Chapter 2
Capabilities and Beyond: Towards an Operationalization of Eudaimonic Well-Being in a Public Space Context

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2.1 Introduction: Addressing Well-Being in Cities

Since 1990 the United Nations Development Programme has undertaken to produce an annual report on the human dimension of development, consistently asserting that "the process of development should … create a conducive environment for people, individually and collectively, to develop their full potential and to have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives in accord with their needs and interests" (UNDP, 1990: 1). This is an important goal for urban development worldwide, especially considering that by 2050, the global urban population is expected to nearly double. Human activities and their impacts are increasingly concentrated in cities, and this poses immense sustainability challenges of environmental, social, and economic nature, all of these impacting human well-being. Addressing these challenges, The New Urban Agenda (UN, 2017) articulates a vision for a better and more sustainable urban future – "one in which all people have equal rights and access to the benefits and opportunities that cities can offer" (ibid., p. iv). It postulates that "cities can be the source of solutions to, rather than the cause of, the challenges that our world is facing today" (ibid.). In this context, the improvement of well-being in cities – both in developed and developing countries – emerges as an important objective, which is also central to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015).

To address human well-being in cities in an adequate way, we need a better understanding of this construct. Growing scholarship on the relationship between the quality of the built environment and quality of urban life (Marans & Stimson, 2011; Pfeiffer & Cloutier, 2016; Wang & Wang, 2016; Shekhar et al., 2019; Mouratidis, 2021) typically focuses on the range of *pathways* through which the

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built environment may affect subjective well-being of urban dwellers, not so much on the *operationalization* of well-being. The concept of subjective well-being (SWB) commonly used in this field is usually taken as unproblematic, defined in terms of the "personal evaluation of quality of life" (Diener et al., 2018; Mouratidis, 2021), as opposed to objective (economic) well-being measured by quantitative indicators such as income. This distinction is not satisfactory, as both these constructs fall into the category of hedonic well-being.

I argue that the concept of human well-being in cities is not sufficiently understood. In particular, the essential distinction between eudaimonic and hedonic well-being needs to be expressed more explicitly in urban research. In this chapter I address this distinction and propose a preliminary operationalization of eudaimonic well-being in the context of urban agriculture, informed by the virtue tradition (Aristotle, 2009), elements of the capability approach (Nussbaum, 2011), and the theory of affordances (Gibson, 1979; Rietveld, 2012). Chapters 4 and 6 further contribute to refining and contextualizing of these operationalizations through case studies of urban agriculture in Norway and other Northern European countries.

2.2 The Distinction Between Eudaimonic and Hedonic Well-Being

Eudaimonia is often translated as happiness but it differs substantially from today's understanding of this word in terms of pleasurable, often transitory experiences (hedonic happiness). For ancient Greeks, *eudaimonia* denoted human flourishing – the actualization of our full potentials, a rewarding and fulfilled human life, which was necessarily one lived in accordance with virtues – excellences of character and understanding (Aristotle, 2009). Importantly, virtue is not so much about what a person *does* in specific situations but what a person *is* in the totality of their life (Taylor, 2002: 44).

Eudaimonic well-being (human flourishing) needs to be clearly distinguished from hedonic well-being (or subjective well-being) related to "the frequency and intensity of emotional experiences such as happiness, joy, stress, and worry that make a person's life pleasant or unpleasant" (Christodoulou et al., 2013:2; Kahneman & Deaton, 2010). Human flourishing is not about positive emotional experiences (which usually have a transitory nature) but about the actualization of one's potentials, perception of meaningfulness of one's life, growth. Positive emotions are usually present here, but the contentment is based upon a person's effort of self-cultivation and sense of purpose. It is "the lasting realisation of what has been wrought" (Taylor, 2002:119).

