Governments implicitly consider the enhancement of the quality of life as a touchstone of the effects of their policies. In our paper we focus on the subjective well-being. In this approach the emphasis lies on the evaluation of the individual's life, both in the sense of the evaluation of contentment (the cognitive aspect) and in the sense of affective reactions (state of mind and emotions). Besides the evaluation of life in general, we also analyse the satisfaction with more specific aspects of the daily life, such as health, the own financial situation and the neighbourhood.

Based on the resource-theory on subjective well-being, we analysed the main determinants of people their evaluation of life as a whole and more specific aspects, like their own health. In order to study this, we have set up a face-to-face survey research design within a random sample of people entitled to vote, spread over the three biggest Flemish cities (Ghent, Bruges and Antwerp). More specific, in our analysis we present the empirical data of 1873 adult citizens in Ghent, Bruges and Antwerp. The sample comprises a representative sample of citizens entitled to vote. In our search for the main determinants we took a wide range of variables into account. There relative importance was analyses using multivariate regression analysis.

In our paper we demonstrate that the determinants of the subjective well-being in general do not conform with the evaluation of all more specific aspects of the daily life. A distinction has to be made between the satisfaction with more private aspects (as the family life and health) on the one side and more public aspects (as the neighbourhood) on the other. The former correlates stronger with the general subjective well-being. Concerning the satisfaction with health, we found that that judgement is not only based on the appreciation of ones health as such. Other factors such as social support, social integration and self-esteem are important determinants of the satisfaction with health and subjective well-being more in general. Those factors had to be taken into account in the set-up and evaluation of the health care policy.