complexity of young people's understandings and experiences of happiness. To do so, it relies on data derived from the qualitative empirical data collected through 'draw, write and tell' activities (see Sub-section 4.4.2) and complemented by data extracted from the applied in-school social survey (see Sub-section 4.6.2). As such, it categorises participants' discussions of their understandings and experiences of happiness into three different layers, operating in an interconnected way. Thus, it suggests that, for children and adolescents, happiness is rooted in their lives as a shared experience, triggered by the acquaintance of positive feelings (first layer), expressed within their personal relationships (second layer), and experienced through the activities they enjoy, the things they own, and their personal beliefs and shared views (third layer), all moderated by the context in which they are growing up (see Figure 5.1).

Following the layers of the suggested model, the chapter consists of one main section sub-divided into three subsections. Section 5.2 first provides an overall view of what happiness means and how children and adolescents understand it in Lima. In doing so, it argues that *happiness is a shared relational experience grounded in social interactions*. It then provides a closer look into the three layers outlining the model. Subsection 5.2.1 addresses the importance of positive feelings in igniting the shared experience

of happiness. Subsection 5.2.2 then looks at the different social entities and dynamics grounding and giving sense to the happiness experience. As such, it discusses the role of the family, pets, and friends within children’s and adolescents’ day-to-day lives and as key drivers of happiness. Finally, Subsection 5.2.3 provides a valuable insight into what helps triggering children’s and adolescents’ experiences of happiness. It explains how happiness can be experienced through an array of activities, things, and beliefs. Following participants’ interventions, this has been identified as being active, owning, and consuming, and by being connected.

Figure 5.1: PROPOSED MODEL OF CHILDREN’S AND ADOLESCENTS’ CONSTRUCTS OF HAPPINESS
Source: Author based on empirical data



5.2. Children’s Constructs of Happiness in Lima: The Shared Experience of Happiness

For children and adolescents in Lima, two fundamental domains grounded their discussions of happiness: the experience of positive feelings and the significance of meaningful relationships. This resonates with previous studies discussing children’s emotional lives and important relationships as pillars of their understandings of their wellbeing. In particular, Fattore et al. (2008) annotated these two factors as providers of the conditions for children to explain what was essential in terms of wellbeing and ‘also allowed children to integrate complex and contradictory experiences into their understanding of well-being’ (Fattore et al., 2008, p. 62).

In the case of Lima, participants described happiness as strongly intertwined with the feelings that fuelled significant connections, the people they spent time with, and the quality of their relationships. A major consensus among all participants was that happiness is a shared and social experience. In that sense, following the suggestion by Thin (2012), that happiness is fundamentally social, I argue that children's constructs of happiness are essentially grounded in their social occurrences through which they not only relate to others but also make sense of their surroundings. Consequently, I suggest that young people's understandings of happiness can be framed beyond individual occurrences and rather as a relational process. Relationships, thus, are fundamental and intrinsic to the essence and understandings of (young people's) happiness (White, 2017). Amalia illustrated it in the following quote. She explained happiness as what occurs when sharing earnest moments with others.

'[Happiness] is something you can share with people. It can be found in many places, for example when you achieve something, when you get something you wanted, or when something good happens to other people that you know will also affect you because they are good things.'

(Amalia, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

Furthermore, a closer look at the survey dataset allowed for a deeper level of granularity to emerge and for a better understanding of what lies behind the shared experience of happiness. As part of the quantitative questionnaire, participants were asked to write three words that occurred to them when thinking about happiness. As a result, 1,851 answers were registered, analysed, and categorised by content similarity into 13 categories, including 'others' and 'don't know / don't answer'. Among these, almost half of the responses (55.6%) were distributed between the two main categories. Positive feelings ranked first with 28.3%, and relationships with family/friends/pets ranked second with 27.4%. Activities (13.3%), things (8.8%), leisure/fun (6.6%), and personal beliefs (5.6%) followed in the ranking (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' CONSTRUCTS OF HAPPINESS

Responses to survey question: Write three words that come into your mind when you think of happiness

Source: author based on survey responses

CONSTRUCT	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	%	INCLUDED RESPONSES
POSITIVE FEELINGS	523	28.3%	Joy, Harmony, Love, Care, Trust, Pride
FAMILY / FRIENDS / PETS	507	27.4%	Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Cousins, Friends, Dog pets, Cat pets
ACTIVITIES	246	13.3%	Dance, Sing, Run, Draw, Play, Skate
THINGS	162	8.8%	TV, Mobile phones, Netflix, Tablet, Internet, Video games, Clothes, Toys, Food
LEISURE / FUN	122	6.6%	Parties, Holidays, Have fun
PERSONAL BELIEFS	104	5.6%	Honesty, Responsibility, Respect, Faith, God
PLACES	73	3.9%	School, Park, Street, Cinema, Supermarket, Shopping Mall
INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP	21	1.1%	Being in love, having a boyfriend / girlfriend
NEGATIVE FEELINGS	12	0.6%	Sadness, Concern, Anger, Disappointment
NATURE	11	0.6%	Plants, Flowers, Clouds, Nature
ABSENCE OF NEGATIVE SITUATIONS	5	0.3%	Not having bad moments
OTHERS	51	2.8%	Memories, Christmas, Gifts, Jokes, Memes
DON'T KNOW / DON'T ANSWER	14	0.8%	
TOTAL	1851		

This data suggested that the social shared experience covered and is explained throughout different domains, layers, and nuances that converge into a powerful statement in terms of children's constructs of happiness. Happiness for children is not an episodic occurrence but rather a continuous backdrop that sits in the core of their interactions and crosses over their different life settings. As such, consideration and analysis of it is needed and might unveil valuable knowledge for assessing young people's happiness in a way that allows policy-makers to more accurately identify whether or not policies are being effective or not (Dolan, Kudrna, & Testoni, 2017). The following subsections will examine these various domains and their significance towards picturing a multidimensional construct of children's happiness.

5.2.1 Shared Positive Feelings: Triggering the Experience

Throughout both their narratives and survey responses, children and adolescents in Lima consistently referred to positive feelings as what sat at the core of their experiences of happiness. Similarly, within the survey responses, out of all 1,851 entries, 523 referred to positive feelings (see Table 5.1). In both the qualitative and quantitative datasets, many references to positive feelings were identified, including, above all, the words 'joy', 'love', 'care' and 'peace', among others (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: POSITIVE FEELINGS WORD CLOUD

Responses to survey question: Write three words that come into your mind when you think of happiness

Source: author based on survey responses



This supported what Giacomoni, Souza, and Hutz (2014) identified in their research: that children and adolescents can relate and explain an abstract concept such as happiness through the acknowledgement of their personal feelings. This is something to be expected given that children's perceptions of experiences are more concrete and situational and, therefore, could construct the concept of happiness in a more immediate and tangible way in terms of the different moments they live, imagine, and describe (Sternberg & Nigro, 1980). During one of the qualitative workshops, Maria Jose, Selena, and Margarita illustrated it in the following quotes. They described happiness as feeling joy, being positive, and being thankful.

'Happiness is a feeling you have when you are joyful'

(Maria Jose, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o),

'(Happiness) is being optimist, positive and joyful with everyone around you'

(Selena, Lima South, girl, 14 y/o).

'(Happiness) is being joyful and thankful for what life had given you and for how you feel about it'

(Margarita, Lima Centre, girl, 11 y/o)

Likewise, previous studies also reported on similar trends (Giacomoni et al., 2014; Hoher Camargo et al., 2011; López-Pérez et al., 2015). Consistently, this domain top-ranked the discussions among all the participants, without significant differences accounted for by either gender, age, or geography. Similarly,

after 'joy', 'love' was one of the most popular responses within the survey and interviews. Participants agreed that happiness stood for 'being loved', 'being cared', 'being nurtured', 'being valued', and 'being recognized'. Raquel explained it in her own words as being with the people who represented love for her.

'Personally, it makes me happy to be surrounded by people who love me'
(Raquel, Lima Centre, girl, 14 y/o)

In addition, whilst discussing their drawings, a group of three girls and one boy introduced me to 'Cecilia Sofia' (see Figure 5.3). They shared her story, narrating why they pictured her as a happy person. They explained that she was happy when she was well treated, particularly when she knew her family (and peers) loved and cared about her. The smiley girl in their drawing dressed in bright colours, with a heart stamped on her jumper, and surrounded by flowers, brought to life the story the children were telling. There was nothing but joy in it. The heart was an evident hint of the relevance of love and care in their constructs of happiness. Drawn in the middle of the chest but also in the core of their narratives, this was a repetitive element across participants' drawings (see Figure 5.4). Yet, mainly for children rather than adolescents.

Figure 5.3: 'CECILIA SOFIA': Happiness is being loved and looked after
Source: Drawing and narrative by Group LNG3 – 3 girls and 1 boy – 8 y/o – Lima North



Cecilia Sofia is 8 years old. She is a very good and clever girl. Everybody likes her. She is very responsible and is happy helping others especially teaching her little sister new things. She enjoys caring about others and is happy when she feels loved. When she grows up, she wants to be a lawyer to keep helping others.

'You know she is happy, because you can see it in her face. She is smiling' ... 'Especially, when she is in the garden taking care of the flowers' ... 'She is overly happy when she is being well treated'
(Ana Sofia, Lima North, girl, 8 y/o)

'Also being loved and cared by her family and in the classroom'
(Hernan, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)

Figure 5.4: POSITIVE FEELINGS: Love in the core of a happy person

1. and 2. Drawing by Group LSG8 – 2 girls and 2 boys – 9 -10 y/o – Lima South,
3. Drawing by Group LNG9 – 4 girls – 9 y/o – Lima South

Source: participants' drawings intervened by author



Following feelings of love and care, the analysis of the in-depth interviews also revealed the constant references to the particular feeling of peace and tranquillity. Children and adolescents seemed to value the possibility of having some time to think on their own, be relaxed, have some tranquillity, be away from the normal school/home routine, and enjoy some quiet moments. By connecting this feeling of being interconnected with the places where they experienced it, they unveiled the spatial dimension apparently inherent to children's constructs of happiness. This will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Recalling the data collection process, children were asked, among other things, to draw *how a happy person looks*. These drawings were intended to be a medium for eliciting answers during the interviews. Yet many of the children spontaneously shared some of their personal thoughts whilst drawing. The task was set up to be done in groups of 3 to 5 participants; hence, most of the comments also had a shared narrative. In this sense, the idea of achieving peace was present in both their fictional and personal narratives. A group of participants from Lima South explained this feeling as part of the character narrative. Whilst drawing, they shared how their fictional character feels happiness whilst being in peace.

“Pablito” [their fictional happy character] spends at least three evenings a week at the park, close by.’

(Agustin, Lima South, boy, 14 y/o)

‘He likes the park because it is not crowded.’

(Jorge, Lima South, boy, 14 y/o)

‘He feels in peace and happy.’

(Camila, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

On a different day, also whilst drawing, Aranza and Marcela shared some of their own personal thoughts. Aranza referred to going to the park to reflect and have quiet but happy moments. Marcela shared about feeling relaxed, inspired and in peace when focusing on the sunset.

'Right now, I am thinking of going to the park after school, with my dog. I like going to the park because it is a place to think and reflect that can give you peace, tranquillity and therefore happiness.'

(Aranza, Lima Centre, girl, 14 y/o)

'When I get to see the sunset, I can't help but feel relaxed, in peace, just focusing on the sun and the sounds of the ocean. It makes me feel happy and inspired'

(Marcela, Lima Centre, girl, 14 y/o).

Akin to their constructs of happiness, children's understandings of peace had not been thoroughly researched either. On the one hand, existing studies had been mostly done in contexts of war or violence (Walker, Myers-Bowman, & Myers-Walls, 2003); on the other, only a few studies had deepened into overall children's concepts of peace. When done, it has been usually by putting children's understandings of peace in confrontation with the concept of war. As a result, these studies consistently reported on what peace is not, or so-called 'negative peace'. This is in relation to the absence of violence, conflicts, or quarrels (Hakvoort & Hägglund, 2001; Hakvoort & Oppenheimer, 1993). Yet, Walker et al. (2003) identified an interesting nuance among these results, reporting that many of the children explained peace as 'nothing going on', 'being quiet', 'being still', and 'doing nothing'. Yet, as these concepts are embedded in cultural and social phenomena, it has been noted that children's understanding of these terms may vary across different countries and contexts (Hakvoort & Hägglund, 2001). Moreover, the affinity between happiness and peace had also been identified in previous studies. Hoher Camargo et al. (2011) identified that Brazilian adolescents reported peace whilst discussing positive feelings. Kapoor et al. (2018) reported on similar findings from adolescents in India. Likewise, López-Pérez et al. (2015) asked children and adolescents in Spain to define happiness in their own words. Their findings reported on 'harmony' ranking second within their identified categories, including comments related to '*happiness as being tuned with the world, inner peace*' (López-Pérez et al., 2015, p. 2450). Consideration of this data

allows for a better understanding of what I am calling the shared experience of happiness. Thus, it sets up the foundations for a further understanding of children's and adolescents' constructs and experiences of happiness as fundamentally social and intersubjective, triggered by positive emotions.

5.2.2 Shared Relationships: Making Sense of the Shared Experience of Happiness

Meaningful relationships have proven to greatly impact children's happiness and well-being (Konu, 2002) and have the strongest correlation with their overall life satisfaction (Huebner, 1991). Previous studies reported on the centrality of family and friends as a key element of children's and adolescents' lay constructs of happiness (Carroll & O'Dwyer, 2002; Giacomoni et al., 2014; Sixsmith, Stewart, Nic Gabhainn, Fleming, & O'Higgins, 2007) as part of what keeps them well (Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2006) providing them with a sense of belonging, safety, and value (Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005). However, as they grow up, young people's agency and experiences are either enabled or constrained by a variety of structural conditions and socio-spatial contexts. Family is a key context where children's agency is developed and reconfigured (Holt, 2011). Friendships, also an essential context, are a voluntary product of structural specialities able to both set boundaries and confer freedom (Skelton, 2000). Likewise, regarding happiness constructs, both familial relationships and friendships prove to be drivers and barriers.

For children and adolescents in Lima, this construct included references to parents (both *mom* and *dad*), siblings, grandparents, cousins, and dogs and cats as pets. Responses related to friends consisted of words such as '*friendship*', '*best friends*', '*female and male friends*', '*be with friends*', '*share with friends*', and '*be social*'. Likewise, participants' answers to the survey revealed the importance of family, friends and pets as a key element of their happiness experiences. With an overall percentage of 27.4%, these three grouped categories ranked second regarding what young people think of when prompted with the word happiness (see Table 5.1). Also, during the interviews, participants explained happiness whilst describing their relationships with both family (including pets) and friends. Through sharing their experiences and awareness of their positive feelings (see Subsection 5.2.1), participants inevitably discussed their personal and meaningful relationships as those through which the shared experience of happiness gained

sense. These two social entities, mostly mentioned together, appeared as two interlocking pieces shaping the happiness experience. As such, this subsection explores children's and adolescents' narratives of their shared relationships—comprising family, friends and pets—as the next layer of young people's construct of happiness. In addition, it also attends to the significance of being alone (or not) and what this meant for both children and adolescents.

i. Family

As mentioned before, family and friends were mostly mentioned together, yet they agreed that the interaction with the nuclear (parents and siblings) and extended family (cousins, uncles, grandparents) explained happiness as it stands for the importance of being loved, cared for, nurtured, valued, recognised, and looked after. This would support O'Higgins et al.'s (2010) study with Irish children, where participants revealed how family '*afforded them a sense of security and of being loved*' (O'Higgins, 2010, p. 373). One of the few participants drawing independently (not as part of a group), when talking about her drawing, explained it as follows:

'Kiara' is five years old and is happy because she has a close, affectionate, and understanding family. All this makes her happy. Having her family together, knowing that her parents give her a lot of love'

(Ava, Lima North, girl, 14 y/o).

Whilst it was through their narratives that participants widely discussed the role of their families within their happiness experiences, surprisingly, this was not entirely reflected in the drawings. Out of 35 drawings, only one depicted the character's family (see Figure 5.5). This one belonged to an adolescent group of three girls and one boy in Lima North. Whilst drawing, they took some time to discuss what to include in it. They debated upon how and what to draw to meet the task. They agreed to draw a girl and what 'she needed to be happy'. Their discussion went as follows:

'Draw her surrounded by her mom and dad, her family, and a dog'

(Mayra, Lima North, girl, 16 y/o)

'Yes! In that way, she will be in a place with everything she needs to be happy'

(Florencia, Lima North, girl, 14 y/o)

Figure 5.5: 'FIORELLA': Happiness is being in family. Mom, Dad and a dog, everything you need to be happy.
Source: Drawing by Group LNG7 – 1 boy and 3 girls – 14 y/o – Lima North, intervened by author to highlight the statement



Undeniably, for young people, family makes part of the meaning of happiness. However, as Costello (1999) noted, there is not anything simple behind the word ‘family’ as the complexity of the term also hides considerations in terms of definition, structure and function within the family itself. Yet, Landgraf (1998) argued about the hierarchies of importance between the quality of the relationships over the structure and gave more significance to the first one. In that regard, children and adolescents discussed that social cohesion—in particular, significant bonding moments, such as parents sharing good news, getting to know the little sibling, visiting grandma, getting to help in the family business, going to the park together and sharing celebrations and achievements—would strengthen the correlation with their happiness. Yet, they also explained that it was sometimes characterised by tensions disentangled through negotiation, particularly with family. Adolescents, in particular, discussed the struggles of growing up. They described it as being placed in an in-between space where you are neither a child nor an adult. Following this, adolescents also discussed family from a different angle in which family not only provided happiness but rather a sense of unhappiness. Some participants discussed family relationships failing to provide the necessary support, care, love, and structure needed for that stage of their lives. Talking about family was, for some of them, a reminder of not being listened to, *‘because adults always exclude you when you are “younger”’* (Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o), and also a reminder of feeling unrecognised and still being treated as voiceless children. Catalina and Laura, 12-year-old girls from Lima Centre, explained it in the following quotes. They described a family dinner scene where clear boundaries are drawn between the adults' and children's worlds.

'It is like when you go to have dinner with your parents or grandparents. Adults will talk about their "things" and will leave you aside. They will not even let you eat at the same table'

(Catalina, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

'And so, the adults will sit at the main dining room, and the "children" will remain at the table outside even if it is cold. Nobody likes that'

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

The data suggested that noticeable geographical differences between case study areas might be unveiled, as similar stories were shared only by participants from Lima Centre. Consideration of this data might imply family relationships to be different, linked by more or less stronger bonds affected by the social, economic, and geographical context in which they live. This, however, will need further exploration in future research to be confirmed.

ii. Pets

Pets are believed to play an important role in children's daily lives. Previous studies on 'relationships between children and animals' found that pets were consistently considered family and that building reciprocal relationships with them is possible (Tipper, 2011, p. 145). Pets provide nurture, care, love (Katz, 1981), and social support (McNicholas & Collis, 2001). Likewise, they provide emotional regulation, a sense of closeness, companionship, fun and promote physical activity (Melson & Fine, 2015). Similar to 'Fiorella' (see Figure 5.5), almost a third of the interviewed groups included references to their pets (or their depicted character's pet) as meaningful to their constructs of happiness. This supported Bryant's (1990) argument that pets be considered special friends within children's social structures. Moreover, similar to relationships with family or friends, young people's relationships with animals can be profound. As such, they are intertwined in their social worlds (Tipper, 2011).

Lima's children and adolescents are not the exceptions to this, as they described pets as sources of unconditional company, playing buddies, comforting listeners, and friendly and nurturing sources. Therefore, pets are key to their happiness. A detailed analysis of the drawings provided an insight into this. 9 out of 35 drawings included illustrations of pets (dogs, cats, and even a bunny). Other animals were also included (such as a bird and a squirrel) but did not form part of the participants' narratives. A

group of girls in Lima Centre described it in the following quotes. They explained how their fictional character felt happy when she gets to spend time with her cat. Within their narrative, the cat appeared as a source of company and comfort. Likewise, “Jose (see No. 3 in Figure 5.6) is happy because he knows, after school, his cats are waiting for him, and he gets to spend time playing with them’ (Joshua, boy 10 years old, Lima South, LSG1).

‘Tatiana (see Figure 5.7) is happy when she is with “Pusheen”, her cat’
 (Danae, Lima Centre, girl,11 y/o).

‘She knows her cat is her ally; he will always be with her no matter what’
 (Ana Belen, Lima Centre, girl,12 y/o).

‘She can trust her with her deeper thoughts, feelings and ideas’
 (Veronica, Lima Centre, girl,11 y/o).

Figure 5.6: HAPPINESS IS SHARING WITH PETS

1. Drawing by Group LNG10 – 1 girl – 14 y/o – Lima North,
2. Drawing by Group LSG1 – 3 boys and 1 girl – 9 - 10 y/o – Lima South
3. Drawing by Group LCG5 – 6 girls – 13 y/o – Lima Centre

Source: participants drawings intervened by author



Previous research has discussed animals as social actors, capable of meaningful and purposeful interactions. Pets might be capable of acknowledging others’ feelings and hence can be considered socially engaged (Alger & Alger, 2003; Sanders, 1999). Furthermore, children’s relationships with animals may offer social opportunities beyond human relations, providing a stage in which non-verbal communication is needed. Recognising child-pet relations within the terms of their agency provides a window into the terms with which they make sense of their social lives (Tipper, 2011). Likewise, it

supplies an additional lens to see through the multi-layered complexity of the shared experience of happiness.

However, whilst the role of family, pets and friends (see the following subsection) within the shared experience of happiness is undeniable, the rationale behind these constructs may have nuances and different shades between different ages and geographies. The participants offered different reasons, mostly pragmatic, whilst explaining the value of family and friends. Overall, they revealed that what lay behind was mostly the need for company and the aim for fun, as opposed to being bored or alone. These responses were common to all the participants, yet adolescents added the possibility of building memories and growing close to someone.

Children's narratives for their fictional characters supported this hypothesis. A group of 5 girls in Lima Centre shared the story of 'Tatiana' (see Figure 5.7), the 10-year-old girl they drew. They described the green-eyed girl on their piece of paper as *'happy knowing that she has company'* (Amalia, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o). Correspondingly, being alone was referred to by most of the children as synonymous with being sad or bored. Yet, they also recognised it was possible for them to be on their own, although they wouldn't like it much. However, being alone was not utmost negative. Some of the participants revealed that they could actually enjoy being on their own as this opened the possibility of *'doing whatever he [Alexis] wants'* (Sara, Lima North, girl, 08 y/o), doing the things they liked, being with their thoughts and letting their imagination roam free. The story of 'Alexis' (see Figure 5.8) illustrated this dichotomy, as he felt happy when he was with friends, having fun, but also appreciated and felt happy having spare time on his own.

Figure 5.7: 'TATIANA: Happiness is shared with family, friends and pets
Source: Drawing and narrative by Group LCG4 – 5 girls – 11 y/o – Lima Centre



'Tatiana' is 10 years old, she lives in Lima, in the district of San Isidro. She has an older brother and a cat named Pusheen that keeps her company whenever she is alone at her house. You can tell she is a very happy girl, because she is always smiling and always attentive to what happens around her.

'Happiness for her is being with her family, friends and cat.'

(Veronica, Lima Centre, girl, 11 y/o)

'She is happy when she has company, because she doesn't like to be alone. She is a very sociable person, and she feels that being with the people that make her happy is way much better than being alone.'

(Amalia, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

Figure 5.8: 'ALEXIS': The happiness of being on his own
Source: Drawing and narrative by Group LNG4 – 2 boys and 2 girls – 08 y/o – Lima North



'Alexis' is 8 years old; he loves playing soccer. When he grows up, he wants to be like 'Orejita Flores' ⁸. He is an only child and lives with his mom and dad in Lima, in the district of 'Comas'. He feels very happy, especially when he is in the park with his friends, where he can have fun and play soccer.

'When there is no one, he feels bored'

(Jose Luis, Lima North, boy, 08 y/o)

but 'he likes it when he is on his own because he can imagine things'

(Samuel, Lima North, boy, 08 y/o)

'And he can do whatever he wants'

(Sara, Lima North, girl, 08 y/o)

⁸ Peruvian professional soccer player.

iii. Friends

Stepping aside from family (and pets), participants in Lima equally discussed friendship as a key element of their constructs of happiness, yet some differences emerged between what children said as opposed to adolescents. Children talked about friendship in terms of *'having fun'* and *'someone to play with'*, whilst adolescents went deeper into these relationships, strengthening their bonds into meaningful ties that translated into *'sharing common interests and activities'*, *'finding someone who thinks alike'* and *'being understood especially when family appears to misread them'*. The noted differences were to be expected, as it is within adolescence in which an array of social changes occurs. This includes identity development and change in roles and relationships with both their parents and peers (Hostinar, Johnson, & Gunnar, 2015). Acknowledging these social changes, as well as young people's agency in terms of their own development and spatial experiences (Bunnell, Yea, Peake, Skelton, & Smith, 2012), is key for fully understanding the shared experience of happiness.

Through their drawings and narratives, participants provided an insight into the friendship dimension and its role within their constructs of happiness. Whilst the task asked the participants to draw a single person, 6 out of 35 drawings included more than one person. Groups authoring these drawings explained that they included friends as part of what made their fictional character happy. They chose to include more than one person in their drawing (see Figure 5.9) as *'they are happy with their friends'* and *'happier together'*. Consideration of this data suggested a shift occurring in social life, in which the roles of family and friends blur, potentially tipping the balance towards friendship (Bunnell et al., 2012). Likewise, it aligned with previous studies regarding children's lay concepts of happiness, which discussed the significance of friendship in building a happiness construct (Giacomoni et al., 2014; López-Pérez et al., 2015) and reported on the importance of intimate friends (Konu, 2002) and exploring in determining the effect of friendship on their own happiness as well as the happiness of others (O'Higgins, 2010).

Figure 5.9: HAPPINESS IS SHARING WITH FRIENDS

1. Drawing by Group LNG2 – 2 boys and 3 girls – 8 y/o – Lima North
2. Drawing by Group LCG2 – 5 girls – 11 - 12 y/o – Lima Centre
3. Drawing by Group LSG8 – 2 boys and 2 girls – 09 – 10 y/o – Lima South

1.



LIMA NORTH

2.



LIMA CENTRE

3.



LIMA SOUTH

Friendship is a form of intimacy and presumably an important domain in young people's lives. It is key to social health (O'Higgins, 2010), enables resilience and coping mechanisms (Mcgraw, Moore, Fuller, & Bates, 2008; Tusaie, Puskar, & Sereika, 2007), empowers and provides opportunities for them to widen the space where this is experienced whilst playing a significant role in children's socialisation and social ordering (Bunnell et al., 2012). In this sense, participants explained the importance of friendship as providing opportunities for playing and exploring together. Girls talked about being with friends to have adventures, play in the park, and ultimately just hang out. Boys described the possibilities of teaming up with friends, playing soccer, and having fun scoring some goals. Happiness is, therefore, having fun, spending time, and hanging out with friends.

On the other hand, for adolescents, friendship is a more supportive social entity. They highlighted the importance of belonging to a group, sharing similar interests and being free to talk and express themselves in a trusting environment. The need for communication between peers increased. Friendship means having someone who sees the world from the same point of view as you and being fully understood. Happiness is having someone in your life you can 'relate to', 'believe in' and 'rely on'. Friendship is being valued for who you are. Friendship is meaningful, requires reciprocal trust and care

(Bunnell et al., 2012), works as a support structure, and significantly shapes the shared experience of happiness.

Two particular drawings depicted in bright colours two different groups of friends bringing the friendship narrative to life. One was drawn by a group of children (see Figure 5.10), and the other was drawn by adolescents (Figure 5.11). Both illustrated groups of friends as surrounded by multiple stars, a rainbow, and even a smiley sun - all of these symbols related to joy, energy and tranquillity. Malena, Dafne, Abraham, and Leandro, 9 and 10-year-old children from Lima South, chose to draw themselves and share a bit of their own personal stories. They were all peers in the same class; however, all four of them did not consider themselves a group of friends. Malena and Dafne were friends with each other, separate to Abraham and Leandro, who were also friends. In establishing this difference, they highlighted the different dynamics within friendships between girls and boys. Malena and Dafne were most happy when they met at the park, explored, and played. Abraham and Leandro, on the other hand, were happy when they met after school or over the weekends on the soccer field. They liked playing in opposite teams. Abraham would be the captain of the 'Peruvian team' whilst Leandro would represent the 'Brazilian' one. They both had their soccer balls, and Leandro even had his Brazilian t-shirt (see Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10: FRIENDS: Friendships between children, the happiness of playing together
Source: Drawing and narrative by Group LSG8 – 2 boys and 2 girls – 09 – 10 y/o – Lima South



'Malena' and 'Dafne' are 9 years old. 'Abraham and Leandro' are 10 years old. They are all friends. They live in the same neighbourhood and attend the same school. They are all happy when they are together or with their other friends.

'Malena and Dafne are happy when they meet their friends at the park, where there is a small hill, trees and they can run, explore and play.'

(Malena, Lima South, girl, 9 y/o)

'Abraham and Leandro are happy when they go to the soccer field, because there they can play soccer and team up with their friends.'

(Abraham, Lima South, boy, 10 y/o)

Similarly, Catalina, Felicia, Laura, Maria Cristina, and Fiorella, 11- and 12-year-old adolescents from Lima Centre, also chose to draw themselves. They depicted themselves at the beach, yet for drawing purposes, they assigned each other different names. Correspondingly, they shared that they were happy when they got to ‘hang out’, ‘have fun as a group’, and particularly ‘talk to each other’ whilst ‘recognising themselves in each other’. These comments provided additional evidence of the growing role of friends and peers within adolescence, in many cases displacing the role of parents (Wilkinson, 2004). Also, it unveiled the underlying significance of social relationships and agency to their happiness and overall wellbeing. (Fattore, Mason, & Watson, 2007) (see Figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11: FRIENDS: Friendships between adolescents, the happiness of hanging out together
 Source: Drawing and narrative by Group MLG2 – 5 girls – 11 - 12 y/o – Lima Centre



‘Andrea’, ‘Annie’, ‘Lia,’ and ‘Laura’ are 12 years old. ‘Sandri’ is 11. They are all friends living in Lima.

They are happy when,

‘They hang out together’

(Catalina, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

‘They are happy because they are together’

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

‘They have fun as a group’

(Felicia, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

‘They do not like to be on their own, because it is boring and you have no one to talk to’

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

‘They are happy together, because they can talk and understand each other, trust, share the same interests’

(Catalina, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

It is in the spaces that friendships are built, common ground is found, and inequalities are produced (Bunnell et al., 2012). The places depicted in the drawings and described in their narratives— ‘park’, ‘soccer field’ and ‘the beach’—provided evidence, to some extent, of differences emerging by studied area, and hence by socio-economic level. Whilst children living in the peripheral city (Lima North and Lima South) chose spaces in their local neighbourhood (e.g., the park, the soccer field), participants from Lima Centre mostly referred to farther away spaces such as the beach or more exclusive spaces such as private clubs. Figure 5.11, depicting five girls together at the beach, illustrated this. This is because Lima Centre young people’s urban imaginary of the beach corresponded to exclusive beach condos or clubs located at

least 100 km south of Lima accessible only by car, whilst the park and the soccer field are local, within walking distance, accessible public spaces (see Chapter 6).

Whilst both children and adolescents referred to their relationships as a medium to make sense of their happiness experience, they also provided evidence of particular attitudinal age differences. Previous research focused on developmental differences found out that children are more likely to talk about their lives through concrete physical attributes and common activities like playing and sharing (Berndt & Savin-Williams, 1993), whilst adolescents tend to be more abstract and will reflect a shift towards autonomy (Zimmer-Gembeck & Collins, 2003). Therefore, they will discuss aspects of their lives in terms of self-determination and freedom (López-Pérez et al., 2015). In Lima, whilst children explained happiness through playing with friends (see Figure 5.10), adolescents also discussed the possibilities of being free to have different and new experiences. Adriana, Micaela, and Raquel explained it in the following quotes. They argued that adolescents are happier due to having the time and opportunities to have varied experiences, explore, and see new things.

'Adolescents are happier, because they get to live their life, they want to have different experiences'

(Adriana, Lima South, girl, 14 y/o)

'Because it is in adolescence where you experience the most'

(Micaela, Lima South, girl, 14 y/o)

'Happiness is exploring, having new experiences, travelling, visiting new places'

(Raquel, Lima Centre, girl, 14 y/o)

In addition, both adolescent girls and boys stressed the importance of being with and staying connected to friends in the virtual world as an alternative form of hanging out. Adolescent girls referred mostly to social media and Netflix, whilst adolescent boys associated it mostly with online gaming. 'Roberto' (15 years old) and 'Amaya' (14 years old) (see Figure 5.12), two fictional characters created by adolescents in Lima South and Lima Centre, respectively, portrayed this. 'Roberto' *'is happy playing soccer and video games. He is a gamer, and he is happy when he is connected with his friends playing on his console'* (David, Lima South, boy, 15 y/o). 'Amaya', on the other hand, *'is happy when she gets to hang out with her friends and go to the cinema. She is also happy when she stays in her room, with her TV, computer, and mobile phone to have fun while messaging her friends'* (Mariana, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o). A close look at their

drawings brought their words to life. Roberto was depicted wearing a t-shirt and baggy trousers, ‘comfortable clothes, ideal to stay at home’ (fieldwork notes). Also, in writing, participants included the things that made him happy. Among others, the words ‘gamer’, ‘en su casa’ (in his house), and ‘videojuegos’ (videogames) can be identified.

On the other hand, Amaya was drawn in her bedroom ‘where she has everything she needs to be happy’ (Mariana, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o). The girl in the drawing is surrounded by her TV and computer. She is also wearing a ‘headband simulating anime ears’ (fieldwork notes) and holding her mobile phone.

Figure 5.12: HAPPINESS IS BEING CONNECTED

1. ‘Roberto’ Drawing by Group LSG14, 2 boys and 1 girl, 15 y/o, Lima South,
2. ‘Amaya’ Drawing by Group LCG3, 6 girls, 12 y/o, Lima Centre

Source: participants’ drawings intervened by author

- 1.
- 2.



Whilst extensive research has explored both the negative and positive effects of the use of social media on adolescents, including references to reduced life satisfaction and social isolation (see, e.g., Goodall, Ban, Birks, & Clifton, 2013; O’Reilly et al., 2018), as well as increased social support self-esteem and sense of belonging (see, e.g., Davis, 2012; Liu & Yu, 2013), little has been done to explore its correlation with adolescents’ constructs of happiness through their perspectives. This research helps address that niche gap by uncovering the importance of virtual connectedness as part of adolescents’ constructs of happiness and friendship. Adolescents in Lima referred to the importance of connectedness through social media in general as a way to nurture their ongoing offline friendships, which is not possible in other

ways. These findings suggested that adolescents attended their friendships from the comfort of their homes (Boyd, 2007; Clark, 2005) and that social media provided the possibility to counteract age-related limitations such as lack of transportation due to parental dependency, possible curfews, and over-exposure to unsafe environments. The latter correlated to participants' experiences of the city and how the physical environment, in some cases, constrained their experiences of happiness (see Chapter 6). Following this, online friendships, understood as an extension of offline relationships, served to provide social support and enhance adolescents' senses of belonging as they moved out from childhood and claimed more independence from their parents (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992; McInroy, 2020). Therefore, the inclusion of social media technology as part of adolescents' happiness constructs should be understood in this light. However, further research on the specifics is also advised.

Consideration of this data highlighted the key role of social relationships within young people's constructs of happiness. It also resonated with the social dimension that is understood to be key to Latin American citizens' average happiness assessments (see Chapter 2). In addition, it provided a valuable insight into some age differences. Comparison of children's and adolescents' narratives, and experiences of friendship and happiness within them, shed light upon the transition process that signifies growing up. Their answers evidenced young people's understandings that happiness changes, matures, and gains depth within different stages of their lives. Hence, it is possible to suggest that young people's happiness constructs also undergo a developmental shift (López-Pérez et al., 2015).

5.2.2 Activities, Things, and Beliefs: The Dynamic of Happiness

Beyond discussing the role of family and friends as social entities giving sense to the shared experience of happiness, participants were also keen to explain under what circumstances these relationships provided them with opportunities to experience day-to-day happiness. Besides feeling nurtured, cared for and listened to, they argued that by doing things together, owning things alike and having similar beliefs, they could experience joy, build meaningful moments and strengthen bonds. Responses from the survey supported these with the categories 'activities', 'things', and 'personal beliefs', ranking in third, fourth and sixth place correspondingly. From 1,851 responses, these three categories combined

accounted for 512 (27.6%) responses (See Table 5.1). Participants explained that the significance of these three categories was not in the activities, objects, or beliefs themselves but in their meaning in terms of fun experiences, personal agency, independence, and a sense of belonging. The following subsections will delve into the nuances and rationale behind these three equally influential sources of happiness with the ability to ignite the shared experience of happiness.

i. Activities: Happiness through Being Active

Describing their interactions with friends and family, participants listed an array of activities as opportunities for setting in motion and sharing experiences of happiness. The quantitative dataset, analysed using content analysis, provided a set of 246 responses labelled under activities. In addition, for an added level of granularity, four main categories were identified within these responses. These are: 'outdoor play and sports', 'academic achievements', 'arts and crafts', and 'other'. The first accounted for 76% of the responses in this construct, compiling responses such as 'running', 'playing outside', 'skating', 'playing soccer' and 'playing basketball' (see Table 5.2). Likewise, within the draw and tell activity, 27 out of 31 groups mentioned the possibilities of playing outdoor, practicing sports and being physically active as part of their constructs of happiness. Analysis of these data disclosed the relevance and role of varied outdoor activities as enhancers of young people's experiences of happiness. By engaging in these activities mostly within their spare time, children and adolescents in Lima were able to experience moments of fun and break the routine. In return, these activities granted them major opportunities for experiencing happiness and achieving overall positive wellbeing (Giacomoni et al., 2014). Additional categories included the activities related with academic achievements (10.6%), arts and crafts (8.1%) and others (5.3%). For the purpose of this thesis, only the first category on outdoor play and sports will be explored as it is the one directly related with the overall aim of the research. However, it is advisable to take all categories into consideration to add depth to our understandings of what makes part of young people's constructs of happiness.

Table 5.2: ACTIVITIES: Happiness through being active

Responses to survey question: Write three words that come into your mind when you think of happiness

Source: author based on survey responses

CONSTRUCT	CATEGORY	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	%	INCLUDED RESPONSES
ACTIVITIES	OUTDOOR PLAY AND SPORTS	187	76.0%	Running, playing outside, skating, playing soccer, playing basketball
	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	26	10.6%	Studying, doing homework, obtaining good grades
	ARTS AND CRAFTS	20	8.1%	Dancing, singing, drawing, doing crafts, writing
	OTHER	13	5.3%	Be active, talk, travel, think
TOTAL		246		

In sharing the story of ‘Raul’ (see Figure 5.13), a group of two boys and two girls from Lima North, aged 8-years-old, clearly illustrated how different activities allowed for varied opportunities to experience happiness. According to them, the tall 7-year-old, grey-eyed boy standing in the park on a sunny day pictured in their flipchart paper ‘spends lots of time outdoors meeting his friends in the streets’ (Yair, Lima North, boy, 8 years old). Among other activities, ‘[h]e is happy playing “tag” or “hide and seek” with his friends and riding his bike’ (Gracia, Lima North, girl, 8 years old).

Figure 5.13: ‘RAUL’: The happiness of being active

Source: Drawing and narrative by Group LNG5 – 2 boys and 2 girls – 08 y/o – Lima North



‘Raul’ is a tall, skinny, 7-year-old boy. He lives in Lima with his parents. His dad is an engineer, and his mom is a doctor, so they are always working. He is always happy and is always smiling.

‘He feels very happy at school.’