The theme of eudaimonic well-being has been addressed within psychology for a long time – already in 1930s psychologists investigated issues such as self-actualization, creativity, becoming, meaning, and human potential. The interest in these issues has led to the emergence of humanistic psychology in mid-1950s

(Schneider et al., 2015), objecting to the reductionist investigation of the human mind and behavior embraced by behaviorism and psychoanalysis. Humanistic psychology perspectives had major influence on psychotherapy practice since 1950s (Perls et al., 1951; Frankl 1946/1959; Rogers, 1961) but their impact on empirical research within psychology was limited due to an absence of credible assessment tools to measure the diverse aspects of human flourishing they described (Ryff, 2017). This situation has changed in 1980s with the first attempts to operationalize eudaimonic well-being construct and develop tools for its assessment (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryff, 1989). Research on eudaimonic well-being gained momentum in early 2000s. Ryan and Deci (2001:141) in their review of well-being studies within psychology note that these have been informed by two general perspectives:

> the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance; and the eudaimonic approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realization and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning. These two views have given rise to different research foci and a body of knowledge that is in some areas divergent and in others complementary.

The interest in the topic of eudaimonic well-being in psychology has been steadily growing (Ryan et al., 2008; Huta & Ryan, 2010; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Huta, 2016; Vittersø, 2016; Cromhout et al., 2022), but these discussions have had limited impact outside this disciplinary domain. Eudaimonic well-being is little understood within the policy context, and its operationalization is considered challenging. Accordingly, researchers and decision-makers most often use the construct of hedonic well-being for policy monitoring, informing, and analysis purposes within different policy domains (Stone & Mackie, 2013), perhaps with an exception of lobal-level strategies, as reflected in Human Development Reports published annually by the United Nations Development Programme since 1990. Yet, several studies in psychology suggest that eudemonic well-being is relatively more important for the overall psychological functioning and life satisfaction (McMahan & Estes, 2011; Ryff, 2017; Ruini & Cesetti, 2019). This point at the necessity of extending the urban well-being discussion beyond hedonic models.

2.3 Well-Being as an Ethical Construct

Most basically, the question of urban well-being is an ethical question of "what makes a good urban life?" and can be only answered against the background of a broader normative outlook. In this I follow Upton (2002) who argues that spatial planning needs to be understood fundamentally as a form of applied ethics: it is concerned with values, and therefore it is necessary to develop an understanding of how the ethical frameworks and their concepts inform the making of places.

The normative orientation of contemporary urban discourse comes primarily from Western modern ethics and its principle-based (deontological) and outcome-based (consequentialist) systems.

In both these perspectives, the question of human well-being is predominantly viewed in terms of hedonic well-being (Taylor, 2002:119). The example of a deontological perspective is the Rawlsian theory of distributive justice (Rawls, 1971), in the urban context primarily concerned with the just distribution of burdens and benefits of urban development and securing individual liberties (Fainstein, 2010; Soja, 2010). Consequentialist thinking, on the other hand, is chiefly concerned with achieving the greatest utility for the greatest number (however ambiguous this notion may be) and has informed the development of cost-benefit analysis – a valuation tool widely used in urban decision-making.

The third major orientation in modern ethical discourse is the virtue tradition in its diverse formulations. The Aristotelian virtue ethics was the dominant approach in Western moral philosophy until the Enlightenment, when deontologist and consequentialist perspectives gained the central position in the ethical discourse. It re-emerged in the late 1950s in Anglo-American philosophy as a response to increasing dissatisfaction with the prevailing forms of deontology and consequentialism. As Anscombe (1958:1) points out: "Anyone who has read Aristotle's *Ethics* and has also read modern moral philosophy must have been struck by the great contrast between them." Subsequently, she argues that the dominant ethical positions neglect several topics that had always figured in virtue ethics' perspective, such as motives and moral character of an individual, moral education, moral wisdom, or a concept of a good human life. In her view, ethics – if it is to be meaningful – should revive these concepts.

Virtue ethics differs from deontological and consequentialist perspectives in that it is not concerned with abstract rules of conduct. In Greek Antiquity, where this tradition has its roots, the key question of ethics was the question of a fulfilling life (*eudaimonia*) and a closely associated idea of virtue (the excellence of character and understanding). It investigates what is "good" (i.e., leads to human flourishing) rather than what is "right" from the perspective of a moral law. The central questions are here: "How should I live?", "What kind of person should I aspire to be?" "How to cultivate the excellence of character?" Taylor (2002:6) describes this perspective as "the ethics of aspiration" and the two other modern ethics' perspectives concerned with the moral law as "ethics of duty." This is of course a simplified model: the ethics of duty and the ethics of aspiration to some extent overlap, and as Nussbaum (1999:163) observes, both deontology and consequentialism contain treatments of virtue. Taylor's distinction however gives a good idea of the difference in the fundamental orientation. For early Greek and Roman moral thinkers, ethics was essentially "the art of living" rather than a search for universal moral laws.