(Gracia, Lima North, girl, 08 y/o)

‘Studying, painting with markers and getting good grades make Raul happy, but he also enjoys and is happy when he is outdoors playing with his friends’

(Javier, Lima North, boy, 08 y/o)

‘He spends most of his spare time outdoors; he meets with his friends at the street outside his house’

(Yair, Lima North, boy, 08 y/o)

‘There they ride their bikes, play tag or hide and seek’

(Greis, Lima North, girl, 08 y/o)

‘Play soccer and have fun’

(Teo, Lima North, boy, 08 y/o)

Outdoor play not only increases children’s physical activity and therefore improves their health (Bento & Dias, 2017; Brockman, Jago, & Fox, 2010), but also boosts their imagination and creativity (Howard-Jones, Taylor, & Sutton, 2002; Russ, 2003), develops competencies enhancing their confidence and

resilience (McArdle, Harrison, & Harrison, 2013; Sharp et al., 2018), provides self-advocacy skills (Broadhead, 2009; McElwain & Volling, 2005), and allows for practicing decision-making skills (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005; Hinkley, Brown, Carson, & Teychenne, 2018). Above all, play is perhaps a sequence of joyful moments experienced through childhood that becomes an intrinsic driver of happiness under the right circumstances and contexts. By playing, children give meaning to themselves in the world and develop their personal capacities while building relations (Coates & Pimlott-Wilson, 2019; Van Gils, 2013). Therefore, the possibilities of play and the opportunities it offers become an intrinsic element of the shared experience of happiness and children's constructs of it. Children and adolescents in Lima reflected upon the different play-related activities they engage with in their spare time. They described these activities as what they enjoy doing and as what makes children happy. Activities related to play were described as those providing fun and as '*activities that will make most people happy*' (Mayra, Lima North, girl, 16 years old).

ii. Things: Happiness through Owning and Consuming

By considering the things they owned and the food they ate, participants described that their experiences of happiness were also enhanced by their possessions or their access to disposable income, providing traces of a consumer behaviour characteristic of urban life. This subsection deals with these experiences and explores participants' references to their possessions and consumer attitudes. To do so, I suggest understanding consuming in a broad way as both the ownership of things to shape purposeful lives (Sassatelli, 2007) and the acquisition of goods (and access to services) as part of their identity building (Stillerman, 2015). As such, children from a very young age are able to understand the concept and value of possessions (Chan, 2006; Goldberg & Gorn, 1974; Roedder, 1999). Earlier research suggested that possessions have the power to fuel both self-confidence and self-concepts and boost feelings of being in control of our surroundings (Csikszentmihalyi, 1982). More specifically, on children and young people's possessions, previous studies reported that toys, media, and clothes are valuable as a means to gain social status (Snyder, 1972), attract friends, and strengthen their happiness (Chan, 2005). In addition, research on children's popular cultures argued for children's and adolescents' lives to be embedded in a world of

ongoing cultural phenomena which are '*materially and affectively located within contexts, habits, relations and moods*' (Horton, 2010, p. 391). This research also suggested that young people's possessions can shape their routines and their affective lives (Horton, 2012), allow for subcultural identities to be developed (Baker, 2004), and allow for varied identity formation practices (Dolfsma, 2004).

Participants in Lima described the things they owned in relation to the opportunities they provided for furthering their play activities and as elements suitable to be shared with others, enhancing their play experiences. They mentioned possessions allowing to stay connected with friends and family and the use of disposable income for meeting friends in varied fast-food restaurants. Possessions appeared to give participants not only a sense of identity (Belk, 1992) but also, opportunities to relate to others, strengthen their sense of belonging and enhance their sense of freedom—all of which contributes to the positive feelings sitting at the core of young people's constructs of happiness. Children in Lima discussed playing with toys such as balls and dolls as part of their constructs of happiness. Describing their depicted fictional characters, they shared, for example, that '*Raul (see Figure 5.13) is happy when he plays with his toys*' (Javier, Lima North, boy, 8 years old), and that '*he is also happy when he plays with his soccer ball*' (Jose Luis, Lima North, boy, 8 years old). Similarly, '*Edu is happy playing with his ball*' (Fernanda, Lima North, girl, 8 years old) whilst '*Yerai is happy playing with her dolls*' (Alicia, Lima North, girl, 8 years old), and '*Cecilia (See Figure 5.3) is happy in her room where she has her dollhouse*' (Ana Sofia, Lima North, girl, 8 years old).

Such references might be read as evidence that children from an early age can recognise the value of possessions in relation to their personality, social meanings, and emotional bonds (Chan, 2006) and as a source of sustained stimulation (Furby, 1980). Moreover, perspectives on possessions develop with age; preferences shift from toys to sports equipment, computers, and clothes. As the child matures, so does their concept of ownership (Furnham & Jones, 1987; McDermott & Noles, 2018). Whilst children reported on their toys as meaningful possessions, adolescents made reference mostly to technology devices, including mobile phones, computers, game consoles, tablets, and technology in general. Digital technologies are currently undeniably part of our contexts. Their extensive use at home, school, or in the community might replace interpersonal interactions and provide alternative ways to communicate, learn,

develop social relationships, and build friendships (for a more detailed overview, see Danby, Fleer, Davidson, & Hatzigianni, 2018).

Through their depicted fictional characters' narratives, adolescents described the use of tech devices as significant to their constructs of happiness. They shared, for example, that *'Roberto (see Figure 5.12) is a gamer, he likes videogames and enjoys being connected with his friends via the internet'* (Diego, Lima South, girl, 15 years old). Similarly, they shared that *'Ian is happy spending time in home playing on his PS4 console'* (Ariana, Lima South, girl, 15 years old), and that *'Felix thinks that playing Minecraft is key to his happiness'* (Camila, Lima South, girl, 14 years old). Female characters were not exempt from this narrative. Yet, adolescent groups depicting girls in their drawings referred less to consoles or video games and more to mobile devices and social media. In that sense, *'Fatima is happy when she gets to scroll down her social media feed'* (Violeta, Lima South, girl, 15 years old). Likewise, adolescents expressed a sense of temporal happiness attached to these devices. Catalina and Laura, a pair of 12-year-old participants from Lima Centre, discussed this as follows:

'You know, mobile phones and electronic devices can make you happy; they get you entertained'

(Catalina, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

'You are right! But you can be like what? An hour? Hour and a half on your electronic device and then you get bored again; you get the feeling that you have seen it all'

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

As previously discussed, as children get older, the complexity of their social relationships increases. Consequently, it is expected that their preferences for possessions will change too. In this regard, Snyder (1972) argued that, within adolescence, access to disposable income could translate into independence and ownership rights and integrate into the development of the self-concept. Also, possessions could provide a person with an increased sense of social influence and a socially appealing identity among peers (Bell, 2019). Adolescents in Lima gave insight into this. In particular, girls went beyond their descriptions of current possessions into describing the thrill of 'going shopping' as part of their constructs of happiness. This uncovered a wide range of understandings and motivations that can be explained (among other things) by their correspondent socio-economic level, as well as their access to disposable

income or allowance. Adolescents living in less-favoured areas referred properly to 'window shopping'. They described their experience as a shared experience with friends within their leisure time. A group of adolescents in Lima South shared the history of 'Fatima', their 14-year-old depicted character. They shared that she felt happy when meeting her friends at the shopping mall, getting together and just enjoying their spare time.

'When Fatima goes out and wants to feel happy, she goes to the shopping mall with her friends. The get-together, spend some time, have fun'
(Violeta, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

Previous research aiming to understand consumer behaviours among adolescents described shopping as 'central to the adolescent experience' (Shim, Serido, & Barber, 2011). Such research found that adolescents are more likely to shop with friends or peers they identify with (Mangleburg, Doney, & Bristol, 2004). Moreover, their conversations with friends regarding shopping favoured their social motivation to consume. Likewise, Shim et al. (2011, p. 292) conceptualised it as 'unstructured time with peers'. Similar studies also noted that adolescent girls mostly go to shopping malls to socialise and spend their time with friends or observe others (especially boys) rather than properly shop (Haytko & Baker, 2004; Pyyry, 2016). Consideration of the data suggested that adolescents' consumption not only has a social component but a hedonistic dimension concerned with amusement, freedom, fun and, consequently, happiness. By hanging out in shopping spaces, adolescents stepped aside from their habitual routine, shaping brief 'hangout homes' evoking transitory 'bursts of joy', providing opportunities for them to reimagine themselves, if even momentarily (Pyyry & Kaakinen, 2019, p. 111). However, whilst shopping malls might have been identified as convenient for young people's social encounters, the extent of them being welcome in these spaces seems debatable. Matthews, Taylor, Percy-Smith, and Limb (2000) identified shopping malls and commercial areas in the UK as contested territories where adolescents' presence might be seen as problematic and not appropriate. Pyyry and Kaakinen (2019), on the other hand, discussed, in the case of Helsinki, young people are increasingly more welcome in such commercial spaces. What is more, she suggested shopping malls seemed to have progressed into incorporating tailored spaces for young people to hang out. Lima follows the latter trend.

Research aiming to disentangle the drivers and motivations of consumer behaviours in adolescents argued that the consumer socialising experience is tainted by the sociocultural and ideological context (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Moreover, Shim et al. (2011) discussed that socio-economic contexts underlie consumer socialisation, contributing to significant differences within adolescents' consumer behaviours. In Lima, adolescents from wealthy areas exemplified these variations clearly. Besides the social, fun shopping experience, they also discussed the possibilities and experiences of purchasing new things as part of their constructs of happiness. Fatima, a 13-year-old participant from Lima Centre, explained it as follows:

'I believe you can get happiness from the things you own and buy. I feel very happy when I go shopping, I like getting new clothes and stuff'
(Fatima, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o)

Still, adolescents from both wealthy and deprived areas attributed an increased sense of freedom to being allowed to roam on their own. Participants described it as a role play, where they get to mingle with adults as equals and be responsible enough to decide how and whether they spend their weekly allowance if any. Overall, participants' discussions reflected upon a two-way relationship between the shopping experience and their sense of freedom. It appeared that, for young people in Lima, the enhancement of personal freedom reflected upon their owning reasons becoming a driver and a consequence of the shopping experience.

Going further and stepping beyond the concept of 'going shopping', children and adolescents in Lima also included strong references to what and where they eat. They referred to the experience of eating out as part of their constructs of happiness, either as isolated occurrences or as part of the shopping experience. Disregarding age or socio-economic context, they discussed consuming food as a driver of their happiness. They included burgers, pizza and other types of fast food as well as Chinese food and ice cream. Mentions of food were frequent in both the quantitative and qualitative data. A closer look at the drawings produced by the participants illustrated it clearly. Almost a third of the drawings (11 out of 31) depicted references to food. Colourful illustrations included references to pizza, chips, chicken, burgers, candy and, to a great extent, ice cream. Brands such as McDonalds were also identified.

By mostly referring to fast or junk food, participants explained the significance of food in their constructs of happiness. Besides the food itself, what also appealed to them was being able to spend their own money. Fast food unveiled, in this case, a temporal, desirable, consuming experience that was also affordable. Disregarding their age or socio-economic context, the narratives behind their fictional characters consistently raised the theme of food as a source of happiness. They described varied types of food as one of the things that made them happy.

'Leandro is happy when he goes eating out to the KFC, the Chinese restaurant or chicken and chips'

(Silvia, Lima North, girl, 10 y/o)

'Fatima is happy thinking about the different types of food she can get over the weekend. She gets very especially happy when she eats burgers or ice cream'

(Violeta, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

'Ice cream, burgers, junk food, chips, eating what they want makes them very happy'

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

Eating and drinking are possibly the main, most recurrent and complex human behaviours (Köster, 2009). Food acts as a medium product for social construction (Kniazeva & Venkatesh, 2007) and can be an important source of hedonic happiness (Berenbaum, 2002). Moreover, eating out with family and friends is also a way of strengthening social relations, building memories, and feeling nurtured (Fischler, 2011; Sobal & Nelson, 2003). Additionally, either as a special celebration or as an activity, sharing the eating out experience is often linked to happiness (Sidenvall, Nydahl, & Fjellström, 2000).

Summing up, children's constructs of happiness also need to be decodified and understood as being embedded in a world of consumption where the acts of owning, shopping, or eating are constant and recurrent. Yet, once again, it seems not to be fully the possessions or the consuming act in itself, but the enhanced sense of freedom and the social experiences ignited by them that helps dynamize the shared experience of happiness for children and adolescents in Lima.

iii. Beliefs: Happiness through Being Connected

Following doing things together and owning things alike, participants discussed sharing similar beliefs allowing for experiences of happiness to be triggered. Sharing common views can enable vibrant, powerful social communities where regular interactions and exchanges of ideas can occur. Moreover, as social beings, humans are constantly seeking to form, join, and foster communities resonating with our personal interests (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Both children's beliefs and views help enhance their senses of belonging, connectedness, and consequently their experiences of happiness. Despite their socio-economic and cultural contexts, participants discussed their varied sets of personal beliefs as part of what makes a person experience happiness. They argued that happiness was possible partly by believing in God and fostering good values. Likewise, they agreed on believing that children are generally happier than adults and that, in many cases, the happiness experience can be a temporal one.

Whilst narrating their fictional character stories, participants were first asked to introduce them in terms of age and gender. Whilst gender selection was mostly due to a negotiation process between the members of each group, age was explained as a mirror of their own age but also as the most appropriate way to address the task of picturing a happy person. Many argued that '*children are happier than adults*' (fieldwork notes). However, in sharing the story of the few depicted adult characters, Viviana, a 15-year-old adolescent from Lima North, clearly illustrated this shared view. She shared the story of 'Leony' (see Figure 5.14), a 20-year-old happy man who had been happier when younger. She described his life as constantly concerned about responsibilities and his future. In doing so, she revealed that 'Leony', in the drawing, was actually a representation of her brother. In addition, she added that she herself was going through a similar experience, feeling less happy now than when she was a child. As a result, she was convinced that children are happier than adults.

'Even though "Leony" has reasons to be happy, he is always thinking about the problems and responsibilities at work and home. He lives a very stressful day-to-day life, thinking about how to build a better future for himself and his family. Being an adult is a problem. Always when you reach adulthood, you have more things to do, you have to work, more responsibilities, you need to think about your family. It gets harder to be happy, yet "Leony" is constantly trying.'

(Viviana, Lima North, girl, 15 y/o)

Figure 5.14: 'LEONY: Happy adult, yet a happier child
Source: Drawing and narrative by Group LNG8, Viviana, girl, 15 y/o, Lima North



Leony is 20 years old, he is a happy man, but he knows he could be happier. He has a very loving family, a lovely cat named Leo as a pet, and the confidence that God guides his life. For him, his family, his pets and God are the main sources of love and so sources of happiness.

Yet, Leony is constantly struggling with life. He has a job, but it is difficult. He feels life is constantly challenging him, but he hopes for a better place to live and work without suffering and sadness.

'Being an adult is a problem. Always when you reach adulthood, you have more things to do, you have to work, more responsibilities, you need to think about your family. It gets harder to be happy, yet Leony is constantly trying.'

(Viviana, Lima North, girl, 15 y/o)

Correspondingly, almost all participants referred to adults as less happy due to stress and responsibilities and their lack of spare or leisure time. Andrea and Facundo explained it in the following quotes. They argued that adults seemed not to enjoy what they regularly do and have little time to engage in play or fun activities, rather than constantly working.

'Adults are less happy than children because they do not enjoy what they do or are happy with what they are doing. There are just a few who do, but overall, they are usually complaining.'

(Andrea, Lima Centre, girl, 14 y/o)

'Children are happier than adults because children are usually playing in contrast to the adults who are mostly working and doing things.'

(Facundo, Lima North, boy, 10 y/o)

Consideration of this data unveiled responsibilities to be considered as something standing in the way of experiencing happiness. Participants argued that besides school tasks, they had little responsibility, hence more opportunities to experience happiness in their day-to-day lives. However, this should not be understood as a general trait to all children and adolescents (e.g., working children, young carers) with whom further research on their constructs of happiness is also advised. Certainly, experiences are likely

to vary across ages as they are diverse and not homogenous (Hopkins & Pain, 2007). But whilst it is difficult for adults to do, children mainly live in the moment as they experience lives in a continuum of time (Rasmussen, 2004). Therefore, I argue, it is precisely this temporality within children's and adolescents' experiences that marks a generational difference and drives them to believe they stand out from adults in terms of happiness.

Beyond age and lack of major responsibilities, participants in Lima also attributed happiness to their feelings of self-efficacy and character strengths such as optimism, positivity, and overall good attitude. The first refers to a positive viewpoint regarding the self, which seems to be key to feeling good (Bandura, 1997; Caprara, Steca, Gerbino, Paciello, & Vecchio, 2006). The latter encompasses the conditions enabling young people to thrive (Park & Peterson, 2006). Participants argued that attitude could reveal whether a person is happy or not. This is consistent with previous research suggesting a close association between character strengths and happiness among young people and adults (Park & Peterson, 2006), which can be established quite early (Deneve & Cooper, 1998). Joshua, a 10-year-old boy from Lima South, explained this in more detail. Describing his depicted character, he shared how one can know if one is happy by paying attention to another person's appearance and attitude. Similarly, Fatima, a 13-year-old adolescent from Lima Centre, explained how you could tell a person is happy from their facial expressions and whether or not they appeared approachable.

'You know they are happy seeing their facial features. It is like, if you see someone walking in the street, looking pale, quiet, without energy, then you get the feeling he is kind of sad or frustrated. But, if you see someone walking cheerfully with energy, that means he is happy. It is their attitude what makes you notice the difference'

(Joshua, Lima South, boy, 10 y/o)

'I believe you can tell if a person is happy by their facial expressions and overall attitude. When a person is happy, they are awake, smiling and are easily approachable. They laugh and show a positive attitude toward whatever they are doing'

(Fatima, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o)

Adolescents went deeper into the idea of being optimistic and included having good moral values as an essential element of their constructs of happiness. As they grow up, they progressively internalise values and acknowledge them as part of themselves (Grusec, 2002; Ryan, 1991). Whilst drawing, a group of

girls shared their ideas regarding the question I presented. Trying to figure out what and how to draw, they started by asking themselves what makes them happy. They wrote down their ideas and chose what they thought were the most important traits of a happy person. Later they explained it as follows:

'A happy person has a positive attitude fuelled by good values like respect and honesty.'

(Selena, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

'Also, empathy and tolerance.'

(Vera, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

'And kindness.'

(Alexandra, Lima South, girl, 14 y/o)

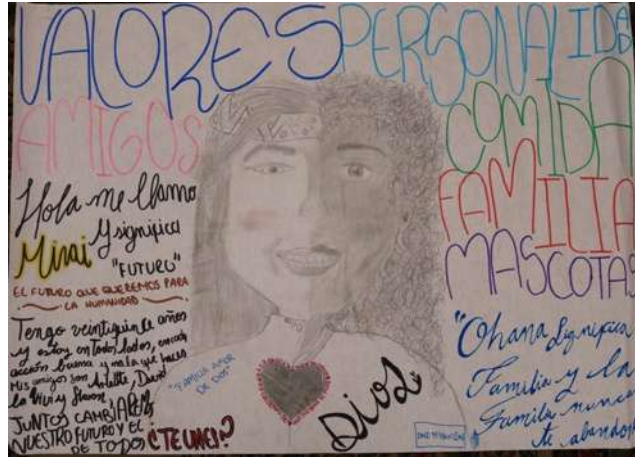
Understanding the role and significance of moral values proved priceless for other organisations such as schools and churches (Hardy, Padilla-Walker, & Carlo, 2008). Likewise, it might, to some extent, have supported the references to God and the participation in church activities, as some of the participants revealed. Going beyond a positive attitude and character strength values, children and adolescents in Lima referred to both spiritual and religious practices as enabling their happiness experiences. The first referred to a personal system of inner beliefs able to provide strength and comfort, whilst religious practices and religiousness applied properly to the institutional practices and rituals (Houskamp, Fisher, & Stuber, 2004)

Disregarding age or socio-economic context, discussions regarding believing in God and attending church emerged within some of the interviews. Whilst not widespread, its inclusion within all case study areas and its correlation with some of the participants' meaningful places (see Chapter 6) made it worth exploring. Participants discussed both religious and spiritual practices.

By illustrating a particular fictional character, a group of three girls and a boy ranging 15 to 16 years old aimed to represent God as the core and source of a person's happiness. Intending to represent different ages, genres and races within the same portrayal, 'Minai' was a citizen of the world with God close to his heart (see Figure 5.15). Participants in this group marked that particular trait of their character's life. They explained that God provided company, comfort and happiness (spiritual practice) and that this occurred mostly when attending church (religious practice).

Figure 5.15: 'MINAI': Happiness is being close to God.
 Source: Drawing by Group LNG2 – 1 boy and 3 girls – 15 -16 y/o – Lima South

'Minai is happy because he/she knows he/she is always with God. Attends a Christian church every Sunday. In church Minai can feel God's love and company. Overall, that makes Minai extremely happy'
 (Vera, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)



However, not all comments included a clear reference to religious practices; rather, they focused on the spiritual dimension of believing in God. 'Amaya', for example (see Figure 5.12) 'wakes up every morning and thanks God for a new day to be happy and alive' (Amalia, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o). 'Leony' (see Figure 5.14), on the other hand, among other things, is happy because 'God is his father and provides him incommensurable love' (Viviana, Lima North, girl, 15 y/o).

Previous studies have already established links between happiness, religiousness, and spirituality based on research with adults and young people (Argyle, 2013; Francis, Jones & Wilcox, 2000; Francis & Lester, 1997; French & Joseph, 1999). Moreover, regarding children, in particular, Holder, Coleman, and Wallace (2010) suggested it was more their spiritual practices rather than religious ones contributing to their happiness. By contrast, findings from this research identified that both religious and spiritual practices are part of their constructs of happiness. Whilst attending church or other religious practices may broaden social connectedness (Ellison, 1991), establishing a close relationship with a god may promote stress reduction, improve coping strategies (Hardy, Nelson, Moore, & King, 2019; Holder et al., 2010), and increase the sense of personal meaning (Otake, Shimai, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otsui, & Fredrickson, 2006).

Also, regarding children's and adolescents' religious and spiritual practices, previous research suggested that social relationships and the environment play a key role in shaping young people's religious identities (Hemming & Madge, 2012) and strengthening their agency (Hemming, 2016) and further discussed the influential role of place in contributing to young people's spiritual and religious practices (Madge, Hemming, & Stenson, 2014). Following this, the findings in this subsection suggested that, disregarding the object of their beliefs, young people sharing particular views developed their identities as members of specific communities providing them with opportunities to connect and strengthen their senses of belonging by developing their social skills. In doing so, spiritual and religious practices contributed to the relational character of the happiness experience. Young people's religious identities were developed through their interactions with a range of social entities, friends, and peers, allowing for experiences of happiness to occur and be shared.

5.3. Summary and Conclusion

Drawing on both participants' illustrations and narratives of their fictional characters' experiences of happiness and their responses to the quantitative survey, this chapter contributed to the still limited literature on young people's understandings of happiness. Thus, it proved the ability of children and adolescents to reflect, articulate, and explain complex terms related to happiness in their own words, disregarding the extent of their language abilities. Moreover, in sharing their experiences, participants proved happiness experiences to be part of their daily routines, hence a continuum of constant occurrences rather than a sequence of isolated moments. By introducing an interconnected model of varied happiness domains, the findings provided significant insight into the complexity and relationality behind children's experiences and constructs of happiness. In doing so, it highlighted the decisive role of positive emotions and social relationships, contesting more individual approaches to happiness research and suggesting children's happiness to be fundamentally social and grounded in their day-to-day lives.

In echoing young people's understandings of happiness, this chapter reflected on the complexity behind their experiences, highlighting valuable knowledge not only regarding their happiness but, overall, their lives and their social agency. By interrogating children's and adolescents' experiences, it unveiled that

the interpersonal dimension and messiness of life were intertwined with their experiences of happiness. Attending to this, the chapter explicitly discusses what children and adolescents mean and value when discussing happiness. To do so, this chapter introduces an integrated model of children's and adolescents' constructs of happiness. As such, it goes beyond previous attempts to exploring children's and adolescents' whose findings had previously only listed and categorised children's and adolescents' responses to how they understand happiness. Consequently, it demonstrates that happiness for young people is intimately related and highly affected by their social connectedness. In doing so, the chapter suggested that children's and adolescents' happiness can be understood mainly as a socially shared experience, simultaneously defining and being defined by young people's surroundings, social interactions, senses of belonging, and senses of freedom. Consideration of this data highlighted what local governments and policy-makers risk ignoring by not attending to the social and experiential dimension of children's and adolescents' happiness.

CHAPTER 6

CHILDREN PLACING HAPPINESS⁹

6.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed how children's and adolescents' constructs of happiness are rooted in their personal everyday experiences. To do so, it introduced a model outlining a series of layers through which children and adolescents in Lima understood and built their constructs of happiness. Overall, participants agreed that happiness is a shared, social experience fuelled by positive feelings (first layer) embodied within their social relationships (second layer) and constantly being shaped and dynamized through being active, consuming and being connected (third and last layer). Their discussions also shed light upon how their experiences of place provided a physical environment and were intertwined with those dynamics. This chapter more explicitly accounts for how these constructs are grounded in their experiences of the city and for how an urban *space* can turn into a happy *place* for children and adolescents. In doing so, it identifies the variables influencing children's and adolescents' preferences of urban space for experiencing happiness.

Understanding what constitutes happy places for children and adolescents is a challenge due to the complexity and variety of their experiences. Whilst the literature regarding children's experiences of place in the city is wide (see, e.g., Christensen and O'Brien 2003; Chawla and Malone 2003; Leverett 2011; Freeman and Tranter 2011), studies attempting to identify and explore the relationship between children's meaningful places, children's emotions in place, and the role of the physical urban environment on those meaningful places have remained more limited (Rasmussen 2004; Kytta, Broberg, and Kahila 2012; Chaudhury et al. 2019). Nonetheless, studies have explored the ways in which the urban environment can enhance children's happiness in urban spaces, yet their findings have neither been grounded in children's or adolescents' own experiences nor their perceptions (Freeman 2017). In this regard, using an experiential approach, this chapter builds upon children's and adolescents' constructs of happiness, addressing this gap by looking specifically into the key factors mediating and moderating children's and adolescents' shared experiences of happiness and by identifying the

⁹ Aspects of this chapter including some of the participants quotes and photographs were used in Alfaro-Simmonds (2021).

meaningful places where children and adolescents locate those experiences. In doing so, it answers the second research question:

'Where do children and adolescents in Lima find and place happiness in the urban realm?'

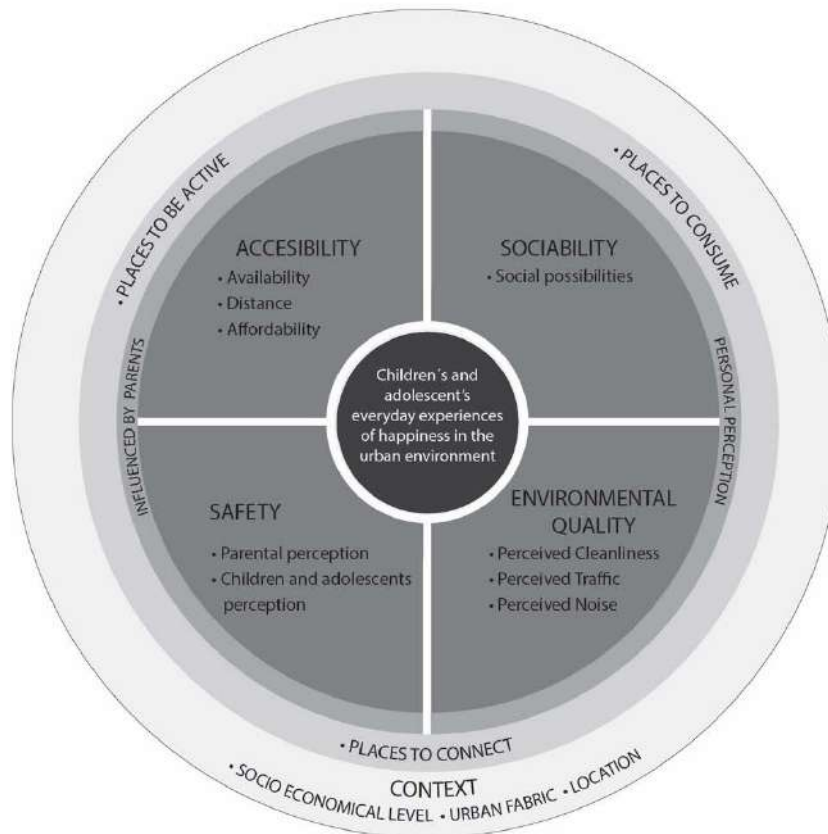
To achieve this, the chapter is organised in two sections reflecting on the participants' decision-making process. First, it identifies the variables mediating children's and adolescents' decisions and then it progresses into their space preferences. Relying on both qualitative and quantitative empirical data, this chapter introduces a model outlining how children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the urban environment are mediated. By categorising empirical data derived from photo-mapping activities, photo-elicitation semi-structured interviews (see Sub-section 4.5.1) and data extracted from the applied in-school social survey (see Sub-section 4.6.2), the developed model identifies four main mediated variables: accessibility, safety, sociability, and environmental quality.

Furthermore, it also suggests that the experience of happiness in place is moderated by context. This means we cannot assume children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness to be universal. Additionally, it introduces three types of spaces embedded in the urban context: places to be active, places to consume, and places to connect (see Figure 6.1). Combining analyses of qualitative and quantitative empirical data, and following the outlined model, the content of this chapter is divided into two subsections. Section 6.2 first discusses the extent to which urban space is actually relevant for children and adolescents in Lima. It then provides an insight into how the four main variables introduced in the model mediate and influence children's and adolescents' behaviours and decision-making processes towards their urban space preferences. It also explores how the urban context informs that process. To do so, it also relies on a significant body of literature regarding children's and young people's drastically different experiences of the urban space compared to adults (Matthews, Limb, and Taylor 2004; Skelton 2004; Elsley 2004; Valentine 2004).

Section 6.3 explores the diversity of spaces in which children locate their everyday experiences of happiness. By exploring different places to be active, consume, and connect, it establishes the link between children's constructs of happiness (see Chapter 5) and their use and appropriation of the urban

space. Both subsections aim to provide an overall detailed account of how children’s and adolescents’ everyday experiences of happiness are shaped, enhanced, or constrained by the city.

Figure 6.1: CHILDREN’S AND ADOLESCENTS’ EXPERIENCES OF HAPPINESS IN CONTEXT
 Proposed model of variables mediating and moderating children’s and adolescents’ everyday experiences of happiness in the city
 Source: Author based on empirical data



6.2. Children’s and Adolescents’ Everyday Experiences of Place and Happiness in Lima

By navigating between the spaces of the home, the school, and a variety of outdoor/indoor, public/semi-public/private spaces, children’s everyday experiences of place are regularly grounded within and forged by the city. Therefore, the urban realm is not only the background scenario for children’s experiences of place but a significant, integral element of their everyday experiences. The city, the neighbourhood, and the street, diverse as they are, transcend their character of mere locations and turn into life events. In doing so, they can evoke *positive emotions* and enhance *social relationships*, two fundamental domains of children’s and adolescents’ constructs, and everyday shared experiences of happiness in Lima (see Chapter 5). Also, these two main domains, positive emotions and social relationships, appeared to be

ordinarily interconnected with the place and embedded in the context in which they occurred. This section discusses the ways in which the city and its context influence children's experiences of happiness. To accomplish this aim, it firstly reflects on the importance children and adolescents in Lima attribute to spending leisure time in places different than home or school. Subsequently, it explores the key variables affecting children and adolescents' experiences of happiness in relation to the place(s) where they occur.

6.2.1. Children's and Adolescents' Everyday Use of Urban Spaces in Lima

Urban spaces are a key element of children's everyday experiences of the city. In the context of this thesis, these kinds of spaces refer to any place different to the home and school (See Chapter 4). This discussion will usually, but not always, refer to public or private spaces located within the local home-neighbourhood area within a range of 5 – 10 minutes' walk (see Kearns and Parkinson 2001 multi-layered scheme of the neighbourhood as explained in Chapter 2) and where children tend to spend free or leisure time (these include, for example, public spaces such as parks or the street and private spaces such as restaurants or shopping malls). In this way, urban spaces play the general role of public spaces, not only as places for meeting with peers to hang out, play, and have fun with, but also where children can construe their individual and collective identities (Lieberg 1995; Travlou 2003), shape their growing up processes, and strengthen their senses of belonging (Chawla 1992; Matthews 2003). They are key to children's experiences of the city and are a means of building a sense of community, promoting social ties, and connecting meaningful life experiences to places (Jack 2010; Malone 2017; Witten et al. 2019). For children and adolescents in Lima, the use of outdoor spaces proved to be an important component of activities undertaken in their spare time. Referring to the pictures they took of their happy places, one of the participants explained she chose the places where she normally goes as these are where she experiences happiness

*'I decided to take the pictures in the places where I play, because is then, when I feel **happy**. I usually play outdoors, in the afternoons every day'*
(Celia, Lima North, girl, 8 y/o,)

Celia referred to playing outdoors as an everyday, routine activity. Similarly, analysis of the survey data revealed that at least 14% of the participants across all case study areas spent some time outside their house / school every day of the week. 77% of the participants played or met with friends in different urban spaces at least once a week. By contrast, 23% of the respondents reported never playing outdoors (see Table 6.1). Participants went beyond reporting how often they were not at their house / school—also included within their narrative was the amount of time they usually spent in different urban spaces. Abel recalled:

‘Usually, when I go to the park, I stay a couple of hours. I always go with the family, with my cousins, sometimes I find friends there. We play tig all the time.’

(Abel, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o).

Abel’s comment correlated with what the survey data revealed. An average of 23% of participants reported spending between one and two hours with friends outside their house / school (see Table 6.2). This was also consistent with the drawings depicted in the previous chapter, where the fictional characters were placed in urban spaces other than the house or school in 94% of cases.

Table 6.1: TIME USAGE

How often do you play/meet with friends in outdoor spaces?
Source: Author based on participants’ responses

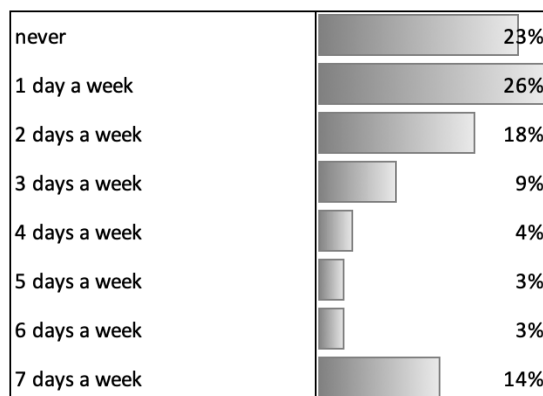
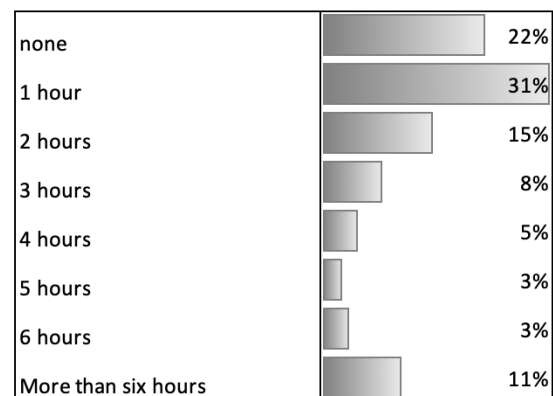


Table 6.2: TIME USAGE

How much time do you spend with your friends in outdoor spaces?
Source: Author based on participants’ responses



Children’s and adolescents’ usage of urban spaces also contributed to their sense of belonging and place attachment. The different districts and neighbourhoods in which children and adolescents grow up in Lima, as well as their everyday spaces within their neighbourhood, proved to be a significant part of who

they are and a key element of their identity (Jack 2010). Participants related to both the physical and social environment they inhabited, thus confirming that their lives were emotionally invested and intertwined with their local context. Joseph explained it as follows:

*'I would not like to move from my neighbourhood, because here I am **happy**, I have my friends, my family and my history, I have grown up here'*
(Joseph, Lima South, boy, 9 y/o).

Similarly, talking about the fictional happy character they created a group of girls in Lima Centre explained:

*'He will not move because he is **very happy** where he lives'*
(Francisca, Lima Centre, girl 11 years old)

*'He has built all his **happy** memories there and he would not like to change that'*
(Marcia, Lima Centre, girl, 11 years old,)

In both cases, participants referred to the importance of their neighbourhood as the place where they belonged, and had grown up, developed memories, and built stories. Their local urban environment has intrinsically shaped their lives. Likewise, results from the quantitative dataset demonstrated that 57% of the participants felt they belonged to their neighbourhood or districts. Only 8% reported a feeling of not belonging to their living area. The reasons for this were not disclosed (see Figure 6.2). A closer look revealed that this trend remained strong despite the urban and contextual differences among case study areas. Across all case study areas, at least 50% of the participants reported a feeling of belonging to their neighbourhoods—50% in Lima North, 56% in Lima Centre and 63% in Lima South (see Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.2: SENSE OF BELONGING - I feel like I belong to my neighbourhood / district?
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

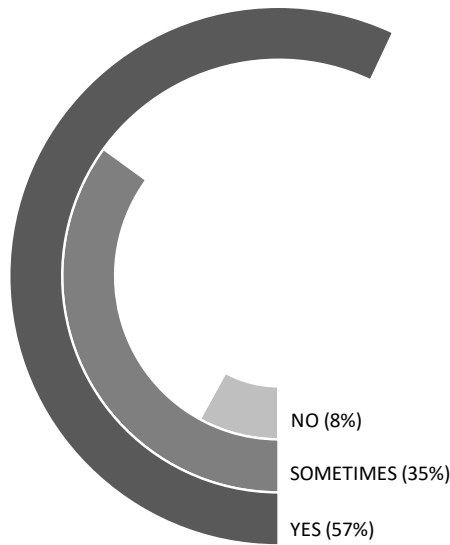
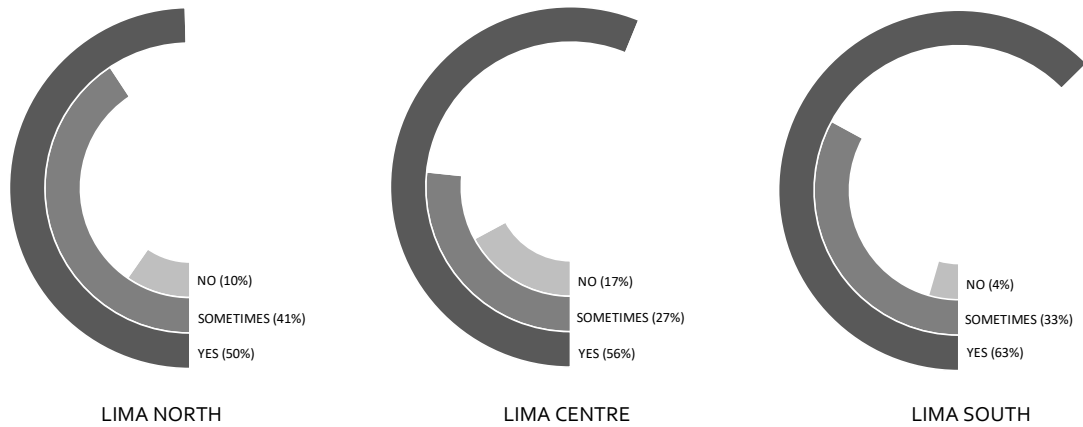


Figure 6.3: SENSE OF BELONGING - Differences by case study areas
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



However, age-wise, adolescents' sense of belonging seemed to decrease. The possibility of moving and living in places with better amenities became part of their reflections. Jose Alonso explained it as follows:

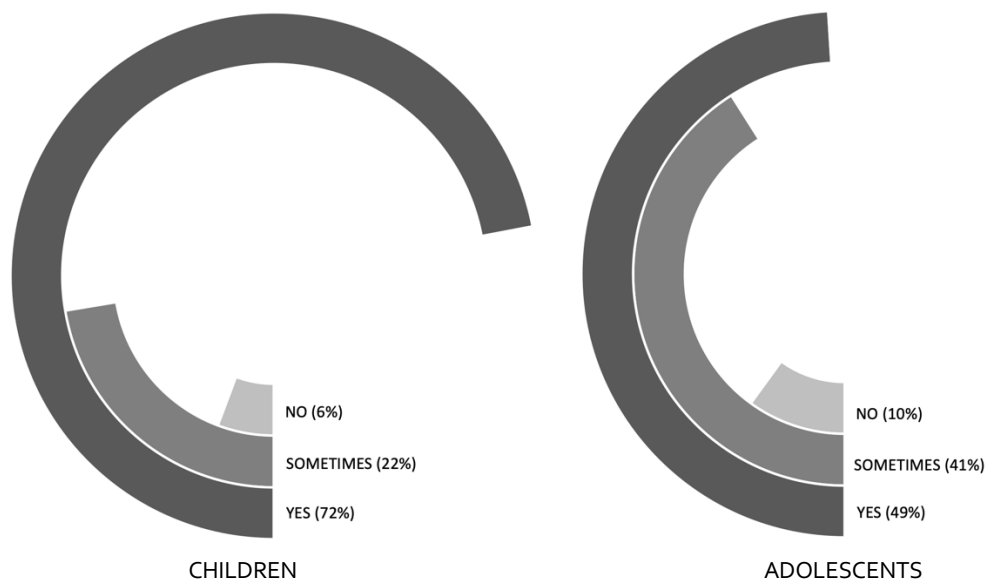
*'If it would be possible, I would like to move. I am **happy** where I live but would prefer living in a place with more parks, more security, some place like Miraflores (a district in Lima Centre).'*

(Jose Alonso, boy 15 years old, Lima South)

The data also showed a significant difference between children's and adolescents' responses regarding their sense of belonging. Whilst 72% of children felt they belonged to their neighbourhood, only 49% of

adolescents felt similarly (see Figure 6.4). This might be due to a wider territorial range and an increased sense of independent mobility that might come, in some cases, naturally with their growing up processes. Being able to navigate the city more extensively might have influenced their perceptions of place and fuelled comparative and aspirational thoughts regarding various places in the city.