There is nonetheless a great diversity among formulations of virtue theories and a great deal of disagreement between some of them (Nussbaum, 1999). Certainly, rather than refer to a diffuse category of "virtue ethics," it is better to talk about "a class of ethical theories that share a common emphasis on virtues as central features

of their account of morality" (Ivanhoe 2013: 50). Other unifying factors include "a concern for the role of motives and passions in good choice, a concern for character, and a concern for the whole course of an agent's life" (Nussbaum, 1999:163). In Russell's (2012: 2) view, the major trait of virtue theories is their focus "not so much on what to do in morally difficult cases, as on how to approach all of one's choices with such personal qualities as kindness, courage, wisdom, and integrity."

One of the most common objections to virtue ethics includes the charge of cultural relativity: the critics often point out that different cultures embody different virtues; hence in the virtue ethics perspective actions can be evaluated as right or wrong only relative to a particular cultural context. This charge, however, is related to a more general, metaethical problem of justification and can be also directed to consequentialism and deontology. In fact, it seems that virtue ethics, with its practice-oriented and context-sensitive approach, has less difficulty with cultural relativity than the other two perspectives. As Sen and Nussbaum (1993) argue, cultural disagreement arises mostly from local understandings of virtues, but virtues themselves are not relative to culture.

2.4   Eudaimonic Well-Being and Capabilities

Operationalizing eudaimonic well-being (human flourishing) in Cultivating Public Space research project we borrowed from Nussbaum (2011). We used the list of ten central human capabilities (i.e., ways of being and doing that people have reasons to value) to categorize the key dimensions of eudaimonic well-being in the urban context. The link to capabilities is strictly speaking not necessary in an operationalization of eudaimonic well-being, yet it offers a robust starting point and an advantage of connecting to an established discourse that has been very influential in social sciences research.

The capability approach has its origins in the works of the Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen (1974, 1979) who criticized the limitedness of the traditional economic models and evaluative accounts largely based on utilitarianism and Rawlsian theory. He argued that these models fail to grasp the activities we are able to undertake ("doings") and the kinds of persons we are able to be ("beings"). He called these ways of being and doing *capabilities*, describing them also as the *real freedoms* to achieve our desired doings and beings. In line with the Aristotelian vision, the capability approach has its focus on the ends (ways of being and doing we have reasons to value) rather than on the means (resources/public goods we can access), arguing that resources and goods are important, but alone do not guarantee that people are able to convert them into the desired doings and beings.

The key questions to be asked when inquiring about capabilities are: "What am I able to do and to be? What are my real options?" (Nussbaum, 2011:106). Accordingly, this framework brings to the analysis the idea of assets relevant for people and groups to fulfill their aspirations – such as being well-nourished,

educated, and healthy. What is important, this approach emphasizes the freedom people have to shape their lives in meaningful ways and the importance of the enabling or disabling environment for the pursuit of well-being (Frediani & Hansen, 2015:3–4). This freedom can be understood in terms of opportunities, abilities, and choices of individuals and groups to pursue different well-being dimensions (ibid.).