Figure 6.4: SENSE OF BELONGING - Differences by age
 Source: Author based on participants' responses



Overall, the discussion in this sub-section has highlighted the extent to which spaces beyond the home and school play a significant role in shaping children's everyday experiences. The trends that have been discussed reflect children's consistent uses of urban spaces and their strong sense of belonging to their local environment. It reinforces what previous literature has discussed about how everyday experiences of place tend to reflect significantly on children's senses of belonging and recognitions of meaningful places (Rasmussen and Smidt 2003; Bourke 2017). Through their everyday experiences of place and senses of belonging in the urban realm, children and adolescents in Lima challenged the narrative that had traditionally placed them as a threat to the urban space (Valentine 2004) and foregrounded their voices and agency on the construction of their sense of place within the city.

Whilst the usages and experiences of urban spaces by the children and adolescents in Lima were undeniable, the extent and how these children and adolescents faced, related to, and explored the city

was a complex, contested process complicated by different variables which, when combined, mediated the shared happiness experience. Understanding how these experiences were mediated and moderated by different urban and contextual traits is key to successfully comprehending the rationale behind the appointment of varied spaces as happy places. The following subsection explores these factors and how they reflect the overall experience of happiness in the urban environment.

6.2.2. Children's and Adolescents' Everyday Experiences of Happiness in Context

Children's and adolescents' usages and experiences of urban spaces in Lima proved to be significantly influenced by a series of variables that have a significant impact on their everyday experiences of the city. Their experiences of happiness were regulated and either constrained or enhanced overall by the urban context and by the set of norms established at home. Consequently, the social opportunities provided appeared to be unequally distributed. By comparing the different urban conditions in which children grow up, I argue that geography makes a difference in meaningful everyday experiences of happiness during childhood. In that sense, this subsection reveals the numerous ways in which context and living conditions alter children's everyday experiences and their happiness outcomes.

As part of the fieldwork, participants were asked to photograph and map the spaces of the city where they experience happiness. Follow-up interviews were conducted with selected participants. As will be discussed later in this chapter (see Section 6.3), the photographs themselves revealed a variety of spaces in the urban realm which had been chosen as places of happiness. On the other hand, the interviews provided the means for understanding what lay behind the decision-making process for choosing one space over the other as a happy place. The latter revealed that children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness in the city were mediated by four main variables: sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality (see Alfaro-Simmonds, 2021). The first two were influenced, negotiated, or determined by parents or caregivers, and the latter two were largely a result of the child's personal perception. Furthermore, besides these four influencing factors, children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the urban environment were also moderated by the context in which they lived. That is, they were context dependant. Thus, the socio-economic conditions, the structure of the

urban fabric, and the geographical location of their local neighbourhoods can variously affect the experiences of happiness had by children living in Lima Centre, North, and South. The three areas studied reflected two different contexts. The central city (Lima Centre) and the peripheral city (Lima North and Lima South) (see Chapter 3). It was these contrasting scenarios moderating young people's decision-making process. Thus, in identifying their preferred spaces for experiencing happiness, they unveiled the variables mediating this process (See Model in Figure 6.1). Sociability being the first of them.

i. Sociability

Participants in Lima agreed that, in most cases, the happiness experience is a shared one grounded in positive feelings and social relationships, which include family and friends (see Chapter 5). Following that, the urban spaces in which they experience everyday happiness are guided by the same principle. They have a social component that transcends their physical quality (Moss and Petrie 2005). They represent and enable diverse types of relationships and ways of appropriating space. They also provide insights into how meaningful and valuable the spaces become for children and adolescents (Leverett 2011). Previous studies reported on the relevance of social interaction in urban space mostly related to children's mobility (Ross 2007; Mikkelsen and Christensen 2009; Horton et al. 2013). However, the relationship between the social possibilities of urban space and happiness has not been previously explored. In that sense, I argue for the key role of sociability in the urban space as an enhancer of children's and adolescents' experiences of place and, consequently, their everyday experiences of happiness. I also suggest that sociability is one of four key elements that mediate children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness and the selection of places where these experiences occur.

Children's experiences of urban spaces need both a supportive physical environment and a space that facilitates and promotes children's encounters with others. The outdoor experience is essentially social. If there is no one to play with or meet, children are less likely to be outdoors (Karsten and Van Vliet 2006). Austin and Selena explained it as follows:

*[The park] 'Is also a **happy place** because I always go with my family. I go either with my mom, dad, brother, or cousins. Sometimes all together. I also go with friends sometimes or I meet them there.'*

(Austin, Lima North, boy 8 y/o)

*'These places are **happy places** because of the people I get to share them with.'*

(Selena, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

Depending on how social a space is in the city, it can either facilitate or constrain children's and adolescents' neighbourhood explorations and use of the urban space (Carroll et al. 2015). As such, feeling some sense of connection to the people they encounter in their selected 'happy places' in the city emerged as quite important for children, transforming their experience of the urban space into a shared one that helped shape a sense of belonging as well as the experience of happiness. However, bringing the urban context into the mix, some differences emerged between children living in Lima Centre and the children living in the peripheral Lima North and South. In the latter case, for many, the local neighbourhood was the main site for spending their spare time and for everyday social encounters not only with friends but also family. Cousins, uncles, and aunts proved to be neighbours, strengthening the sense of communities and the social opportunities within. This provided children in impoverished areas (Lima North and Lima South) with more social opportunities to meet and play outside the spaces of the house or school (Karsten 2005). Parks and street playing being favoured (See subsection 6.2 below). Compared to those living in wealthier areas, young people living in less wealthy areas are more likely to engage in outdoor activities rather than in organised activities (Weir, Etelson, and Brand 2006; Castonguay and Jutras 2009). Dayron described the street in which he lives as that of family and plenty of other boys around. This provides plenty of opportunities for everyday social encounters.

'I play with neighbours and with my family. We are 20 living in my house and the rest of the family live in the street or nearby. So, there is plenty of boys to go out, and play soccer in the streets.'

(Dayron, Lima South, boy, 16 y/o).

The urban context within the peripheral city, shaped over time within different waves of internal migration, has seen families and entire communities shaping a network of neighbourhoods. In many cases, this succeeded in reproducing the social and cultural values of their original highlands'

communities where large and multigenerational families were valued, cared for and encouraged to stayed close by. New generations, born and living in Lima, are growing up and experiencing the local urban space within the legacy of these networks, where multigenerational, extended families are a common feature of the local neighbourhoods (see Hordijk 2015). By contrast, children and adolescents living in Lima Centre appeared to have a completely different and, in many cases, more limited experience of their urban surroundings. Following Forrest and Kearns (2001), the local neighbourhoods were less used as sites of social encounters. On the contrary, the source of the neighbourhood's sociability was more dispersed and eroded within a more individualised lifestyle.

Children and adolescents seemed to live in an apparent reduced personal bubble with limited engagement with their urban surroundings (Malone 2007). The sociability of the neighbourhood lost importance over the social opportunities provided by the possibility of being driven to a friend's house during a general discussion in class, two girls explained their experiences of urban space as follows:

'During weekday, afterschool I go back to my home. In the weekend we don't go anywhere. I go to my room, in my house. Sometime, veeeeeery rarely I go to my friend's house. Sometimes I go to Wong [a local supermarket], sometimes to the shopping mall, but mostly, I stay in my house in pyjamas, all day, all weekends.'

(Lima Centre, girl, 10 y/o during general discussion)

*'Normally I spent time in my house or in the school. In my house, I am usually on my own, in my room all day, using my phone watching tv, on WhatsApp, playing videogames. I don't see the need for going outside. I guess I just feel **happy** that way.'*

(Lima Centre, girl, 10 y/o during general discussion)

The data suggested that children and adolescents rate the potential happiness of a space by considering possible social opportunities. In general, an urban *space* will potentially be a happy *place* if they are able to find their friends or other young people around to meet and play or just gather with. Peers are important to children and adolescents irrespective of where they live. In this sense, their urban spaces of happiness can vary from a local park to a friend's house. Whilst the sociability of the space was key for placing the happiness experiences, the other three factors need to be drawn into the mix. Accessibility,

safety perception, and quality of the environment (to be discussed in the following subsections) also play a significant role in the ways they locate their shared experiences of happiness.

ii. Accessibility

Whilst the sociability of a space determined whether an urban space appeared open and inviting, the accessibility of those spaces determined whether children and adolescents had sufficient opportunities to experience and be part of their local neighbourhood and, to a greater extent, the city. This subsection discusses the term accessibility, not in relation to disability as it is typically used but in a broader urban sense. As such, it conceptualises accessibility in urban terms, as the number of opportunities and easiness to reach specific destinations, as opposed to the more common term of mobilities referring more specifically to ways of travelling from one point to the other (see Levine, Grengs, and Merlin 2019). Following this, Kytä et al. (2015) suggest recognising accessibility as equal access to services and opportunities. Considering this, I propose approaching accessibility as comprising four variables: availability of local amenities, distance, affordability, and parental availability. Consequently, for children and adolescents in Lima, the shared experience of happiness relied also on how accessible a place was both geographically and economically. Participants' usages of different urban spaces in Lima varied according to how convenient they were in terms of what was available, how close they were, access to financial resources, and parenting styles. These four approaches to accessibility add a different layer of complexity to children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of urban spaces. However, the extent to which they mediated their everyday experiences and their impact on the overall experiences of happiness uncovered both similarities and contrasting differences according to their geographical location. Examination of these variables provided additional insights into how children experienced happiness within the urban environment.

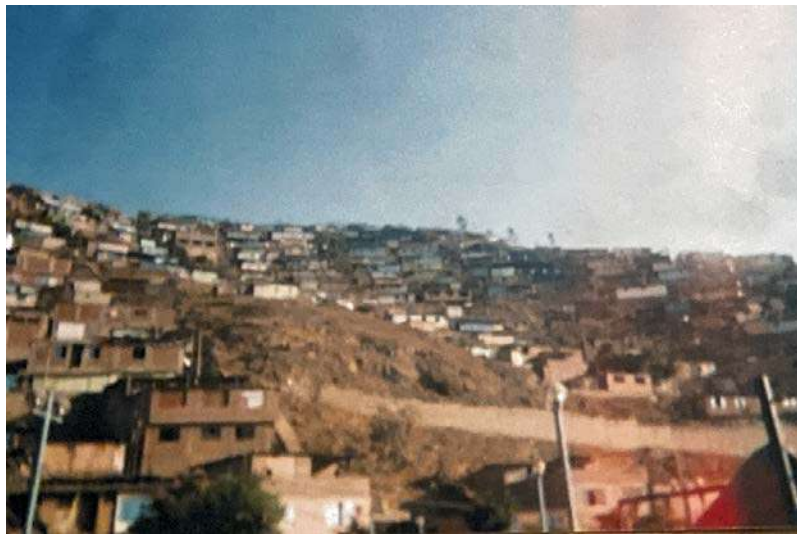
These four variables operate and mediate participants' access to experiences of the city in an interlaced way. Thus, as part of their everyday activities within their spare time, children and adolescents travel to places that are available, affordable and at a distance to which their parents are willing to take them or accompany them. Domingo's picture (see Figure 6.5) and accompanying narrative exemplified this. He

pointed to the top of the hill, where a soccer slab is located and where he feels happy. Yet, due to distance, cost, and his mother's availability, this space is not always accessible for him.

Figure 6.5: ACCESSIBILITY: 'Happy Places I don't go often'
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'This is the hill on the top of my house. There is a soccer slab there. I don't go often, but I like it. I feel **happy** there, but it is far away from home, we need to walk like 20 minutes to get there. We can also get a "tuk-tuk" and go quicker, but it costs. It depends on my mom.'*

(Domingo, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o).



Depending on their urban context, participants would either consider or not consider their local neighbourhood as a potential urban space to meet, play or hang out at. In terms of distance, for participants in both Lima North and South, the school itself was not only close by, at a home-neighbourhood level within an approximate radius of half a mile or a 5- to 10-minute walk, but so were the main sites for social encounters and spending their spare time (see Figure 6.6 and Figure 6.7).

Dayron explained it in the following quote. He preferred places near his house, within a walking distance.

He favoured local places to gather with friends.

'These places are near my house, and I can go walking. I always try to go places nearby. The parks and the streets are great to gather with friends or family and hangout or play.'

(Dayron, Lima South, boy, 16 y/o)

Figure 6.6: DISTANCE – Lima North
 Source: Author based on participants' responses to the photo-mapping activity

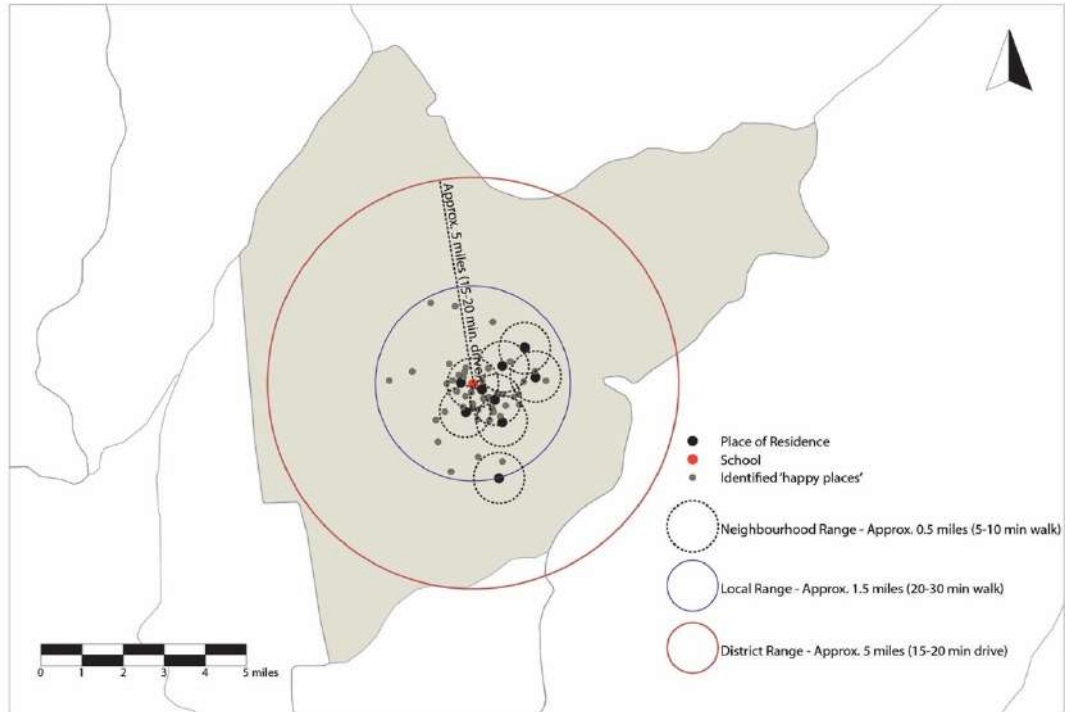
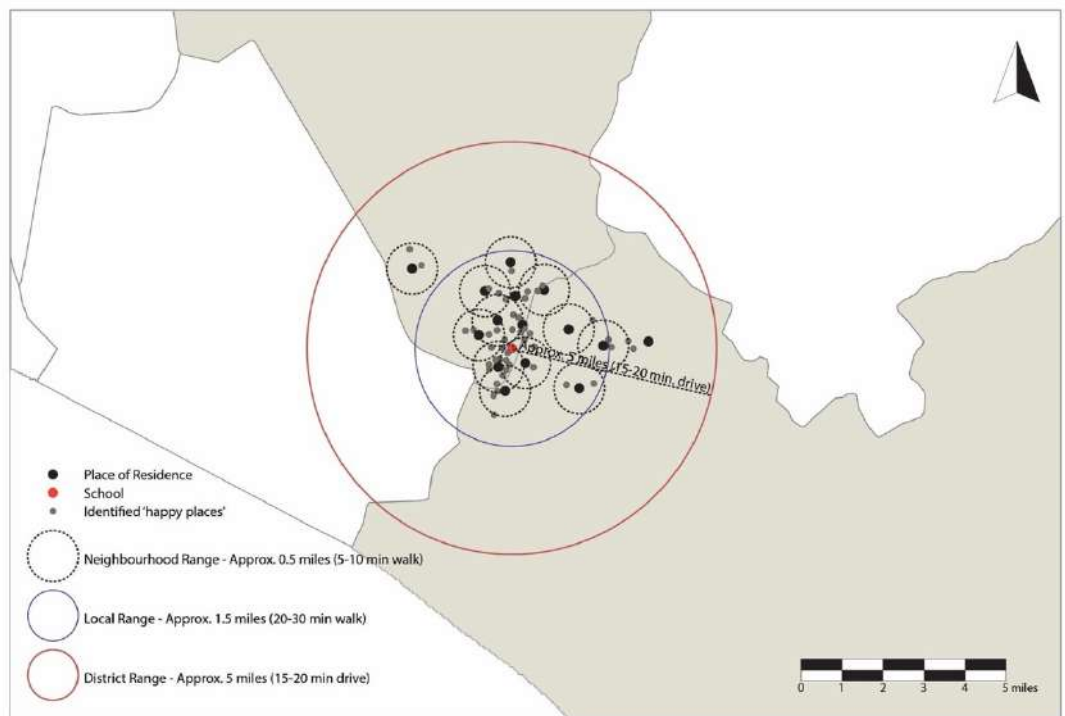
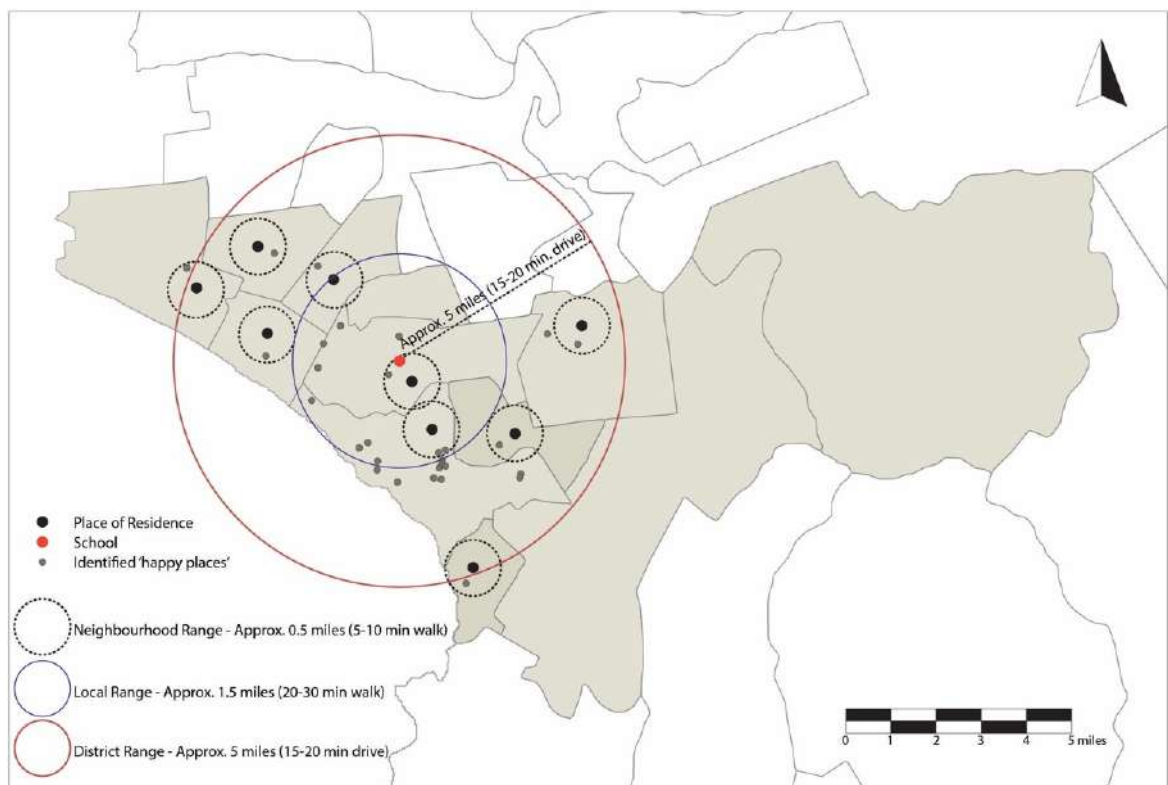


Figure 6.7: DISTANCE – Lima South
 Source: Author based on participants' responses to the photo-mapping activity



By contrast, children in Lima Centre experienced the city within a wider territorial range. As opposed to those in the peripheries, the school was normally a 20-minute drive away (if not more), and friends' houses in a similar driving range were the main sites for social encounters. The local neighbourhood, by contrast, was experienced occasionally with the nuclear family. Neighbourly relationships were rare, and visiting extended family was a weekend occurrence. The places where they located their experiences of happiness reflected this dynamic. Places close to their neighbourhood were only mentioned in reference to occasional outings with the family. By contrast, they located their happy places within a wider district range, with an average radius of 5 miles (meaning a 15 to 20 minutes' drive) (see Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8: DISTANCE - Lima Centre
 Source: Author based on participants' responses to the photo-mapping activity



The effects of distance on children's decision-making processes also depend on what is available and what is affordable. Yet, whilst the relation between distance and availability is direct, the relation between availability and distance with affordability is inverse. That is, a wider range of amenities will

normally be across a wider distance but will be less affordable in exchange. In terms of availability, previous research has reported many cities, mostly western ones, see children lose outdoor space as urban space has become, overall, more consolidated, and less accessible, a space where children are not always welcome (Valentine and McKendrick 1997; Christensen and O'Brien 2003; Chawla 2016) Consequently, young people become more likely to have to move within a wider range of the city to achieve social and learning experiences (Leverett 2011). Similarly, in Lima, previous studies discussed that urban densification strategies, alongside real estate developers and local policy practices, have seen urban public spaces closed, privatized, and reused (Lozada 2018). Children and adolescents, therefore, have seen their options for available things reduced. In practice, children and adolescents in Lima North and Lima South found that the local parks and soccer slabs were available, close by, affordable opportunities for outdoor social encounters. Alternatively, the peripheral city also offered some outdoor, not consolidated urban space for children to explore, use, and appropriate within their everyday experiences, such as parts of the mountains or unused open ground (Kraftl et al. 2013). Furthermore, appropriating and exploring these places was part of the shared experience of place and of the happiness outcome in itself (see Figure 6.9 and Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.9: AVAILABILITY: Not fully consolidated urban space as happy places
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'This is a place we call "the patio". I feel **happy** there because I can run, jump and play with my friends.'*

(Austin, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)



Figure 6.10: AVAILABILITY: Alternative happy places
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'Here I am in the soccer field. It is actually a huge field that we use to play soccer. It is a **happy** place because there is plenty of space for running. I go walking, sometimes with my brother. I live close by so I can also go on my own, but I meet friends there.'*

(Javier, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)



Participants in Lima Centre, by contrast, in many cases struggled to identify these opportunities. A conversation with one of the participants exemplified this. Angie argues there is no happy place in Lima. She asked if pictures of her travels would be valid. She explains she only experiences happiness either in her house or her friends' houses.

Angie: [Regarding the photography task] Can I include pictures of my travels?

Researcher: No, they need to be from Lima.

Angie: But there is nothing nice about Lima. I don't know any place

Researcher: Try thinking of any place in Lima where you feel happy. Think about the places you go normally when you are not at school.

Angie: Only my house and my friend's house

Researcher: Any other place you can think of. Maybe a place that you go with your friends or family?

Angie: Mmm, no

The previous discussion reflected on an additional dimension of accessibility. By referring to her travels, Angie shed light upon a particular lifestyle or economic status that allows regular travels to 'nice places

out of Lima'. Affordability, in this case, transferred the potential opportunities for experiencing happiness within the city to places beyond the scope of the city. However, whilst it is undeniable that this might provide a wider experience of the country or even the world, it shows in return a limited experience of the city on an everyday level. The everyday experiences of happiness in place are consequently reduced for participants from Lima Centre. Furthermore, affordability was and is also relative and context-sensitive. What is affordable to Lima Centre families in a regular way might be a special occurrence for children living in Lima North and Lima South. The data also revealed how the economic inequalities shape children's and adolescents' experiences of the city to a point where access to a public place, such as the beach in a coastal city, depends on parents having enough money to spend. This means some public assets of the city might just be not considered by many children (O'Brien 2003). Comparing the following comments by Domingo in Lima South and Laura in Lima Centre will bring this to life.

*[Discussing pictures, he was not able to take] 'I would have liked to take pictures of the beach, I feel **really happy** when we go, but it is far away. We don't go very often because it costs. My dad says it is a whole budget to go to the beach. Not sure what he means by that exactly, but I know is expensive'*

(Domingo, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o)

(Going to the beach to spend the day will cost Domingo's family an average of 20 dollars in total)

*[Discussing the places, she goes with her friends in summer] 'Normally, when it is summer, I go with my friends to the beach in 'Asia' [Asia is a beach located 65 miles south of Lima Centre]. We spend all the weekend and part of the week there. For me, it is one of the **happiest places**. Sometimes we even go in winter but only on the weekend because we have school in the week.'*

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

(Going to the beach as described by Laura will cost an average of 100 to 150 dollars each time they go)

Regarding the accessibility variables, three out of four (availability, distance, and affordability) shed light upon how the urban context moderates the everyday experiences of urban space, providing a range of different thresholds between one area and the other. However, the fourth variable (parental availability) had an equal and similar impact on the overall experiences of place, disregarding the geographical location. Family practices (see Morgan 2011) appear to be key for getting an insight into children's

geographies of happiness (O'Brien et al. 2000; Pain 2006). The findings revealed that children's experiences of place appear to be mostly developed under adult supervision. This resonated with findings from a previous study in the region on children's outdoor play. Cortinez-O'Ryan et al.'s (2017) study on children's and parental perspectives of outdoor play in Chile revealed that almost 80% of the children were always under parental supervision. This was despite perceiving the neighbourhood as safe. Additionally, they showed a strong dependency between children's and parents' schedules, in which normally the latter prevailed upon children's desires. Participants' everyday experiences of happiness are therefore strongly linked to their parents' available time. Emilio, Domingo and Vania, from the different case study areas, agreed with this, explaining:

'I always go these places [the local park and the soccer slab] with my mom. I only go when she has time or can take me.'

(Emilio, Lima North, boy, 10 y/o)

*[The soccer field] 'is a **happy place** because I can go and play soccer, but I don't go that often. It depends on my mom.'*

(Domingo, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o)

'When we go [to the shopping mall] we always need to go with adults. When I go to the park, I go to play. Depending on what my parents need to do later, we can stay longer. I can go any time but always with someone. If there is no one available, then I cannot go.'

(Vania, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

The findings suggested that overall accessibility was key to children's decisions about which urban spaces to spend their leisure time in. Everyday experiences of place appear to be highly informed by accessibility variables. The extent to which the neighbourhood provides local opportunities for children to make use of on an everyday basis will determine how they relate to the urban space and the city. Convenient, accessible places will allow children and adolescents the opportunity to experience more varied social everyday experiences of outdoor urban spaces and, therefore, an enhanced experience of happiness within the urban realm.

iii. Safety

In addition to an urban space being social and accessible, the extent to which a space makes children feel safe from external dangers or potential hazards will determine whether they will be allowed to go, increasing, or decreasing their opportunities to experience happiness in the urban space. Similar to previous research on children's experiences and use of the urban space (see, e.g., Morrow 2003; Carroll et al. 2015), children's and adolescents' safety concerns in Lima were evident when discussing their experiences of happiness in the city. Across all study areas, participants shared their perceptions of safety within the spaces they either navigate or avoid, sometimes echoing their parents' concerns. Children and adolescents in Lima North and Lima South discussed their knowledge of their local neighbourhood environment, whilst participants from Lima Centre extrapolated their comments to the overall country and even compared it with other parts of the world. Teo, Dayron, Laura and Catalina described Lima as a dangerous city, causing them to consider safety on top of happiness.

*'If you are walking alone, a thief can come and ask for your money. We are kids, we don't have much money. It is dangerous. For that, we better stay at home **happy**, rather than outside'*

Teo, Boy 8 y/o, Lima North

*'The parks are relatively safe before 6pm. After 6, gangs get together in the park, and it is dangerous because you can get robbed. My parents ask me to be back at home before 6. I got robbed once. I felt horrible, they didn't harm me physically, but they stole my phone. I was freaked out. I stopped going out for a while, but **I was not happy**, missing my friends or not playing soccer.'*

(Dayron, Lima South, boy, 16 y/o)

Laura: [In Lima] 'There is too much danger'

*Catalina: 'Exactly. You cannot go out on your own; something can happen to you. That is what happens in Peru. It is very sad. When I am in the city, I am more afraid than **happy**'*

Laura: 'Everywhere is like that, but for example, in Europe, there is less violence'

*(Conversation between Laura and Catalina,
Lima Centre, girls, 12 y/o)*

Like other Latin American cities characterised by continuous expansion, urban fragmentation, and inequality, Lima is imprinted with insecurity, environmental degradation, and corruption (Fernandes 2011; Inostroza 2017) (see Chapter 3). Consequently, children and adolescents are confronted with added complexity to their interaction with the public realm as opposed to those living in western cities. As such, in correlation with children's discussions, the quantitative data revealed that, overall, 66% of participants considered safety as a problem in their neighbourhood (see Figure 6.11). That is, 6 in 10 children perceived Lima as an unsafe city. However, looking more closely at the data, significant differences emerged across case study areas. Participants living in Lima Centre perceived their neighbourhoods as considerably safer than those living in the peripheral city. Whilst 43% of the Lima Center participants considered safety a problem, 69% participants from Lima North and 72% participants from Lima South rated their neighbourhoods unsafe (see Figure 6.12).

The findings revealed children and adolescents in Lima to be aware of their urban context. They were able to identify its potential hazards and dangers and considered safety a factor shaping their everyday experiences of the city. They understand the potential risks of being alone in the streets and applied that knowledge to their decision-making processes ('going out before 6pm'). Also, they were able to compare and contrast their context, proving their ability to be critical of their urban surroundings. However, this might also indicate overexposure to a vast inventory of dangers reported consistently by the media (Thomas and Hocking 2003; Velásquez et al. 2020) and amplified by the parents, which may be worth exploring in more detail as part of further future research.

Moreover, whilst no significant difference was observed regarding gender, differences regarding age must be acknowledged. Where 71% of adolescents considered safety a problem, a smaller 56% of children thought similarly (see Figure 6.13). The difference might be explained by adolescents' slightly increased independent mobility, potentially leading them to be somewhat more exposed to any urban dangers. This becomes a constant process of negotiation, limiting parent-approved available spaces (Carroll et al. 2015) and privileging institutionalised and monitored spaces over public spaces (see Section 6.3 for a more detailed account of selected spaces).

Figure 6.11: SAFETY: Do you think safety is a problem in your neighbourhood?
Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

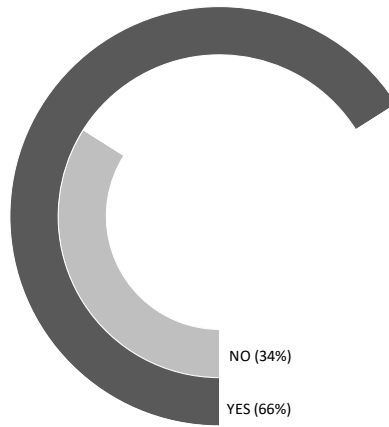


Figure 6.12: SAFETY: Differences by case study areas
Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

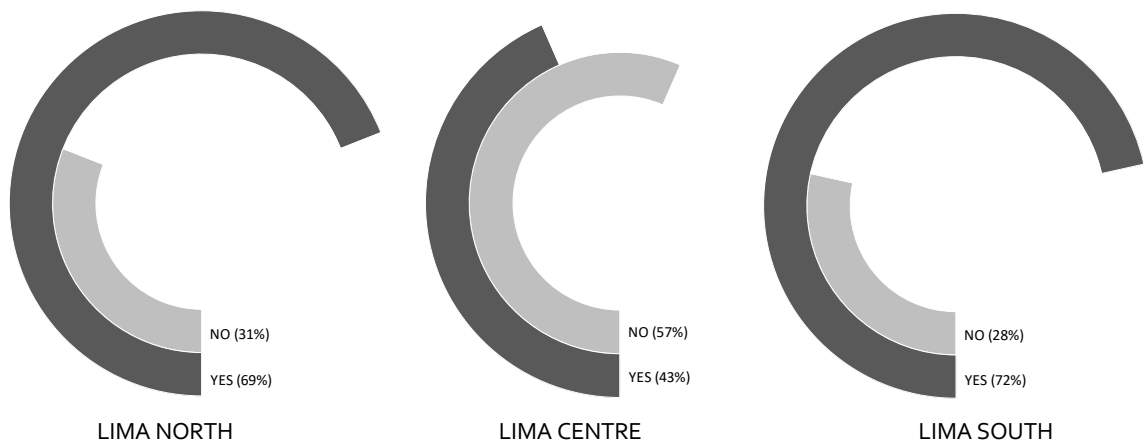
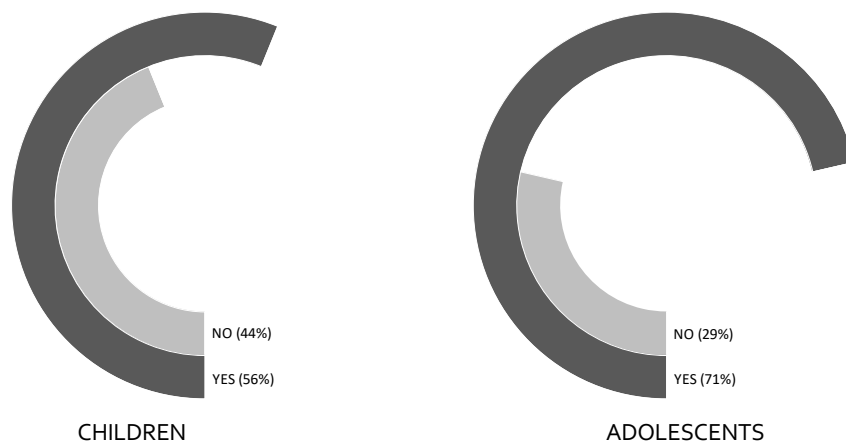


Figure 6.13: SAFETY: Differences by age
Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



Confirmed by the data, the effects of safety on children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban context are undeniable. A key question that remains is how and to what extent safety perception mediates children's and adolescents' everyday behaviours towards using urban space and, more specifically, their experiences of *happiness* in place. Participants' discussions shed light upon this, indicating that their perceptions of safety mediated their urban experiences. The knowledge of inhabiting an unsafe city engendered different behavioural outcomes. As such, it might too have ignited a process of constant awareness and adaptation or constraint and frustration. Consequently, constraining or limiting opportunities for experiencing happiness in the city. Jorge and Laura exemplified it in the following quotes. Jorge is aware of the risks in his local neighbourhoods. He argues that despite the risks, there are still opportunities for experiencing happiness. These, however, can be reduced. Laura, on the other hand, explains having limited or no opportunities to experience happiness—for her, Lima is too risky as to even venture into it.

*'You grow up knowing that there are areas of the neighbourhood more dangerous than others. At the end, there is no place safe. You know? We need to be always aware and take precautions. Do not go out late, or not being alone in the night. Avoid gangs and don't talk to strangers. Do not walk along this or that street which can be unsafe. Going out preferably in group or with family if you are a kid. You don't stop doing things, you still enjoy, and are **happy** hanging out with friends. Sometimes you meet less, or you just take care of yourself and remain alert'*

(Jorge, Lima South, boy 14 y/o)

*'I feel frustrated in doing this exercise [think on public spaces in the city where you feel happy]. I cannot think of an urban space to consider **happy**. I hardly go outside. I cannot even go to the corner or to the convenience store walking on my own. My dad says I can get robbed or at worst kidnapped. When I am not at house or school, I might probably be in a friend's house, that is all. This are safe spaces, think that means they are also **happy spaces**.'*

(Laura, Lima Centre, girl 12 y/o)

(Other girls in the class nodded, confirming what Laura was saying)

Both Jorge and Laura echoed parental fears and recalled the set of norms and recommendations learnt at home. They shared their fear of stranger danger and the risk of encounters with gangs, thieves, or kidnappers in both cases. Jorge acknowledged urban danger as part of his everyday experiences of the city but, as he said, *'it does not stop him from going out'*, although it nonetheless required him to be aware, develop coping mechanisms, and apply what he has learnt at home. Laura, however, evoked her father's concerns and consequently avoided going out. The latter correlates with previous studies on parental fear, recalling how parents tend to see the world as a more dangerous place than when they were children (Freeman and Tranter 2011), engendering feelings of anxiety (Pain 2006) and even levels of paranoia (Franklin and Cromby 2020; Furedi 2006). The result of this is that children like Laura are not allowed to go out regularly despite living in a more premium area. Although engendering different behavioural outcomes, parental fears were shared across case study areas. Similar to previous studies, parental concerns regarding 'stranger danger' (e.g., thieves, drug addicts) derived in participants seeing their independent mobility reduced (Jelleyman et al. 2019). Only some adolescents from the peripheral city shared how this condition seemed to ease as they grew up. In the case of children, they only rarely discussed being allowed to mobilize without adult supervision. The following quotes exemplified this point. All three children, Celia, Fatima and Nicolas, explain how they need adult supervision and company or either are not allowed to be outside.

'When I play outside, I cannot be alone. There is always an adult with me.'
(Celia, Lima North, girl, 8 y/o)

'I am not allowed to go on my own anywhere, not even to the end of the street.'
(Fatima, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o)

'Normally I go with my brother, it is very rare that I am allowed to go on my own. There has to be no one to take me, for my mom to let me go on my own. She said now I am growing; she can trust me. But If I am alone, I need to stay close to home.'
(Nicolas, Lima South, boy, 11 y/o)

Moreover, data collected from the survey corroborated the effects of perceptions of safety on outdoor experiences, revealing that 30% of the participants stopped going outdoors at least once a week due to feeling unsafe (see Figure 6.14). In this case, whilst there were no relevant differences within case study

areas, the sample analysed by age and gender did uncover significant variations worth noting. The data unveiled girls' and children's mobility to be more restricted due to safety perception, as opposed to that of boys and adolescents. Whereas 59% of girls stopped going out, only 44% of boys felt limited. Likewise, where 60% of children stopped going out, only 51% of adolescents considered safety a reason for staying at home (see Figure 6.15 and Figure 6.16). Similar to previous research, this suggested that gender and age operate as social categories framing children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban realm (O'Brien et al. 2000; Karsten 2003; Morrow 2006; Pitsikali and Parnell 2019). This being the case, whilst all participants acknowledged the fears and risks inherent to the urban space, these were more likely to impact children and girls' behaviours towards their experiences outdoors. This also suggested that as a result, their experiences of happiness in place might as well also be operated by these subject identity categories.

Figure 6.14: SAFETY: How many times in the week have you stopped going out due to feeling unsafe in your neighbourhood?
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

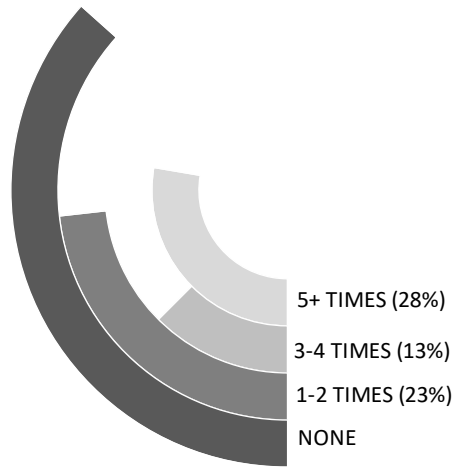


Figure 6.15: SAFETY:
 How many times in the week have you stopped going out due to feeling unsafe in your neighbourhood? – By gender
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

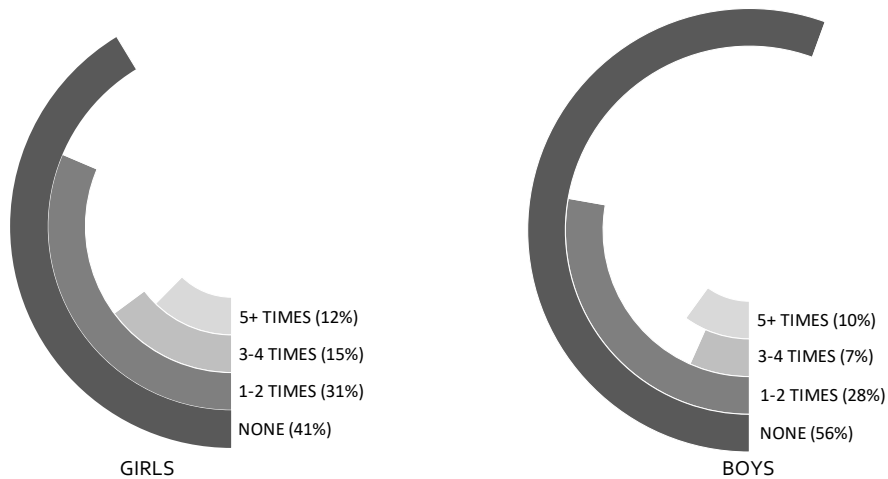
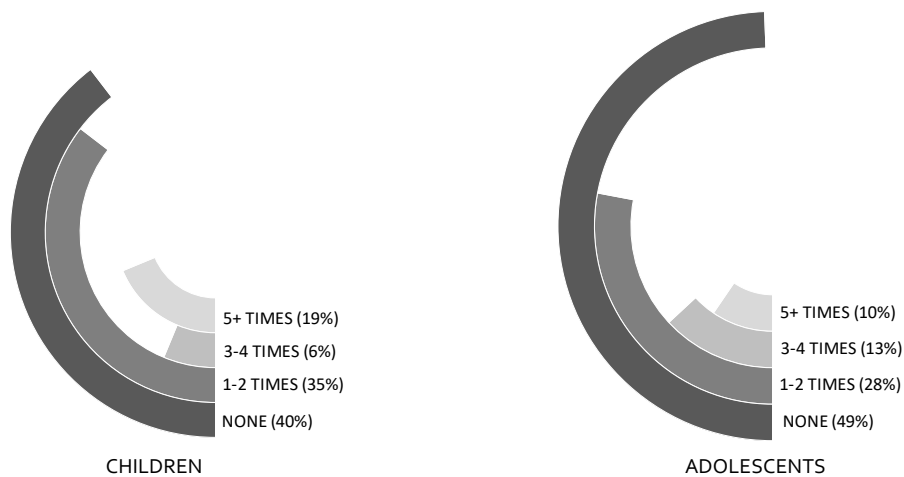


Figure 6.16: SAFETY:
 How many times in the week have you stopped going out due to feeling unsafe in your neighbourhood? – By age
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



iv. Environmental Quality

The last of the four forces mediating children’s and adolescents’ experiences of happiness in the urban realm refers to how they perceive the quality of their environment. The criteria under which they rate their urban spaces’ environmental attributes will provide a more or less pleasant experience of the city - that is, they will enhance or constrict their everyday experiences of happiness. In that sense, the quality of the immediate physical environment plays a crucial role for children growing up in the city, as it shapes central key spaces for exploration, play, and confidence-building (Christensen and O'Brien 2003). Participants observed and assessed an urban space primarily by how clean, noisy, and well-maintained it was. Across all case study areas, participants shared their perceptions and thoughts regarding the quality of their environment. Mainly, they agreed that cleanliness was one of the main observable qualities to take note of for enhancing their happiness experiences. Abel from Lima South even incorporated these opinions into his photographs and included some takes from different angles of the local park where he used to play. He described the rubbish in the streets and lack of cleanliness as the main triggers of urban unhappiness. This is explained in Figure 6.17.