Nussbaum (2011) emphasizes the distinction between *functionings* and *capabilities*. It is basically a distinction between the realized (choices) and the effectively possible (opportunities), or between the achievement of actual "beings" and "doings" people have reason value and freedom to realize these "beings" and "doings." Having an opportunity to play, one may not realize it for personal reasons. Similarly, a person with a plenty of food available may choose to fast. According to Nussbaum (ibid.), capability, not functioning, should be the appropriate political goal of public policy, since it respects citizens' freedom of choice. This view has been criticized by authors pointing out that it is challenging to maintain a clear distinction between capabilities and functionings (Wolff & De-Shalit, 2013). Firstly, it is difficult to determine at what point an opportunity is too remote to constitute a capability – for example, do I have a capability for play if relevant recreational facilities are located at a substantial distance from my home, but I could travel to the area where these are more available? Second, some capabilities necessarily build upon certain functionings. For example, the capability to play to a large extent presupposes bodily health as a functioning. The third problem is epistemological – functionings unlike capabilities can be easily observed and therefore are easier to account for in research and policy. This, according to Wolff and de-Shalit (2013) provides a pragmatic reason to focus on functionings rather on capabilities. I can add to this discussion another argument supporting the focus on functionings over capabilities in the discussions of human well-being. Eudaimonia (human flourishing) is essentially about functionings (the realization of one's potentials), rather than about capabilities (freedom to realize these).

Nussbaum (2003:42) considers the list of central capabilities as "open-ended and subject to ongoing revision and rethinking, in the way that any society's account of its most fundamental entitlements is always subject to supplementation (or deletion)." In a similar tone, Alkire (2005:127) argues:

> The first observation to make about the capability approach is that operationalizing it is not a one-time thing. Some critics seem to be nostalgic for an approach that would cleanse the capability approach from all of the value choices and provide an intellectual breakthrough … But many of the residual value judgments in the capability approach will need to be made on the ground over and over again. … That was what Sen means by fundamental or assertive incompleteness.

The capability approach has been criticized for too strong focus on individual well-being. Yet, capabilities are not only enhancing individual lives but the collective life – influencing the ability of individuals to participate in democratic life of a society and to shape meaningful social relationships, as is further elaborated in our discussion of civic friendship and communities of virtue in Chap. 3 and supported by findings from our empirical studies presented in this book.

While extensively applied in domains such as political economy, social welfare, or education, there have been few attempts to utilize the capability approach in the context of spatial planning and urban design (Frediani & Hansen, 2015:3). I see a substantial potential of this approach in regard to programming and evaluation of the quality of public spaces. Nussbaum (2011:163) acknowledges that the quality of environment plays an important role in capability approach, being crucial for human well-being.

2.5 Addressing Public Space: Environmental and Social Affordances

The theory of affordances offers a convenient point of departure for operationalization of eudaimonic well-being in the public space context. Similarly to capability approach, it is concerned with the activities we are able to undertake ("doings") and the kinds of persons we are able to be ("beings") but addresses these in the spatial and social contexts of our immediate surroundings.

The term "affordance" was coined by James Gibson (1966). In his book *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception (1979:127)*, Gibson explains:

> The *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill. The verb *to afford* is found in the dictionary, the noun *affordance* is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.

In this perspective, elements and features of our surroundings aren't just objects, but microenvironments that afford us (and other living beings) possibilities. For instance, a rigid flat surface affords support and locomotion to terrestrial animals. The water surface of a lake does not afford support to a terrestrial animal, but it does afford it to some insects. Thus, the same part of an environment may afford different things to different species or organisms. This is because affordances are relational in nature, they are both a fact of the environment and a fact of the organism. In this, they cut across the dichotomy of subjective-objective. Urban agriculture projects – depending upon their design, organization, and functional program – offer affordances such as food growing, physical exercise, learning, restorative activities, play, etc. They also offer a rich variety of affordances for non-human organisms (see Chap. 13).

Gibson's focus was environmental affordances. He didn't systematize theoretically the notion of social affordances, but he gave several examples of these, using this notion in two different senses (de Carvalho, 2020). The first group are affordances depending on social conventions – for example, the postbox is an object that "affords letter-mailing to a letter-writing human in a community with a postal system" (Gibson, 2015:130). An agent from a culture without a postal system cannot perceive the postbox as an object affording letter-mailing. The second group of

social affordances are possibilities for interaction that other persons or animals afford. Through these affordances a person or an animal shows up to an observer not as a physical object but as an agent with the capacity to reciprocate. According to Gibson (2015:126), these are "the richest and most elaborate affordances of the environment." Rietveld (2012: 207) defines this category of affordances as "possibilities for social interaction offered by an environment: a friend's sad face invites comforting behavior, a person waiting for a coffee machine can afford a conversation, and an extended hand affords a handshake." Social affordances are of crucial importance in addressing the communal dimension of urban agriculture.