*Figure 6.17: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Street cleanliness
Source: Photographs taken by participants*

*‘The park used to be a place where I felt **happy**, but now every time I go there is always rubbish. It makes the park and the street smell bad. The problem is the rubbish truck. It only comes twice a month. In between, the rubbish keeps piling and piling. It is not a **happy place** anymore.’
(Abel, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o)*



Likewise, results from the quantitative dataset supported Abel’s opinion and revealed that, overall, 45% of the participants felt either sad or very sad regarding the street’s cleanliness in their neighbourhoods

(see Figure 6.18). However, a closer look revealed significant geographical differences. Whilst the overall result was consistent among those living in the peripheral city, participants from Lima Centre appeared to be overall happy with the cleanliness of the streets. Whilst 27% of the participants in Lima Centre expressed being sad or very sad with the street cleanliness in their local areas, 45% in Lima North and 43% in Lima South reported their sadness regarding the cleanliness of their neighbourhoods, making evident the structural differences in terms of waste management across the city (see Figure 6.19).

Figure 6.18: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Street cleanliness
 How happy are you with the street cleanliness or the amount of litter on the street?
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

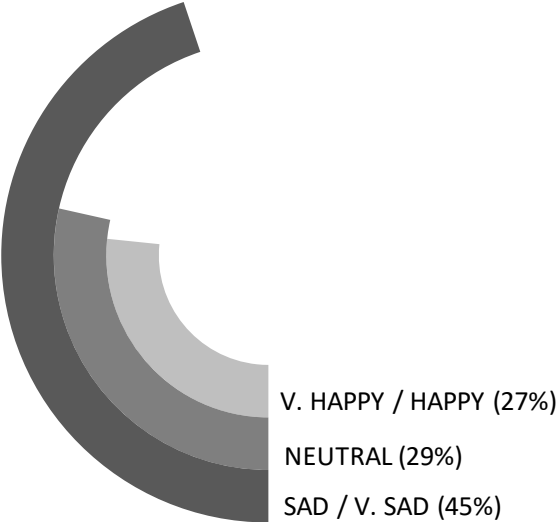
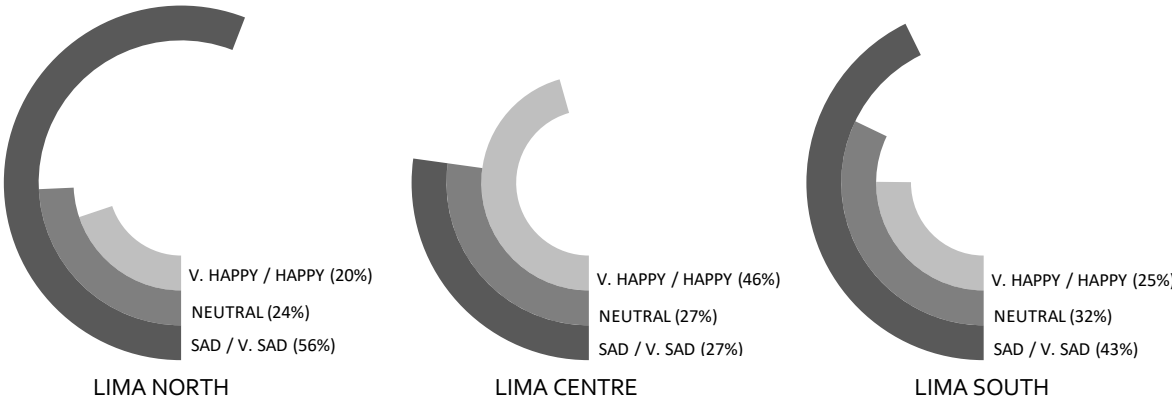


Figure 6.19: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Street cleanliness
 How happy are you with the street cleanliness or the amount of litter on the street? - Differences by case study areas
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



Similarly, participants mentioned noise levels as an urban trait affecting their happiness experiences and shaping their interactions with their urban surroundings. Noise has been reported as a major cause of environmental dissatisfaction as it has been noted it can negatively affect the quality of life of a wide portion of the population. Children included (Sarker, Hossain, and Khatun 2019). Participants referred to the noise mainly produced by the cars and the traffic. They also included people shouting, people listening to music at high volume, and even animals, such as dogs barking or parrots chirping early in the morning. The following comments shared in class as part of discussions within activities at both Lima Centre, and Lima North illustrated how, in many cases, the high levels of noise disrupted their overall everyday experiences of happiness.

*'As I live close to the highway, the noise from traffic and cars is constant. It goes nonstop from early morning to late night. I would prefer it to be quieter, so I can be more relaxed and **happier**.'*

(Comment during class discussion, Lima Centre, girl, 10 y/o)

*'Sometimes the noise can be annoying and gets you grumpy. It is like my next-door neighbour, for example. She has 13 cats and a parrot, all very noisy. The cats make lots of noise, and the parrot is chirping all day long; they distract me when I am trying to do my homework or going to sleep. On top of that, she throws some very loud parties regularly. It is music and chatting all together. Not easy to be **happy** like that.'*

(Comment during class discussion, Lima Centre, girl, 12 y/o)

'One thing that annoys me is the screams. It just goes non-stop some days. Women shouting, men shouting. Sometimes it even puts me off of going out.'

(Comment during class discussion, Lima North boy, 14 y/o)

Furthermore, results from the quantitative dataset correlated with the participants' discussions, revealing that an overall 32% reported being sad or very sad regarding their neighbourhood noise levels, as opposed to 21% who reported being happy or very happy with the levels of noise in their local surroundings (see Figure 6.20). Similar to waste management, the variability of noise appeared to be context-dependent. A closer look into the case study areas unveiled the differences. Once again, whilst there was some consistency between the overall answers and what participants in the peripheral city reported, answers from Lima Centre were contrary to this. Whilst 41% and 32% in Lima North and Lima

South correspondingly reported being sad or very sad with the levels of noise in their local areas, only 23% shared the same feeling in Lima Centre, with 40% of the Lima Centre participants being happy or very happy with the levels of noise in their neighbourhoods or local areas (see Figure 6.21).

Figure 6.20: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Noise levels
 How happy are you with how quiet or noisy is your neighbourhood (e.g., from cars or people)?
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

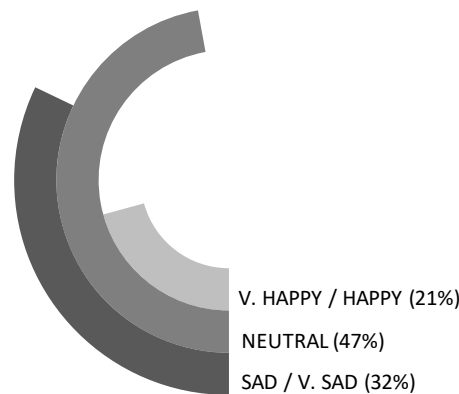
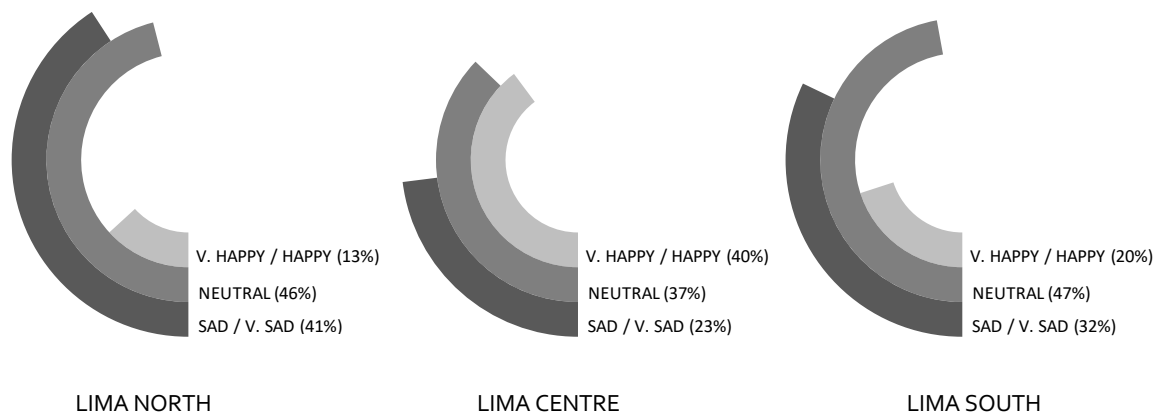


Figure 6.21: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Noise levels
 How happy are you with how quiet or noisy is your neighbourhood (e.g., from cars or people)? - Differences by case study areas
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



In addition, participants shared their thoughts on issues concerning overall urban maintenance affecting their experiences of happiness in the city. When sharing and discussing their own and other's photographs, participants from all case study areas included comments on the state of wall painting, pavement maintenance, pedestrian paths and road surfaces, and maintenance of green areas as traits that make their experiences of the urban space less pleasant and less evoking of happiness. The following comments, which were shared as part of the overall discussion during the mapping activity, exemplified

this by highlighting urban characteristics that, if improved, might provide an enhanced everyday happiness experience within the urban realm. Photographs in Figure 6.22 illustrate their comments:

*'Some places are in bad shape; the walls have graffiti and marks. It does not look nice. I think if it would be nicer, I will feel **happier** going there.'*
(Comment during class discussion, Lima North, boy, 15 y/o)

'I don't like how it [the park] looks. The playground looks old, the painting is fading. It does not look well maintained. It does not make you want to play there.'
(Comment during class discussion, Lima Centre, girl, 10 y/o)

*'Besides the cleanliness, the walls are not well painted, the playground is rusted, and out of order, the grass is not green anymore, and there are not enough trees. I like playing there [in the local park] but feel like it could be way better. I will definitely feel **happier** and play more there if it improves.'*
(Comment during class discussion, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o)

The data suggested that young people are aware of their local surroundings and that their everyday experiences are affected by their quality. However, whilst the quality of the physical environment plays a role in children's experiences of place, the relation between children's and adolescents' rating of the space and its usage is not necessarily direct. In many cases, children can use, enjoy, and experience happiness in places rated poorly for a combination of variables (Chawla 2016). Even when children and adolescents critically evaluated the environmental quality of their neighbourhoods, they also provided positive comments regarding what physical attributes made their experiences happier. Domingo and Jorge illustrated this by describing their photographs of some of their happy places. They unmistakably identified spaces as holding meaning for them as a part of their everyday experiences of happiness. However, similar to the examples seen before in this section, they also promptly included in their narrative those physical characteristics which have room for improvement (see Figure 6.23 and Figure 6.24).

Figure 6.22: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Urban maintenance

1. Wall painting, 2. Maintenance of green areas, 3. Playgrounds out of order, 4. Pedestrian paths and road maintenance
Source: Photographs taken by participants



Figure 6.23: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: 'My tyre' could be better
Source: Photographs taken by participants

'This is my tyre. It is like a swing but made out of a tyre. Playing there makes me *happy*, but I would like it to be well painted. The poles are rusted, and my hands get dirty with it and my legs get scratched sometimes. Also, it will be nice to have some green grass.'

(Domingo, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o)



Figure 6.24: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY: The contaminated soccer field
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'Lots of people judge the soccer field because of how it looks. It can seem unattended and dirty, but personally I like it very much because it is big, and I enjoy very nice moments with friends. It is a soccer field of sand and dirt. The only problem is, now it is too contaminated [with rubbish and parked or abandoned cars]. For a while, it was sort of acceptable. Now that the population has grown it has become worse. The contamination is taking out space from the field and gives it a very poor and ugly appearance. It does not take away that the place is still good, and we can still gather and use it **happily**, but the contamination plays against it.'*

(Jorge, Lima South, boy, 14 y/o)



The examples confirmed the ability of children to assess the urban spaces they used under their own criteria. The findings correlated with previous research studying the quality of life for children living in urban areas. Similar to the Growing Up in the City project (GUIC) (see Chapter 2), the most discussed features were cleanliness, noise and its absence, trees, and flowers for their beauty and as providers of shade, and green spaces as play areas. The quality of the environment is, therefore, key as a potential enhancer of the happiness experience. However, to understand the extent to which it mediates and informs the experience of place and happiness outcomes, it must not be taken as an isolated item but be intertwined with how social, accessible, and safe a space is.

6.3. Children and Adolescents Placing Experiences of Happiness in Lima

Whilst the previous chapter discussed children's experiences of happiness as being shaped by activities, things, and beliefs, in this section, I argue that the everyday experience of happiness was an active, consumptive, and connected experience. To do so, children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness relied on physical spaces easily found in the public realm, such as parks, sports areas, shopping malls, churches, and the street, among others. However, living in diverse urban and social contexts, children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban realm in Lima were varied and complex. The previous section drew attention to the extent of that complexity by identifying the multiple variables mediating children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban space. It also highlighted the way in which these factors are moderated by context; that is, they are context-dependent. Hence, the availability, sociability, safety, and quality of children's and adolescents' everyday urban surroundings varied according to their place of residence. This section will subsequently focus primarily on identifying the urban spaces where children locate their everyday experiences of happiness—parks, sports areas, streets, commercial and worship spaces. It will also aim to illustrate how these particular urban spaces inform and relate to the happiness experience. To do this, it shall first provide an overview of children's and adolescents' preferred spaces and then go into a more detailed account of how the singularities of these spaces relate to children's and adolescents' constructs and experiences of happiness. By identifying the urban spaces used by children and adolescents in Lima, this section will aim to shed light upon the role of the city in shaping and framing their experiences of happiness. In doing so, it will also establish the link between children's constructs of happiness (as seen in the previous chapter) and their use of the urban space.

6.3.1. Children's and Adolescents' Everyday Urban Spaces for Happiness

By photographing and identifying diverse types of spaces, children and adolescents in Lima were keen to discuss and locate their experiences of happiness within the urban space. Participants were asked to photograph spaces within the city where they experienced happiness. They were instructed that any place different from their house, family's houses, or school would be valid. Following this, the pictures were developed and classified by similarity into 9 typologies, agreed upon with the participants. Out of a total

of 466 pictures (Lima North n=188, Lima South n=202, Lima Centre n=76), the majority depicted parks (n=166, 35.6%), followed by streets (n=124, 26.6%) and commercial areas (n=98, 21%). Sports areas and worship spaces followed in ranking, among others (see Table 6.3). Similarly, within the survey, participants were asked to write three places where they experienced happiness. Out of 1655 words registered, 282 referred to their own house, and 94 to school were excluded from the analysis to maintain consistency with how the photograph activity was introduced. The resultant list of 1279 words was analysed and categorised by content similarity into 12 categories, including ‘others’, ‘don’t know / don’t answer’ and ‘none’. Among these, 74.4% of the list was distributed between three top categories: parks (35.3%), commercial areas (23.5%), and sports areas (15.6%). Fourth in the ranking were roads with 6.1% (see Table 6.4). The first one included local parks of various sizes, and the second included shopping malls, supermarkets, local markets, and cinemas and convenience stores. As for sports areas, both public and private sports facilities (mostly, but not only, related to soccer) were listed. Roads, on the other hand, included streets, pedestrian roads, public stairs, and cycle lanes.

Table 6.3: PLACING HAPPINESS - Pictures taken by participants classified by typology
Source: Author based on participants’ photographs

TPOLOGY	TOTAL OF PICTURES	%	INCLUDED SPACES
PARK	166	35.6%	Local Parks
ROADS	124	26.6%	Streets, pedestrian roads, public stairs
COMMERCIAL	98	21.0%	Shopping Malls, Supermarkets, Markets, Cinemas, and Restaurants
SPORT AREAS	34	7.3%	Public Soccer fields, Soccer Academies, Private Clubs
WORSHIP	20	4.3%	Church, Cemetery
PUBLIC SPACE	10	2.1%	Squares
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	9	1.9%	Beach, countryside
OTHER	3	0.6%	Police Station, Airport
CULTURAL	2	0.4%	Library, Museum
TOTAL	466		

Table 6.4: PLACING HAPPINESS

Responses to survey question: Write three places where you experience happiness

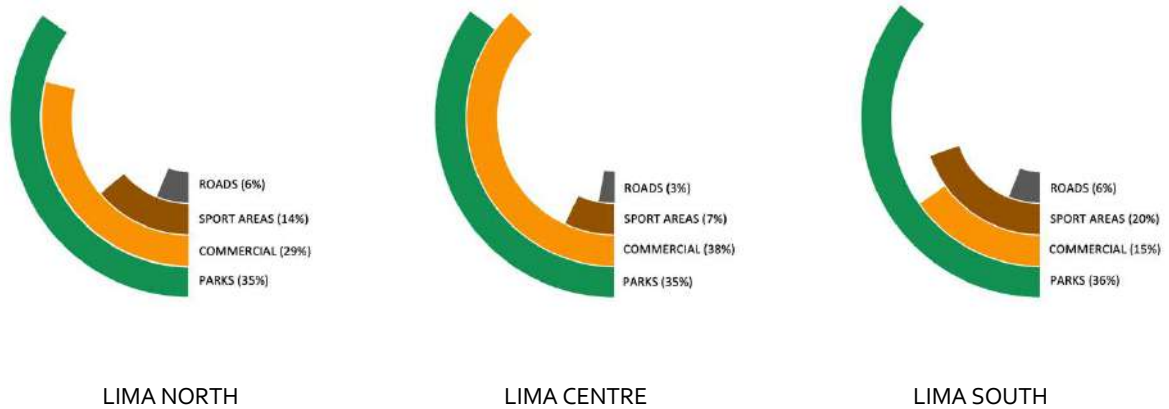
* Not included in Pictures – (See Table 6.3)

Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

TYOLOGY	TOTAL OF RESPONSES	%	INCLUDED SPACES
PARK	452	35.3%	Local Parks
COMMERCIAL	300	23.5%	Shopping Malls, Supermarkets, Markets, Convenient Stores*, Cinemas, and Restaurants
SPORT AREAS	200	15.6%	Public Soccer fields, Soccer Academies, Private Clubs
ROADS	78	6.1%	Streets, pedestrian roads, public stairs, cycle lanes*
DON'T KNOW / DON'T ANSWER *	63	4.9%	
PUBLIC SPACE	54	4.2%	Squares, Bus Stop*
LOCAL AREAS	38	3.0%	Overall neighbourhood*
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT *	32	2.5%	Beach, countryside
OTHER	31	2.4%	Police Station, Local Festivals*, Public Transport*, Internet Cabin*
WORSHIP	19	1.5%	Church
NONE *	9	0.7%	
CULTURAL	3	0.2%	Museum
TOTAL	1279		

When looked at in detail, significant differences emerged among case study areas. Parks consistently appeared to be the preferred places where happiness is experienced. However, commercial areas (e.g., shopping malls) seemed to have greater relevance as places for happiness for children and adolescents living in more affluent areas. Participants from Lima Centre referred to commercial places slightly more than parks (38%), whilst only 29% of participants from Lima North and only 15% from Lima South mentioned commercial spaces. An inverse trend was noted regarding sports areas. 7 % of Lima Centre participants referred to sports areas, whilst 14% of Lima North participants and 20% of Lima South participants referred to sports areas. Additionally, roads were mentioned more by Lima North (6%) and Lima South participants (6%) than by participants from Lima Centre (3%). See Figure 6.25 illustrated it representing each type of place with a different colour, for highlighting purposes. On the latter, it must be noted though that Lima Centre participants' mentions of roads referred mostly to cycle lanes and commercialized pedestrian boulevards, whilst Lima North and Lima South participants answered the survey with things like *'playing in the street'* or *'the street outside my house'*.

Figure 6.25: PLACING HAPPINESS – by Studied Area
 Responses to survey question: Write three places where you experience happiness
 Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



What is more, children were asked to locate the photographs they took on a map. The maps, combining all places selected, validated the mediated role of the accessibility factor and the moderating role of the geographical context. Although similar in context, as Lima North and Lima South are both in the peripheral city, they nevertheless provided varied experiences of urban spaces for children and adolescents. Participants in Lima North (see Figure 6.26), for example, identified a wider offering of commercial spaces in the local surroundings, whilst those from Lima South (see Figure 6.27) marked more parks, including open-grounded areas. In doing so, they confirmed that their experiences of happiness within the urban space were indeed informed by the availability of particular spaces.

However, participants from Lima Center unveiled a completely different dynamic and relationship with the city and urban surroundings. Whilst they photographed only parks and commercial spaces, the location of these placed their experiences of happiness within two different and marked ranges, what I have termed the 'family range' and the 'friends' range'. The 'family range' placed familial experiences in the urban space, basically in local parks near home, normally visited over the weekend. Participants shared comments such as, *'The park is for family because it is close'* and *'On weekends I go running / cycling with my family always close by'* (fieldwork notes). As for the 'friends' range,' it described social experiences in children's spare time, about a 10-15 minutes' drive away, with their friends. The map also identified a particular part of Lima Centre as a main gathering point (see Figure 6.28).

Figure 6.26: PLACING HAPPINESS – Lima North
Source: Author based on participants' responses to photo-mapping activity

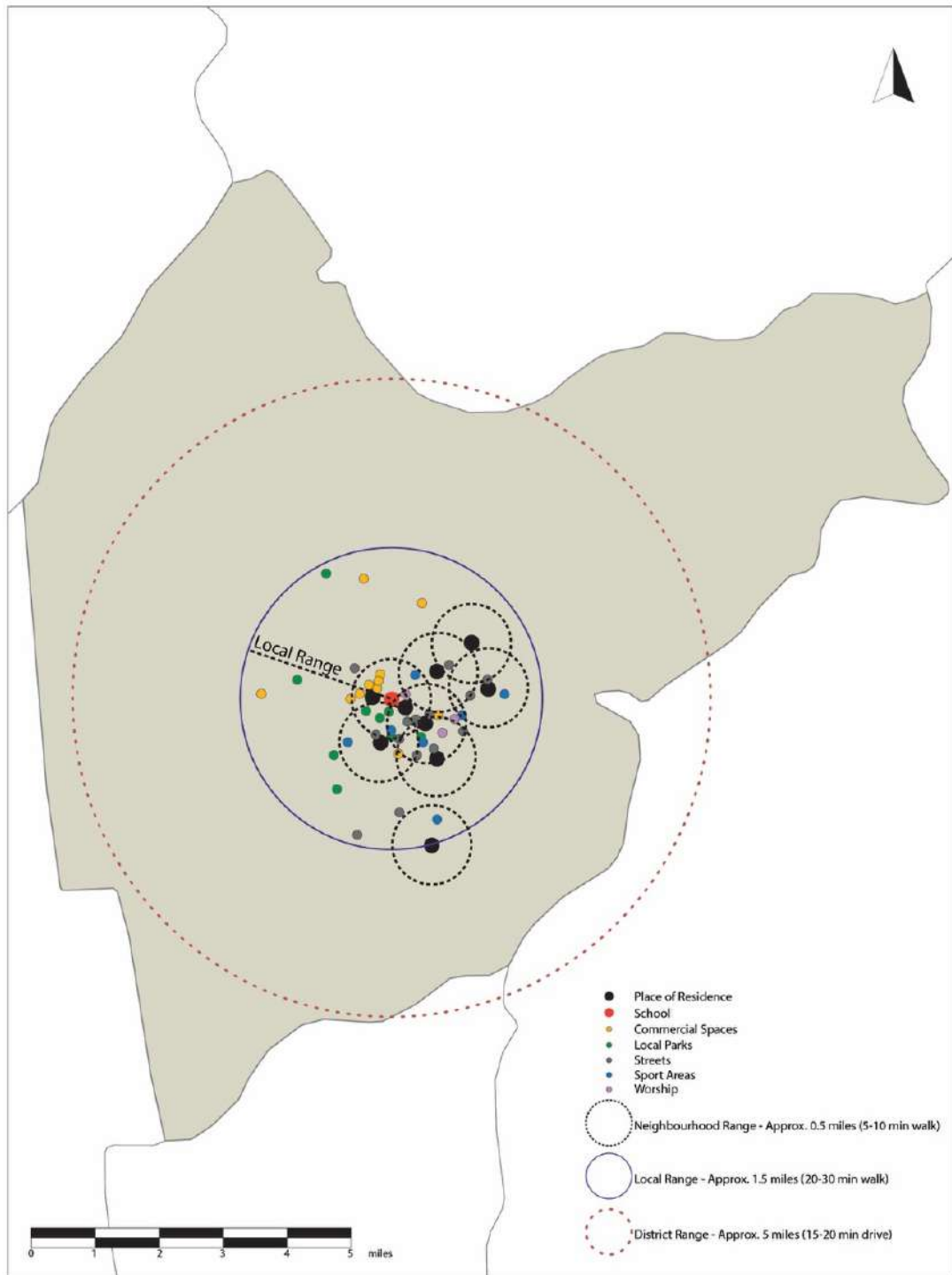


Figure 6.27: PLACING HAPPINESS - Lima South
 Source: Author based on participants' responses to photo-mapping activity

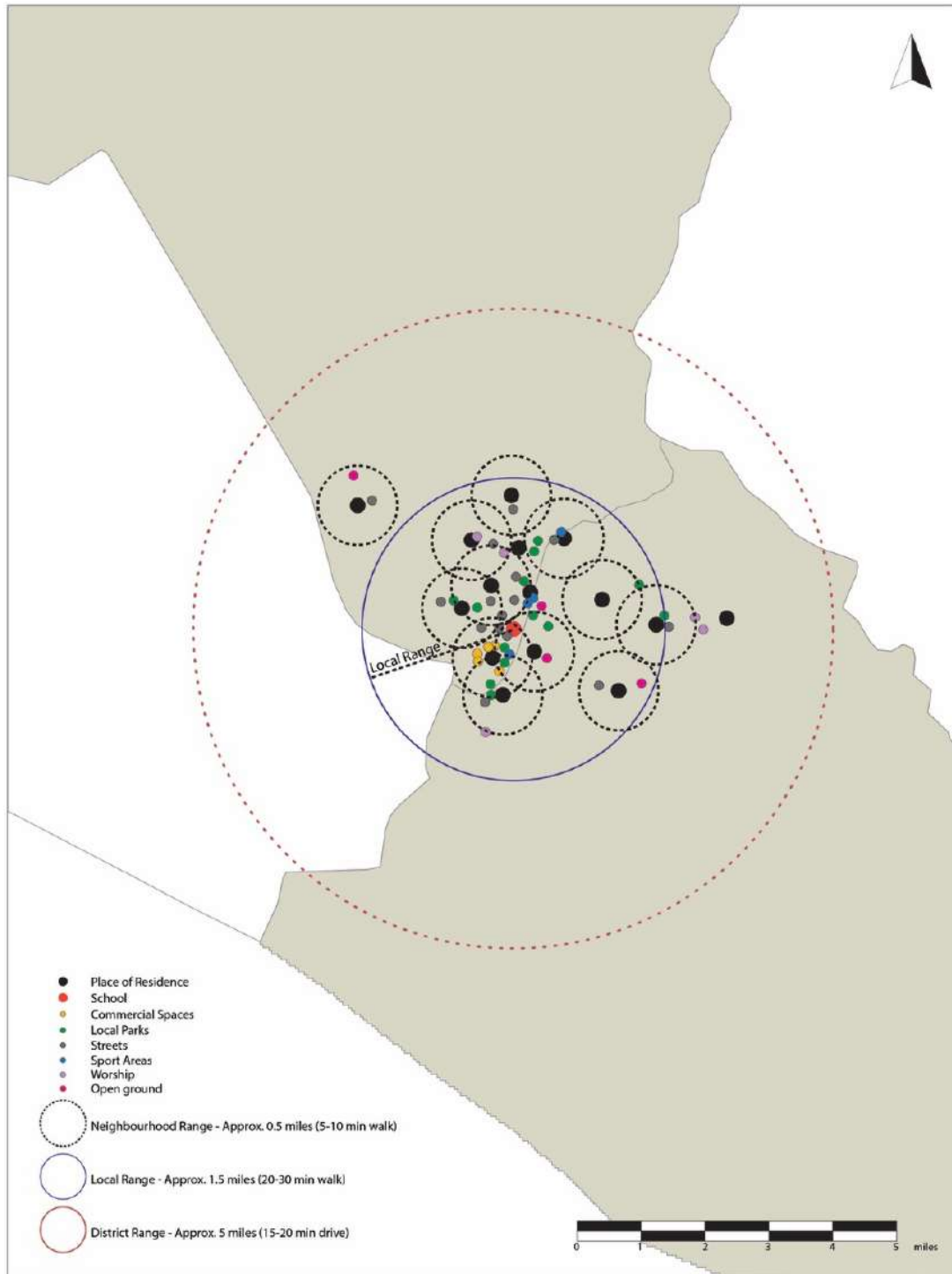
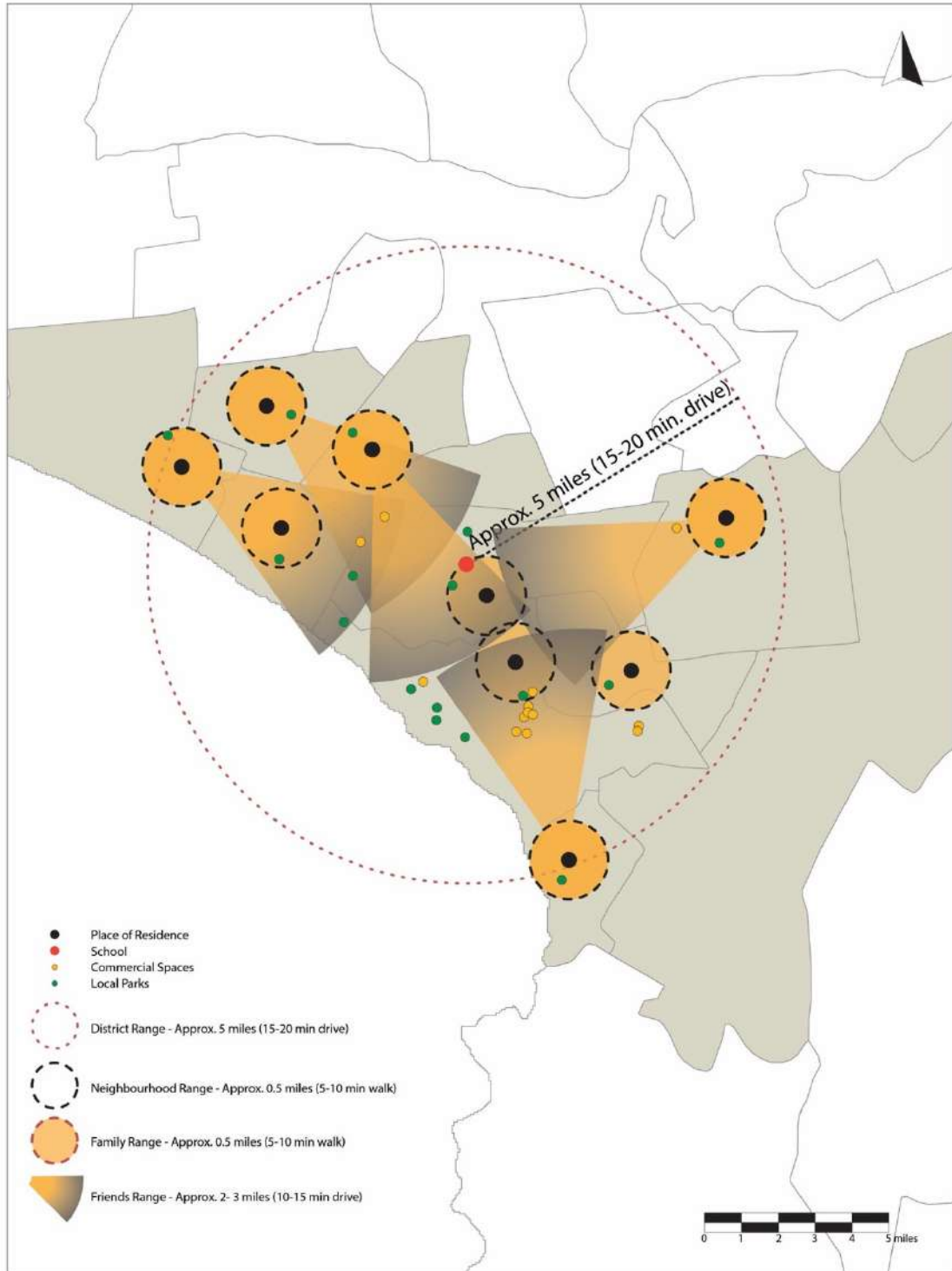


Figure 6.28: PLACING HAPPINESS - Lima Centre
 Source: Author based on participants' responses to photo-mapping activity



The data concurred with previous research studying children's and young people's leisure-setting preferences, including the renowned research project 'Growing up in the City' (GUIC) (See Chapter 2), whose findings revealed that children from a variety of countries conversely valued nearby places for playing and gathering with friends, such as parks, nearby shops, and recreational centres (Chawla 2016). Similarly, Ergler, Freeman, and Guiney (2020), investigating preschool children's experiences of local surroundings in Dunedin, and Carroll et al. (2015), studying children's use of and experiences with public space in Auckland, New Zealand, both found that participants were particularly attracted by places with nature, playgrounds, food outlets, and sports fields. Likewise, Kytta et al. (2018) employed a place-based approach with over 1300 children living in Helsinki, Finland and Tokyo, Japan, for mapping their experiences of meaningful places. Within their analysis, parks, sports fields, commercial areas, streets, fields, and beaches were among participants' most frequently mentioned places. They also documented references to worship spaces, such as shrines or churches. However, whilst my research resonates with previous studies, it furthers this field of research by helping to establish and understand the linkages between children's preferred urban spaces and their everyday experiences of happiness.

The findings reflected the moderating role played by the urban context. Moreover, the variety in preference ascribed to commercial areas might reflect socio-economic differences and the distribution of the commercial landscape that had primarily been developed to target the affluent population in Lima Centre. By contrast, the peripheral city, still undergoing a process of growth and consolidation, offered a collection of mostly community-made soccer slabs and even open-ground areas that can be used or transformed into sport or play areas by children and adolescents.

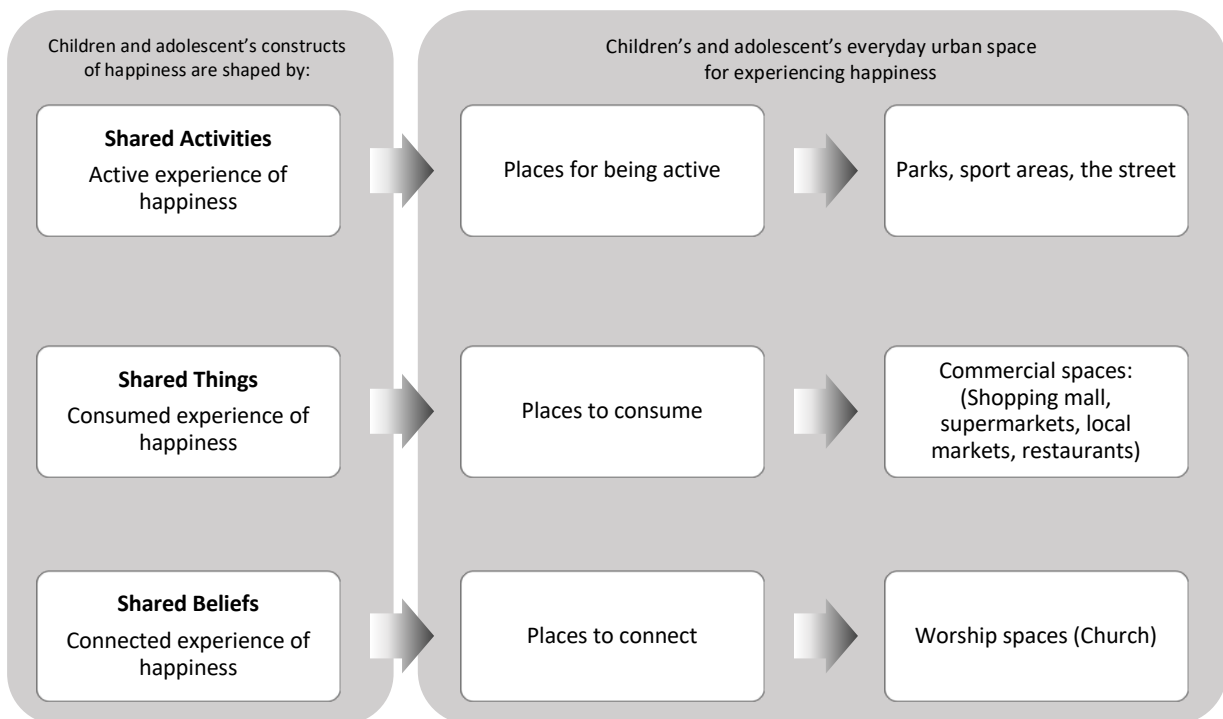
However, whilst the general trend outlined similarities, it also revealed the multiple opportunities urban spaces offered to children and adolescents to enliven their experiences of happiness. As such, physical urban spaces provided ideal scenarios for experiencing happiness on an everyday level as an *active*, *consumptive*, and *connected* experience. Parks, sports facilities and even the streets were places for engaging in play and being physically active. Commercial spaces were places to hang out, spend disposable income, and experience a different kind of enjoyment from either window shopping or shopping itself, therefore taking part in consumption. Meanwhile, the references to churches and

cemeteries reflected the need for places to connect. The following subsections will delve into the nuances of these different spaces regarding the experience of happiness.

6.3.2. Places to Be Active, Consume and Connect

Throughout the fieldwork, children’s and adolescents’ preferences for specific types of urban spaces for experiencing happiness reflected upon how they constructed happiness. By drawing happy fictional characters, participants were able to communicate how they understood happiness and, by taking photographs of their everyday urban experiences, they were able to bring into their narrative the relevance of their experience of place and how both happiness and place experiences were intertwined. The previous subsection already identified and rated the types of places preferred by children and adolescents in Lima. Following the scheme illustrated in Figure 6.29, this subsection will discuss how children’s and adolescents’ usage of those spaces informed their experiences of happiness. Consequently, it will clearly establish the link between children’s and adolescents’ constructs of happiness established in the previous chapter.

Figure 6.29: PLACING HAPPINESS
 Children’s and adolescents’ constructs of happiness related to the place they occur
 Source: Author based on empirical data analysis



i. Places to Be Active: Parks, Sports Areas and the Street

Previous studies have discussed how parks and open spaces promoted children's interaction with peers, contributed to their motor skills development and allowed them to burn off extra energy (Loukaitou-Sideris and Sideris 2009), preventing obesity and improving their physical health (Blanck et al. 2012), reducing stress, increasing attention, and improving their overall wellbeing (Chawla et al. 2014; Feng and Astell-Burt 2017). However, the effects of urban open spaces on urban residents' happiness have rarely been explored. Kim and Jin (2018) attempted to address this gap by studying individual survey data of adult urban dwellers in Seoul and found a correlation between urban park areas and happiness, yet their study did not cover children's and adolescents' experiences. This subsection will address this gap by providing an insight into the relationship between open urban spaces and children's everyday experiences of happiness.

Children and adolescents discussed a variety of activities extensively as part of their constructs of happiness (see Chapter 5). Playing outside, running, being physically active, practicing sports, and cycling were consistently repeated as part of their narratives. In describing and discussing their photographs, they proved a correlation between those activities and the spaces where they occurred. Parks, sports areas, and streets were preferred and identified as places for experiencing everyday happiness precisely because of the opportunities they provided as arenas for performing those activities, as well as being enhancers of social opportunities. Participants identified all three of them mainly as places for being active, where such activities are possible. Dalila, Yair, and Domingo explained it as follows in Figure 6.30, Figure 6.31, and Figure 6.32.

Figure 6.30: Places for being active – Parks
Source: Photographs taken by participants

'I chose the park near my home as a happy place because it has a nice playground. I can play on the see-saw, ride my bike, play volleyball and use my roller skate.'

(Dalila, Lima North, girl, 8 y/o)



Figure 6.31: Places for being active – Streets
Source: Photographs taken by participants

'I took pictures of the street and the stairs, because those are the places where I usually play and feel happy playing. In the street I usually play soccer with my brother. On the stairs, we sit and play "taps"¹⁰'

(Yair, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)



¹⁰ Taps also called *pogs*, *flippos*, *tazos*, *caps*, among others. Plastic circular figures of 1.5 inches in diameter with cartoon drawings on them. The game is played in rounds. In each round, children 'playing taps' will typically pick one tap as a 'shooter' and stacked the remaining ones in a pile, upside down. The aim of the game is to hit the pile with the 'shooter' trying to flip them up leaving the drawings visible. The player who achieves to flip more in one go, wins that round.

Figure 6.32: Places for being active - Sport Areas
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'This is a soccer slab; children go mostly there to properly train and play soccer. For me, it is a **happy** place because I can go and play soccer with my friends.'*

(Domingo, Lima South, boy, 8 y/o)



Adolescents shared similar views, mainly talking in terms of practicing sports. However, for them, parks and outdoor spaces played a more significant role as spaces for socialising with peers (Loukaitou-Sideris and Sideris 2009). Instead of playing, adolescent participants referred to parks as gathering places to meet, sit, and have a chat. Alexandra explained it as follows:

*'The park near my house, it is a place where I can gather with my friends. Just hang-out, laugh, be **happy**. We meet a couple of days a week after school and chat.'*

(Alexandra, Lima South, girl, 14 y/o)

Whilst all three spaces provided opportunities for being active and having social encounters; participants provided a range of additional reasons for identifying these spaces as happy places. They agreed that parks provided contact with nature. Flowers were valued aesthetically, and trees were valued as a source of shade. They also proved to be a source of peace, relaxation, and a way to relieve stress (See Figure 6.33). Similarly, streets and sports areas, when non-busy, were also places for contemplating, valued for

the quietness they could provide, offering relief from noisy and busy environments (see Figure 6.34 and Figure 6.35).

Figure 6.33: PARKS – Access to nature, shadow and quietness
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'I took pictures of the places and things I like. I chose flowers and trees. I like nature. It makes me **happy** looking and enjoying nature. These are places where I can relax, be quiet and calm.'*

(Alexandra, Lima South, girl, 14 y/o)



Figure 6.34: STREETS: A place for contemplating
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'I took a picture of the street of my house. I always stay there sitting on the stairs in front of my house, contemplating. Just being there makes me **happy**.'*

(Dayron, Lima South, boy, 16 y/o).



Figure 6.35: SPORTS AREAS: A quiet place for being in peace
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'I took picture of a soccer slab near my house. I like that it is a quiet place. There is silence. When there is silence in a place, it makes me **happy**, because I don't like places where people are shouting or making too much noise. We are a lot of people at home, so it is noisy every day.'*
(Eddie, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)



Despite a widespread preference for parks, sports areas, and streets for being active as part of the experience of happiness across case study areas and age groups, discussions regarding sports areas, in particular, highlighted the contextual differences between children living in the peripheral city and those living in Lima Centre. The latter mentioned mostly private sports areas, including gyms and private clubs. This continues to be a trend observed throughout this chapter. Instead, children in Lima North and Lima South, identified mainly public sports facilities, or multipurpose open ground areas, affordable alternatives to more structured leisureed activities (Elsley 2004; Holloway and Pimlott-Wilson 2018) (see Figure 6.36).

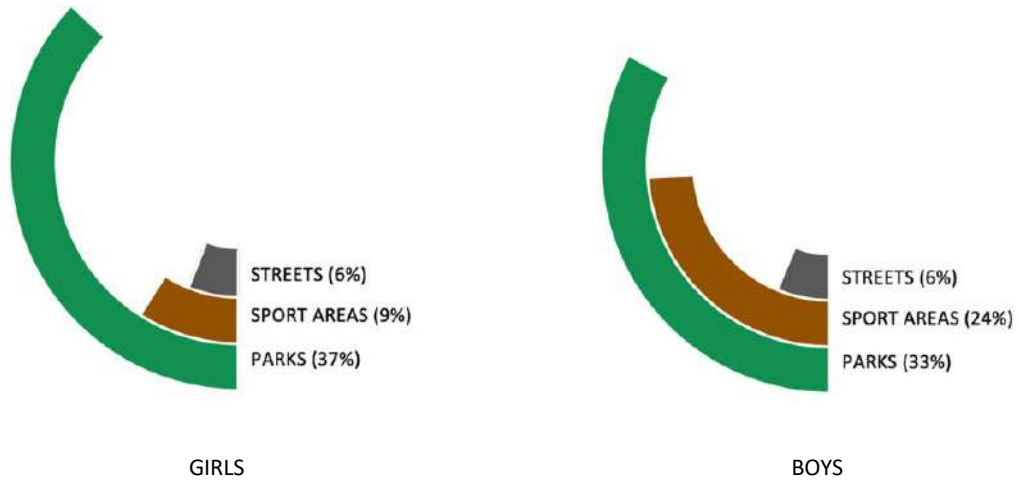
Figure 6.36: PLACES TO BE ACTIVE - Sports Areas

1. Public soccer slab, 2. Open grounded area, 3. Private Sports Facilities, 4. Private Club, 5. Public soccer field, 6. Open grounded area
Source: Photographs taken by participants



Boys and girls proved to value and use local places in diverse ways, their behaviour varying in terms of their physical activities (Kilvington and Wood 2016). Previous empirical studies have found that boys and girls differ concerning their levels of and preferences for physical activity (Karsten 2003). Boys tend to be more physically active than girls both in and out of school playgrounds. (Willenberg et al. 2010; Torkar and Rejc 2017). Boys have proved to be more likely to engage with team play and popular sports such as soccer (Børve and Børve 2017), whilst girls are more likely to enjoy a variety of activities, such as playing tag, climbing, running, hiding, sitting, and talking (Hyndman and Chancellor 2015). Participants' responses to the survey proved to be consistent with previous studies, indicating that sports areas were more extensively used by boys (24%) than by girls (9%) for being active whilst experiencing everyday happiness (Figure 6.37).

Figure 6.37: PLACES FOR BEING ACTIVE - By gender
Source: Author based on participants' survey responses



The combined dataset proves a correspondence between the activities reported as part of children's and adolescents' constructs of happiness and the urban spaces where they locate these experiences. It uncovered the potential for outdoor spaces as enhancers of the everyday happiness experience as providers of opportunities for exploration, playing, and practicing sports whilst having fun. They proved to rank highly on the sociability scale and were considered widely accessible. However, concerns about safety and the quality of the space, to some extent, constrained or limited the overall usage of these spaces (see Chapter 7). It also revealed the varied ways in which children used and transformed urban space and the value assigned to spaces. Parks, sports areas, and streets were, therefore, more than merely functional spaces within the neighbourhood; they were an integral part of children's and adolescents' everyday experiences and a grounding element for their future relationship with the city.

i. Places to Consume: Commercial Spaces

Besides activities, as part of their constructs of happiness, children and adolescents in Lima discussed the importance of the things they owned and consumed (see Chapter 5). Among others, they included toys, mobile phones, computers, and fast food and desserts. These things, however, constituted a part of their everyday experience of happiness insofar as they provided social opportunities, fun, freedom, and independence. Following the same criteria, participants ranked commercial areas highly as spaces where they experience happiness. Shopping malls, supermarkets, and local markets were described fundamentally as social spaces. For both children and adolescents, commercial spaces were demonstrated to be places for spending time with family and built-up traditions. Fatima explained it as follows:

*'I go practically every weekend to the shopping mall with my family. I really like doing that. It is something we have been doing for long now. And every time I get an ice-cream. It is kind of a tradition. It makes me **happy** sharing those moments'*

(Fatima, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o)

Besides family, adolescents also addressed the role of commercial spaces as meeting points with friends. Shopping malls were mainly described as places to meet friends, feel comfortable, spend time, feel safe, and use disposable income. Jairo and Beatriz described it in the following quotes. In both cases, meeting friends in a shopping mall is a safe, viable alternative to feeling comfortable and experience happiness.

*'If I am not in the park with my mates, I meet them at the shopping mall, where we feel comfortable. We get to fool around, be silly, be **happy**.'*

(Jairo, Lima South, boy, 14 y/o)

*'When I go out, and want to feel **happy**, I go to the shopping mall with my friends. As we are all girls, we know it is safer there than meeting in the street or a park. It is unlikely to be attacked in places that have security such as the mall.'*

(Beatriz, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)

Previous studies have already addressed the significance of commercial spaces for adolescents (Matthews et al. 2000; Pyry 2016; Liu et al. 2020), yet they have not explored them as potential enhancers of the experience of happiness. They have argued that shopping malls, in particular, provide a convenient space for adolescents to gather and hang out, yet their presence is often perceived as inappropriate (Matthews

et al. 2000; Gotham 2020). The evidence from my research showed the contrary. In Lima, adolescents found in shopping malls not only social opportunities but welcoming and safe spaces. As such, for Jefferson, the shopping mall was a welcoming place, where he felt comfortable meeting there with his mates. Brittany, on the other hand, stressed the importance of being safe. She and her friends discussed the risks of being girls walking in the city. *'Girls and women are always at risk; anyone can attack you', 'If you want to go out, you can be safe at the shopping mall'* (fieldwork notes). Katz (2006) referred to this as 'terror talk', constraining particularly girls' independent mobility in public spaces and urban areas.

Pyyry's (2016) participatory research project with young girls hanging out in San Francisco, reflected on the importance of adolescents using time and space to *'actively do nothing'* (2016: 14) as a way of exploring and appropriating the urban space. By hanging out, adolescents are engaged with each other and with their physical surroundings. The data suggested that, while hanging out in commercial spaces, adolescents shared experiences of happiness. It also proved that, in the process, they established meaningful relationships with consumption spaces, influencing future consuming behaviour. Explicitly describing a shopping experience and the time wandering around the mall with friends, Fatima illustrated it as follows:

*'I also like going to the shopping mall with my friends. Sometimes they will come to my house, and we will then go to the 'Rambla' (a shopping mall). We like spending time wandering around. It is easy to just stay there. When we go to the shopping mall, we can be there from 30 minutes up to 5-6 hours. There are many shops, and we get to see what we like or dislike, try out things. Shopping makes us really **happy**.'*

(Fatima, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o)

Participants from all case study areas agreed on commercial spaces as important spaces for experiencing everyday happiness. However, data from my survey revealed a larger preference towards commercial spaces among children and adolescents in Lima Centre, for whom this kind of spaces appeared as relevant as parks (see Figure 6.25). Furthermore, a more in-depth analysis revealed significant differences between case study areas in terms of their specific preferences towards different types of commercial spaces and the meaning attributed to them regarding their experiences of happiness. A closer look into, primarily, their top two preferred types of commercial spaces revealed some patterns that might later reflect upon their adult consumer behaviour. Overall, shopping malls were the most popular option in

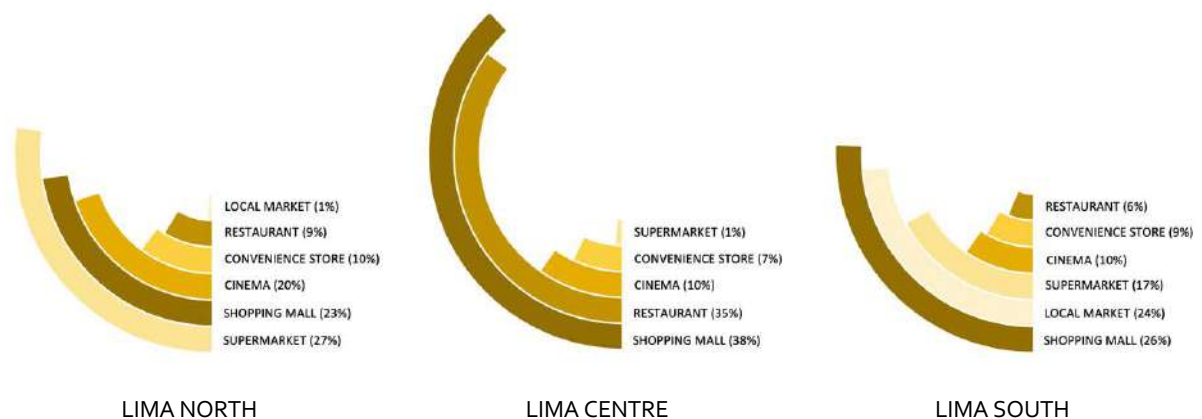
Lima Centre and Lima South, yet the former preferred them more (38%) than the latter (26%). Second in preference for these two areas were restaurants (35%) in Lima Centre and local markets in Lima South (24%). In the case of Lima North, shopping malls occupied the second place in preference (23%), surpassed only by supermarkets (27%) (see Figure 6.38).

Figure 6.38: PLACES TO CONSUME: Types of places to consume – by studied area

Source: Author based on participants' survey responses

Note: A range of other responses was given totalling less than 10%, not included in the charts.

Other responses included: Cybercafes, local shops, department stores and private playgrounds



The data reinforced the moderated role of the geographical context, highlighting how the availability of spaces in their local surroundings might shape children's and adolescents' experiences of everyday happiness, as well as their overall relationship with the city. By discussing their photographs, participants provided valuable insights into how these spaces operate as part of their everyday experiences of happiness within their particular contexts. Participants from Lima Centre foregrounded their experiences consuming food as part of their happiness experiences, both in their pictures (see Figure 6.39) and during an in-class conversation, which illustrated it as follows.

*Maria Jose: 'I feel **extremely happy** when we go to McDonalds'*

Amalia: 'Me too, also if we go to Dunkin Donuts'

*Laura: 'Yes, eating in those places makes me **happy**. Ice cream, burgers, chips, any junk food'*

(In-class conversation between Maria Jose, Amalia and Laura,
Lima Centre, girls, 12 y/o)

Figure 6.39: PLACES TO CONSUME: Lima Centre second in preference – Restaurants
Source: Photographs taken by participants



Children from Lima North, on the other hand, emphasized that supermarkets have games and arcade areas where they can play not only on their own, but more importantly, with their parents (see Figure 6.40). Similarly, children from Lima South referred to local markets as places where they get to spend time with their parents and, in many cases, help them with their business (see Figure 6.41).

Figure 6.40: PLACES TO CONSUME: Lima North first in preference – Supermarkets
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'In Metro [the supermarket], at the top of the stairs in the picture, there are lots of games, and I have fun. I also feel **happy** because I play there with mom and dad. I am **happy** in this place because I can play and have fun.'*

(Emilio, Lima North, Boy, 10 y/o)



Figure 6.41: PLACES TO CONSUME: Lima South second in preference – Local Markets
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'Here I am at the door of the Local Market where my mom works. I feel **happy** there because I get to be with my mom and help her with the clients.'*

(Samuel, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)



The various commercial spaces that children preferred suggested a pattern for future commercial experiences. In many cases, preference for commercial spaces would be influenced by the preference of their parents or other adults in their geographical area (e.g., they prefer going to the supermarket their parents attend, rather than to a new or closer one). This also reflected how the context and local availability of different commercial spaces influenced and shaped part of children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness in the city. By identifying commercial spaces as social spaces and places for happiness, the findings in this subsection strengthen the social dimension of the happiness experience. Their consuming experiences, either through their own disposable income or through their parents', were meaningful and part of their everyday experiences of happiness insofar as they enhanced their social relationships with family and friends.

ii. Places to Connect: Worship Spaces

Alongside activities and things, a third force shaping children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness corresponded to their shared beliefs, which were reflected in both their spiritual and religious practices (see Chapter 5). Accordingly, participants' discussions covered believing in and connecting personally with God through praying and also attending church regularly. As such, both catholic and evangelical temples were described as places for happiness due to their symbolism (e.g., the place to be with God) or the social opportunities they offered (e.g., meeting with friends from church). This resonated with previous studies arguing that young people attending church might benefit from three different levels of support: mentoring opportunities, a supportive community, and a relationship with God (Nourian et al. 2016). As such, both children and adolescents agreed on worship spaces as places for experiencing happiness.

Children emphasized that church provided them with the opportunity to connect with God, pray, be quiet, and in peace. Acknowledging these spaces, participants provided an insight into how the religious and spiritual are part of their everyday lives (Holloway and Valins 2002). By attending church, young people reported being able to establish a better relationship with God, finding in him a source of counselling and comfort (Clayton-Jones et al. 2016). Eddie and Austin illustrated this. They explained going to church and praying as a way to be quiet and in peace and, therein, to achieve a more sacred connection with god.

*'I feel **happy** when I go to church, because praying to God makes me feel **happy** and in peace.'*

(Eddie, Lima North, boy 8 y/o)

*'This is the church. It makes me **happy** because inside everything is quiet. You get to be in silence with God and in peace. That makes me **happy**.'*

(Austin, Lima South, boy 9 y/o)

Whereas for adolescents, attending church can provide opportunities to widen social connectedness through involvement in activities such as mentoring and volunteer work, enhancing self-esteem and lending a sense of fulfilment (Ellison 1991; Mattis and Mattis 2011; Hardy et al. 2019). Participants described churches and temples as places not only for praying but also for easing personal doubts, feeling

peace, and being listened to by priests, brothers, or sisters willing to do so. Selena illustrated this in Figure 6.42. She explained going to church allows her to ease her doubts and find personal support.

Figure 6.42: PLACES TO CONNECT: The temple a place ease doubts and be listened
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'This is the picture of my temple. I feel **happy** there because it helps easing my doubts. You know, sometimes you have doubts or feel kind of empty Then I go to church and the priest begins preaching and you just know God is with you. Also, there is a sister there and I feel I can consider her as if she were my older sister. I can trust her, and I know she is always going to be willing to listen. That is why I like being there. It makes me **happy**.'*

(Selena, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)



Similarly, participants across all case study areas discussed believing in God and having a personal set of beliefs as part of their constructs of happiness (see Chapter 5). However, when discussing worship spaces, only those from the peripheral city proved to have regular attendance to them. Children and adolescents from both Lima North and Lima South included worshiping spaces as part of their places of happiness. In the case of adolescents, previous research argued that religion, spirituality, and practical involvement in the church could operate as a protective system against life adversity and demands (Lee and Neblett 2019). This could explain why only participants living in impoverished urban areas, hence adverse conditions (Lima North and Lima South) included worship spaces as places for happiness. However, whilst the reasons behind adolescents' attendance to worship spaces need further future exploration, I

also speculate that these spaces might prove to be an additional alternative to private recreational, leisure spaces, unaffordable for families living in the peripheries, but not for families in Lima Centre. Thus, providing affordable opportunities for community building, strengthening their social skills and sense of belonging.

Despite not being among the top preferences (accounted only for almost 2% of the responses – see Table 6.3 and Table 6.4), references to worship spaces reflected on how spiritual and religious practices are embedded in children’s and adolescents’ everyday lives. Consequently, providing opportunities for happiness to be experienced. Similar to what happened with recreational and commercial areas, adolescents also valued worship spaces as providers of social opportunities. Participants described them as places to meet and connect with friends sharing a common faith and to spend time together while helping with regular chores and, by doing so, giving something back to the community. Once again, the sociability of a space proved to be key for having and enhancing everyday experiences of happiness. Vera and Selena explained it in Figure 6.43 and Figure 6.44.

Figure 6.43: PLACES TO CONNECT: The Church: a place to meet with friends
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*‘I feel **happy** in the church, because I spent lots of time there. On the weekends I can be there almost the whole morning. I normally go with my family, but I get to meet my friends there too. After the service, we normally hang out there.’*

(Vera, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)



Figure 6.44: PLACES TO CONNECT: Giving back to the community by helping with the chores at the Church
Source: Photographs taken by participants

*'To the church, I not only, go to pray. Sometimes we get to help with the chores of the church. In the picture, we are helping, building the stairs and the ramp, and painting the walls. There is always something to do and it is a way to help. A way to be **happy**.'*

(Selena, Lima South, girl, 15 y/o)



By identifying churches and temples, participants proved these places to be a source of comfort and counsel and enhancers of social relationships. Participants both used and transformed these spaces, strengthening their sense of community, belonging and shaping their experiences of everyday happiness.

6.4. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has proved the significance of the local urban space as a constituent of children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness. By using a combined qualitative and quantitative dataset, it has explored the complexity behind children's and adolescents' use and appropriation of urban spaces and their effects on children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness. Rather than focusing on subjective or objective variables for studying how the environment affects children's experiences of happiness and wellbeing, it followed a more relational approach (Atkinson 2013; White 2017). In doing so, this chapter focused on the experienced, social, and meaningful features of space for children, providing an insight into the complex variety of both individual and collective relationships not only between children, adolescents, and adults, but also between children, adolescents, and places as part of their experiences of happiness. These findings strengthen the social and shared dimension of the

happiness experience for children and adolescents discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5) and succeed in linking their constructs of happiness with the spaces they reported as happy places.

Overall, the discussion in this chapter has highlighted the extent to which children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness in the urban realm in Lima shaped and were shaped by how they related to the city. To do so, the chapter introduces a model drawing attention to four particular urban variables—sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality—mediating the participants' decision-making process regarding their preferred urban spaces. In doing so, the chapter demonstrates children's and adolescents' urban spaces' preferences for experiencing happiness—parks, sports areas, commercial and worship spaces—are not randomly chosen. Instead, they are context-dependent.

The varied and multiple experiences of children's and adolescents' happiness in place unveiled transactions with space in ways that their places for happiness were unique but also collective. Within these spaces, the relationship between self and space transcended into an affective relation that turned ordinary spaces into enhancers of everyday happiness for children and adolescents. As a result, this chapter's key contribution is in representing the first attempt to understand children's and adolescents' preferences for urban space under the lens of experiential happiness, providing an insight into the complex and diverse nature of what we can call urban *children's geographies of happiness*.

CHAPTER 7

CHILDREN PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS

7.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored the varied urban places where children and adolescents located their everyday experiences of happiness. In doing so, it introduced a model outlining four key variables under which participants' everyday experiences of happiness in the city appeared to be mediated. These are sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality. By discussing and placing their experiences of happiness within the urban realm, children and adolescents explained the opportunities for happiness those spaces provide but, in many cases, also critically described them as spaces with room for improvement. This chapter builds upon those discussions and takes them a step further. By echoing, categorising, and interpreting participants' perceptions of their urban environment, it provides a valuable insight into what can be changed in the city to encourage happiness. In doing so, it also provides a comparative overview of how children and adolescents in Lima perceive the city as either aligning with or opposed to what local practitioners and government representatives consider. Identifying what in the urban environment can be improved and how is usually an ongoing, arduous task for every city (Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2020; Las Casas, Scorza, & Murgante, 2018). Suggesting shifting the policy, planning, and design approach towards one with a consideration of happiness at its centre, and more specifically children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness, is more radical. It is also an invitation to essentially see the city through a different pair of eyes and rethink the city with what would be considered unusual parameters.

By listening to children and adolescents, we can immerse ourselves, in a sense, into a future that demands to be listened to and negotiated with (Davoli & Ferri, 2000; Dimoulas, 2017; Freeman, 2006). Through their encounters with and experiences of their urban surroundings, children develop a profound relationship with their local environment and knowledge of the city that is simultaneously social, emotional, pragmatic (Bourke, 2016), and normally different from that of adults. Relying on that

intimate knowledge of the urban realm, this chapter deals with thinking about and assessing the city through a happiness lens. In doing so, it answers the third and final research question:

'How would children and adolescents in Lima suggest changing or improving the city, for enhancing their experiences of happiness in the urban realm?'

This chapter builds upon the four key *variable* model, which outlined the factors *mediating* children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness, introduced in the previous chapter (see Figure 6.1), and adds two additional layers of granularity. The first added layer corresponding to a set of seven *domains of assessment* outlining participants' broad areas of concern regarding the city and its opportunities as a happiness enhancer. At the subsequent level, the seven domains of assessment have been split into fifteen *key urban attributes* reflecting participants' focus of attention within each domain. Both added layers being exclusively derived from coding participants' responses to the quantitative social survey.

Fundamentally the model operates on three levels:

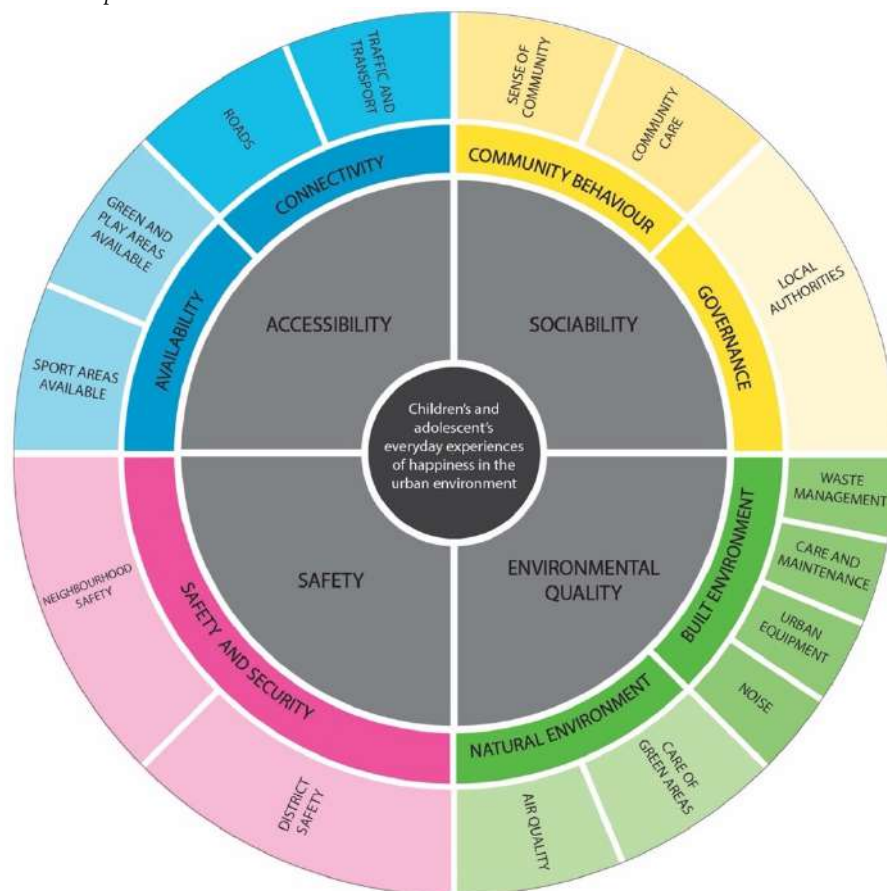
1. Four mediated variables: sociability, environmental quality, safety and accessibility.
2. Seven domains of assessment: community behaviour, governance, built environment, natural environment, safety and security, availability, and connectivity.
3. Fifteen key urban attributes: sense of community, community care. local authorities, waste management, care and maintenance, urban equipment, noise, care of green areas, air quality, district safety, neighbourhood safety, sports areas available, green and play areas available, roads and traffic and transport (see Figure 7.1).

In doing so, this chapter naturally progresses from identifying children's and adolescents' urban spaces for experiencing happiness (See Chapter 6) into diagnosing *what* of and *how* these spaces can be improved to enhance children's and adolescents' experiences happiness. By combining qualitative and quantitative empirical data, the chapter is divided into two sections. Section 7.2 answers *what* can be changed in the city for enhancing happiness experiences. It does so by first identifying children's and

adolescents' urban concerns affecting their happiness experiences. It then weaves in participants' narratives and perceptions with how local practitioners conceive and understand the city.

Section 7.3 then sheds light upon *how* the city can change to provide more and better experiences of happiness. By imagining future cities through a happiness lens, this section translates physical, functional approaches to urban planning and design into a holistic and more human approach. Attending to children's and adolescents' perceived and imagined urban happiness contributes creatively to envisioning a more sustainable future, liveable scenarios. It does so by displaying the results of two 3D model-building workshops, resulting in an array of actionable recommendations for *shaping Lima into a happy/happier city* as imagined and proposed by participants of this study. It concludes by discussing where attention should be placed in each of the case study areas if happiness is to be considered as an urban goal with restricted resources.

Figure 7.1: CHILDREN'S AND ADOLESCENTS' ASSESSMENTS OF PLACE
 Proposed model of key pragmatic issues to consider for planning cities for happiness
 Source: Author based on empirical data



7.2. Children's and adolescents' assessments of place and happiness in Lima

Through their everyday experiences of the city, participants forge a relationship with urban space, enabling the development of intimate and detailed knowledges of their local environments (Christensen, 2008; Rasmussen & Smidt, 2003). By navigating and using urban space, children and adolescents shape a multi-layered sense of place, comprising tightly interlaced social, emotional, and pragmatic transactions (Bourke, 2016), which often differs from those developed between adults and their environment. In that sense, participants' unique relationships with the local urban environment provide them with a valuable perspective on what can be changed or improved in the urban realm. Following the model previously described (see Figure 7.1), this section weaves children's and adolescents' narratives and practical evaluations of their local environment with local practitioners' opinions and considerations on the city. By exploring children's and adolescents' concerns and priorities regarding their urban surroundings, it reflects on *what* can be / need to be changed in Lima to make it a happier city. It finishes with an overall comparison across all case study areas.

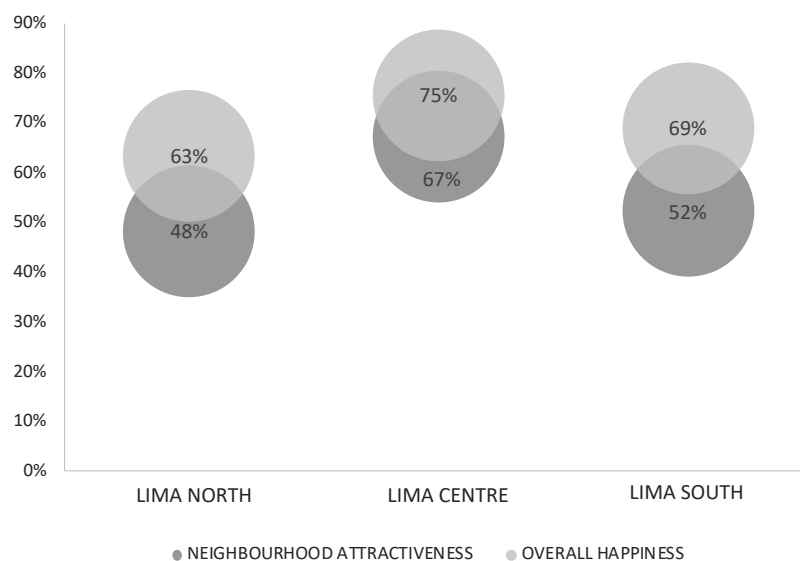
7.2.1. Children's and adolescents' urban concerns and priorities for happiness

Whilst describing their chosen urban spaces for experiencing happiness, children's and adolescents' narratives included common concerns regarding what they felt undermined those experiences in Lima. This is, what was missing or in need of improvement in those spaces for their experiences of happiness to be enhanced. Following what former studies had previously described (Hart, 1979; Malone, 2013; Wilson, Coen, Piaskoski, & Gilliland, 2019), participants' discussions revealed a pragmatic, expert knowledge of the spaces they regularly use or spend time at. Moreover, previous studies aiming to understand children's experiences of the city had done so by asking children to report widely on the quality of their urban life. As a result, they have been able to produce a list of both positive and negative urban indicators of quality of life as perceived by children (see, e.g., Kruger & Chawla, 2002). In the case of this thesis, children and adolescents in Lima discussing their experiences of happiness in urban environments were similarly able to pinpoint specific physical and social attributes affecting their urban happiness. Correspondingly, children and adolescents in Lima addressed issues such as rubbish in the

streets, traffic, and overall lack of maintenance affecting their experiences of happiness in the city. Their responses unveiled a direct relationship between how they construct and experience happiness and how the physical and social environment can affect—positively or negatively—those experiences.

Moreover, previous studies exploring varied factors affecting everyday happiness had found it to be somehow affected by situational and place-based variables (Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2014). This study contributes to widening this argument by exploring children’s and adolescents’—rather than adults’—perceived urban happiness. As such, in the case of Lima, participants’ discussions unveiled the varied ways in which the different urban conditions defined by the peripheries-centre dichotomy, affected their everyday experiences of happiness. What is more, participants’ overall levels of happiness appeared to correlate with the level of neighbourhood attractiveness reported across case study areas. Analysis of the quantitative dataset uncovered that coincidentally, lower levels of neighbourhood attractiveness in the peripheries (48% for Lima North and 52% for Lima South) corresponded with lower levels of overall happiness (63% for Lima North and 69% for Lima South). By contrast, the highest level of neighbourhood attractiveness in Lima Centre (67%) correlated with. Further validation of this data would be needed to investigate whether this relationship was statistically significant (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7.2: CHILDREN’S AND ADOLESCENTS’ OVERALL HAPPINESS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD ATTRACTIVENESS CORRELATION
Differences by case study areas
Source: Author based on survey responses



As such, their opinions were both specific and broad, and when possible, they addressed multiple concerns at once. A participants' comment during a discussion in class about what was happy or not so happy about their photographed spaces provided an illustration of this. For him, what was needed was a better overall quality of life. He went on to explain what this entailed for him, including mentions of cleanliness, order, and better management, among other things.

'For happier spaces what we need to improve is the quality of life overall. This includes better streets and parks. More cleanliness and order. Better management. For the refuse truck to collect more often. Increased surveillance, among other things.'

(Juan Carlos, boy, 14 y/o, Lima South)

Likewise, as part of the survey, an open-ended question asked participants to write *what* they would change in their neighbourhood *to make it a happier place*. Seven hundred thirty-nine entries were registered, analysed, and classified by content similarity into four main groups, seven domains, and fifteen key urban attributes (see Figure 7.1). These four main groups followed the previously discussed four mediated variables shaping participants' decision-making process regarding urban spaces for experiencing happiness: sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality (see Chapter 6). Taking a step further, participants were then able to diagnose, describe, and single out *what* specific characteristics of these spaces were of concern or could be improved for strengthening their experiences of urban happiness.

Among these, participants' responses and concerns regarding urban issues affecting their experiences of happiness were mainly related to environmental quality matters (29%), followed by accessibility (23%) and safety (20%). Issues regarding sociability accounted only for a smaller 8%. In addition, 7% of the participants answered that nothing needed changing, whilst 5% suggested everything should be changed (see Table 7.1). Answers regarding environmental quality included, among others, responses concerning excess rubbish in the streets, lack of cleanliness and order, lack of care or maintenance, excess of noise, and air pollution. Accessibility comprised issues regarding the conditions of roads and paths, excess traffic, and availability of green and sports areas. Safety included comments on overall urban insecurity and improvement of security and surveillance measures. Finally, sociability accounted for responses

regarding the lack of collaboration between neighbours, community behaviour, and better local authorities.

A closer look allowed for notable differences to emerge across the case study areas. Concerns in the peripheral city appeared to be consistent with the overall data, where environmental quality ranked as the main concern accounting for 31% of Lima North responses and 26% of Lima South responses. Responses in Lima Centre, on the other hand, prioritised accessibility (31%) over the other three variables. Sociability remained across all case study areas the least mentioned, with percentages below 10%. A semaphore-based classification provided an instant graphic overview of what stood out among all variables (see Table 7.2). Nevertheless, although all four variables operated within children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in an interlaced way, the identified key urban attributes to attend towards happier cities responded to what was overly lacking in each context. Hence, these results provided additional insight into the contextual differences previously discussed in Chapter 6. Children's and adolescents' reports added evidence of urban public services being unevenly met within different geographical areas. This, however, seems to be not a unique or isolated situation but rather an ongoing condition of the dual peripheries-centre dynamic, affecting children and adolescents' lives and experiences of happiness.

Table 7.1: URBAN CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES FOR HAPPINESS

Responses to survey question: If you could change one thing in your neighbourhood or district to make it better or happier, what would it be?

Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable) determined by author

















MEDIATED VARIABLE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	%	INCLUDED RESPONSES
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	 211	29%	EXCESS OF RUBBISH AND LACK OF BINS, CLEANLINESS AND ORDER, WALLS, GREEN AREAS AND PUBLIC SPACES IN NEED OF MAINTENANCE, RUSTED PLAYGROUNDS, LACK OF LIGHTPOSTS, EXCESS OF NOISE, AIR POLLUTION
ACCESSIBILITY	 164	23%	LACK OF, AND NEED OF MAINTENANCE OF ROADS, STREETS AND PATHS, EXCESS OF TRAFFIC, LACK OF GREEN AND SPORT AREAS AVAILABLE
SAFETY	 149	20%	OVERALL PERCEPTION OF INSECURITY IN THE LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD, DISTRICT AND CITY, NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT ON SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE MEASURES
SOCIABILITY	 62	8%	LACK OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN NEIGHBOURS, DISRESPECTFUL COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR, LACK OF COMMUNITY CARE, BETTER LOCAL AUTHORITIES
OTHER	53	6%	POVERTY, STREET DOGS, BETTER SEWAGE SYSTEMS
NOTHING	54	7%	
EVERYTHING	37	5%	
I DON'T KNOW / I CANNOT ANSWER	9	1%	
TOTAL RESPONSES	739	100%	

Table 7.2: URBAN CONCERNS AND PRIORITIES FOR HAPPINESS – Differences by case study areas

Responses to survey question: If you could change one thing in your neighbourhood or district to make it better or happier, what would it be?

Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable) determined by author

MEDIATED VARIABLE	LIMA NORTH	LIMA CENTRE	LIMA SOUTH
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	 31%	 25%	 26%
ACCESSIBILITY	 20%	 31%	 21%
SAFETY PERCEPTION	 22%	 18%	 19%
SOCIABILITY	 7%	 8%	 10%

Participants' discussions provided a clear image of how contrasting the different aspects of a city can be, due to, among other things, past and current processes of improvised urbanisation, which occurred mainly within the peripheries. Vanessa Lainez, Programme Coordinator in Peru for the Bernard van Leer Foundation, described it as a spontaneous and informal process, appearing organised but uncovering a series of unregulated illicit mechanisms.

'When you look at Lima at first glance, particularly to the peripheries, you might believe there is some sort of organization behind. But in real, is all informal. The organization and distribution of the plots are improvised on many occasions by mafias. Almost everything is left to informal organizations. Houses and urban spaces arouse spontaneously like mushrooms, not due someone really thinking ahead. The contrast with more established areas of the city like Miraflores for example (part of Lima Centre) is extreme.'

(Vanessa Lainez, Programme Coordinator Peru,
Bernard van Leer Foundation)

By assessing the local environment, children and adolescents in Lima proved to be aware of, and their happiness experiences to be affected by, a system that does not guarantee equal and basic conditions to all its citizens (see Chapter 3). All 739 responses registered in the survey reflected both shared and individual concerns regarding their local surroundings, proving how participants' views of the city were solidly grounded in the present and in tune with the context they inhabit. Likewise, they shed light upon which criteria need to be considered to shape the physical and social urban environment to make progress towards enhancing children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness and place. In doing so, they depicted an image of what must be considered to rethink the city under a happiness lens. Moreover, the uniqueness and intimacy of the relationship between participants and the urban realm enabled them to provide a more in-depth and detailed reflection on *what* to specifically change for planning and building a happier Lima.

The following subsections account more explicitly for participants' concerns under each of the four mediated variables. To do so, it analyses each *mediated variable* under two subsequent levels of granularity *domains of assessments* and *key urban attributes*. As such, whilst Chapter 6 explored each mediated variable in relation to children's and adolescents' preferences for urban spaces (see Chapter 6), the following four sub-sections take this analysis, one step further. They specifically explore what children and adolescents identified as in need of attention within each mediated variable

i. Assessing Environmental Quality

Although participants proved they used urban spaces within the opportunities and constraints of their local context, they also criticised their physical and environmental limitations (Freeman & Tranter, 2011). Thus, the main variable assessed by children and adolescents in Lima referred to the quality of the environment expressed as a concern for building a happier local environment. Participants' main concerns under this variable spanned from air quality to the overall provision of urban spaces. Their answers were then classified under two main assessment domains—one regarding the natural environment and the other concerning the built environment. Participants concerned with the natural environment discussed air pollution and the care and maintenance of natural green areas. That is, how they look, how they could be improved, how well they are taken care of, how often they are watered, and the number of trees and flowers within their district. On the other hand, responses regarding the built environment discussed issues concerning waste management, noise levels, provision of urban equipment (e.g., rubbish bins, light posts, benches, semaphores, bus stops), and overall care and maintenance of the district. This included run-down wall painting, the order in the streets, graffiti, playgrounds rusted or not in operation, and the need for better care for spaces in bad condition. However, in developing countries, a key consideration worth noting is that access to nature or open areas is often limited by poor environmental quality and characterised by higher levels of degeneration (Adams, Savahl, & Casas, 2016). The following open-ended responses to the survey provided a better insight regarding both domains, the natural and the built environment, regarding which children and adolescents identified opportunities for improvement. In both cases, the quotes illustrated an overall assessment of the urban environment as one in bad shape.