Importantly, affordances depend on our perceptions and abilities – different people may identify different affordances in the same space, based on their bodily abilities, skills, cultural background, and age. For example, for a person with good cooking skills, the crops from an urban garden present more affordances for nutritious and tasty meals than for someone who has no knowledge on this matter. This is very much related to the discussion of conversion factors in the capability approach: the extent to which a person is able to convert available options (capabilities) into functionings is based on personal, social, and environmental factors (Sen, 1992).

2.6 Toward an Operationalization of Eudaimonic Well-Being in the Urban Agriculture Context

In the following I present a preliminary operationalization of eudaimonic well-being in the context of public space that was developed within Cultivating Public Space research project. I aimed to create a conceptual tool to evaluate well-being impacts of urban agriculture projects, but this operationalization may be used more generally to evaluate the potential of any kind of public space (both actual and planned) to sustain human flourishing – an alternative to valuation models driven by an instrumental rationality, such as cost-benefit analysis.

The operationalization was informed by elements of three perspectives: the virtue tradition, the capability approach, and the theory of affordances. The operationalization process paralleled the construct-oriented approach to personality assessment (Ryff, 2017), but in this case it was concerned with public space assessment. The process began with conceptually based definitions of well-being dimensions to be operationalized – Nussbaum's (2003, 2011) list of ten central capabilities. I continued with the question: *What kind of environmental and social affordances need to be granted by a given urban agriculture project to sustain the well-being dimensions indicated by each of the capabilities?* These preliminary insights (Table 2.1) were further contextualized/validated in the course of empirical research in our project (see Chaps. 4 and 6). This was the first stage of the operationalization.

Table 2.1 Sustaining capabilities through affordances of urban agriculture: a preliminary operationalization of eudaimonic well-being dimensions in the context of urban agriculture projects

	Capability	Nussbaum's definition (2003:41–42)	Preliminary operationalizations: environmental and social affordances of urban agriculture
1.	Life	"Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living."	-Experienced safety of urban agriculture projects and their surroundings -Effective crime prevention measures
2.	Bodily health	"Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter."	-Opportunities for physical/restorative activities -Access to green areas -Access to local organic food -Opportunities for gaining nutrition knowledge
3.	Bodily integrity	"Being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence"	-Experienced safety of urban agriculture projects and their surroundings -Effective crime prevention measures
4.	Senses, imagination, thought	"Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason … Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical, etc. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression.… Being able to have pleasurable experiences and to avoid nonbeneficial pain."	-Opportunities to experience/influence tactile and symbolic qualities of design and aesthetics -Freedom of expression/self-expression -Opportunities for local political engagement -Opportunities for engaging into artistic/creative practices -Opportunities for contemplative/mindful activities
5.	Emotions	"Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety."	-Opportunities for meaningful relations and interactions with others -Opportunities for self-expression -Measures limiting anxiety and fear in social interactions
6.	Practical reason	"Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life."	-Opportunities for learning -Opportunities for deliberation on values/goals/visions -Opportunities for engagement in development, managing and programming of urban agriculture projects -Flexible and adaptable planning and design of urban agriculture projects

(continued)

Table 2.1 (continued)

	Capability	Nussbaum's definition (2003:41–42)	Preliminary operationalizations: environmental and social affordances of urban agriculture
7.	**Affiliation**	"A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another. …. B. Having the social bases of self-respect and nonhumiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. …."	-Opportunities for development of a sense of belonging and meaningful relations with others -Inclusive/nondiscriminatory way of organizing projects -Inclusive meeting places for all segments of society
8.	**Other species**	"Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature."	-Opportunities for forming relation to nature – cultivation of plants, beekeeping, etc. -Opportunities for encountering wild nature in cities
9.	**Play**	"Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities."	-Opportunities to engage into leisure, recreation, and play activities -Opportunities for celebrations -Opportunities to engage into cultural activities
10	**Control over one's environment**	"A. Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. B. Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), and having property rights on an equal basis with others; …. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason, and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers."	(a) Political: -Opportunities for participation in decision-making -Opportunities for expression of political views -Opportunities for deliberation on values/goals/visions (b) Material -opportunities for engagement in managing, planning, development and programming of urban agriculture projects; -opportunities for employment/job training

The second stage of operationalization has been delineated conceptually but would benefit from a follow-up empirical research for further contextualization. It extends the operationalization of well-being in terms of capabilities with the consideration of virtues which is largely absent in capability scholarship. The key question here is: *What kind of virtues can be linked to each of the central capabilities, and what kind of environmental and social affordances would support the cultivation of these virtues?*

Virtues are moral or intellectual excellences (see Chap. 3 for more in-depth discussion of this theme). Different sets of virtues that can be encountered in virtue literature since Antiquity. Here, I use a contemporary categorization of Peterson and Seligman presented in their book *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004) identifying six key virtues and related character strengths:

– Wisdom and Knowledge: Creativity, Curiosity, Open-mindedness, Love of Learning, Perspective.
– Courage: Bravery, Persistence, Integrity, Vitality.
– Humanity: Love, Kindness, Social Intelligence.
– Justice: Citizenship, Fairness, Leadership.
– Temperance: Forgiveness, Humility/Modesty, Prudence, Self-Regulation.
– Transcendence: Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence, Gratitude, Hope, Humor, Spirituality.

Table 2.2 provides an overview over the definitions of these (Peterson & Seligman, 2004:29–30).

Importantly, virtues benefit not only the individual but also the community, encouraging tangible outcomes like reverence for life, rich and supportive social networks, respect by and for others, satisfying and productive work, and material sufficiency – ultimately sustaining healthy communities and families (Peterson & Seligman, 2004:19).

Building upon the first stage of our operationalization (Table 2.1), where we focused on ten central capabilities (viewed as well-being dimensions to be addressed in urban gardens through their environmental and social affordances), I now deepen this discussion asking how these capabilities link to specific virtues and what kind of environmental and social affordances would be conductive/limiting to the cultivation of these virtues. For some capabilities these links are quite straightforward, for others, may be less evident but still can be identified with some interpretive effort. For example, the capability of practical reason can be directly linked to virtue of wisdom and related character strengths: curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and perspective. It can be also linked to the virtue of justice and character strengths such as fairness and leadership. The capability of affiliation can be linked to virtue of humanity and character strengths such as love, kindness, and social intelligence. The capability of bodily health can be linked to virtue of temperance and character strengths such as such as prudence and self-regulation.

Table 2.2 Classification of virtues and character strengths based on Peterson and Seligman (2004:29–30)

Virtues	Character strengths
Wisdom and knowledge: "cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge"	**Creativity** [originality, ingenuity]: "Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it"
	Curiosity [interest, novelty-seeking, openness to experience]: "Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering"
	Open-mindedness [judgment, critical thinking]: "Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly"
	Love of learning: "Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows"
	Perspective [wisdom]: "Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people"
Courage: "emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal"	**Bravery** [valor]: "Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it"
	Persistence [perseverance, industriousness]: "Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door", taking pleasure in completing tasks"
	Integrity [authenticity, honesty]: "Speaking the truth but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions"
	Vitality [zest, enthusiasm, vigor, energy]: "Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated"

Humanity: "interpersonal strengths that involve tending and befriending others"	**Love:** "Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people"
	Kindness [generosity, nurturance, care, compassion, altruistic love]: "Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them"
	Social intelligence [emotional intelligence, personal intelligence]: "Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations"
Justice: "civic strengths that underlie healthy community life"	**Citizenship** [social responsibility, loyalty, teamwork]: "Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share"
	Fairness: "Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance"
	Leadership: "Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same maintain time good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen"
Temperance: "strengths that protect against excess"	**Forgiveness and mercy:** "Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful"
	Humility/modesty: "Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not seeking the spotlight; not regarding oneself as more special than one is"
	Prudence: "Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted"
	Self-regulation [self-control]: "Regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions"

Table 2.2 (continued)

| Virtues	Character strengths
Transcendence: "strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning"	**Appreciation of beauty and excellence** [awe, wonder, elevation]: "Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience"
	Gratitude: "Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks"
	Hope [optimism, future-mindedness, future orientation]: "Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about"
	Humor [playfulness]: "Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes"
	Spirituality [religiousness, faith, purpose]: "Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort"