*'I think for the district to be **happier**, I would change how the green areas look like. The parks and in general all the green areas are in bad shape. There should be more trees and greener parks.'*

(Jose Carlos, boy, 13 y/o, Lima South)

'First thing to change is how it (the district) looks. The walls, the streets, the spaces in general in the neighbourhood look worn out or faded. I would like it to look well cared after.'

(Valery, girl, 10 y/o, Lima North)

Moreover, a further look at the data across case study areas allowed for the identification of key urban attributes in need of attention within each context. In all three cases, the *built environment* was emphasised over the *natural environment*. This might be due to children and adolescents having a more straightforward way of assessing their local neighbourhood (Carroll, Witten, Kearns, & Donovan, 2015) and consequently prioritising what could potentially be most easily improved. Out of 739 entries, 211 referred to issues concerning the quality of the environment. From the analysis of the survey responses, six key environmental quality urban attributes were identified. Air quality and care for green areas were issues categorised under the natural environment domain, and noise levels, urban equipment, care and maintenance, and waste management were issues categorised under the built environment domain. Across all case study areas, the key urban attribute of *waste management* stood out as the main concern. As such, 66% of the participants in Lima South, 62% in Lima North and a lower but still significant 45% of participants in Lima Centre claimed waste management was the key determinant of the quality of the environment (see Table 7.3).

Table 7.3: ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

If you could change one thing in your neighbourhood or district to make it better or happier, what would it be? -

Responses by case study area and mediated variable

Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable, domains of assessment and key urban attributes) determined by the author.

MEDIATED VARIABLE	DOMAINS OF ASSESSMENT	KEY URBAN ATTRIBUTES	LIMA NORTH	LIMA CENTRE	LIMA SOUTH	INCLUDED RESPONSES
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	AIR QUALITY	● 7%	● 10%	● 5%	PERCEIVED AIR POLLUTION
		CARE OF GREEN AREAS	● 19%	● 7%	● 19%	CONDITION OF OVERALL GREEN AREAS (e.g., PARKS, AND URBAN GREEN AREAS)
	BUILT ENVIRONMENT	NOISE LEVELS	● 3%	● 10%	● 5%	SURROUNDING NOISE LEVELS
		URBAN EQUIPMENT	● 4%	● 21%	● 3%	NUMBER AND CONDITION OF LIGHT POSTS, RUBBISH BINS, BUS STOPS
		CARE AND MAINTENANCE	● 5%	● 7%	● 1%	LACK OF CARE OR DEFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF URBAN AREAS
		WASTE MANAGEMENT	● 62%	● 45%	● 66%	AMOUNT OF RUBBISH IN THE STREET AND CAPACITY OF REFUSE COLLECTION

Within their responses, participants demonstrated their clear local knowledge as being shaped and embedded in their contexts. Whilst sharing a common concern for the way waste is managed and the cleanliness of the city, their responses shed light upon the different meanings this entailed, depending on the context in which they lived. Their voices revealed what is important from their local perspective and reinforced the argument that their experiences and assessments are context-dependent. The following quotes provided additional insight into this. Participants from the peripheral city, Lima North and South, discussed the amount of rubbish in the streets and the bad smell emerging from it. Figure 7.3 illustrates this. On the other hand, a participant from Lima Centre described what she looked at through her window, revealing her concern for the rubbish on the roofs of the houses. This unveiled the varied experiences and assessments children can have of the city from different perspectives, all of which are equally valid but not necessarily universal.

*'If I could, I would change the dirtiness, get rid of the rubbish. I would clean everything because there is much rubbish, and when I walk to school or the park, it stinks. I would feel much **happier** if it were cleaner and smells nicely.'*

(Angel, boy, 8 y/o, Lima North)

*'There is a huge amount of rubbish around where I live. That affects everyone living there, and the smell is unbearable. Even if you want, it is very difficult to be **happy** walking by the piles of rubbish.'*

(Graciela, girl, 14 y/o, Lima South)

*'I would suggest cleaning the roofs of the houses that are dirty and full of rubbish. I live in a building, and it looks awful from my window. It is not a **happy** view.'*

(Elizabeth, girl, 11 y/o, Lima Centre)

Figure 7.3: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Waste management Lima North and Lima South

1. Rubbish in the streets, 2. Rubbish close to local park, 3. Rubbish under 'Do not litter' sign, 4. Rubbish in main avenue

Photographs taken by author

1



3



2



4



LIMA NORTH

LIMA SOUTH

Following waste management, a second urban attribute in need of attention for participants in Lima North (19%) and Lima South (19%) corresponded to the *care for green areas*. This correlated with the preference children and adolescents had for parks as urban spaces for locating happiness (see Chapter 6). Within this urban attribute, they addressed issues concerning the condition of parks and natural green areas and the number of trees, flowers, and urban green areas in their local neighbourhoods. Children value having opportunities for exploring varied urban spaces, preferring environments including nature (Elsley, 2004; Evans, 2006). Green areas allow active free play and physical activity (Flowers, Timperio, Hesketh, & Veitch, 2020). In addition, quality time in contact with nature promotes social connections (Maas, Verheij, Groenewegen, de Vries, & Spreeuwenberg, 2006), allows for engagement with nature elements (in. e.g., animals) (Beery, Chawla, & Levin, 2020) and enhances children's resilience (Joassart-Marcelli & Bosco, 2015).

Participants appealed to their urban imaginaries of parks as properly being extensions of green areas (and not any other colour). A girl's response to the survey illustrated it clearly. She suggested taking

better care of the parks, making sure green areas are properly watered and kept green rather than yellowish. She compared the parks in her neighbourhood in Lima North with those in Miraflores (a district part of Lima Centre), which are typically very well cared for, properly watered and overall green. The pictures below, taken by participants of each case study area, depicted contrasting differences between local parks. They reflected what children and adolescents discussed, providing an image of what care and maintenance of green areas looked like in each context (see Figure 7.4).

*'[For making my neighbourhood **happier**] I would change the parks. Take better care of the green areas, make sure they are green, properly watered, not dusty or yellow. Make sure they are enough trees for shadow and nice flowers too. Like in Miraflores [a district in Lima Centre] where everything is green and nice.'*

(Brenda, girl, 9 y/o, Lima North)

By contrast, for participants in Lima Centre, the care for green areas was one of the lower-ranked urban attributes. Analysis of the photographs in Figure 7.4 regarding Lima Centre's examples of green areas revealed these spaces to be currently an attended priority in the area and hence not a reason for major concern. Instead, participants from this case study area expressed their concerns regarding *urban equipment*. Children and adolescents from Lima Centre shared their thoughts on issues such as the provision and condition mainly of light posts, benches, and semaphores, among other things. The streetlight posts and streetlight bulbs were the most mentioned among them. A participant's response to the open-ended questions in the survey pointed this out. She suggested changing the lightbulbs and adding more light posts. The underlying reason being safety, which would, in this case, consequently lead her to having a happier experience of her local neighbourhood.

*'I would change the lightbulbs in the light posts and also add more light posts. Currently, some of them are broken, or out of order, and everything is dark in the afternoon and night. In that way, I would feel safer and **happier** whilst walking in my neighbourhood.'*

(Desiree, girl, 15 y/o, Lima Centre)

Figure 7.4: ASSESSING ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – Care for green areas

Local parks across case study areas.

1. Local Park in Lima North, 2. Local playground in Lima North, 3 and 4. Local Park in Lima Centre, 5. Local Park in Lima South, 6. Local playground in Lima South

Photographs taken by participants

1.



3.



5.



2.



4.



6.



LIMA NORTH

LIMA CENTRE

LIMA SOUTH

Throughout their discussions, participants' concerns regarding the urban space revealed a powerful multisensory experience constituted by not only visual elements but also smells (*'the rubbish stinks'*) and sounds (*'the street can be very noisy'*) (see Chapter 6). As such, experiencing the urban space afforded an embodied experience (Cele, 2006; Lee & Ingold, 2006) and a sensory place knowledge (Pink, 2015), key for appreciating children's and adolescents' assessments of the urban realm within their everyday experiences. In doing so, children's and adolescents' narratives also provided an insight into their unique knowledge of the city acquired not only through visual encounters but through embodied cognition, both kinaesthetic and empathetic (Bryant, Frazier, Becker, & Rees, 2020). The findings suggested that by appealing to those multisensory experiences, children are able to further imagine the expected physical experience an enhanced space can provide, thus envisaging potential experiences of happiness. However, whilst participants agreed on environmental quality as a top priority and opportunity for improvement for happier urban spaces, the other three mediated variables: accessibility, safety and sociability, were also included in their assessments.

ii. Assessing Accessibility

Besides environmental quality, children explained that an urban space needed to be accessible to guarantee enough opportunities for experiencing happiness in the city. As such, I suggested using the term accessibility in a wider way, comprising issues of affordability, parental availability, distance, and availability of urban spaces (see Chapter 6). In that sense, whilst discussing their preference for urban spaces, children and adolescents were able to identify those urban spaces available for happiness and what their neighbourhood was missing in that regard. With 164 out of 739 responses, accessibility ranked second across all case study areas as a concern for what was needed for happier neighbourhoods. Participants' common concerns in terms of accessibility were classified under two domains of assessment: connectivity and availability. The first comprised issues regarding means to connect one place to another, such as the roads in terms of their condition and adequate maintenance and matters of traffic and transport. This refers to the number of vehicles in the streets and the use of alternative mobility options. On the other hand, availability encompassed issues concerning mainly the availability of both sports areas and green and play areas. Opinions shared overall under these domains included varied and recurrent comments such as '*streets need to be paved / repaired*', '*pedestrian roads should be widened*', '*traffic should be reduced*', '*we need more parks / sport areas*'. Key urban attributes in need of attention, however, differed between case study areas.

Under the first domain of assessment, in terms of connectivity, results within the peripheral city appeared consistent for both Lima North and Lima South, whilst Lima Centre portrayed a contrasting overview. Responses related to the conditions of the *roads* represented 58% for Lima North and 63% for Lima South, placing it as the key urban attribute to attend to in terms of accessibility in these areas (see Table 7.4). Their emphasis on roads correlated with their significance as an urban space to experience happiness, identified in the previous chapter (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3). The following open-ended responses to the survey highlighted the reasons behind this. In both cases, the streets are described as broken, in need of repairing, or even as not properly paved.

*'I think, for making the district **happier**, we need proper paved roads. Currently, they are made of dirt, and when it rains, it gets muddy and slippery. People slip and fall down. Gets more difficult to play for children.'*
(Jennifer, Girl, 9 y/o, Lima North)

*‘The streets need repairing. They are cracked, with potholes, broken. It looks as if, roads, speedbumps and pedestrian lanes had been wrongly built. They need repairing. I think that would make people **happier**, as they would be able to walk and drive safely.’*

(Giancarlo, Boy, 13 y/o, Lima South)

Table 7.4: ASSESSING ACCESSIBILITY

If you could change one thing in your neighbourhood or district to make it better or happier, what would it be?

Responses by case study area and mediated variable

Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable, domains of assessment and key urban attributes) determined by the author.

MEDIATED VARIABLE	DOMAINS OF ASSESSMENT	KEY URBAN ATTRIBUTES	LIMA NORTH	LIMA CENTRE	LIMA SOUTH	INCLUDED RESPONSES
ACCESSIBILITY	CONNECTIVITY	ROADS	● 58%	● 26%	● 63%	CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE OF ROADS
		TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT	● 0%	● 49%	● 1%	QUANTITY OF VEHICLES IN THE STREET, USE OF ALTERNATIVE MOBILITY OPTIONS
	AVAILABILITY	GREEN AND PLAY AREAS AVAILABLE	● 29%	● 23%	● 20%	LOCAL AND ZONAL PARKS AND PLAY AREAS AVAILABLE
		SPORT AREAS AVAILABLE	● 14%	● 3%	● 16%	PUBLIC SPORT AREAS AVAILABLE

By contrast, only 26% of children and adolescents in Lima Centre expressed concerns on this issue. Their attention was mainly drawn to the conditions of some of the roads in need of improvement, revealing a certain awareness of them being, to some extent, adequately maintained. The following open-ended response from the survey illustrated this. A girl from Lima Centre identified an opportunity for improvement within the roads, yet she highlighted this not to be a generalised issue. She clearly referred to some, not all the roads.

*‘Some, not all, but some roads have potholes. And the pedestrian roads are very slippery when it rains. I think those things should be improved for having a better and **happier** experience of the city.’*

(Karina, girl, 14 y/o, Lima Centre)

Participants’ diverse thoughts and different experiences in this regard resonated with what Peruvian practitioners described as contrasting landscapes. Among them, Natalia Bolaños, Project Coordinator for the NGO Sumbi, an organisation specialised in working with children and families within urban contexts, explained the challenges in assessing the city by reflecting on the disparity of the urban context.

'Lima is a city of contrasting landscapes; it is difficult to assess it as a whole. We have very nice parts of the city where there is room for improvement, but overall provides a pleasurable, let say happy, experience of the city. We also have areas where there are not properly streets or pedestrian lanes; everything is dirt. You still see people walking and using it. But it is a whole different experience of the city.'

Natalia Bolaños, Project Coordinator for NGO Sumbi

By comparison, instead of the roads, Lima Centre participants' concerns related to *traffic and transport* ranked as a higher priority. Responses on this issue represented 49% of those in Lima Centre, as opposed to being hardly mentioned by participants from Lima North and Lima South (see Table 7.4). Open-ended responses to the survey from Lima Centre's participants illuminated this issue further. They discussed the amount of traffic and suggested the use of alternative vehicles and overall improvement in the transport system. This was consistent with patterns of mobility described by participants from this area (see Chapter 6).

*'Where I live, there is too much traffic. Sometimes it is a hassle to go out, and that does not contribute to **happiness** at all. I would suggest people to use bikes instead of cars when they can. Like for short distances.'*

(Daniela, Girl, 12 y/o, Lima Centre)

'If I could, I would try to improve the transport system. The amount of traffic in the streets, particularly in the morning going to school, is too much, makes any trip unpleasant.'

(Carmen, Girl, 14 y/o, Lima Centre)

Their comments resonated with those of Jorge Arevalo, former vice-minister on housing and urbanism, who provided a personal and expert insight regarding one of the issues constraining happiness in the city. When interviewing him, I asked what could be improved to make Lima a happier city. His answer reflected on the effects of traffic on general conditions of stress and mental health. He identified mediocre road design and poor driving as the underlying conditions affecting overall happiness.

'I think traffic produces stress, particularly in peak hours. Our roads have been badly designed, and on top of that, we are not good drivers; we drive poorly. All of that produces stress, gets to your nerves, it must have an effect on happiness.'

(Jorge Arevalo, Peru's former vice-minister on housing and urbanism)

Analysis from this study suggested a correlation between children's and adolescents' assessments of the roads, the way they normally use them, and the importance they award them. For children in Lima North and South, having properly paved roads gained relevance as, for them, roads are not only spaces for cars but also an opportunity for everyday experiences of happiness. As shown in the previous chapter, they ranked second in preference within participants' photographed urban spaces for happiness (see Table 6.3 in Chapter 6). On the other hand, for participants in Lima Centre, the roads meant a way to get from home to their preferred spaces for socialising and experiencing happiness, leading to the higher priority given to the traffic and transport rather than the roads themselves.

As for the second domain of assessment, in terms of availability, children across all case study areas shared a similar concern regarding the need for more and better green and play areas. In all cases, responses in this regard accounted for at least 20% of those concerned under the accessibility variable (see Table 7.4). Participants' opinions on the parks they visited within local distance argued for improved and bigger play and green areas. Danilo, Fatima, and Joshua explained it in the following quotes regarding their photographs. To the question of what they would change, if anything, for having happier spaces in their local neighbourhood, Danilo reflected on the quality and quantity of the playgrounds as something with the potential to make his experience of the city happier. He also shared that he would feel sad if the park, as he knows it, disappeared. Fatima recalled having more green areas as a medium for happier experiences, and Joshua, speaking on behalf of all the children, demanded more green areas for playing.

*'If I could change something, I would improve the playgrounds. I think we need more playgrounds. I will feel much **happier** in that place [the park] if it were bigger and had bigger playgrounds. If it closes or disappears, I will feel sad.'*

(Danilo, Lima North, boy, 8 y/o)

*'If the park were bigger, I will feel **happier** because then there will be more green areas.'*

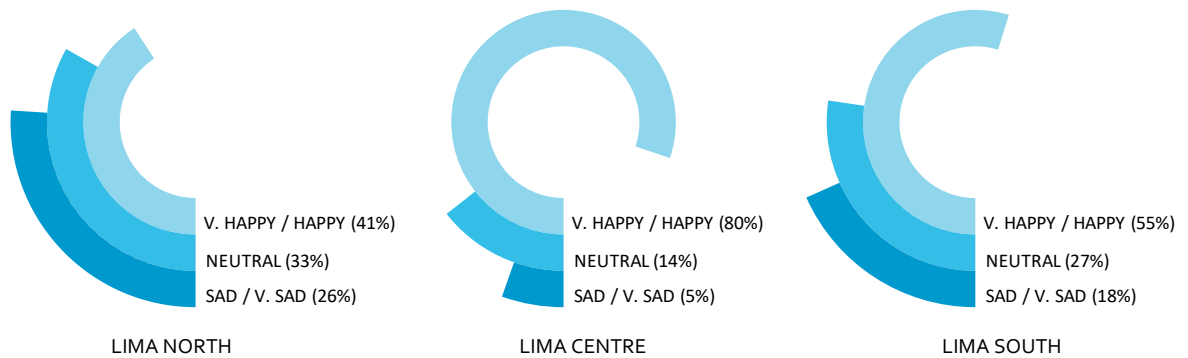
(Fatima, Lima Centre, girl, 13 y/o)

'More parks for children to play will mean more happier spaces in the neighbourhood.'

(Joshua, Lima South, boy, 10 y/o)

By sharing their concerns on the *available green and play areas*, they strengthened the importance that these kinds of urban spaces hold for them as part of their everyday experiences of happiness. A closer look at the quantitative dataset revealed, however, significant differences in their levels of happiness regarding this key urban attribute. In that sense, whilst a significant 80% of the participants from Lima Centre reported to be happy with the green and play areas available in their local neighbourhoods, a lesser 55% in Lima South and 41% in Lima North expressed similar feelings. Results from the peripheral city indicated that almost half of the participants were either sad or neutral about the green and play areas available (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5: ASSESSING AVAILABILITY – Urban Attribute: Green and Play areas available
 How happy are you with the green and play areas available in your neighbourhood? - Differences by case study areas
 Source: Author based on survey responses



Consideration of this data provided a grounded insight into the unequal distribution and quality of urban spaces across the city. It unveiled the effects of rapid urbanisation on the overall shared experience of happiness. By hardly considering the need for urban spaces, districts mainly in the peripheries lack adequate and available local green areas to serve as spaces for play and social encounters. Pablo Vega Centeno, an expert in urban sociology and university lecturer, supported this by arguing that the availability (or non-availability) of urban spaces in Lima is rooted in rapid urbanisation processes and the lack of an integrated plan.

‘The underlying theme is that Lima grew too fast between 1940 and 1980. It expanded with a view focused on housing development, but without giving importance to the importance of collective areas.’
 (Dr. Pablo Vega Centeno, Lecturer, Ph.D. in Sociology)

Taking Dr. Vega Centeno's comment into account, children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness within the city appeared to be affected not only by issues specifically regarding immediate connectivity or availability but also by the extent to which these urban elements had been considered, planned, designed, and executed across time. Accessibility is, however, the second of four key mediated variables to consider. For a holistic understanding of what can be done to make Lima a happier city, safety and sociability must also be considered.

iii. Assessing Safety

The ways in which safety considerations mediate participants' experiences of happiness and their decision-making processes towards preferred urban spaces have been extensively discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 6). Previous studies have demonstrated that neighbourhood safety can be an influential barrier for children's and adolescents' access and use of urban spaces (Gomez, 2004; Romero, 2005; Shokoohi, Md Dali, & Hanif, 2017). However children's and adolescents' views on how to improve safety in the city remained under research. By building on the empirical data already discussed in Chapter 6, this subsection addresses this gap by accounting for what participants considered could be improved for guaranteeing safe urban spaces for all. Considering children and adolescents as active users of the urban space demands attending to improve their safety within neighbourhoods (Shokoohi et al., 2017). As such, of 739 open-ended answers from the survey, 149 were classified under the safety variable. In this case, participants referred either to insecurity and perception of criminal activity within the district or to the need to improve surveillance strategies to guarantee a safe environment more locally within their neighbourhoods. In that sense, following both strands of answers, two different key urban attributes were identified under one domain of assessment. These were *district safety* and *neighbourhood safety*. The first compiled all responses related to criminal activity and insecurity as an overall perceived feeling. The second comprised answers related to surveillance strategies, such as increased security mechanisms, more police officers, better lighting, and community awareness programmes (see Table 7.5). Responses under district safety included repeated comments such as '*criminal activity is all over the city*', '*I would fight street harassment*', and '*There are too many drug addicts/drunks/gangs/thieves*'. Previous

studies have discussed that such factors highlight parent’s anxiety about children’s independent mobility in urban spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris & Sideris, 2009), consequently reducing children’s and adolescents’ use of urban spaces (Karsten, 2005; Valentine & McKendrick, 1997). Hence the opportunities for them to experience happiness and the city.

Between both key urban attributes, participants across all areas emphasised their concerns regarding neighbourhood safety. The following open-ended responses to the survey illustrated this point. First, a participant from Lima Centre expressed how she would like to feel in the city, comparing it with the experience her parents had at her age and reflected on her current conditions. Second, another participant from Lima Centre shared similar feelings, calling for attention to specific strategies and safety surveillance mechanisms so that safety in her neighbourhood is guaranteed.

‘I would like to feel safer. Like, with better and more surveillance and more security. Currently, there is some, but I will prefer more. I am 12, and at this age, I cannot go out on my own. My parents, on the other hand, were able to play and go out on their own when they were my age because everything was safer. Today there is more insecurity in general.’

(Francesca Girl, 14 y/o, Lima Centre)

‘I would like to feel safe walking in the street without the need of constantly looking all around to avoid being robbed. More security, more surveillance, more police patrols.’

(Nicoletta, Girl, 13 y/o, Lima Centre)

Table 7.5: ASSESSING SAFETY

If you could change one thing in your neighbourhood or district to make it better or happier, what would it be?

Responses by case study area and mediated variable

Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable, domains of assessment and key urban attributes) determined by the author.

MEDIATED VARIABLE	DOMAINS OF ASSESSMENT	KEY URBAN ATTRIBUTES	LIMA NORTH	LIMA CENTRE	LIMA SOUTH	INCLUDED RESPONSES
SAFETY	SAFETY AND SECURITY	DISTRICT SAFETY	33%	15%	36%	PRESENCE OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY, OVERALL AREA/CITY INSECURITY
		NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY	67%	85%	64%	BETTER AND MORE SURVEILLANCE STRATEGIES, SECURITY MECHANISMS

Following children's and adolescents' comments, the data suggested that neighbourhoods failing to guarantee safety conditions for their inhabitants reduced the possibilities of urban spaces being used and for participants to know, explore and experience the city in a way that can enhance their happiness. On the contrary, unsafe neighbourhoods engender fear and frustration towards the city, shaping a scenario increasingly detached from children's and adolescents' experiences of the urban realm. In the quote below, Natalia Bolaños reflected on her experience working with children and families and discovered that safety is fundamental for children and adolescents growing up in urban contexts. Similarly, Antonio Bonifacio, architect and project manager for Arquitectonica, an international architecture firm with offices in Peru, reflected on urban design and architecture's key role in providing safe, pleasurable, and happy experiences for people living in cities.

'The main objective for children and families in urban areas is for them to have safe urban spaces. The problem now is in many cases; children are hardly allowed to go to the park or gather with their friends. Parents are increasingly overprotective. An unsafe city goes against children's autonomy, right to free play, social development. There is mistrust from the people due to perceived insecurity. Consequently, children grow up cautious, stressed and disappointed with the authorities, and overall, the city.'

Natalia Bolaños, Project Coordinator for NGO Sumbi

'Urban design needs to provide safe spaces where people can feel calm, relaxed. If you do not feel safe in the street, you will not go out, and if so, you will not enjoy it; it will not be pleasurable, and it will not provide happiness. My generation, over 30's, grew up enjoying the city. We had walked, ran and played all around it without any worries. We were happy. For children now, that is hardly possible. Through architecture, we can ensure buildings and urban spaces to provide adequate conditions for anyone to walk through the city feeling safe, calm and having a pleasurable experience. A wide walking path surrounded by trees will provide a completely different experience than a narrow lane next to a blind wall.'

Antonio Bonifacio, Architect, Project Manager for Arquitectonica

Considering the above quotes, children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness and the city can be fostered and encouraged in spaces where safety is not an issue. Responsibility for guaranteeing this appeared to be shared by varied stakeholders of the city. Providing safe spaces for children and for all is a priority that demands creative and innovative solutions. The key lies in children's and adolescents'

emphasis on surveillance strategies. Whilst they acknowledged and proved awareness of the presence of criminal activity, they suggested changing urban spaces in a way that encourages the use of the city whilst discouraging criminals from acting upon them.

iv. Assessing Sociability

By identifying and locating their preferred spaces for experiencing happiness, participants highlighted the sociability of an urban space as fundamental for considered it a happy place (see Chapter 6). Yet, this variable was the least referred within the open-ended survey responses when assessing the urban space. (see Table 7.1). Responses concerning sociability demonstrated the valuable role of the neighbourhood community in enhancing children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in their local neighbourhoods. This subsection deals with participants' concerns on sociability, providing a significant insight into what they consider lacking not only in the physical but also within their local social surroundings. Whilst only 62 (8%) responses referred to concerns regarding sociability issues (see Table 7.1), what participants expressed in this regard, provided additional insight into what needs to be taken into consideration for making Lima a happier city. Through their open-ended responses, children and adolescents shared their opinions on what I have categorised into two domains of assessment: *community behaviour* and *governance*.

From these two identified domains of assessment, community behaviour compiled the majority of participants' responses distributed subsequently under two key urban attributes: sense of community and community care. However, attention within these key urban attributes differed slightly across the case study areas. Interestingly, this was the only variable where the peripheral/centre dichotomy did not fully apply. In this case, Lima Centre and Lima South participants ranked *sense of community* as a key social priority. That is, how the neighbours and the community behave and to what extent they care for each other. In both cases, the concerns on this issue accounted for over 50% of their responses, 56% in the case of Lima Centre and 59% in the case of Lima South (see Table 7.6). An open-ended response to the survey from a girl in Lima Centre explained it further in the following quote. She identified an attitude of superiority between neighbours playing against social cohesion and community building.

*‘What needs changing for having **happier** neighbourhoods are the neighbours’ attitudes. People do not have local or neighbourhood friends. They behave as if they are superior to each other. That makes me very sad because if the people would have a different attitude, we could join as a real community and, for example, put some pressure upon the mayor demanding better results.’*

(Claudia, Girl, 15 y/o, Lima Centre)

Table 7.6: ASSESSING SOCIABILITY

If you could change one thing of your neighbourhood or district to make it better or happier, what would it be? Responses by case study area and mediated variable.

Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable, domains of assessment and key urban attributes) determined by author.

MEDIATED VARIABLE	DOMAINS OF ASSESSMENT	KEY URBAN ATTRIBUTES	LIMA NORTH	LIMA CENTRE	LIMA SOUTH	INCLUDED RESPONSES
SOCIABILITY	COMMUNITY BEHAVIOUR	SENSE OF COMMUNITY	38%	56%	59%	NEIGHBOUR'S BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS OTHERS, COMMUNITY SUPPORT
		COMMUNITY CARE	50%	33%	31%	NEIGHBOUR'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ENVIRONMENT
	GOVERNANCE	LOCAL AUTHORITIES	13%	11%	10%	DIFFERENT AND BETTER AUTHORITIES

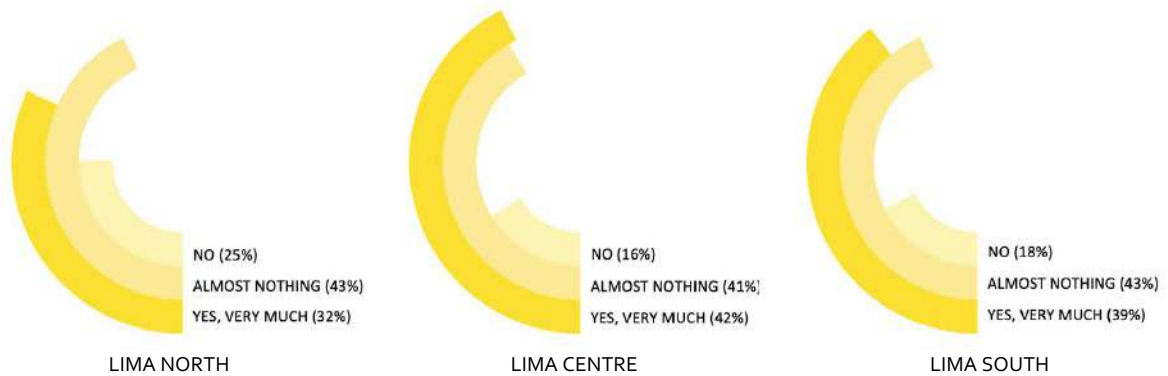
Participants from Lima North, by contrast, appeared to prioritise *community care*. That is, how and to what extent neighbours behave and care for their local environment. Whilst their responses regarding sense of community accounted for 38% of their entries, their concerns regarding community care accounted for 50% of their responses under this variable (see Table 7.6). They raised awareness about the lack of respect or interest people have in caring for the environment, the local neighbourhood, and the appearance of the streets. Participants appeared to morally judge neighbours, attributing them with responsibility not only upon themselves but upon the liveability conditions of the neighbourhood as a whole. Recurrent comments included: *‘the people don’t care for the street/neighbourhoods/parks/district’*, *‘people should learn not to throw rubbish in the streets’*, *‘people should worry about keeping clean/in order their streets’*. One of the open-ended answers to the survey stood out. A boy from Lima North put his neighbours on the spot and called them out for the lack of respect for each other and the environment.

*‘If I could change something for making my city **happier**, I would change the people in my neighbourhood. They do not respect each other; they throw rubbish to the streets, they simply don’t care.’*

(Kevin, Boy, 13 y/o, Lima North)

A closer look at the quantitative shed additional light on participants' perception of their neighbours' attitudes towards the local environment, unveiling a correlation between what participants in Lima North expressed. It showed a more evenly distributed and overall agreement across case study areas. Over 50% of the participants reported their neighbours do not or do almost not care about their neighbourhood's appearance. In that sense, 68% of the responses from Lima North, 61% from Lima South, and 58% from Lima Centre reported negatively on their neighbours' attitudes towards the appearance of their local surroundings (see Figure 7.6).

Figure 7.6: ASSESSING SOCIABILITY – Priority: Community Care
 Do you think people in your neighbourhood care about the neighbourhood's appearance? - Differences by case study areas
 Source: author based on survey responses /categories (mediated variable, domain and key urban attributes) determined by the author.



The data suggested that children's and adolescents' abilities to assess the urban space from their own perspective go beyond mere observation of the physical environment providing additional insight into the social role of the urban realm. As such, neighbourhoods, districts, and cities need to provide social opportunities for children to experience and learn about how their society functions. Consequently, the extent of the community's commitment towards others and the environment might have a direct impact on participants' happiness in the city. Jorge Yamamoto, a Peruvian social psychologist with ample research experience in adult happiness in the country, shared the participants' concerns under the community behaviour domain. Discussing the main challenge for considering happiness as a key priority for city development, he suggested that the need to cultivate good values for improving how people behave should be considered above others. He identified the benefits this could have but also unveiled a particular trait of Lima's citizens that might pose a challenge when attempting to advance people's behaviour and attitudes.

'Basically, I would say [the main challenge for considering happiness a key priority] is community behaviour or citizen behaviour. If we work consciously on improving how the people behave in the city, recognising what empathy, respect, and compliance with minimum norms implies and understanding its benefits, other things will follow like in a cascade. Maybe I am biased due to my background [psychology], but I do believe that by putting an emphasis on positive values, people can be able to organize and manage their local environments and kind of self-managed local urban improvements. The main problem in Lima is we live in an upside-down world. With my research team, we have reviewed the literature, and we have found that what needs to happen first is minimum respect for the law and the norms. Here we are not even there. On the one hand, norms are not well communicated or understood, and on the other, we live in a society where taking advantage of the norms is in many cases considered heroic.'

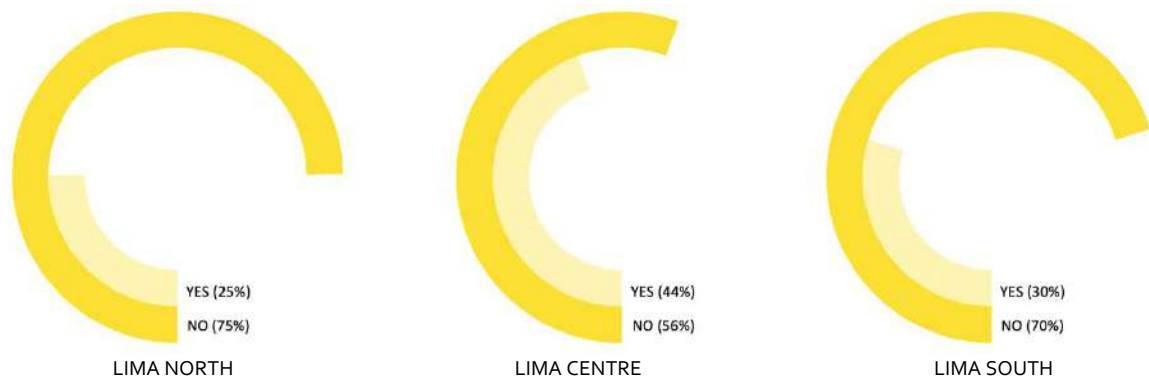
(Dr. Jorge Yamamoto, Social Psychologist, Ph.D. in Anthropology)

Community behaviour, however, needs also to be complemented by the efforts of local [district] authorities to lead each district within their own resources and with their communities' best interests at heart. Under the domain of governance and the corresponding key urban attribute of local authorities, participants across case study areas shared open-ended responses to the survey such as *'what needs changing is the mayor'*, *'the mayor does not care for the district'*, and *'I would change the mayor of my district'*. The quantitative data supported this sentiment and revealed that over 50% expressed a sense of unhappiness with their local [district] authorities. 75% of participants from Lima North expressed unhappiness with how their district is managed, whereas 70% of participants from Lima South similarly expressed unhappiness. On the other hand, Lima Center reported that 56% of participants were not happy with their local authorities (see Figure 7.7). Previous studies exploring associations between good government practices and happiness had argued that people are overall happier in countries where governments work better (Helliwell, Huang, & Wang, 2020; Liu, Gao, & Huang, 2020). In particular, those with better technical quality to address governance everyday issues (Woo, 2018). However, studies exploring this relationship from within children's and adolescents' perspectives are still a gap in the literature.

Figure 7.7: ASSESSING SOCIABILITY – Priority: Local Authorities

Do you think local authorities in your neighbourhood care about the neighbourhood's appearance? - Differences by case study areas

Source: author based on survey responses



Consideration of this data proved that children and adolescents deserve and demand to be part of neighbourhood communities. They need a nurturing environment in which sharing positive values and showing care for others and the environment are constant and consistent (Freeman & Tranter, 2011), instead of sporadic or non-existent. Findings in this subsection suggested happiness in cities needs to be assessed holistically from within different dimensions, physical and social. Negotiating both aspects of neighbourhoods is key for promoting children's and adolescents' sense of independence, resilience, and social skills (Malone, 2006). More explicitly, this sub-section sheds light on what local authorities, decision-makers, and urban planners are failing to attend to for providing adequate urban spaces for participants to have memorable experiences of place and happiness.

Furthermore, the data unveiled the challenges facing Lima toward becoming a happy/happier city. More specifically, *what* urban attributes need to be attended to in each case study area for enhancing children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the city. Consequently, an integrated overview of what needs to be attended/ prioritised per case study area can be outlined. To do so, the quantitative data for each area served as input for producing compass diagrams allowing for a consolidated overview of children's and adolescents' assessment of urban happiness in Lima. The emoji Likert-type scale used in the social survey conducted during the fieldwork (see Chapter 4) was translated into a numerical scale of 1 to 5, where 1 corresponded to very sad and 5 to very happy. Using this scale, positive and negative issues affecting each area were clearly identified. The average score was 3.3, accounting for urban

attributes identified as neutral—that is, those that have room for improvement but were not prioritised for immediate attention. Lima North and Lima South scored similarly for all variables. Two key urban attributes stood out as in need of immediate attention: waste management and noise levels. Both corresponded with participants’ primary concerns and scored below the average 3.3 (see Figure 7.8 and Figure 7.9). In the case of Lima Centre, traffic and transport stood out as the main urban attributes to attend to, ranking negatively and with a considerably below-average score (see Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.8: CHILDREN’S HAPPINESS WITH LIMA TODAY – Lima North
 Source: author based on survey responses

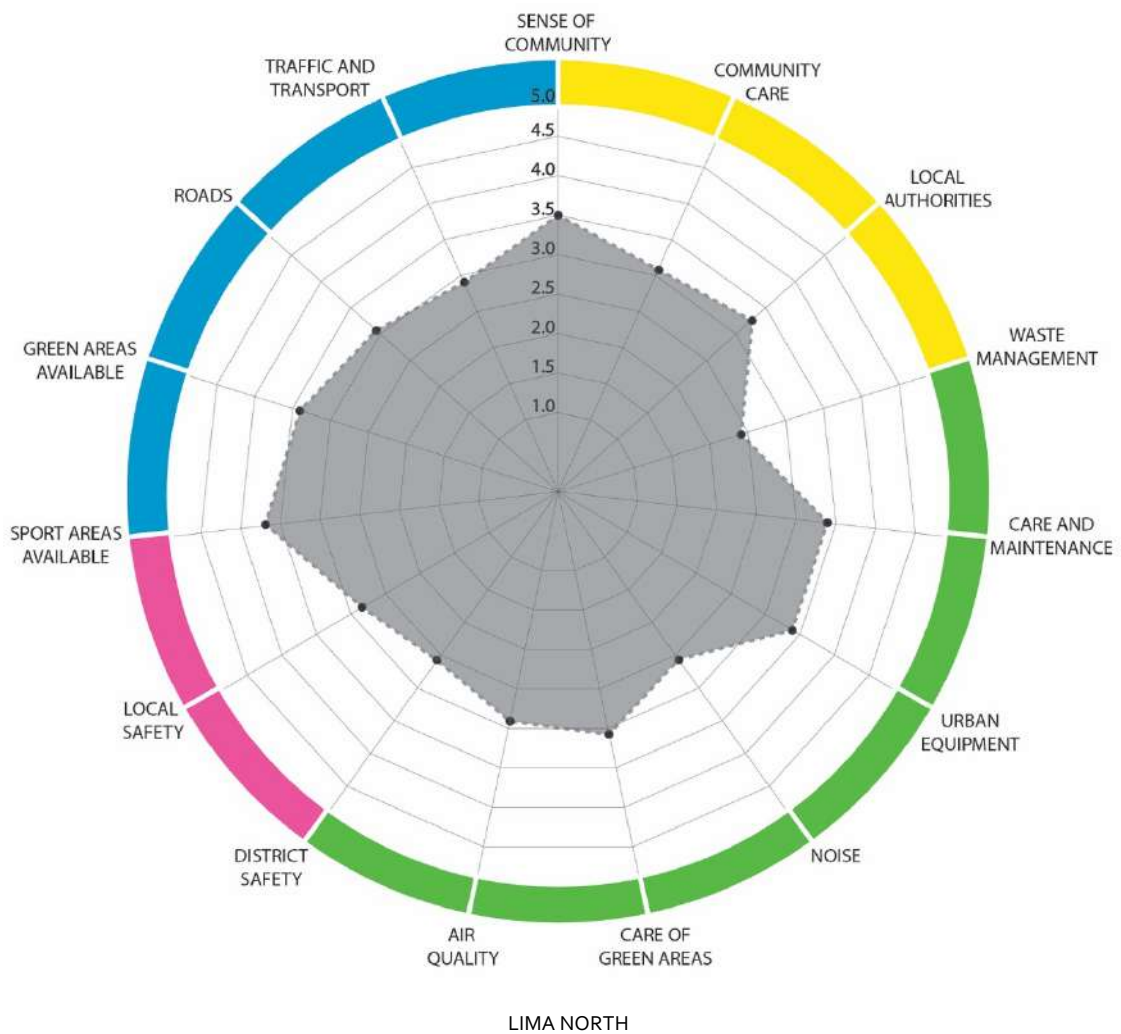
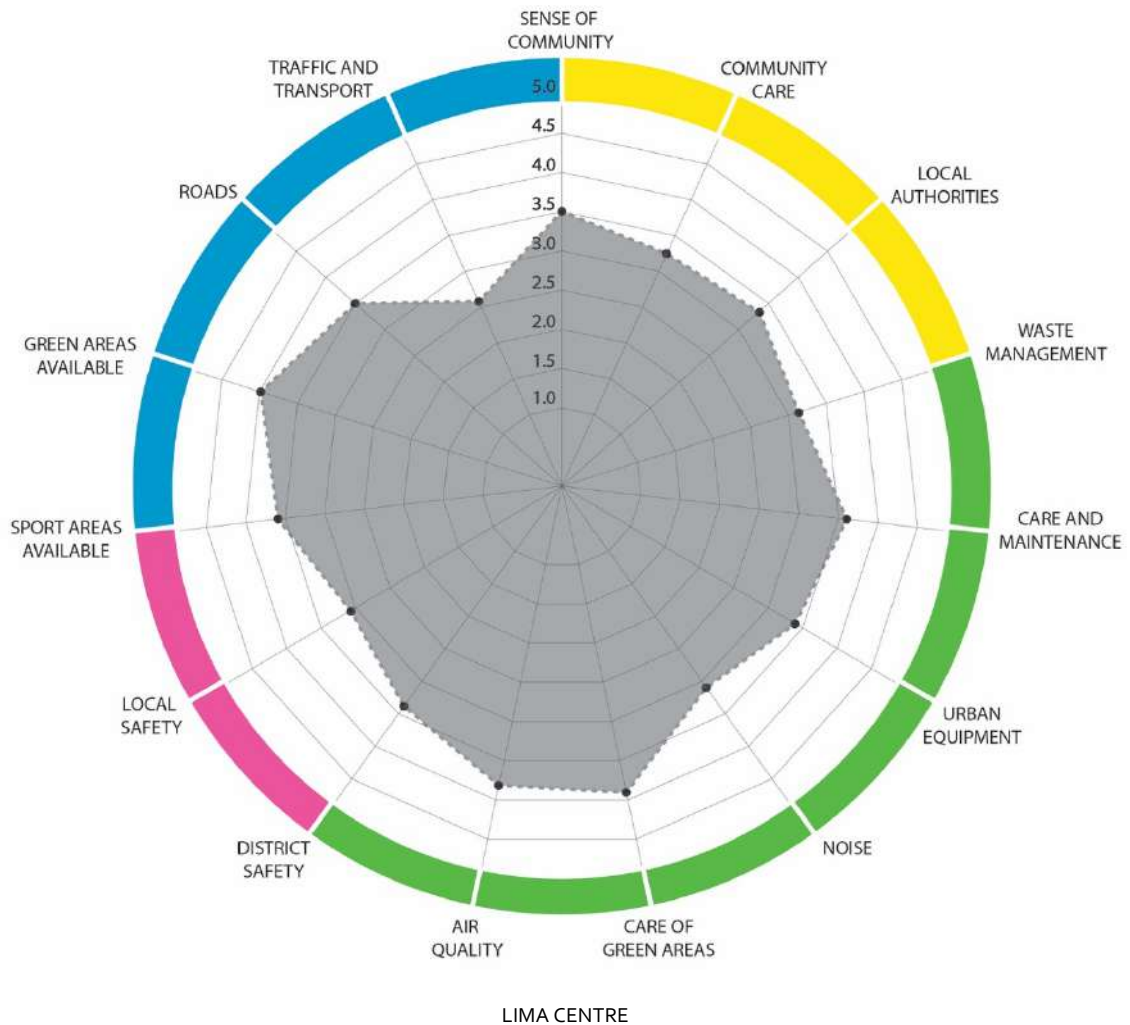


Figure 7.9: CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS WITH LIMA TODAY – Lima South
 Source: author based on survey responses



Figure 7.10: CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS WITH LIMA TODAY – Lima Centre
 Source: author based on survey responses



The findings of this study highlighted the performance of each case study area regarding the last level of granularity (key urban attributes) introduced in the model operating children’s and adolescents’ experiences of happiness (see Figure 7.1). Its value lies both in being based entirely on children’s and adolescents’ expert knowledge of their living surroundings and providing a useful set of measurable attributes. Thereby setting up the foundations of a clear and effective consultancy / planning tool to easily represent, evaluate and identify conditions of an area from the experiential perspective of its residents at all levels.