In the course of Cultivating Public Space project we have encountered different manifestations of virtues both in our empirical studies and classroom activities, and this discussion is further extended theoretically in Chap. 3 in the context of communities of virtue. Still, more research is needed to get a better understanding of how environmental and social affordances of public space can sustain the cultivation of virtues in specific contexts. This is a problem of identifying the enabling conditions for development of virtues and character strengths that Peterson and Seligman (2004: 11) delineate as an important concern for future research:

> We … believe that positive traits need to be placed in context; it is obvious that they do not operate in isolation from the settings,... in which people are to be found. … Some settings and situations lend themselves to the development and/or display of strengths, whereas other settings and situations preclude them. … Enabling conditions as we envision them are often the province of disciplines other than psychology, but we hope for a productive partnership with these other fields in understanding the settings that allow the strengths to develop. Our common sense tells us that enabling conditions include educational and vocational opportunity, a supportive and consistent family, safe neighbourhoods and schools, political stability, and (perhaps) democracy. The existence of mentors, role models, and supportive peers—inside or outside the immediate family—are probably also enabling conditions. … [A] future goal would be to characterize the properties of settings that enable strengths and virtues.

On the basis of our preliminary understanding of the relationship between affordances, capabilities, and virtues, urban placemaking for human flourishing can be understood as a continuous process of negotiating a space's optimum set of affordances – environmental and social – so it sustains a variety of central capabilities and offers opportunities for cultivation of related virtues, moral and intellectual. This model calls for citizen participation in the process of altering the affordances of their environments for the benefit of all.

The interconnected framework of capabilities, virtues, and affordances (Fig. 2.1) can be used to evaluate eudaimonic well-being impacts of public space. As our case studies illustrate, successful urban gardens are inclusive, inviting, and vibrant because they offer multiple affordances attracting diverse group of citizens, sustaining their capabilities, and inspiring cultivation of virtues in multiple ways.

Fig. 2.1 The interconnected framework of capabilities, virtues, and affordances can be used to evaluate eudaimonic well-being impacts of any kind of public space
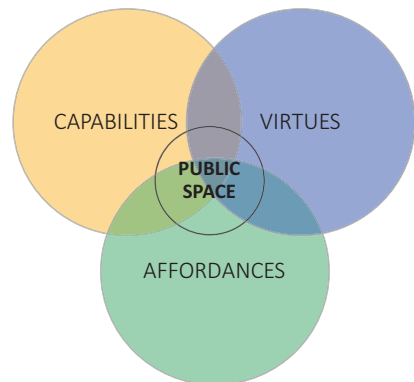
2.7 Beyond Capabilities

Despite our borrowing from the capability approach, the research of Cultivating
Public Space project cannot be considered as capability research per se. In our
attempts to operationalize human flourishing, we remain entirely within the
Aristotelian tradition. The capability approach has been to some extent inspired by
this tradition: in composing the list of central capabilities, Nussbaum (1999:40)
asks an Aristotelian question, "What activities characteristically performed by
human beings are so central that they seem definitive of a life that is truly human?"
Yet, as she further admits, the guiding thought behind her approach is the liberal
concept of freedom, "one that lies at the heart of [John] Rawls' project" (Ibid. p. 46).

Accordingly, the capability approach has been primarily concerned with a
broader question of social justice and human rights, addressed typically on the
national or even global level (Nussbaum, 2003, 2011). Its primary concern is with
the material and institutional arrangements securing all individuals the liberty to
realize their capabilities. The main emphasis here is on "well-being freedom"
(opportunities/liberties to pursue ways of doing and being one has reasons to value)
not so much the actual realization of these opportunities, i.e., "well-being achieve-
ment" (which is the core concern for virtue ethics and eudaimonic well-being dis-
cussion). The liberty concern in capability scholarship tends to overweight the
well-being concerns (Sen & Nussbaum, 1993:38–39).