7.3. Children and adolescents planning urban spaces for happiness in Lima

By playing, practicing sports, and engaging in myriad other activities, children develop an active inclination towards their physical and social contexts. As a result, they are equipped with the necessary skills to observe, learn, explore, and influence their surroundings, potentially becoming agents of change (Nordström & Wales, 2019). The previous section attended to *what* can be changed in each case study area for enhancing children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the city. This section takes a step further into discussing *how* to address those issues in need of attention. In doing so, it provides an insight into participants' urban imaginaries regarding what they think an urban space should look like to foster experiences of happiness. Considering children's and adolescents' ability to participate in urban planning processes actively is gradually shifting their role from passive recipients to active agents (Malone & Hartung, 2010), this section proves necessary not only to listen but to help voice their opinions and ideas towards better environments. They tend, after all, to notice things that are often overlooked by adults (Freeman & Tranter, 2011). To do so, the section is divided into two subsections. Sub-section 7.3.1 accounts for participants' practical, actionable recommendations for improving urban happiness in Lima. Sub-section 7.3.2 progresses into establishing a correlation between participants' overall self-reported happiness and their perceived urban happiness in each case study area. In doing so, it highlights what matters and what needs prioritising for a higher impact on their everyday happiness.

7.3.1. Children's and adolescents' proposals to improve urban spaces for happiness

By building 3D models of their imagined happy places, children and adolescents in Lima provided an array of grounded proposals based on both their current and aspired experiences of the city. During the fieldwork conducted for this study, two sets of 3D models were produced and later analysed—the first comprised a set of models built individually by children. The second set consisted of more detailed models, built collectively in groups of children with the assistance of adults (see details on what this entailed in Chapter 4). In both cases, what is immediately striking is the inclusion of parks and/or sports areas (see Figure 7.12, Figure 7.13 and Figure 7.14 later in this section), which correlates directly with their preferred urban spaces for happiness experiences (see Chapter 6). Also interesting and compelling is the relationship between the percentage of roads, green and sports areas across the model surfaces.

The latest published data for Lima (2013) shows that 20% of the urban surface is covered by roads and lanes (e.g., streets, pedestrian and cycle lanes), 5% by green areas, and a very small 0.07% of the area is covered by public sports areas (e.g., soccer fields and slabs) (Ludeña Urquizo, 2013). By contrast, analysis measuring the correspondent areas of the individual 3D models (see Chapter 4) revealed a significant difference. Children built models that, on average, were covered 31% by roads and lanes, 25% by green areas, and 6% by sports areas (see Figure 7.11). Provided with the opportunity to think and design the urban spaces needed for enhancing happiness experiences in the city, children created a powerful and critical image of the urban realm they knew and inhabited—one that was currently failing to provide enough opportunities for them to be social, active and in contact with nature. Likewise, a closer look at the 3D models provided additional insight into the varied ways this image was conveyed. Figure 7.12 exemplifies this by showing those models with greener and sports areas as well as those mixed in between. A closer look provides evidence for what can be at first glance one of the main considerations towards including happiness within urban policy and design—one that above all, recognises in green and sports areas a feasible and possible road for increasing everyone's opportunities to experience happiness within sociable, green and active urban spaces.

Figure 7.11: URBAN SURFACE COMPOSITION

Relationship between % of roads (RD), green area (GA) and sports areas (SA).

Surface in light grey corresponds to other types of urban surfaces (e.g., built surfaces)

Source: Author based on latest published data (Ludeña, 2013)

Source: Author based on analysis of 3D Models designed by Participants Lima North / Age: 8-9 years old

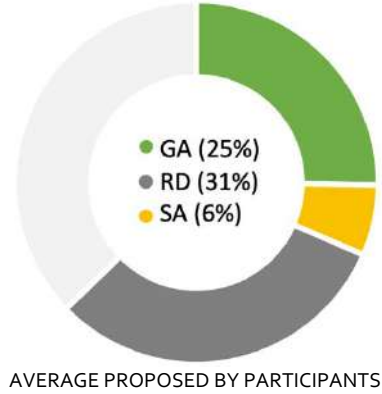
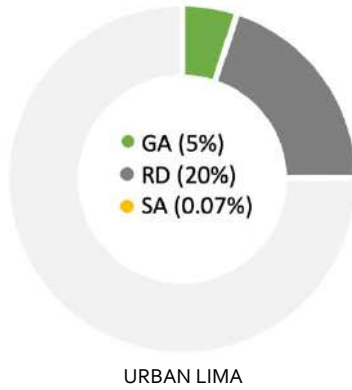


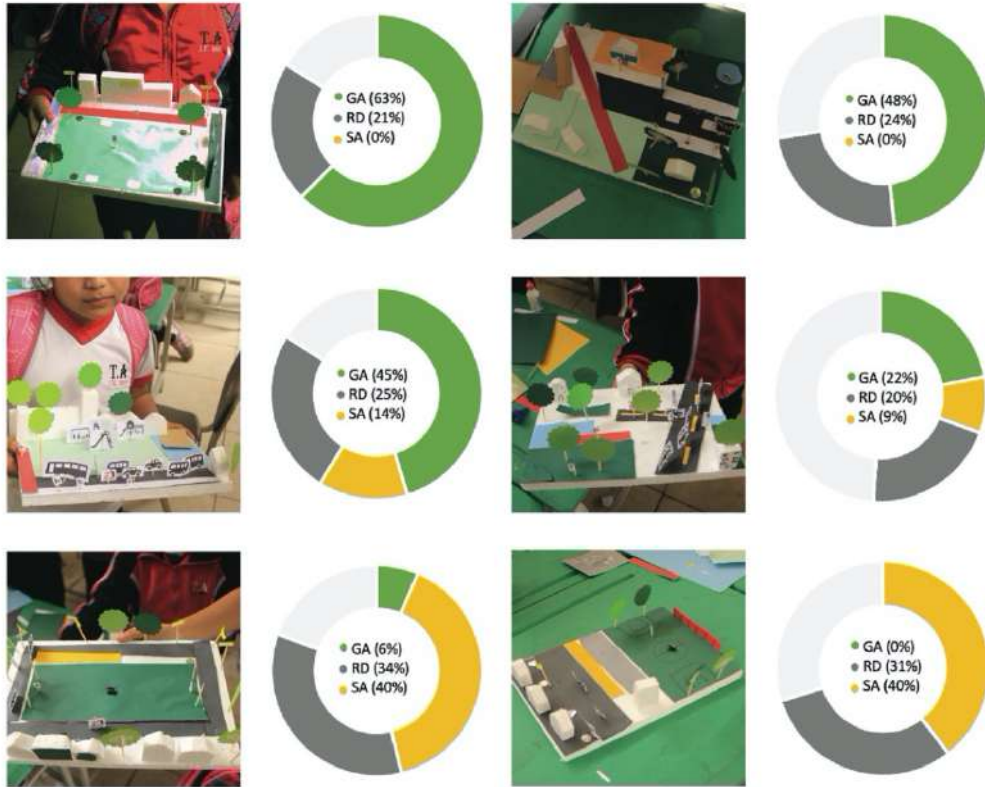
Figure 7.12: URBAN SURFACE COMPOSITION – 3D models and surface analysis sample

Relationship between % of roads (RD), green area (GA) and sports areas (SA).

Surface in light grey corresponds to other types of urban surfaces (e.g., built surfaces)

Models designed and built by participants Lima North / Age: 8-9 years old

Photographs and concept by author



In addition, the findings of the first set of 3D models, produced individually, provided an overview of the type of urban landscape children imagined as enhancers of happiness. Further analysis of the 3D models built collectively by participants in Lima South (see below Figure 7.13 and Figure 7.14), alongside their narratives and support statements, allowed for a more detailed set of actionable and viable recommendations. Coincidentally, these aligned with various key urban attributes identified and discussed in the previous section (see Section 7.2). Similarly to the individual models, the collective proposals (n=5) concurred to place a large green area at the centre of their models. Presenting their models, participants of different groups explained that the first thing they agreed upon was the need for the city to guarantee enough green areas available for all. Hence, in all the cases, considerable extensions of green areas sat at the core of their proposed 3D models of happy cities. The following quotes from both a group whose participants were mainly adolescents and another group whose participants were mainly children illustrated this.

*'The core of our **happy** city is the green areas. The main space in the city is a big park. Also, we have included green areas between the streets, and each house has at least a tree.'* (See No.8 in Figure 7.13)

(Group 1-mainly adolescents, 2 boys, 2 girls,
14-16 years old and 2 adults)

'The park is at the heart of our city. That is why every building and house has some connection to the park or green areas. All the houses face the park, so they have direct access to the park. Also, the park allows for different activities, such as a playground for children and sport areas for older children or adults.'

*'Because we think nature is important to be **happy**, we also included a big green area surrounding the city, not necessary a park, just a place with trees and nature. More like a forest.'* (See No.1 and 4 in Figure 7.14)

(Group 5 – mainly children, 1 boy, 3 girls,
08-11 years old and 2 adults)

Different from the individual models produced in the first workshop, those produced in groups in the participatory design workshop allowed for a different level of complexity addressing the participants' main urban concerns. Their proposals tackled different aspects under all four mediated variables, yet they mostly referred to environmental quality and accessibility issues. On the first, participants made sure to include enough rubbish bins as part of their urban equipment. In one case, participants even

considered a scheduled refuse truck regularly circulating within the city to keep it clean. This resonated with the discussions on the importance of cleanliness for having pleasant experiences of the city (see Subsection 7.2.1). These demonstrated their awareness and knowledge of the importance of planning and waste infrastructure. The following quote exemplified this by emphasising the links between happy spaces and comfortable and clean environments.

*'This is a **happy place**, because it is a clean environment, including everything we like and need to enjoy and be comfortable That is why we have included many light posts and rubbish bins. There is also a refuse truck that will collect rubbish from the streets and houses every two days, because that is something that is currently lacking in the district' (See No.2 and 4 in Figure 7.13)*

(Group 1, 2 boys, 2 girls, 14-16 years old and 2 adults)

Regarding accessibility, the models included recommendations related to both assessed domains: connectivity and availability. For the first, both adolescents and children prioritised options for alternative mobility. Besides roads for cars or public transport, they stated the need for appropriate and safe walking and cycle paths, allowing children to move independently between their houses and school as an alternative to the use of public transport. In addition, a couple of groups also addressed the lack of affordable and accessible ways to mobilise those living in the hills into the flat parts of the city and vice versa. In attention to this, they suggested including a cable car system to connect both parts of the city. The following quotes illustrated this by describing the roads and mobility systems they built into their models.

'In our model we have prioritized the cycle paths in a way that they can be used by children to get to school as an alternative to public transport.

We have also proposed a cable car connecting the higher parts of the mountains with the main city. This way, it will be easier to commute between both parts of the district. Currently, sometimes for us living in the mountain, it is difficult to meet friends who live at lower parts of the district or city.' (See No.1 and 3 in Figure 7.13)

(Group 1, 2 boys, 2 girls, 14-16 years old and 2 adults)

'Following the park, our starting point, we included cycle paths, pedestrian roads, roads and houses around. We also included the zebra lines on the road so children can cross safe and take public transport if needed to go back home.' (See No.8 in Figure 7.14)

(Group 5, 1 boy, 3 girls, 08-11 years old and 2 adults)

Whilst it was not considered a concerning issue, interestingly, in the workshop, groups also discussed the need for being appropriately virtually connected. One group incorporated this into their model by suggesting the city should offer 'free Wi-Fi for all'.

*'In our **happy city** we had included free Wi-Fi for everyone because it is important for everyone to be connected.'* (See No.7 in Figure 7.13)

(Group 1, 2 boys, 2 girls, 14-16 years old and 2 adults)

Throughout the whole workshop, participants working collectively placed important attention on what every group member suggested. As a result, all of the models represented a combined view of what kind of urban spaces a happy city should have. The outcome was models presenting a diverse array of urban spaces in their models. Unsurprisingly, their models did not include green areas, playgrounds, sports areas, and commercial spaces. In addition, most of them also included other services and related facilities, such as schools and hospitals. The following quotes identified the spaces available and considered in the 3D models, explaining that these places were spaces they used and experienced happiness in.

*'In our city, we have included those spaces each of us enjoy and feel **happy** in. We included a recreational park, a pool, and a sport complex, a shopping mall and all types of restaurants, such as cafes, burger places, and many more.*

We also considered a hospital, close to the school. We thought there it would be more accessible. Currently, if something happened in school, let's say a kid falls down and is in an emergency, the nearest hospital or medical service is actually far away, and it is difficult to get there.' (See No.6, 8 and 9 in Figure 7.13)

(Group 1, 2 boys, 2 girls, 14-16 years old and 2 adults)

*'Our main park has a playground and sand area for the children to play and be **happy**. It also has sport areas, because we think that is what adolescents and adults will enjoy most. We included a shopping mall and several restaurants. The restaurants have different flags because they represent varied food from different countries. We also built the school next to a medical service because sometimes children can have accidents and need some place close to be looked after and cured.'* (See No.3-6 in Figure 7.14)

(Group 5, 1 boy, 3 girls, 08-11 years old and 2 adults)

During the building activity, participants also eagerly discussed issues regarding safety, surveillance, and the presence of local institutions to guarantee that. Similar to what was discussed in the previous section (see Section 7.2) regarding safety, participants considered this as a key variable to actually have a full sense of happiness in and enjoyment of the city. In that sense, the presence of police officers, police stations, and surveillance booths was suggested throughout the models. This is particularly interesting considering previous research had extensively discussed lower rates of police trust among children and adolescents rather than adults (Flexon, Lurigio, & Greenleaf, 2009; Sanden & Wentz, 2017). In addition, studies looking into police trust among adults had noted police are not likely to be seen as effective agents of control, particularly in neighbourhoods where issues of disorder and social cohesion are more of concern (Kwak & McNeeley, 2019). The following quote from an adolescents' group (14-16 y/o) challenges this; by including a police station, strategically located they argue the police can better guarantee safety.

*'The main space of our city is the park at the centre. We imagine it will be used by children, adolescents and adults. Our idea is for everyone to experience **happiness** in it. But it needs to be safe specially for children. That is why we thought also important to include a police station with a view to the main square. In that way police officers can be aware of what is happening and act quick in case some kid appears to be in danger' (See No.5 in Figure 7.13)*

(Group 1, 2 boys, 2 girls, 14-16 years old and 2 adults)

Alternatively, a group formed mainly by children (8-11 y/o) argued that police officers were not needed in their city. Instead, they advocated for sociability domains to be considered as necessary mechanisms for keeping the city safe and happy. They suggested relying on the community to look after each other and on the local authorities for managing and looking after the city for everyone to be happy within it. In that sense, they suggested a model of a happy city relying on its people's mutual respect, its community behaviour, and the presence of good local authorities to keep it safe and happy.

*'Our city is a **happy city** because it is a safe city. Our city does not need police officers, because the community respect each other and between them all they keep it safe. We also thought we needed to include a local government so there can be a team to manage and look after the city for keeping it nice and **happy** for everyone.' (See No.7 in Figure 7.14)*

(Group 5, 1 boy, 3 girls, 08-11 years old and 2 adults)

Consideration of this data acknowledges the varied ways in which the urban environment both conditions and mirrors participants' everyday transactions with the urban space in a way in which they become (or not) experiences of happiness. It recognises children and adolescents as able social actors with skills and personal knowledge to contribute to the advancement of their local surroundings (Freeman & Tranter, 2011). In doing so, it adds evidence to the ongoing call for the inclusion of children's and adolescents' thoughts and ideas in the planning process (Kraftl, Christensen, Horton, & Hadfield-Hill, 2013), as they keep proving to be highly aware and visionary when it comes to thinking; about their local environment (Baraldi, 2003; Bishop & Corkery, 2017; Christensen, Hadfield-Hill, Horton, & Kraftl, 2017; O'Brien, 2003). In addition, it adds to the discussion on the benefits and need for building child-friendly cities initiatives (CFCI) (see Chapter 2); however, whilst the CFCI movement acknowledges children's overall wellbeing, the empirical data on this study provides a grounded actionable approach towards incorporating children's and adolescents' happiness experiences more explicitly into the urban agenda.

Figure 7.13: PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Adolescents

Source: Author based on 3D Model built by group of Adolescents – (Group 1 – G1)

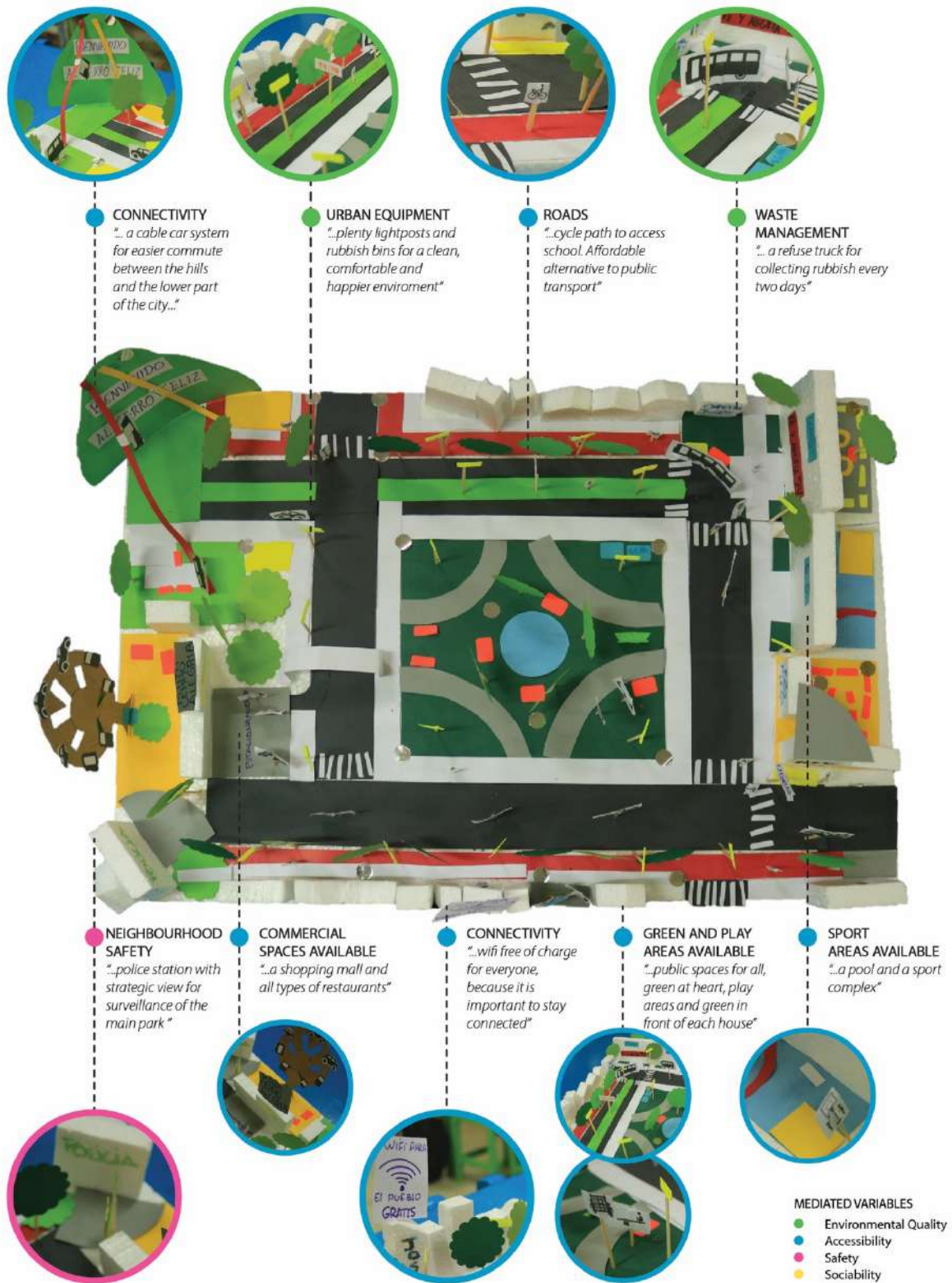
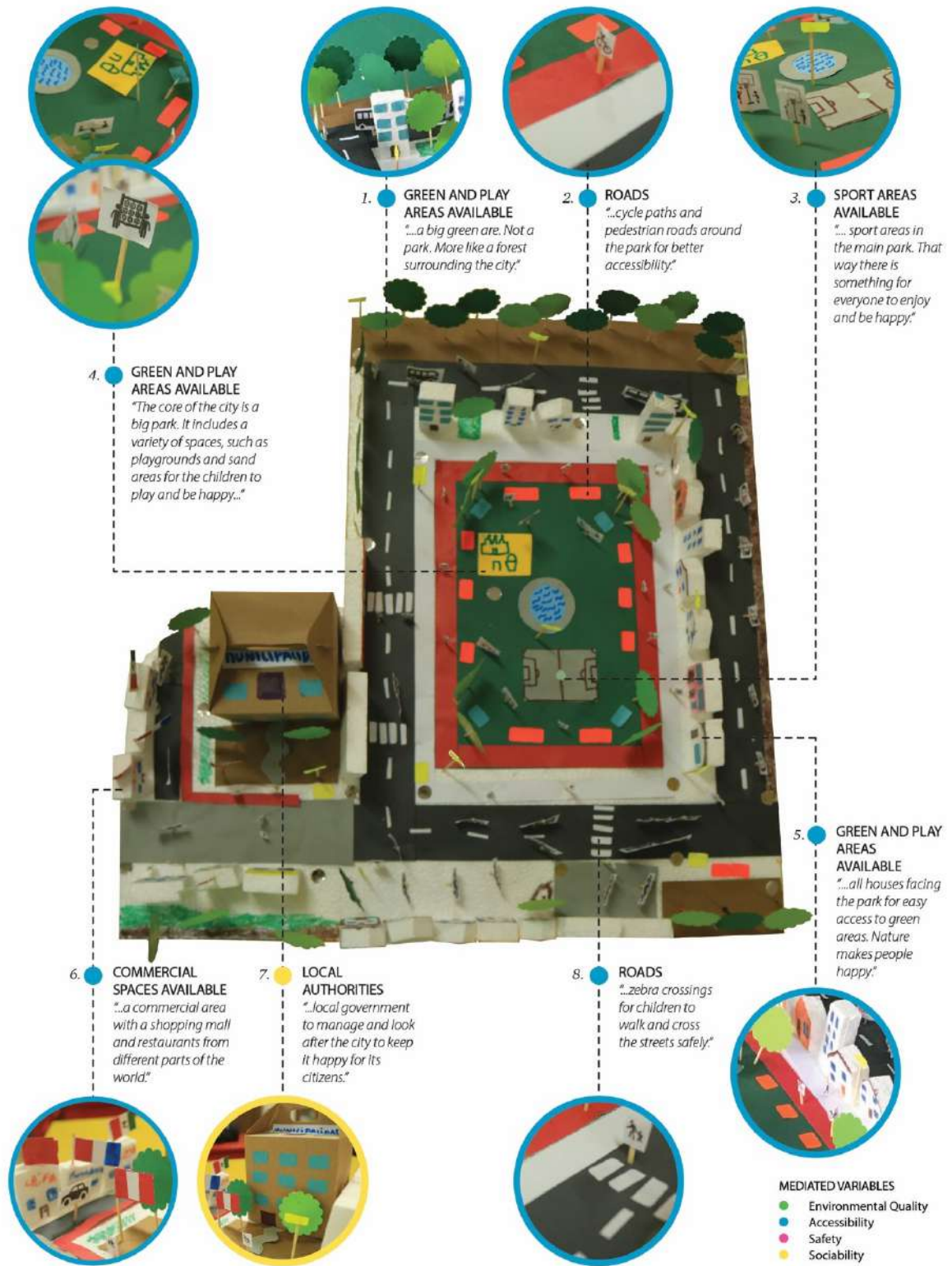


Figure 7.14: PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Children
 Source: Author based on 3D Model built by group of children – (Group 5 – G5)



7.3.2. Actioning on children's and adolescents' proposals: Where to start planning for happiness in Lima?

If children's and adolescents' concerns and recommendations for building cities capable of enhancing happiness experiences are to be considered and addressed, policy- and decision-makers are obligated to listen to both children and adults alike. In essence, there needs to be a recognition that children and adolescents can reflect on their social and urban contexts and are provided with the capacity to engage in action for urban improvement (Carroll, Witten, Asiasiga, & Lin, 2019; Ren, 2020). In the case of Lima, children and adolescents are rarely included or considered in planning or policy practice. On the other hand, local authorities and urban practitioners discussed the need for quantifiable evidence for even considering happiness as an urban goal (see Chapter 3).

Based on the empirical findings, this study has addressed both challenges. It has demonstrated that children and adolescents have indeed the capacity to provide timely recommendations for urban improvement. Also, it has produced quantifiable evidence for assessing urban happiness in each case study area (see Sub-section 7.2.1). However, for an even more grounded account of this data, I suggest going a step further by correlating local *domains of assessment* (Layer 2 of the model in Figure 7.1) and *key urban attributes* (Layer 3 of the model in Figure 7.1) with their correspondent effects on participants' self-reported overall happiness. In doing so, this type of analysis highlights *what matters* for participants in each case study area and what would have a more meaningful impact on their everyday happiness. Thus, it provides a clear hierarchy of needs and priorities. Consideration of this data can help policymakers allocate efforts and budgets to initiatives that might not only solve an apparent, functional urban problem but also incorporate happiness as a variable of urban progress. At a more tactical level, it can also be used by potential local government candidates to inform political campaign promises and government plans with an evidence-based urban happiness discourse.

The correlation of both levels of granularity—domains of assessment and urban attributes—with their impacts on participants' overall happiness has been plotted and presented graphically for ease of interpretation. This allows for potential strategic viable action plans to be outlined. By organising the data in four quadrants, the graphics presenting the data (see below Figure 7.15, Figure 7.17 and Figure 7.19 featuring at the end of this section) allowed for quick identification and prioritisation of those

domains and attributes perceived poorly but having a high impact on overall happiness (see red quadrants in Figure 7.15, Figure 7.17 and Figure 7.19). As such, a closer look at the graphics plotted by case-study area confirms the participants' perceived urban happiness is context-dependent. Hence at the local level, one solution will not necessarily fit all areas.

Overall, in terms of domains of assessment, across all case study areas, *safety and security* are of high impact on overall happiness (see No 1 in Figure 7.15, Figure 7.17 and Figure 7.19); however, analysis of the subsequential level of granularity (urban attributes) allows for differences to emerge. As such, in terms of safety and security, in the case of both Lima South and Lima Centre, the attention and resources are more likely to have an impact on happiness if invested in neighbourhood safety (e.g., surveillance strategies, more police officers, better lighting, and community awareness programmes) (see No.1a in Figure 7.18 and Figure 7.20). By contrast, in Lima North, attention within this domain needs to be placed primarily on the key urban attribute of district safety (e.g., focus attention on reducing and keeping criminal activity under control). Yet, the key urban attribute of neighbourhood safety also needs attention (see No.1a and 1b in Figure 7.16).

Following safety and security, in Lima North, the second domain of assessment in need of attention corresponded to the natural environment (see No.2 in Figure 7.15). Within this domain, particular attention needed to be placed on the key urban attributes regarding care for green areas. This entailed providing attention to the condition of parks and natural green areas, making sure they are properly watered and looked after (see No.2a in Figure 7.16). A third key urban attribute to attend might be the roads (e.g., focus attention on the condition of the roads making sure they are properly paved, without potholes or cracks) (see No.3 in Figure 7.16). A fourth key urban attribute plotted close to the already mentioned will be community care. This translates into focusing on the extent to which people living in the neighbourhood/district care for the environment and the appearance of the streets. This can be addressed via local municipality campaigns to influences behaviour. A set of financial fines can also be considered (see No.3 in Figure 7.16).

In the case of Lima South, the second and third domains of assessment to attend corresponded to both the *built and natural environment* (see No.2 and No.3 in Figure 7.17). At the subsequently level of

granularity, concerning the built environment, attention needed to be placed particularly on the care for green areas (similar to Lima North) and overall care and maintenance of the urban environment (e.g., focus attention on care for overall elements of the built environments, wall cleanliness, pest control, collecting and attending stray animals) (see No.2a and 2b in Figure 7.18). Regarding the natural environment, participants' overall happiness was highly impacted by the urban attribute of air quality. This meant paying attention to air pollution levels, and, in particular, attention to the bad street smell extended in the area at the time fieldwork for this study was being conducted¹¹ (See No. 3a in Figure 7.18). As for Lima Centre, the second domain of assessment to prioritise corresponded to the *built environment* (see No.2 in Figure 7.19). Within this domain, particular attention needed to be placed on the key urban attributes corresponding to waste management and urban equipment. The first demanded to place particular attention on guaranteeing sufficient refuse trucks operating within an adequate schedule (see No.2a in Figure 7.20). The latter demanded to make sure all urban equipment is in an appropriate condition (e.g., all light posts properly functioning, adequate distribution of bus stops, well painted and maintained benches) (see No.2b in Figure 7.20). It is worth noting that whilst both Lima South and Lima Centre needed to place attention on the built environment, the key urban attributes in need of attention in each area differed from one another.

Interestingly across all case study areas, the plotted positions for the domain governance can be considered as thought-provoking. By appearing far removed from everyday concerns, it pointed to the apparent disconnection between the local authorities and children and adolescents across the city. Therefore, it reflected the lack of consideration for and disengagement of children's and adolescents' perceptions and views within discussions about how the city is planned and managed.

¹¹ A great part of Lima South (including the areas where this study was conducted) was declared in emergency in 2018 due to the accumulated rubbish in the streets, placing a risk to human health and wellbeing (see SPDA, 2018).

Figure 7.15: WHERE TO START PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Lima North / Clustered by domains of assessment
 Source: Author based on a quantitative dataset



Figure 7.16: WHERE TO START PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Lima North / Clustered by key urban attributes
 Source: Author based on a quantitative dataset



Figure 7.17: WHERE TO START PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Lima South / Clustered by domains of assessment
 Source: Author based on a quantitative dataset

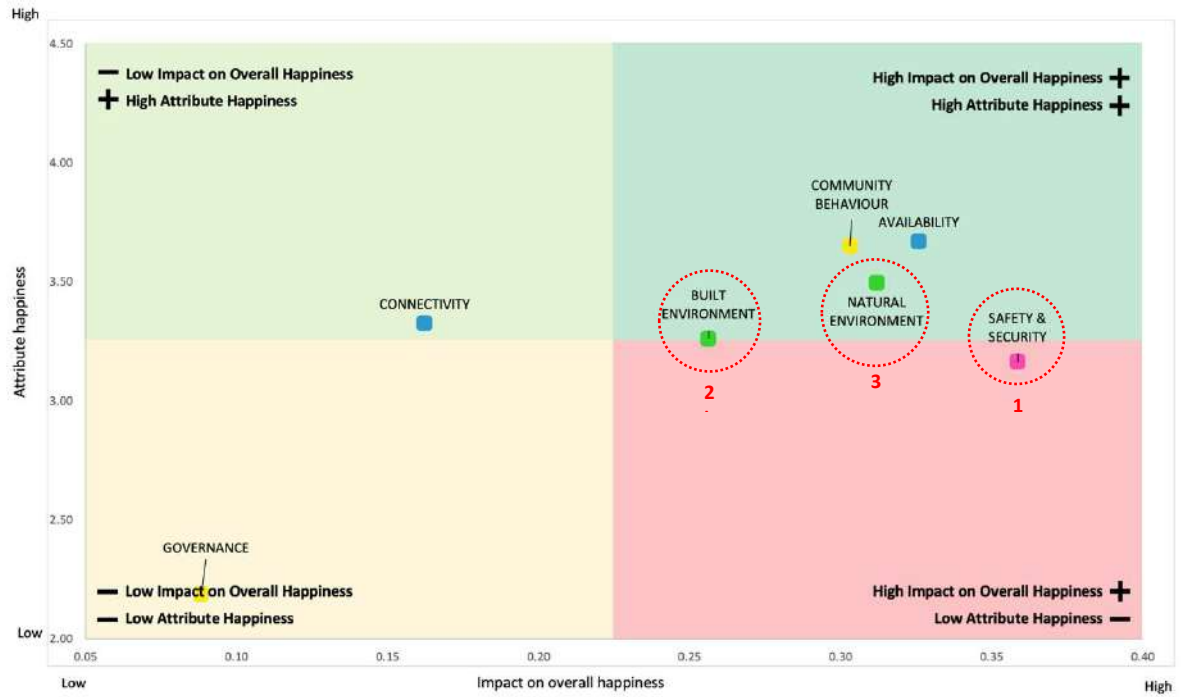


Figure 7.18: WHERE TO START PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Lima South / Clustered by key urban attributes
 Source: Author based on a quantitative dataset



Figure 7.19: WHERE TO START PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Lima Centre / Clustered by domains of assessment
 Source: Author based on a quantitative dataset

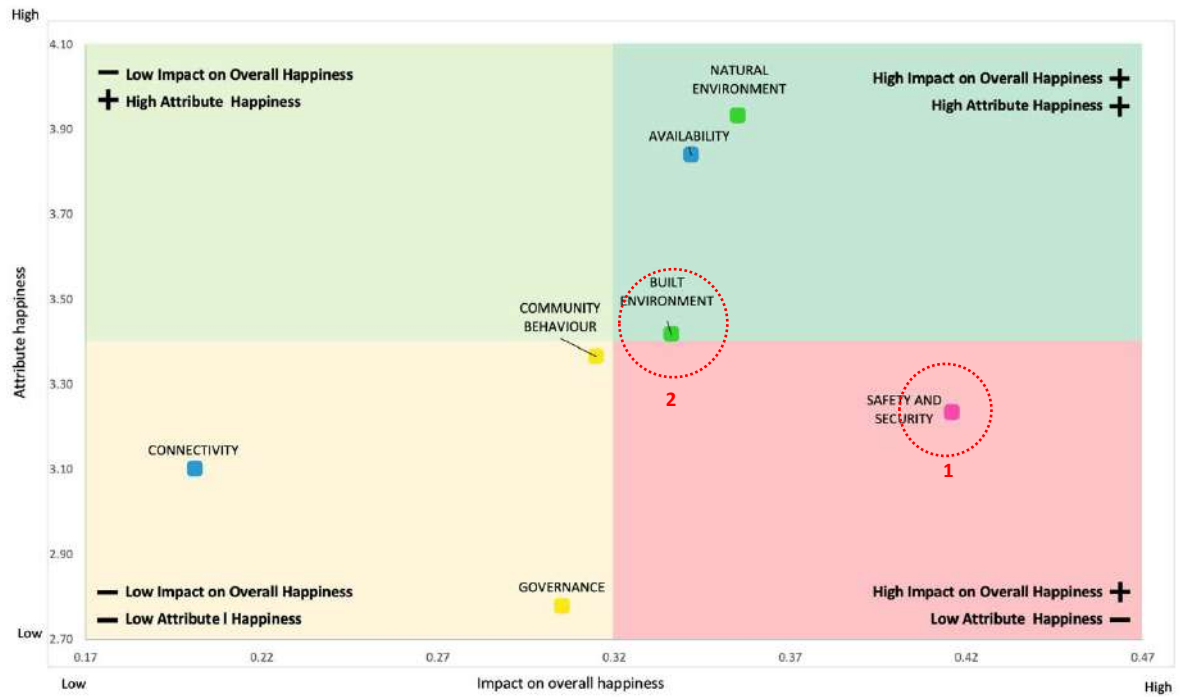


Figure 7.20: WHERE TO START PLANNING FOR HAPPINESS – Lima Centre / Clustered by key urban attributes
 Source: Author based on a quantitative dataset



7.4. Summary and Conclusion

By listening, ranking, and interpreting children's and adolescents' perceptions, issues and concerns regarding the city, this chapter highlights the unique ways in which children's and adolescents' first-hand experiences of the space can inform urban planning and policy. Moreover, by intertwining participants' narratives with local practitioners' understandings and opinions of Lima, this chapter naturally progresses from the previous empirical chapters (see Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) into outlining avenues for further taking empirical research into practice. In doing so, it answers *what* can/should be changed in the city and *how* this can be changed to encourage and enhance happiness experiences. In a broad sense (e.g., beyond Lima), this chapter calls for consideration of physical and social environmental attributes related to happiness. To do so, this chapter has categorised and analysed children's and adolescents' concerns regarding urban happiness under three levels of granularity: mediated variables, domains of assessments and key urban attributes. In doing so, this chapter argues cities aiming for enhancing happiness for their younger citizens need to pay particular attention mainly to urban factors deterring the quality of the built and natural environment (e.g., pollution, lack of cleanliness, noise, lack of green areas) and affecting safety perceptions at a neighbourhood, district, and city level.