In our research we to some extent address the broader question of social justice
in cities, looking into municipal policies enabling a systematic integration of urban
agriculture projects in public space development (Chaps. 11 and 12). Our main
interest however is "well-being achievement," i.e., human flourishing addressed on
the level of an individual and a local community embedded in their immediate spa-
tial settings.

Another point where we go beyond Nussbaum's capability approach is the
emphasis on the importance of an individual effort of self-formation (the cultivation
of virtue) and the quality of communal relationships (civic friendship) in the
achievement of human flourishing (see also Chap. 3). As already indicated, capabil-
ity scholarship typically focuses on *entitlements* of citizens, rarely addressing
responsibilities related to self-formation and our relationships to others that are cen-
tral to the virtue ethics tradition. Nussbaum (1994) to some extent addresses these
issues in her earlier works on early Greek and Roman ethics.

2.8 Concluding Remarks

The virtue tradition is scarcely addressed in planning and urban discourse. In
Cultivating Public Space research project we aimed to address this knowledge gap.
By doing this, the project not only adds to the recently growing discussions within
moral philosophy, addressing contemporary applications of virtue theories, but also

responds to the demand for new conceptual frameworks that could help to tackle the problems and challenges confronting cities in an innovative way, as the intellectual apparatus, concepts, and mindset of traditional spatial planning prove to be deficient in today's complex realities (Ogilvy, 2002; Albrechts, 2010).

The virtue tradition offers a viable basis for an alternative, novel approach to operationalization of urban well-being, that can in turn inform evaluation and development of urban interventions. It demands incorporation of the ideal of human flourishing – a fulfilling individual and communal life – in planning practices and urban development strategies. In this perspective urban space is seen as an arena for the exercise of practical reason and the development of human capabilities and virtues, including "social virtues" such as solidarity and responsibility for the other. It also encourages a more respectful attitude toward natural environments (Cafaro & Sandler, 2005; Sandler, 2007; Zwolinski & Schmidtz, 2013). This view may substantially contribute to grounding an alternative model of economic development and inspire social change.

What is also important, virtue tradition implies a different approach to planning for sustainability than the dominant frameworks of consequentialism and deontology: the focus is on planning of the conditions for the desired actions, internalization of values, and their integration in lifestyles rather than on regulating/imposing the limits. Virtues act here as internal barriers. This is essentially a shift from a punitive structure of obligations and rules, toward character traits undermining a respectful attitude toward the environment. As Cafaro and Sandler (2005:3) put it, the "environmentally virtuous person is disposed to respond—both emotionally and through action—to the environment and the nonhuman individuals (whether inanimate, living, or conscious) that populate it in an excellent or fine way."

The virtue perspective offers an alternative to top-down perspectives, where an individual is typically viewed as *a recipient* of urban services. Here, she is also *an agent*, co-creating/cultivating public space and at the same time taking an active role in the cultivation of her character and contributing to the local community, which in turn leads to the achievement of a fulfilling life. Accordingly, we are concerned not just with individuals' *entitlements* and *liberties* (which is the focus of Nussbaum's capability approach) but also with their *responsibilities* related to the achievement of a fulfilling life and stewardship of shared urban spaces. The active role of citizens and the importance of the bottom-up approach in shaping urban spaces are emphasized in "the right to the city" discourse (Lefebvre, 1996; Mitchell, 2003); however, the theme of r*esponsibilities* in respect to self-formation/intellectual and moral excellence as the central aspect of human flourishing is also missing in this perspective. The theme of responsibilities of citizens is generally under-addressed in current urban research and sometimes considered problematic, which is indeed the case when it masks an effort of neoliberal urban authorities to transfer some of their responsibilities to local communities (Jonathan, 2013). Being aware of these ambiguities, it is crucial to underline that by neglecting the importance of individuals' responsibility in shaping meaningful lives, we may end up in a patronizing and disempowering approach to urban development.

My focus in this chapter is human well-being. It is however important to remember that this theme cannot be addressed in separation from the question of human-nature interaction, and we address it elsewhere in this book (see Chap. 13). Cities are essentially socio-ecological systems, and any decision-making aimed at a sustainable and resilient urban development should always consider different components and scales of an urban system (Walker & Salt, 2012).

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