Also, by appealing to their embodied and multisensory experience of the city, this chapter demonstrates children and adolescents are able not only to imagine and visualise potential ways to enhance urban space but also to envisage potential experiences of happiness. In doing so, this chapter contributes to ongoing debates within the child-friendly cities initiative (CFCI). Yet, it pushes forward the need to consider the *geographies of children's happiness* within a holistic approach. One that follows the CFCI in acknowledging the importance of children's and adolescents' overall wellbeing, but takes it a step forward, foregrounding contributions towards making cities that not only prioritise [children's and adolescents'] wellbeing (Brown et al., 2019) in a broad way (e.g., comprising physical and mental health and living conditions) but also allows for social and intersubjective everyday happiness to be experienced by children and adolescents within their urban context.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

8.1 Exploring Children's Geographies of Happiness from a Latin American Perspective

This thesis has unveiled the varied ways in which the diverse elements of the urban environment are woven into and shape children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness. In doing so, it explored urban *children's geographies of happiness*—an important concern that has rarely been examined in research and, to my knowledge, never undertaken within the Latin American region. Relying on a combined qualitative and quantitative dataset collected in Lima, Peru, the thesis has taken an experiential approach to answer the three main questions motivating this research.

1. *'How do children and adolescents in Lima understand and construct the concept of happiness?'*
2. *'Where do children and adolescents in Lima find and place happiness in the urban realm?'*
3. *'How would children and adolescents in Lima suggest changing or improving the city for enhancing their experiences of happiness in the urban realm?'*

By bringing together both theoretical and empirical research across the research fields of cities, happiness, and children, this thesis has addressed these questions, providing four key empirical findings:

1. Children's and adolescents' happiness can be conceptualised as fundamentally social, cutting across through all aspects of their everyday lives. Concurrently, these reflect their physical surroundings, senses of freedom, and senses of belonging. As such, the thesis has uncovered the intersubjective and relational nature of children's and adolescents' understandings and experiences of happiness.
2. Children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the urban environment are likely to be affected and mediated by four urban structural features—sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality—continuedly shaping young people's identities, attitudes, and strategies towards the city.

3. Urban spaces such as parks, sports areas, and streets are the main spaces in the city that allow for pleasurable, enjoyable experiences for urban children and adolescents. However, commercial spaces—shopping malls, supermarkets and markets—and worshipping spaces should also be considered spaces in the city, providing opportunities for children and adolescents to experience happiness. Hence, allowing for varied contexts—indoor as opposed to outdoor spaces, private as opposed to public spaces—in which children and adolescents inhabit and experience happiness in the city.
4. Children’s and adolescents’ happiness in the city appears to be moderated by context, particularly reflected in the contrasting quality of the built environment across case study areas (e.g., in terms of care and maintenance of green areas or waste management). Consequently, the distribution of urban spaces for experiencing happiness within the urban environment of cities such as Lima is unequal.

Overall, the findings demonstrated that the urban environment shaped and affected—enhanced or constrained—children’s and adolescents’ experiences of happiness in Lima, both in terms of how they use, navigate, and relate to the city, and how the city was later critically assessed or socially valued. The contrasting socioeconomic, cultural, and geographical urban context in which the lives of young participants in Lima were embedded mediated their opportunities to experience happiness outside the house or school. Attention to children’s and adolescents’ experiences of the city revealed contrasting strategies for relating (or not) to the urban environment. For example, children and adolescents in the peripheries revealed being aware of the overall insecurity in their local surroundings, but this did not stop them from navigating the city. Instead, they developed strategies to keep themselves safe (e.g., not going out after 5pm, due to the likely presence of gangs) while still experiencing happiness within their neighbourhood environment. On the other hand, children and adolescents in Lima Centre had a highly restricted relationship with the city due to perceiving it as highly unsafe (see Table 8.1).

Consequently, the thesis attends to the varied ways in which the centre-periphery dichotomy characteristic of Latin American cities affected children’s and adolescents’ physical and emotional encounters with the city, allowing for key differences to be observed. By factoring in the variables of

sociability, safety, accessibility, and environmental quality, participants' relationships and strategies towards the city ranged from one fostering an attitude of awareness but allowing for enjoyable experiences and a better understanding of the urban space (Lima North and Lima South), to one that limited or avoided any relationship with the urban environment and instead favoured private and more exclusive areas of the city (Lima Centre) (see Table 8.1).

Table 8.1: CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CITY FACTORING VARIABLES MEDIATING EXPERIENCES OF HAPPINESS

* Case study areas

Source: Author based on empirical data

		PERIPHERAL CITY LIMA NORTH / LIMA SOUTH*	CENTRAL CITY LIMA CENTRE*
VARIABLES MEDIATING EXPERIENCES OF HAPPINESS IN THE CITY	SOCIABILITY	Neighbours need to care about the environment (Community care) for urban spaces to be happier	Neighbours need to care for each other (Sense of community) for urban spaces to be happier
	SAFETY	Awareness but not restraining / Allow for experiencing happiness in the city an everyday basis	Highly restraining / limited or avoided relationship with the city. Everyday happiness is experienced mainly at home
	ACCESSIBILITY	The city allows opportunities to experience happiness	The city limits opportunities for happiness / Happiness is found in more private, more exclusive spaces.
	ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY	More attention to basic services affecting happiness. (Waste management, cleanliness)	More attention to urban aesthetic features affecting happiness. (Better care and maintenance)

In addition, urban spaces that shaped happiness experiences were often positively perceived whilst simultaneously attracting concerns and calls for improvements. This highlighted the issue of representation under consideration within urban policy and practice. Their experiences or opinions were hardly voiced to local councils, and, when done, they were rarely attended to or considered.

This chapter attends to the theoretical and empirical contributions of this thesis. Section 8.2 discusses the key contributions of this study, highlighting the possibilities for what doing geographies of children's happiness entails. In addition, it outlines varied paths for future research and deals with concrete implications and recommendations for policy and practice. Lastly, Section 8.3 provides closing remarks and final considerations.

8.2 Doing Urban Children's Geographies of Happiness

As a field of study, children's geographies concern both the varied ways in which young people experience, use, shape, and re-shape the spaces in which their lives are experienced and how we, as adults, shape the processes of identity development and the claiming of spaces (Aitken, 2018). Meanwhile, the geographies of happiness aim to identify who is happy and, more particularly, where people are happy and why they are happy there. On the other hand, the subdiscipline of urban geographies is concerned with the study of cities, urban life, and the urban environment. By doing children's geographies of happiness, with a focus on urban contexts, this study has approached these three major fields of scholarship in an interconnected way. In doing so, this thesis has addressed varied theoretical gaps and challenges from within these fields of study. Thus, the key contributions of this study are:

- 1. Systematically studying how everyday urban socio-spatial experiences translate into emotional, individual and collective experiences of happiness for children and adolescents.**

Previous studies attending to the emotional dimension and experiences of urban environments have explored urban emotional experiences and attitudes (Den Besten, 2010), placing particular attention on the embodied and emotional nature of what being in a place and belonging to a place entails (Hall, 2013; N. Wood & Waite, 2011). In doing so, they have recognised both the physical and emotional correspondence of everyday urban experiences as contested by the multiple territories composing the city (Ley, 1981; Pánek & Benediktsson, 2017). However, approximating how everyday socio-spatial experiences render specifically into positive emotions such as happiness remained a novel challenge. Moreover, within that work, systematic studies on children's and adolescents' happiness remain limited. This thesis explicitly attends to this challenge. By interrogating children's and adolescents' everyday socio-spatial experiences of happiness within the urban environment, this study provides a wider understanding of how young people's transactions with the urban space translate into both individual and collective experiences of happiness (see Chapter 6). Participants, for example, described parks as places not only for gathering and playing but also for meeting and sharing family events (e.g., celebrate milestones as having a new brother). Likewise, they described shopping malls and supermarkets as spaces

to spend time with family and establish traditions (e.g., knowing weekends are for getting ice cream with the family at the shopping mall), as opposed to the experiences of adolescents in commercial areas previously documented in western literature as unpleasant and unwelcomed (see Matthews, Taylor, Percy-Smith, & Limb, 2000). As such, this study argues that children's and adolescents' happiness experiences within the urban environment are active, emotional processes connecting them to both the physical and social surroundings they inhabit.

2. Exploring explicitly children's and adolescents' understandings and experiences of happiness fundamentally as a social, interactive, and relational process rather than as an interchangeable term with subjective wellbeing (SWB).

Typically, scholars referring explicitly to children's and adolescents' happiness have done so using the term interchangeably with SWB (see Chapter 2). Using the term 'happiness', previous studies had, for example, sought to voice children's thoughts and understandings on their health and wellbeing (Nic Gabhainn & Sixsmith, 2005; M. Wood & Selwyn, 2017), their life satisfaction as a measure of their SWB (Ziegler, 2010) and their views on what a 'good life' entails (Jover & Thoilliez, 2010). However, studies exploring the experiential nature of children's and adolescents' happiness remain rare. This thesis addresses this gap and approaches happiness as a social, interactive phenomenon rather than using the term interchangeably with that of SWB. In return, this allows for a more social understanding of children's and adolescents' happiness experiences, leading to the next point.

3. That children's and adolescents' happiness is more dynamic and fluid than how it is approached in the SWB literature.

Geographers studying happiness have called for attention to the overly individualised character of wellbeing research (Atkinson, Bagnall, Corcoran, South, & Curtis, 2020). Likewise, they challenged this logic by attending to the notions of context and space within happiness studies, placing attention on wellbeing as a process rather than as a fixed state (Schwanen & Atkinson, 2015). On the other hand, children's geographers recently called for addressing the continuum of 'growing up'. That is, to address the varied differences in young people's everyday lives across age groups in a continuum rather than as isolated clusters of attention (Kraftl & Horton, 2019). By taking an experiential and relational approach,

the thesis attended to these critiques and challenges by arguing and demonstrating that, for children and adolescents, happiness needs to be studied and assessed as something embedded in their everyday lives—hence, as an ongoing, dynamic, and fluctuating process, gradually developing as young people’s identities are built and forged. To do so, the thesis introduced a model reflecting upon a more holistic and grounded grasp of the complexity behind how happiness is understood, experienced, and embodied within children’s everyday practices (see Subsection 8.2.1). In addition, by looking closely into the social, cultural, and geographical contexts in which children’s and adolescents’ everyday experiences regularly occur, this thesis has identified particular ways in which young people’s experiences of happiness are not only context-dependent but, consequently, highly unequal.

4. Listening to children’s and adolescents’ experiences of urban happiness within their local surroundings, allowing for a set of child-centric variables and determinants of urban happiness to be outlined.

Interest and awareness of how local, neighbourhood contexts affect and shape happiness are on the rise. By using an array of subjective and objective measures, several initiatives across the western world are currently exploring and developing city indexes of what drives wellbeing and how to enhance urban dwellers’ happiness within a local level approach (see, e.g., Centre for Thriving Places, n.d.; Smart Dubai, n.d.; The Happy City, n.d.). In doing so, they seek to fill in the gaps unattended by national-level population surveys (see, e.g., Helliwell, Layard, Sachs, & De Neve, 2020). Consequently, they are increasingly including data on social, spatial, and cultural contexts, essential to fully understand the conditions under which happiness occurs (Pykett & Cromby, 2017). However, studies on how children’s and adolescents’ perspectives and experiences of urban happiness are shaped by their local surroundings are still limited, let alone from Latin American urban contexts. This study addresses this gap by listening to children’s and adolescents’ perceptions and experiences of happiness in Lima and attending to their socio-demographic and geographical contexts. The thesis reflects on the effects of Lima’s highly fragmented urban fabric upon the everyday happiness of its younger citizens. Depending on their urban context, participants explained they would either consider or discard their local surroundings as potential urban spaces to experience happiness. Those living in the peripheries preferred spaces located within

walking distance, such as local parks or the streets. By contrast, those living in Lima Centre preferred being driven to friends' houses and shopping malls or private clubs and sports areas instead. As such, this study has broken ground by being the first known attempt to explore children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in a Latin American city. Thus, setting the foundations for further explorations and comparisons of the myriad ways in which Latin American urban contexts inform children's everyday lives, which leads to the following point.

5. Children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of Lima reflected on the particularity of the Latin American region's urban landscapes and, more explicitly, identified how the centre-peripheries dichotomy informs young people's perceived urban happiness and experiences of the city.

Scholars studying children's geographies and reflecting on future directions for the discipline had argued for the need of diversifying the range of international contexts under which young people's lives are studied (Holt, Blazek, Benwell, & Van Blerk, 2020). Increasing attempts to engage with research in the global south to widen and enhance the discipline is one key effort in that direction (Van Blerk, 2019). More specifically, despite growing efforts, the academic literature exploring urban childhood experiences in Latin America remains limited. This thesis has attempted to contribute to these debates by looking into how children in a Latin American city experience happiness and the urban environment within their everyday lives. In doing so, it has addressed the particularity of Latin American urban landscapes shaped by centre-periphery dichotomies and the varied ways it informs and reflects upon children's and adolescents' identities—thus, paving the ways for a wider exploration of the children's geographies of happiness in Latin America. As such, the thesis has addressed vital issues of how and under what circumstances young people access and experience (or not) the city positively and enjoyably. More specifically, in the case of Lima, this study highlighted the varied and uneven contexts in which children's and adolescents' transactions with the urban space were made.

The results reflected the way in which the highly fragmented nature of the city operated on children's happiness—enhancing or constraining it—and perpetuated social and economic inequalities between young citizens of low and high socioeconomic levels. Participants describing their experiences of going to the beach exemplified this. In a coastal city such as Lima, access to the beach is restricted by economic inequalities. For those living in the peripheries, going to the beach was more isolated as it required the family to allocate resources specifically for spending a day at the beach. For those living in Lima Centre instead, spending the summer at the beach was mainly considered a part of their lifestyle. Subsequently, the thesis has identified the overall existing challenges and barriers that need to be overcome to introduce happiness as a measurement of urban progress. Also, it has been noted that considering happiness as a variable to promote better and more prosperous cities within the region can be subordinated to cities meeting more urgent needs, common to many Latin American cities: poverty reduction, children's malnutrition, improvement of health, and educational services being just some of them. However, cities in the region are slowly starting to incorporate the idea of happiness within their urban discourses. When running for office, Bogota's former mayor, Enrique Peñalosa, offered to make the city a happier place to live (See Montgomery, 2013). Similarly, Mexico's representative at the ONU-Habitat assembly in 2019 put forward the idea of developing happy cities within her country and widely the Latin American region (see 'México busca llevar a la Asamblea de ONU-Hábitat la idea 'ciudades felices'', 2019). Also, the former ministry of housing in Chile, back in 2018 called for developing Chilean cities able to enhance the happiness of its citizens (See Velasco Cruz, 2018). Peruvian cities, and more particularly Lima, however, are yet to consider happiness within their urban agenda.

6. Demonstrating happiness can be translated into urban practices and policy practices aiming to rethink the city from a more child-friendly perspective

By recognising the needs of children and adolescents regarding their environment, the UN sought for governments to commit to prioritising children's lives whilst involving them in decision-making processes (UNICEF, 2004). Thus, it aimed to acknowledge and attend to the needs of children and adolescents regarding their environment and, also, for those considerations to inform urban design and planning practices (Baraldi, 2003). Consequently, cities aiming to shape their urban environments into more child-

friendly spaces were called to guarantee safe, clean environments capable of preserving the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents (UNICEF, 1992). However, whilst making reference to wellbeing, work on CFC does not explicitly refer to children's and adolescents' happiness within their urban environments, nor does it refer to their urban happiness experiences. This thesis attends to this gap by listening to and distilling children's and adolescents' perceptions and recommendations into a grounded model with which to assess young people's urban happiness (see Subsection 8.2.1). In doing so, this thesis demonstrated that children's and adolescents' happiness with the city could be translated into effective, actionable recommendations for urban policy and practice to act upon.

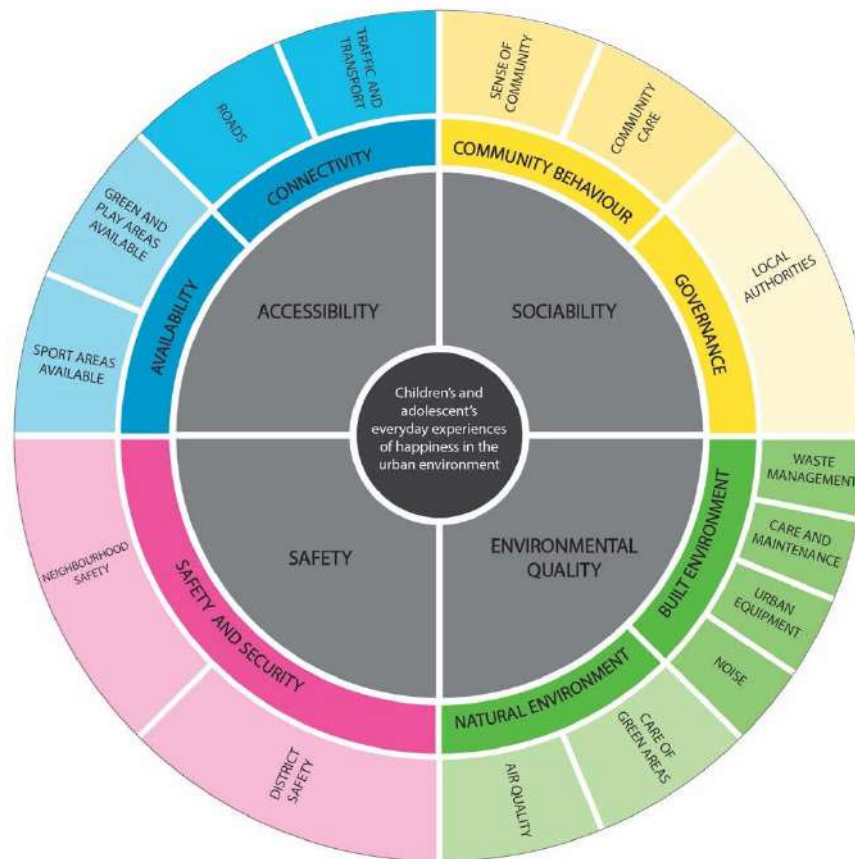
8.2.1. Directions for Future Research

The findings in this thesis pertain to key aspects associated with the current challenges and changes the urban youth is facing globally and, more specifically, to research undertaken from within the Latin American region. To take forward a research agenda on children's geographies of happiness, future research should take upon the challenge of considering voices globally and responding to the extended range of unequal conditions the majority of the youth population will be facing in the near future, aiming for contrasting studies and two-way transferable debates between both cities within the region and the global north and south.

Built upon empirical findings, this thesis has introduced a four key variable model mediating children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the urban environment of Lima, which could be a broad conceptual starting point for future research on children's geographies of happiness. The model outlined three different levels of granularity through which participants in this study discussed their experiences of happiness in the city and provided valuable assessments and key actionable recommendations towards shaping local communities into happier and thriving places. As such, the first inner layer identified four mediated variables informing and affecting children's and adolescents' experiences and strategies towards the urban environment. These included: sociability, accessibility, safety, and environmental quality (see Chapter 6). The second intermediate layer encompasses seven domains of assessment: community behaviour, governance, built environment, natural environment, safety and security,

availability, and connectivity. The third level of granularity accounts for key priorities considered towards actionable recommendations (see Chapter 7) (see Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1: SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE RESEARCH IN CHILDREN'S GEOGRAPHIES OF HAPPINESS
 Source: Author based on empirical data



This model was outlined based on both children’s and adolescents’ narratives of their experiences of happiness in varied urban spaces within their local surroundings and their responses to a social survey assessing their perceived urban happiness within the urban environment of Lima. Thus, it provides an accurate overview of how urban structural traits operate, mediate and inform children’s and adolescents’ urban happiness experiences from within their own perspectives. Fundamentally, the model provides a child-centric framework which I suggest can be the basis for future research exploring children’s geographies of happiness in varied urban contexts and conditions.

Using this framework as a road map, future research exploring children’s geographies of happiness in Lima should consider a greater sample of case study areas, including also Lima East and the annexed constitutional province of ‘El Callao’, not included in this study due to time constraints. Likewise, further

study in the region, and more widely, should consider collecting data from a number of cities of varied scales. Locally in Peru, I suggest that secondary cities such as Arequipa in the South, Trujillo in the North, Huancayo in the East, and Pucallpa, situated with the rainforest, could be researched for gaining a comparative overview of how children and adolescents experience happiness, living in an array of contrasting urban geographies in the same country. Regionally, other capital cities such as Santiago, Buenos Aires, Bogota, Rio de Janeiro, and Quito, among others, could be investigated to help expand, compare and contrast children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness. More widely, it will be advantageous to analyse children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness within more developed cities actively working to incorporate wellbeing as a measure of progress and towards becoming child-friendly cities. Research in wider but targeted geographical contexts would provide a comparative framework for better identifying those urban traits that, based on this model, permeate to other cities and how the model changes within varied geographies. Applying this model in research with children and adolescents living in country towns is another avenue of research based on scaling the geographical scope up or down.

Likewise, further research might also consider expanding this scope to include children and adolescents living in more vulnerable conditions, such as in extreme poverty. Also, it might consider people in vulnerable geographical contexts, such as those living in territories continually exposed to natural disasters (e.g., territories constantly exposed to earthquakes, flooding, land sliding), extreme weather conditions, and less accessible topographies. Research taking this approach might be beneficial for better identifying how and to what extent vulnerable conditions influence, infuse, and transform children's and adolescents' experiences of urban happiness. In addition, it might open the opportunity for a meaningful dialogue between those working on efforts to alleviate children's fundamental spatial needs (e.g., housing) and those attending to create spaces for suiting children's and adolescents' diverse needs (e.g., sociability). Further work might be required to understand and identify the possibilities of attending pressuring needs and incorporating happiness as a variable of success in a more holistic way. Thus, allowing for the interconnected relationship between both, to be recognised.

Moreover, scholars studying children's geographies of happiness should be challenged by the implication and consequences of more recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 (ongoing in 2021), a current complex reality shaping and re-shaping the cities as we know them; thus, transforming the way we relate to the urban environment and the way we understand and experience happiness. Further research looking into children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in cities should raise the question of whether their relationship with the city would still be the same in a post-Covid scenario. If so, it should look at how much the lockdown and mobility restriction measures have re-shaped how children and adolescents relate to and experience the urban space. Further research, locally replicating the study or part of it in Lima, might as well shed light upon how measures of social distancing, increased risk of contagion in close environments, and government regulations have altered the conditions under which children and adolescents experience happiness in urban spaces, particularly in reported commercial and worshipping spaces (see Chapter 6). Pursuing this avenue might provide unique opportunities for comparing the geographies of children's happiness in pre- and post-Covid scenarios.

8.2.2. Implications for Policy and Practice

This study demonstrated the value of listening, categorising, and interpreting children's and adolescents' perceptions of urban happiness within their local surroundings, even in a context in which they are normally unheard. However, whilst attempts to incorporate the voices of young people into policy debates keep growing within some academic arenas, it has been noticed that the gap between childhood agency, policy and practice is still persistent (Punch, 2016). This thesis contributed to this debate, particularly advocating for children and adolescents as experts of their experiences of happiness and the city in Lima. In doing so, it provided a valuable framework for policymakers and practitioners to strategically assess and address ongoing urban challenges affecting children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness. I argue that considering and understanding the uniqueness of children's experiences of happiness in the local context is crucial to developing and securing urban initiatives for shaping better, equitable and thriving communities not only for young people but for everyone. However, whilst the thesis demonstrated the value and validity of young people's voices in the context of Lima, it

raised the question, *'Is there a place for children and happiness in the urban planning and policy practice in a fragmented, segregated and structurally challenging city as Lima?'* Local practitioners interviewed in this study strongly agreed with involving children in decision-making, but there is little sign of this being done. Moreover, the significant social, economic, and political pressures facing Peru may lead to this going further down policy agendas. However, the fact that local practitioners appeared keen to consider happiness as an urban variable and recognised its potential for urban practice suggested this research has not only theoretical but future practical value.

Following the raised question, this section first outlines actionable recommendations for rethinking the urban space under a happiness lens and then introduces a graphic dashboard tool useful for translating happiness assessments into practical guidelines.

i. Actionable Recommendations

Following the four variables meditating children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the city, I suggest four broad recommendations to be considered by urban practitioners and local authorities as guidelines to be incorporated into design and planning decisions for future projects.

1. Urban spaces fostering happiness are clean and have adequate and sufficient suitable urban equipment.

Local authorities in charge of urban spaces aiming to enhance young people's happiness should prioritise strategies to ensure effective and regular waste management. In addition, urban designers and planners should pay particular attention to the quantity of urban equipment suggested per area. Authorities need to make sure urban equipment is kept in suitable working conditions. Light posts, rubbish bins, benches, and playground equipment should be periodically assessed to guarantee their working conditions and adequate distribution.

2. Streets and lanes need to be kept in optimum conditions and well maintained to encourage children and adolescents to use the urban space and experience happiness.

This is of particular importance in areas where roads are not properly paved (e.g., dirt tracks) or have cracks and potholes. Keeping roads and lanes in good conditions helps children and adolescents use and experience happiness in the urban space every day, reducing the risks of falling and getting injured.

3. Neighbourhood safety should be prioritised to amplify children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the city.

Children and adolescents reported not feeling safe in the city and correspondingly seeing their experiences of happiness limited or constrained. Participants suggested that local authorities invest in better and more surveillance strategies (e.g., surveillance cameras) and extend the presence of police officers.

4. Urban spaces need to provide children and adolescents with opportunities to socially gather and play, allowing them to socially experience happiness.

Participants highlighted the social components of an urban space as key for considering it a happy place. Urban planners and designers need to consider this when designing or outlining urban spaces. An urban space is sociable if it allows people of all ages to gather, providing opportunities for different activities to be performed.

All these broad ideas are suitable to be incorporated into future projects and retrofitted and tested within the existing landscape by incorporating tactical urban projects targeting specific neighbourhood areas.

ii. Translating Happiness Assessments into Practical Guidelines

The thesis directly addressed the two main challenges facing urban planners and policymakers in Lima for considering happiness as a reliable variable and measurement of progress. Namely, the complexity and elusiveness of the concept and how this knowledge can be effectively translated and integrated into policy and practice. Findings from the perceived urban happiness survey, illuminated by the qualitative data of this thesis, naturally lend themselves to the development of a dashboard tool (see Figure 8.2)

that can effectively translate into a set of guidelines for building happier urban spaces. As such, the proposed dashboard highlights potential opportunities for shaping the city into one that provides opportunities for children and adolescents to experience urban happiness.

Following the four key variable models mediating children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness in the urban environment of Lima, previously mentioned (see Figure 8.1), the empirical findings have been distilled into a practical, simple graphic dashboard tool to inform urban policy and practice. As a tool, it allows urban practitioners and policymakers to identify and directly inform *where* and *what* needs prioritising to achieve happiness not only for young people but for all urban dwellers. Specifically, it highlights which domains of assessment—community behaviour, governance, built environment, natural environment, safety and security, availability, and connectivity—and key priorities which need attention and action (see Figure 8.2). By applying a standardised survey across case study areas (see Chapter 4), combined with a dashboard analysis, the thesis set the foundations for an effective tool for urban planning consultancy.

Based on the conceptual model of children's and adolescents' experiences of happiness, the dashboard tool allows for an overview of young people's assessments of their perceived urban happiness at different levels of granularity. Divided into four sections, the suggested dashboard first outlines the urban happiness key metrics relevant to the assessed area. This includes participants' overall happiness and perceived happiness by mediated variables (see 1 in Figure 8.2). Another section then introduces the overall urban happiness within the assessed area. It does so through a radial graphic comprising all 15 key actionable priorities (see 2 in Figure 8.2). The dashboard then progresses into a third section, introducing a priority mapping representing the correlation between the key priorities of perceived urban happiness with the participants' overall happiness (see 3 in Figure 8.2). This provides a quick '*at a first glance*' overview of which urban features are worth attending to first, for the purpose of improving children's and adolescents' happiness. Lastly, the tool includes a fourth section (see 4 in Figure 8.2), listing all the urban attributes assessed in the survey with their corresponding values. As a tool, the dashboard tool allows for an overview of the relationship between urban attributes and children's and

adolescents' happiness. Likely, it unlocks the potential of an elusive concept such as happiness, translating its benefits into the practical arena.

However, the dashboard tool needs to be considered and used as an output of a complete and wider package for it to be effective. One that should provide synthesised tools for data collection, guidelines for formatting data and directions for analysis. An alternative future avenue for this research will be for it to be translated into a practical toolkit able to operationalise and systematise children's and adolescents' perceptions of urban happiness. Such a toolkit should include a condensed version of the survey to be replicable in varied areas and periods of the year, a formatted and automated datasheet tool for the collected data to be placed and the graphics automatically generated and placed into the dashboard, and a set of practical guidelines illustrating how to read the dashboard effectively. With said toolkit, data would be likely to be obtained through participatory processes at either local, regional or national level. It also would provide the opportunity for the survey questions to be incorporated into regular measures of progress currently being taken and published periodically within the country by local or national public and private research organisations. (in e.g. see INEI (2017) Final Results of the National Census 2017, Lima Como Vamos (2019) The Quality of Life in Lima report). Both the conceptual model and the suggested dashboard tool are intended to be used at different geographical levels by an array of actors. At a local level it might be suitable to be used by community-based or neighbourhood organisations aiming to champion the quality of their communities, as well as local urban practitioners and private organisations working on developing participatory urban interventions. Also, real estate developers aiming to offer housing and neighbourhood solutions providing not only shelter, but opportunities for tenants to thrive. In addition, local municipalities and regional governments seeking to support emotional and social wellbeing at a community level. At a more national level, public actors taking the lead in establishing or amending current urban policy and regulations (in e.g. public space regulations and housing development norms), such as the Ministry of Housing and the Housing Commission within the parliament might also be interested in using the outcomes of this tool. Wider organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Architects might also use it as a tool to inform urban design. Interpretations of results obtained at different geographical levels, will provide an opportunity for incorporating variables

of urban happiness into urban design and planning decisions suitable to be retrofitted into the existing landscape.

As such, the model targets community leaders, urban practitioners, policymakers, and local authorities aiming to ignite a multidisciplinary dialogue to reflect upon mediated variables, domains of assessments, and key actionable priorities to enhance children's and adolescents' happiness in urban areas. Consequently, the responsibility for incorporating, implementing, financing, and maintaining urban projects aiming to enhance urban happiness needs to be shared by public and private actors. Public actors are called to take the lead in identifying opportunities for urban interventions aiming to enhance the experiences of happiness within the urban space (including local parks and public sport areas). By contrast, private actors developing urban-scale projects such as commercial spaces are also called to incorporate variables of urban happiness to enhance the experience of people visiting those spaces. Depending on the case, the implementation, financing or maintenance of this kind of projects might be taken by either public or private organisations only, or by shared public and private enterprises, through public-private agreements. As such, both side of actors have a role to play for incorporating urban happiness as a variable of urban planning and community development.

Figure 8.2: CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY AND PRACTICE – Dashboard sample analysis for planning for happiness
The figure is for illustrative purposes only.
Source: Author

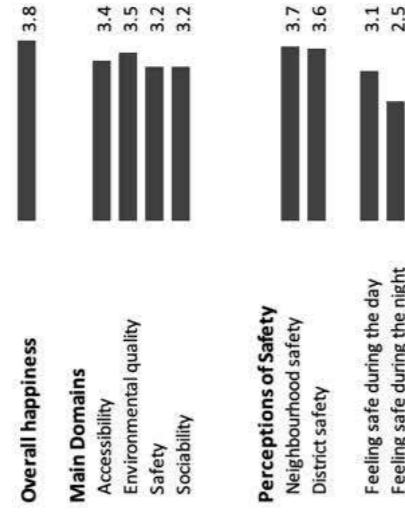
Children's & Adolescents' Perceptions of Urban Happiness
Area: Lima North

Dec 2020

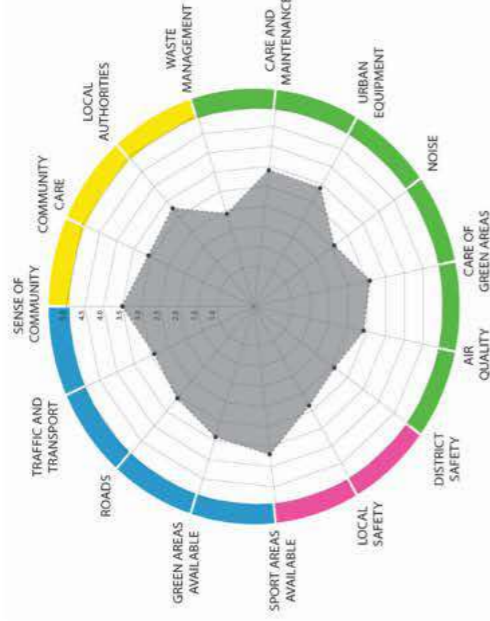
Findings from the Urban Wellbeing C&YP happiness survey are presented below. The summary is presented in five sections:

1. Happiness key metrics:
2. Views of happiness in Lima North by the key priorities
3. Priority mapping of attributes in terms of resident happiness and their impact on overall happiness
4. Priority actions: Making improvements in these areas will have the greatest immediate impact on overall happiness
5. Ratings for specific attributes: 1 = very poor and 5 = very good.

1. Happiness Key Metrics



2. Views of happiness by the key priorities



3. Priority Mapping

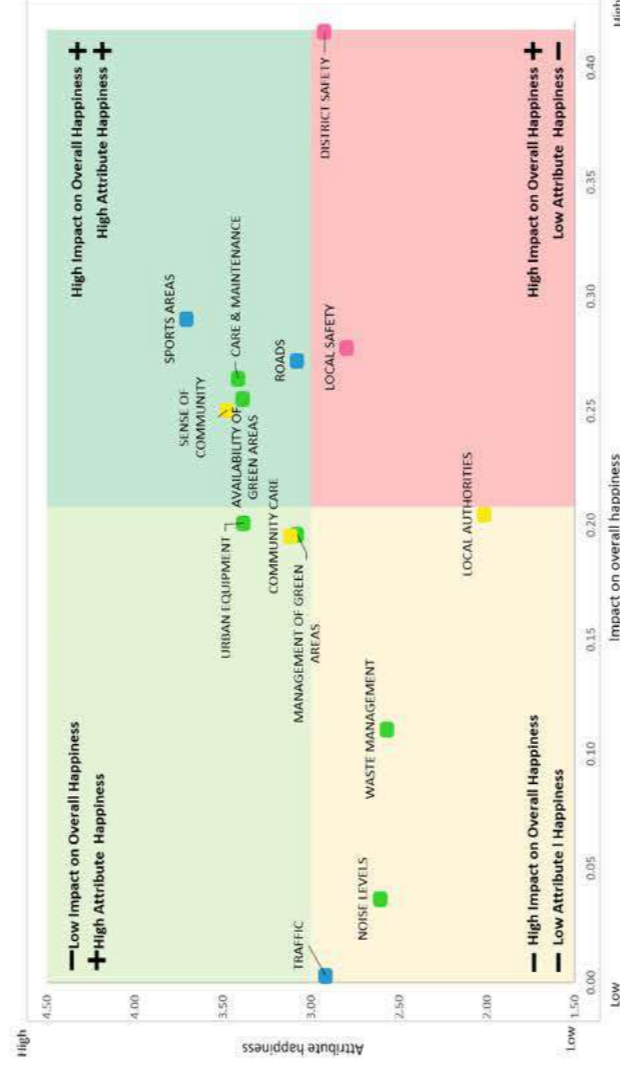
The priority map shows the ratings for both happiness and the impact each attribute has on residents overall happiness.

The impact results have been derived from the correlation of each attribute with overall happiness.

The mapping aligns with four clear investment strategies:

- Improvement priority: low happiness and high impact
- Secondary priority: Low happiness, low impact
- Strength to promote: high happiness and high impact
- Maintain: high happiness and low impact

Note: attributes may be selected as improvement priorities if they are close to the border of a quadrant and



4. Top five priorities: Lima North

1. District Safety
2. Local Safety
3. Roads
4. Availability of Green areas
5. Management of Green areas

4. Happiness with city attributes

Environmental quality	Natural environment	Air quality	Street smell	3.8
	Built environment	Care of green areas	Number of trees	4.3
		Noise levels	Water bodies	3.6
			Noise level	3.1
		Urban equipment	Benches	3.7
Connectivity	Care & maintenance	Lightposts	3.7	
		Rubbish bins	3.3	
		Bus stop	2.8	
	Waste management	Nhood look	3.8	
		City look	3.1	
Accessibility	Roads	Street look	3.8	
		Street cleanliness	3.2	
		Wall cleanliness	3.2	
	Traffic and transport	Streets	3.3	
		Pedestrian roads	3.3	
Availability	Green and play areas available	Bike lanes	3.7	
		Traffic	2.6	
	Sport areas available	Time spent in a car	2.5	
		Parks and play areas	3.8	
		Number of parks	4.1	
Safety	Safety and security	District safety	3.6	
		Local safety	3.1	
	Sociability	Local safety	Night safety perception	2.5
Neighbourhood safety			3.7	
Nhood support people			2.7	
Sense of community		Social happiness	4.2	
		Community caring about appearance	3.5	
Governance	Local authorities	Community caring about others	3.0	
		Mayor performance	2.8	

8.1 Final Remarks

By studying children's geographies of happiness, this thesis has contributed to progress geographical knowledge to interrogate, in an interconnected way, if and how *children and adolescents experience happiness in the city*. This is a timely contribution, particularly in a rapidly urbanising world in which recent historical events call for a wider and more thoughtful consideration of the effects of cities on overall human wellbeing. Similarly, it aligned with current debates on making cities more human. As such, the thesis identified urban traits providing opportunities for children's and adolescents' everyday experiences of happiness to be either enhanced or constrained. In doing so, it drew on the experiential and perceived emotional production of knowledge, outlining the different kinds of relationships children and adolescents can establish with the city if the outcome is for joyful, pleasurable moments to take place. However, it also unveiled the significant inequalities and dynamic realities that current younger citizens will face in the near future in Lima. In that sense, I call for an approach to scholarship, policy and practice for children's urban happiness that reflects upon cultural, social, and geographical embodied experiences of children's happiness in urban contexts. One that recognises these experiences to be as valid and valuable as those of adults. One that listens to the youngest citizens and uses systemic and integrated findings to address the unequal and fragmented urban conditions in which children's lives are embedded and shaped in Lima and more widely in Latin America.

Looking back and reflecting on the drawings, stories, photographs, experiences, and thoughts children and adolescents in Lima, kindly shared with me during the data collection process prompted a hopeful sense of recognition that the happiness of children and adolescents living in cities matters. Hence, it could be key to further geographical and urban research and practice. As such, I was affected by the vibrant ways in which participants of this study narrated their experiences of happiness within a city they described mostly as insecure. Moreover, it stimulated a train of thinking, allowing me to interrogate what we are doing and if we are doing enough to promote multidisciplinary spaces and debates where children's and adolescents' voices are listened to and acted upon. Also, it made me interrogate to what extent we are allowing young people's experiential, affective, everyday experiences of happiness to be successfully fostered and encouraged within Latin American cities.

Across the days and weeks I shared with the participants of this study, I gained valuable insights not only into their urban happiness experiences but also into their many ways of navigating and confronting the city. I learnt from them as much during the workshops and data collection activities as I did by witnessing their transactions with space whilst running, playing, or gathering in the school patio or hallways. Consequently, I felt compelled to think about my relationship with the space and how I experience the city within. Guided by their narratives, I sought to permeate my professional persona as an architect with both their experiences of happiness and their urban navigation strategies. In doing so, I was able to reflect upon the contrasting and sometimes disconnected ways in which the space is thought, designed, built, and managed by architects, planners, engineers and local authorities alike as opposed to how it is experienced and lived by those who inhabit them. In addition, by listening and exploring how participants imagined and reimagined the city, this thesis has shown that, despite seemingly more pressing needs in the region, achieving happier and thriving cities is neither impossible nor divorced from other challenges. As such, this research sets the foundations for a research agenda into the urban *children's geographies of happiness*. One that can translate and incorporate children's and adolescents' joyful, vibrant and unique ways of navigating the city and experiencing happiness within into a wider urban agenda towards building happier cities for all.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Letter explaining the research

- a. Letter explaining the research for schools
- b. Letter explaining the research for children
- c. Letter explaining the research for parents
- d. Letter explaining the research for local practitioners

Appendix 2. Consent forms

- a. Parental consent form for students attending schools in which only the qualitative stage was granted authorization to take place
- b. Parental consent form for students attending schools in which both stages, qualitative and quantitative, were granted authorization to take place.
- c. Parental consent form for students attending schools in which only the quantitative stage was granted authorization to take place
- d. Parental Consent form for students willing to take part in the model making activity
- e. Consent form for local practitioners willing to be interviewed
- f. Consent form for local practitioners willing to take part in the model making activity

Appendix 3. Questionnaires

- a. Semi-structured interview questionnaire used during the 'draw, write and tell' activity
- b. Semi-structured interview questionnaire used during the photo elicit interviews
- c. Semi-structured interview questionnaire used for interviews with local practitioners
- d. Perceived happiness with neighbourhood survey

Appendix 4. Participants

- a. Children and Adolescents (pseudonyms used)
- b. Local practitioners

Appendix 5. Call for Adult participants for participatory design workshop – Advertised via Facebook

Appendix 6. Procedure for 3D models surface analysis

Appendix 7. Studies reviewed as reference for perceived happiness survey design